

# COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V14 Issue 5

Editor: Karla Hardman

**JUNE 2026**



## The 4 CRG Clubs:

Plantaholics  
Potpourri  
Seedlings  
Wildflowers

## Council Motto:

“Enjoy nature’s bounty and beauty through work and creativity.”

## Council Website:

[www.crgrockford.com](http://www.crgrockford.com)

## Email editor:

[CRGnews815@gmail.com](mailto:CRGnews815@gmail.com)

Club calendars are listed on our website, or please check with your garden club on status of individual club activities.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT’S PEN

For this month's newsletter, I'm retelling a story I shared during my first year as Council President. I hope those who remember it don't mind hearing it again! It's just so fitting for this time of the year.

About 18 years ago, Charlie and I decided to trade condo living for a house. After looking at dozens of similar looking homes, we asked our realtor for something more unique. She suggested a house much smaller than our target size. We toured it with my mother and stepfather, and I still vividly remember my mother's wise words: "Well, you don't need a house so big that you can do cartwheels in your bedroom." I wanted to reply, "Speak for yourself," but I held my tongue, and we later bought that house.

Later that year, we noticed a stream of traffic down our street. Investigating, we stumbled upon the Council of Rockford Gardeners annual Free Garden Walk. We toured the yard and officially met our neighbors, Carol and Bob Best. We were so inspired by their beautiful garden and the warmth of everyone we met that it motivated us to dive headfirst into gardening.

The following year, Charlie and I attended the Garden Walk again. At one stop, we met two greeters, Mary Ann Miller and Grace Saunders. True to CRG fashion, they were incredibly friendly, struck up a conversation, and later came to visit our yard. They asked if I'd ever want to join a garden club. In retrospect, I should have said NO (just kidding!), but I said "yes" - and the rest is history.

That single "yes" completely changed my life, eventually leading me to run the Garden Walks and later serve this wonderful group as President. It has brought me immense joy, knowledge, and lifelong friendships.

In closing, if anyone wishes to volunteer at our upcoming CRG Garden Walk please let me know. Also, reminder, the Council holds a breakfast meeting on the first Monday of each month usually at Mary's Market on East State Street. These meetings are open to all CRG members.

# PLANTAHOLICS CLUB EVENT

JUNE  
2026

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[www.crgrockford.com](http://www.crgrockford.com)



Plantaholics had the pleasure of a private tour at Klehm, centered on the beauty of the magnolia trees. Our host, Rose, along with longtime Klehm volunteer Gina, shared their knowledge, complemented by Alex's expert guidance. Mother Nature blessed us with a warm, dry evening.



# PLANTAHOLICS CLUB EVENT



**Plantaholics Garden Tour at the beautiful home of Tom and Pat Johnson. Thank you to the Johnsons and to Maura for organizing the evening.**



# PLANTAHOLICS CLUB EVENT



**Bill Lengjak and Min Wang hosted Plantaholics at their unbelievably glamorous home and their prestigious Asian garden. Bill and Min's home is beautiful, and every item was imported from China.**



# WILDFLOWERS CLUB EVENT



***Wildflowers traveled to Hidden Gardens in Chana, IL. Monica gave us a tour of the gardens and talked to us about the different varieties of hydrangeas. Lunch was had, with all singing Happy Birthday to Inge Frye. Happy 80th birthday!!***



# POTPOURRI CLUB EVENT



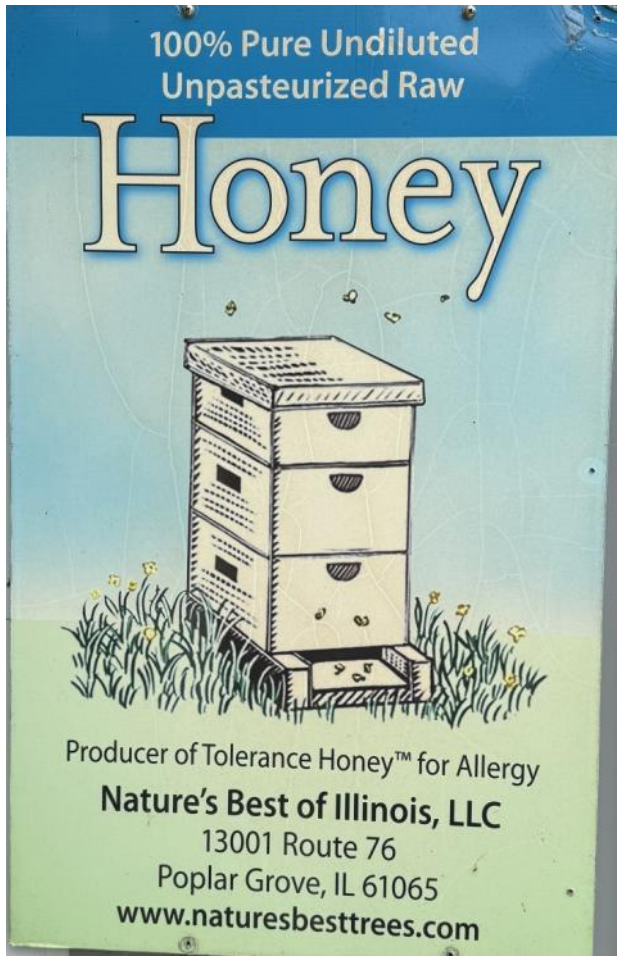
*Potpourri's May monthly garden event:  
Visiting our member,  
Laurel Wild's garden.*



# POTPOURRI CLUB EVENT



Potpourri members spent a wonderful morning with Allison and Randy at Nature's Best of Illinois, LLC a local Honey Farm in Poplar Grove. Such a fascinating and informative presentation with some laughter included. Social time with lunch was enjoyed afterwards at AM Social.



# JUNE 1, 2026 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

## TREASURER'S REPORT

**Beginning Balance as of April 1 2026:** ..... \$4,663.42  
**Receipts – Proceeds from Soil Sale** ..... 70.00  
**Total Receipts** ..... \$5,363.42

## Disbursements:

**Total Disbursements:** ..... \$ 0.00  
**Ending Balance as of May 31, 2026** ..... \$5,363.42  
*Submitted by Mary Ann Miller, Treasurer*

## Committee Reports

**Awards - Susan Schumacher** presented Arch Smith with the GCI Garden Walk 2nd Place Award for 2025 to The Council of Rockford Gardeners from The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc. The Darien Garden Club seems to be the top in the state on receiving various awards. Susan said that we need to check on what awards we would qualify for. Susan Buzzard offered to help.

**Civic Conservation - Diane Donze** had no big news. Diane learned that Habitat is condensing their business office with the Habitat store. As far as a house being completed, Diane has heard nothing. There are men working on a house since the high schoolers are done for the year. Diane believes that we should think about finding another civic organization that we can work with. If you come up with an idea, call Diane. It was mentioned that the Pantry Garden is "civic".

**Lynne Franzene-Lynde** reported that she received a request from Liz Wiener of Wild Roots Nature Center (formerly Severson Dells). They are having a "Special Restoration Day" on June 13, 2026, from 9:00am - 12:00pm at "Prairie's Edge" (formerly Elliot Golf Course), 888 S. Lyford Rd. They are looking for volunteers to help plant 1,000 native plant plugs across 30 acres. Volunteer information will be in our Newsletter, and we need to sign up by June 10th so they know many to expect.

**Programs - Arch** reported that Seedlings will host the Fall Frolic on September 9th from 5:00pm - 8:30pm at Klehm Arboretum. Arch is helping Jan Bowman with this event. Arch also reported that the Fall District 1 Fall Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 15th. They are checking with Wings and Wheels and Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club for estimates. It was suggested that they also contact Forest Hills Country Club for another estimate.

**Publicity - Susan Schumacher** reported that CRG's Facebook page has 764 members. There were 43 posts and comments in the previous month - down 60%. There were 2,355 views in the previous month - down 17.4%.

**Garden Walk - Arch Smith** reported that there are six gardens on the Garden Walk, and he has Garden Reps for the Gardens. Benson Stone will donate the garden stones, and Arch will contact Debbie Kozak to have the stones engraved. Arch also reported that Becky Thalhoffer will again sponsor the billboard for the Garden Walk.

Maura Flanary reported that she will promote the Garden Walk on TikTok and Instagram. Arch reported that he will contact Andrew about the website. We do not put the addresses of the gardens out on the website until a week before the Garden Walk.

**Horticulture - Pat Bellezza** - No report.

**Hospitality - Bev Larson** - No report.

**Newsletter - Karla Hardman** reported that everything is due by Friday to CRG News (crgnews815@gmail.com).

**Parliamentarian - Sarah Britton** - No report.

**Sunshine** - Arch reported that Cindy sent a sympathy card to Kathy Barzkall on the loss of her sister and a get well card to Alice Pearce who is in the hospital. Please call or text Cindy (815) 977-2090 if a card should be sent to a member. (**Cindy prefers a text message** to email.)

**Ways & Means - Lynne Franzene-Lynde** reported that she is checking on possible fundraising opportunities with Panera Bread.

**Website - Arch Smith** reported that Andrew Quintanilla has the new website up and running. But it was mentioned that all is not up to date. (Arch later said that Andrew has all the Garden Walk 2026 items posted now.)

The new website is: [www.crgrockford.com](http://www.crgrockford.com)  
Email: [crgrockford@gmail.com](mailto:crgrockford@gmail.com)

# WHAT ABOUT FERTILIZER?

Pat Belezza, *Wildflower member and Horticulture Chair*

Fertilizer is something added to the soil to increase its fertility by adding nutrients. The 3 major fertilizer nutrients are nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K). Minor nutrients are calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), and sulfur (S). Micronutrients are boron, copper, iron, manganese, zinc, chlorine and cobalt - in tiny amounts. Fertilizers don't alter the DNA of crops or plants we eat. Instead they are used to improve the growth and quality of plants by adding nutrients they need. The resulting vegetable crops have better appearance and greater nutritional value.



Although nitrogen makes up 78% of the air we breathe, plants cannot absorb it from the air. They need to use their roots to take it from the soil. Commercial fertilizer is typically manufactured by creating ammonia by mixing nitrogen from the air with hydrogen from natural gas. Nitrogen produces plant growth and lush leaves and green color.

Potassium comes from old lake and ocean beds formed millions of years ago and is therefore found too deep in the earth for plant roots to absorb it. Potassium fertilizers are built on naturally occurring potassium chloride - similar to table salt. Ash from burned wood or straw is high in potassium; where the name "potash" comes from. Potassium aids in photosynthesis, helps save energy loss from wilting, and helps resist disease.

Phosphate is taken from insoluble calcium phosphate rocks ("rock phosphate") but it is not available to plants in this form and must go through a chemical process to make it accessible to plants. Phosphorus is essential for general

health and vigor, stimulates root growth, improves flower and seed production, makes increased resistance to disease and supports the plant throughout its entire lifecycle.

Similar to mineral fertilizers, organic fertilizers are also made of natural elements with biological origins. Such materials include animal waste, crop residue, compost and biosolids.

The numbers N,P, and K on fertilizer packages indicate the strength/ratio of each element. The higher the number, the higher the % of the element. The lower the number, the

less the risk of burning your plants. Late winter, early spring when perennials are waking up is a good time to broadcast time release fertilizer over gardens. It gives plants a boost after a long, hard winter.

The best way to assess the availability of nutrients in your garden soil is by doing a soil test. A basic test gives a soil texture estimate (sandy, clay, etc.), organic matter content (used to estimate nitrogen availability), phosphorus, potassium, pH and lime requirements. The test will provide an explanation of the results and give recommendations for fertilizing. All commercial fertilizers have a "guaranteed analysis" of NPK listed on the package. It is more important to match the nitrogen (N) recommendation from the soil test than the phosphorus (P) or potassium (K). Do not exceed the phosphorus (P) recommendation because of water quality concerns. Phosphorus runoff triggers rapid algae growth in lakes and rivers. When algae decomposes, they deplete the oxygen in the air which creates "dead zones" that suffocate fish and produce toxins harmful to people and pets.

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE GARDEN EVENTS

## KLEHM ABORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN

2715 S. Main St, Rockford, IL

[www.klehm.org](http://www.klehm.org) | 815-965-8146 | [info@klehm.org](mailto:info@klehm.org)

*Registration may be required for events. See website.*

### Woodsong Summer Concert -

#### The Nevery Brothers

### A Rock n' Roll Tribute from Elvis to The Beatles

Sunday, July 12th - 6:00pm - 8:00pm

**Tickets: Klehm members - \$12.00**

**Public Admission - \$16.00**

**ALL TICKETS WILL BE SOLD ONLINE ONLY!!**

## NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY

1354 N. 2nd Street, Rockford, IL

<https://nicholasconservatory.com/>

### Food Truck Tuesdays

**4:00pm - 9:00pm**

**Every Tuesday**

### Sculpture Tour

Thursday, June 11th - 10:30am - 12:00pm

Drive along the Rock River Recreation Path on a 7-seater cart to see a variety of public sculptures that grace the campus and the riverfront. Dress for the weather.

### Wonderland Ballet Fairies in the Garden

Saturday, June 20th - 10:00am - 2:00pm

Venture through the tropical conservatory alongside magical fairies from Wonderland Ballet Company's cast of "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Meet the Queen and King of the Fairies, take pictures, and find the mischievous pixie Puck for a chance to win free tickets to the Ballet!!



## ANDERSON JAPANESE GARDENS

318 Spring Creek Road, Rockford

[andersongardens.org](http://andersongardens.org)

### Tuesday Evenings in the Gardens Summertime Music Series and Food Trucks Every Tuesday evening

Guests Invited to Enter and Set-Up Seating Areas  
Starting at 5:00pm  
Blankets, Lawn Chairs & Small Tables are Welcome  
Opener 5:45pm  
Headliner at 6:30pm

## NATURE AT THE CONFLUENCE

306 Dickop Street,

South Beloit, IL

815-200-6910

<https://natureattheconfluence.com/>

### Readers by the Rivers

June 9th - 6:00pm - 7:00pm

### Bird Club at J. Norman Jensen

June 12th - 7:30am - 9:00am

### Wildlife Drawing with Pete

June 12th - 11:15am - 12:00pm

June 26th - 11:15am - 12:00pm

### Seeing Nature Differently: Living Water Painting

June 13th - 3:00pm - 4:30pm

### Prairie Monitoring

June 16th - 4:00pm - 4:45pm

June 23th - 4:00pm - 4:45pm

June 30th - 4:00pm - 4:45pm

### Community Fire & Drum Circle

June 18th - 6:00pm - 8:00pm

### We the Native People

June 26th - 6:00pm - 7:30pm

**RSVP Needed**

## WILD ONES

<http://wildonesrrvc.org/>

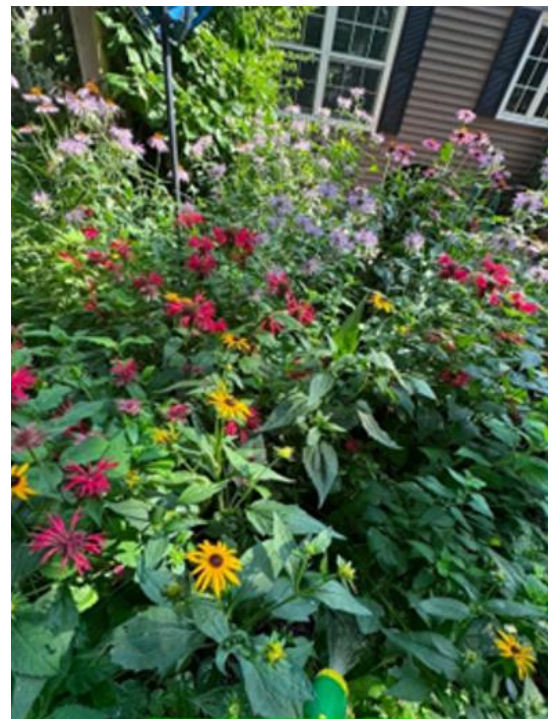
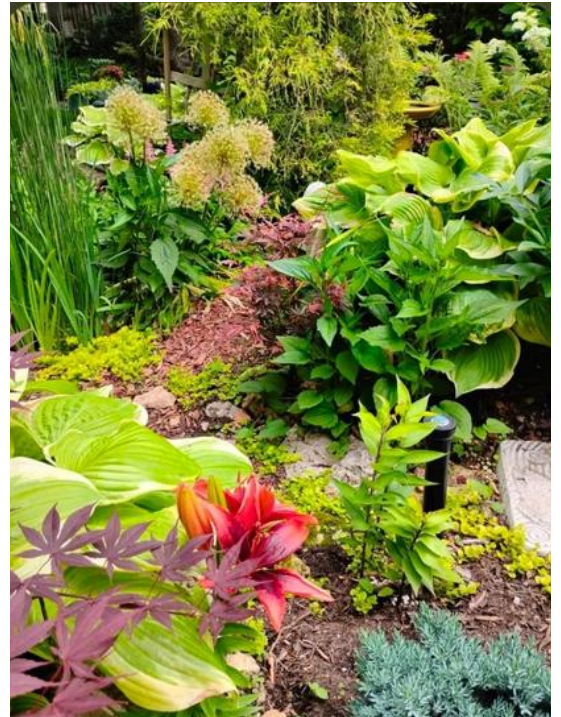
COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS

# FREE GARDEN WALK

Wednesday, July 8th, 2026

1-8 pm, rain or shine.

See [www.crgrockford.com](http://www.crgrockford.com) for details



# SPECIAL RESTORATION DAY

JUNE 13, 2026  
9 AM-12 PM

888 S. LYFORD RD.

Join us at Prairie's Edge to continue restoration efforts.

We will be planting 1,000 native plant plugs, and we need your help!

For more information: [SeversonDells.org/volunteer](https://SeversonDells.org/volunteer)  
or contact [liz@seversondells.org](mailto:liz@seversondells.org)

**WILD  
ROOTS**  
NATURE CENTER  
Prairie's Edge

# GARDEN HINTS / TOPICS



**SUNSHINE**  
A member needs a card?

contact  
**Cindy Rittenhouse**  
by text  
**815-977-2090**

## *FYI*

We are always looking for gardening hints, flower/plant information, helpful hints, tips, or any other information that you would like to share with our members.

**PLEASE** send it to Karla at [crgnews815@gmail.com](mailto:crgnews815@gmail.com).

All information is due before Friday of the first week of the month of a Newsletter publication.



Free compost barrel.

You haul.

Text Susan at 815-793-2950

## SAVE THE DATE



## CRG'S FALL FROLIC

hosted by Seedlings

## KLEHM ARBORETUM

**September 9th**

**5pm - 8:30pm**