



THE HIDDEN GEM

1 October, 2026

President's Message

"I wish that every day was Saturday and every month was October." —Charmaine J. Forde

After working hard all summer in our gardens, October gives us a well-earned moment to rest and admire nature's brilliant last hurrah—yellow goldenrods, purple asters, maroon mums, and crimson maples.

It is also the time to honor our outgoing and incoming leadership and celebrate the camaraderie that makes our club thrive.

A heartfelt thank you to outgoing board members Sharon Sill, Jennifer Sparrow, Janet Lichtenberger, and Sally Steele for your incredible commitment and guidance. We warmly welcome our new Board: Sharon Sill (President), Becky Sitz (1st Vice President), Liz Cochran (Treasurer), and Amrita Chari (Secretary). We are excited for the fresh perspectives you bring!

Serving as President of our wonderful club over the past two years has been a true honor. Thank you all for this incredible opportunity—the dedication and passion of our members is truly inspirational.

Happy Autumn,

Sue



Town & Country Garden Club of Libertyville celebrates 74 years of serving the greater Libertyville area with civic plantings, scholarship awards, local charitable donations and our Hidden Gems Garden Walk.

In this issue:

- Civic Plantings
- Saving Seeds
- Old Growth Forests
- Programs
- NGC/GCI news
- Chelsea Garden Show Plants
- Upcoming Events



The Hidden Gem newsletter is published eight times/year as a .pdf. Join our mailing list [HERE](#).

Submissions are from Club members; contact us at towncountrygardenclub5@gmail.com regarding an upcoming event listing or with membership inquiries.

Editors: Ann Baker, Laura Edwards, Janet Lichtenberger, Sally Steele

Vol. 5 Issue 7

CIVIC PLANTINGS

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Civic Center



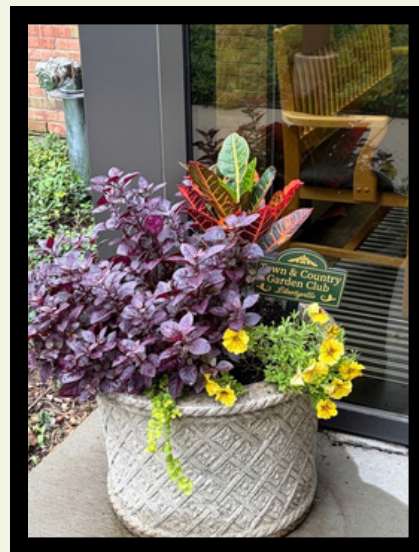
Train Station



Cook Mansion



**Beautiful
Transition
to Fall!**



Library

Seed Saving: A Gift to Next Year's Garden

by Becky Sitz, U of I Extension Master Gardener

Saving seeds is an easy, rewarding way to preserve your favorite garden plants and share them with fellow gardeners. With a little planning, you can harvest seeds from this year's garden and have them ready for next spring.

Choose the right plants. Save seeds from healthy, vigorous plants that performed well in your garden. For the most predictable results, choose open-pollinated or heirloom varieties as their seeds generally grow true to type. Hybrids may produce plants that differ from the parent.

Let seeds mature. Allow fruits, seed heads and seed pods to fully ripen on the plant before harvesting. Tomato seeds, for example, should come from fully ripe tomatoes. Pea and bean pods should dry on the plant until the seeds rattle inside. Flowers such as marigolds and zinnias can be left to dry on the plant before collecting the seeds.

Harvest and clean. Remove seeds from their pods, flower heads or fruits and separate them from plant debris. Some seeds, such as tomatoes, benefit from a short fermentation process in water before rinsing and drying,



Dry thoroughly. Spread clean seeds in a single layer on a labeled plate or paper towel and let them dry completely in a cool, well-ventilated place. Moisture left in seeds can lead to mold.

Store carefully. Place dry seeds in labeled paper envelopes or airtight containers. Include the plant variety and harvest year. Store seeds somewhere cool, dark, and dry. Avoid places with fluctuating temperatures or humidity.



Saving seeds connects one growing season to the next. It preserves favorite varieties and reduces the need to purchase seed. As you clean up the garden this fall, look at your best-performing plants and ask, "Which ones would I like to grow again next year?" Those are the perfect candidates for saving.

By Anne Stranberg, Conservation Chair

TAKE A HIKE!!

Fall is the perfect time to take a hike in the woods. And one of the best places to go is Libertyville's own old-growth forest at Independence Grove. Many of the trees are 150-200 years old and you may spot the tree that could be 400 years old!

Lake County is home to two old-growth forests, St. Francis Woods in Independence Grove, and Ryerson Nature Preserve. They have earned the special distinction of being inducted into the Old-Growth Forest Network, a nonprofit organization that identifies and protects old-growth, mature, and native forests.

St. Francis Woods is about 80 acres of intact woodland on the north end of Independence Grove, along the Des Plaines River Trail. It is one of the highest quality oak woodlands in the county, dominated by red and white oak.

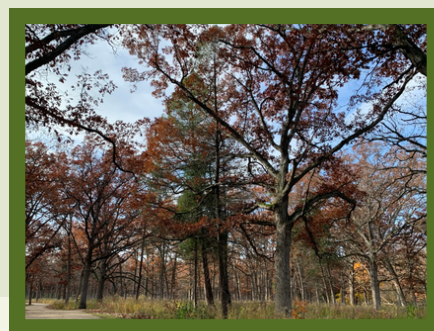
Forests have shaded this portion of the eastern slope of the Des Plaines River since the glacier melted about 9000 years ago. The original forests were composed of spruce, pine, and fir, and a small number of their descendants remain today.

About 5,000 years ago, oaks and hickories spread into this area, aided by Native peoples' use of controlled fires to shape forests, prairies, and savannas. The quality of soil represents 9,000 years of leaves falling and decomposing. St. Francis Woods is a rare place that preserves the look and feel of those ancient forests.

<https://www.lcfpd.org/national-recognition/>



Ryerson Nature Preserve



St. Francis Woods

Blooms in Iceland - absolutely! In September, members met at First Presbyterian, enjoying a photo tour of Iceland presented by Barbara Collins. Barbara introduced us to the scenery, flora, and fauna she and her experienced on a cruise circumnavigating Iceland. A business meeting and wonderful luncheon followed.

Our annual Officer Installation and celebration is October 7, 2026, 11:30 am, at Ivanhoe Country Club.



NGC/GCI NEWS



****REGISTRATION IS OPEN****

Monday, October 5:

Executive Committee Meeting

Joseph Tychonievich "Great Garden Design for Bad Garden Designers"
David Lowenstein "Bugging out: What's that crawling on my plant?"

Tuesday, October 6:

General Membership Meeting

Heidi Grasman "Growing Into 2027: New Plants You Won't Want to Miss"
Joanne DeBruhl "Shoots and Microgreens"
Joe Summers "Frog Approved Water Gardens"
Elizabeth Lambert "Discover Dow Gardens and its Legacy of Beauty"
 (special virtual tour of Dow Gardens)

[Click here for the Silent Auction](#)

****Organize a Watch Party for added fun with friends****
 (individual registration required)

****Zoom training opportunities to follow****

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

~ Hosted by Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. ~

**YOU WILL BE EMAILED A LINK TO THE CONFERENCE
 THE WEEK PRIOR TO THE EVENT**

SAVE THE DATE

**2027
 NGC Convention**

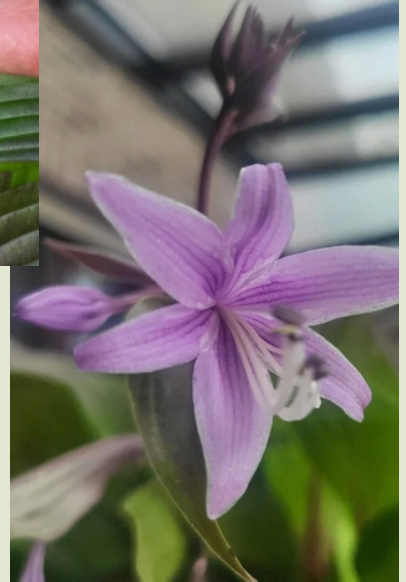
May 13 - 17

Madison WI

MEET THE CHELSEA SHOW WINNERS 6

Every year at the famed Chelsea Flower Show, new plant introductions are submitted and judged. This year's winners will be stunning and will work beautifully in our zone 6 climate.

Winning the RHS Chelsea Plant of the Year competition is Hosta 'Red Ninja'. It's a unique red Hosta, with deep red foliage and green margins. Stunning purple flowers from late summer to early autumn. This hosta needs some sun to bring out the red hues. It needs moist but well-drained soil and is hardy to -9 F.



The second place winner may immediately find a home in our gardens. Hydrangea paniculata 'Groundbreaker Ruby' is the first of a new series of groundcover hydrangeas, shorter than "little" versions of hydrangea cultivars and with a spreading habit.

its flowers open white, gradually deepening through shades of pink to a rich ruby red, creating a long-lasting carpet of colour from summer into autumn. It's ideal for borders and ground cover.

It thrives in sun to partial shade and well drained soil and grows in zones 5- 8.

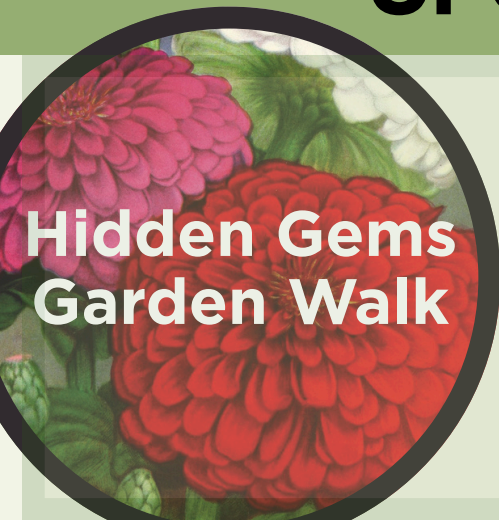


Resources:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/new-plants/hosta-red-ninja>

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/plants/new-plants/hydrangea-groundbreaker-ruby>

UPCOMING EVENTS



Hidden Gems Garden Walk

Hidden Gems Garden Walk

June 26, 2027

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Beautiful Private Libertyville Gardens

Open one day only.

SAVE THE DATE!

October 3, 2026

9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

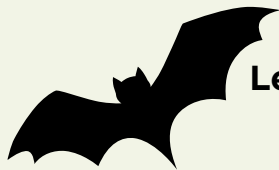
Lake County Extension Office

100 Highway 45, Grayslake IL 60030

Give your trees some love this 'Oaktober' with Openlands & Lake County Extension! Join our open house in Grayslake this October for free mulch, planting demonstrations, insights from Master Naturalists and Lake County Master Gardener: University of Illinois Extension, and more!

Bring your own buckets for free compost provided by Solid Waste Agency of Lake County (SWALCO) while supplies last: 25-gallon maximum, about 5 buckets worth. Shovels will be available for filling buckets.

This event is free and open to the public—bring your neighbors and friends! No registration required.



Misunderstood Creatures

Learn about your backyard neighbors

October 20, 2026

5:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Lake County Extension Office

100 Highway 45, Grayslake IL 60030

LIVE snake ambassadors as well as other examples of native wildlife

REGISTER HERE

