

THE HIDDEN GEM



Summer, 2026

President's Message

"As we honor 250 years of growth, freedom, and unity, there's no better way to celebrate than with flowers that tell the story of America."

— Unknown

George Ball, chairman of Burpee, once said that the most patriotic thing you can do is plant a garden. Our club has taken that to heart! Our stunning red, white, and blue container displays—lovingly planted in May—have truly blossomed. They will be beautifully festooned with flags just in time for America's birthday on July 4th.

Another key event to mark on your summer calendar is the dedication ceremony for our Memorial Tree at Butler Lake. Please save the date for Saturday, August 8th at 10:00 AM. We are honored that Libertyville's Mayor, Donna Johnson, will join us to share a few words of dedication.

We can't wait to celebrate these milestones with you. See you at the next meeting!

Warmly,

Sue Hazelwood, President, TCGC

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.

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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.

CIVIC PLANTINGS



Train Station (left) and Cook Mansion (right)

**OUR BEAUTIFUL RED, WHITE AND BLUE PLANTINGS!
THANK-YOU TO ALL FOR YOUR WORK IN
MAINTAINING THESE CIVIC PROJECTS.**

Civic Center (left) and Library (right)





From left to right, top row:
Cook Lib. North Bed; Cook Lib North bed;
Butterfly Garden Civic Center

Second row: Blue Star Marker Garden

MEMORIAL TREE DEDICATION

SAVE THE DATE!

Town & Country Garden Club Memorial Tree Celebration

Please join us to dedicate and celebrate the Kentucky Coffeetree planted last fall in memory of our members who so generously donated their time and treasures to beautifying Libertyville.

(P.S. Come see the tree in its summer garb—it finally has leaves!)

- When: Saturday, August 8th at 10:00 AM
- Where: Butler Lake Park (North side of Lake Street, by the new playground)
- Special Guest: Mayor Donna Johnson will be in attendance to share a few words



RSVP: A formal Evite with full details will be sent in mid-July. Please keep an eye out and RSVP so we can get an accurate head count. We hope to see you there!



HIDDEN GEMS GARDEN WALK

On behalf of Town & Country Garden Club of Libertyville, Ann Baker and Jennifer Rielly, event co-chairs, thank our homeowner gardeners, Wild Ones, artists, patrons, Village Hall staff, publicity business sites, Mainstreet Libertyville, and, of course, club members for collectively contributing to our successful 14th annual Hidden Gems Garden Walk.

Blessed with beautiful weather, visitors enjoyed touring five exceptional private gardens, discovering new ideas, asking questions, and visiting with the talented gardeners who graciously opened their landscapes for the day. The enthusiasm and appreciation shared by both homeowners and patrons made the event a wonderful celebration of gardening, learning, and community.

Proceeds from the Hidden Gems Garden Walk support the club's civic garden projects, scholarships for students pursuing horticultural and environmental studies, educational programming, and charitable giving throughout our community. Thank you for helping us continue our mission of nurturing nature and beautifying Libertyville.



Edwin Santamaria, scholarship winner, enjoys the Walk - with members Joyce Geib & Laura LeVert
Photo Courtesy of Anne Stranberg

HORTICULTURE

BECKY SITZ, HORTICULTURE CHAIR

WATER SPROUTS AND SUCKERS

Have you ever noticed sprouts growing at the base of a tree or shrub? Or sprouts growing out of the main trunk of a tree? These are called water sprouts and suckers.



Some ornamental trees have a tendency to develop numerous epicormic sprouts. These vigorous shoots arise from latent or adventitious buds. Sprouts that form on roots are called suckers, while those that develop on stems and branches are known as water sprouts. Both have weak branch structure, can shade the main plant, and compete for water and nutrients. If left unchecked, an ornamental tree may eventually resemble a shrub.

Why do trees produce sprouts? Some species, such as ornamental crabapples, are naturally more prone to suckering. In most cases, however, there are two primary causes. The first is stress. Trees often produce new sprouts in response to injury, pests, disease, or aging, attempting to replace damaged growth. While young trees may not sucker, mature trees often do as part of this response.

The second reason is grafting. Many ornamental trees are grafted onto rootstocks selected for vigor and ease of propagation. If the graft weakens or fails, the rootstock may begin producing suckers. Because the rootstock is usually not the desired variety, these shoots should be removed.

A common misconception is that suckers and water sprouts should only be pruned during winter dormancy. In reality, the sooner they are removed, the better. As they mature, they become woody, are harder to remove, and continue competing with the tree for resources. Rootstock suckers may eventually produce leaves or fruit unlike the desired variety. Remove suckers and water sprouts at their point of origin as soon as they appear. This may require several pruning sessions during the growing season, but it will help the desired tree remain healthy and vigorous.

CONSERVATION CORNER

BY ANNE STRANBERG, CONSERVATION CHAIR



A Roll in the Right Direction

At our June meeting, I talked about the toll that our traditional types of toilet paper on our environment. I want to expand on that with information and also common retail sources of toilet paper made from recycled paper (not recycled toilet paper!! That simply is not possible).

The environmental footprint breaks down across several key stages:

Deforestation: One million trees are cut down every day. Regrowth is hampered by soil erosion and impact of heavy equipment.

Water Intensity: Manufacturing a single roll of toilet paper requires an estimated 37.85 liters of water.

Energy Drain: Processing raw wood, pressing, and drying it requires intensive heating and electricity, resulting in a large carbon footprint.

Chemical Pollution: The process of making paper bright, fluffy, and white often relies on chlorine or chlorine derivatives. This releases harmful byproducts like dioxins into surrounding air and aquatic waterways. Recent studies show toilet paper manufacturing can be a major source of PFAS, which leach into groundwater, sewage sludge, and drinking water supplies.

LOCAL SOURCES

Jewel, Mariano's, Sunset, Walmart, Target, CVS, Home Depot, Staples all carry Seventh Generation and Open Nature. Mariano's, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods carry their own brands of toilet paper from recycled paper.

Switching to recycled paper toilet paper really makes a difference. Give it a try.

Resource: [The Best and Worst Toilet Paper, Paper Towel, and Facial Tissue Brands](#) by Courtney Lindwall

MEMBER OF THE MONTH: LAURA LEVERT

My family heritage prioritizes tending gardens for both food and flowers. It's no wonder that I enjoy working in the soil, despite its many challenges. My maternal grandparents arrived from Poland in the 1800s to farm in America. They settled in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and had a truck farm where they grew vegetables to sell and to feed their large family. My earliest memories are biting into a fresh sweet grape tomato that I loved to dip in the sugar bowl! The Jonathan apple tree and red cherry tree in the backyards of my grandparents' and parents' homes kept adults and children busy, especially in the fall. Gardening was both a necessity and a pleasure!

I am the oldest of four with three brothers. I grew up in Arlington Heights, Illinois and still have a strong fondness for this vibrant community. I attended NIU in DeKalb where I received a degree in Elementary Education. I met my future husband, Greg at Northern. We have been married 57 years and have three children, a daughter and two sons. Years later, I received a masters degree in Gifted Education from Northeastern; I very much enjoyed my teaching profession. We are fortunate to have three granddaughters; they like to plant and harvest herbs and veggies which are near their fairy garden!

In our first 30 years of married life, we moved often due to transfers with Xerox Corporation and telecommunications companies. I started new gardens in each hometown; I wish all the plantings and shrubs could have moved with us, but alas, that's not possible! We downsized to lovely Libertyville, where I enjoy flowers in containers and a window box. Our relocations took us to Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, Texas, Virginia, Washington, DC, and finally back home to Illinois. Oh, how I loved the sandy soil of upstate New York—it was a dream to dig and create new beds! Growing up, my dad would “walk the perimeter” of our property, and I found myself doing the same wherever we lived.

Garden Club has been the BEST for making new friends and acquiring many gardening tips, how lucky we are to share with others who deeply love the our passion. My favorite flowers are begonias, roses: my tip would be to keep deadheading, especially geraniums!

A favorite quote from John Muir:
“In every walk with Nature one receives far more than he seeks.”

So, on the eve of our nation's 250th birthday,
“God Bless America, land that we love!”



NATIVE OF THE MONTH: PENNSYLVANIA SEDGE



Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*) is a low-growing native sedge prized as a graceful groundcover for dry shade. Reaching 6-12 inches tall, it forms soft, fine-textured clumps that slowly spread to create a naturalistic carpet beneath trees and shrubs. Native to much of eastern North America, it tolerates poor soils, drought, and tree-root competition once established. Pennsylvania sedge provides habitat for beneficial insects and can serve as a low-maintenance alternative to turf grass in lightly trafficked areas.

PLANT OF THE MONTH: EASY ELEGANCE ROSE 'PAINT THE TOWN RED'

'Paint the Town' is an everblooming shrub rose with vibrant red, hybrid tea-shaped flowers that provide color from late spring through frost. Its glossy, dark green foliage offers excellent disease resistance and beautifully showcases the blooms. Growing 2-3 feet tall and 2-4 feet wide, this own-root rose forms a spreading, mounded habit ideal for borders, mass plantings, and containers. Plant in full sun for the best flowering and overall performance.



The Garden Clubs of Illinois 2026 Summer Meeting

Hosted by District II
Monday, July 13, 2026
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Naper Settlement
523 South Webster, Naperville,
IL

Where Are the Stars?
Guest speaker: Valorie Blaine
[Click for info/registration](#)

National Garden Clubs Environmental School

Our Club members have a HUGE interest in conservation. Consider enrolling in the Environmental School - the four sessions can be taken in any order and are often offered via Zoom. The mission of the Environmental Schools is to teach environmental literacy to cherish, protect and conserve the living earth. It consists of a series of four courses of 10 hours each. These classes investigate, challenge and explore all aspects of the environment with a focus on the interrelationships of plants, animals, insects and people.

Upcoming courses:

Course One: Offered via Zoom September 17 & 18 by the [CT Federated Garden Clubs](#)

Course Two: Offered Via Zoom September 17 & 18 by [Florida Federated Garden Clubs](#)

On the Road Again

A National Garden Clubs, Inc. Standard Flower Show

Presented by
Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc.
at
Lincoln Square Mall
300 S. Broadway Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801

July 23-25, 2026



Admission is free and open to the public
4-8 pm, Friday July 24
and
8 am-Noon, Saturday July 25

Member of
National Garden Clubs, Inc.
Central Region

2026 Fall Central Region Convention Oct. 5th & 6th

ZOOM

Set up your watch parties

Details
to
Follow

UPCOMING EVENTS



15th Annual

Hidden Gem Garden Walk

Saturday, June 26th, 2027

Mark your calendars!

Follow us on Facebook, Subscribe for updates at
www.towncountrygardenclub.com/contact

Tips and Tricks for Successful Home Composting
 Wild Ones and U of I Extension Lake County

Lincolnshire Garden Club's

A Walk in "The Shire"
 Saturday, July 18, 2026
 from 10:00am -
 3:00pm

TICKETS

July 7, 2026

7 - 8 p.m. ZOOM

REGISTRATION

Reaping the Harvest:
 Collection, Processing,
 and Sowing of Native Seeds

Wild Ones and U of I Extension Lake County
 September 1, 7 - 8 p.m., Grayslake Office

Grayslake in Bloom

Community Garden Walk

Saturday, July 18, 2026

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

**"Celebrations Around the
 World"**

An NGC, Standard Flower Show

Presented By

**The Grayslake Greenery Garden Club &
 The Wauconda Garden Club**

Free & Open to the Public

**Saturday, August 1, 12:00 to 4:30 pm
 Sunday, August 2, 10:00 am to 4:30 pm**

**American Legion Post 911
 515 S Main St, Wauconda, IL 60084**