



May, 2025

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

# The Hidden Gem



**Town & Country Garden Club of Libertyville**  
celebrates 73 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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I think the Gardening Universe is trying to tell us something. In April, we had a great program on Gardening in Comfort with ideas on how to save time, preserve our joints, and above all... HAVE FUN GARDENING!

In this newsletter, Laura Edwards has written an interesting article on Chaos Gardening which focuses on a fun, carefree approach to gardening letting mother nature do most of the work. I know that I have changed my style of gardening over the last 20 years, preferring a more natural style using grasses, foliage and shrubs that I don't have to deadhead or fuss with.

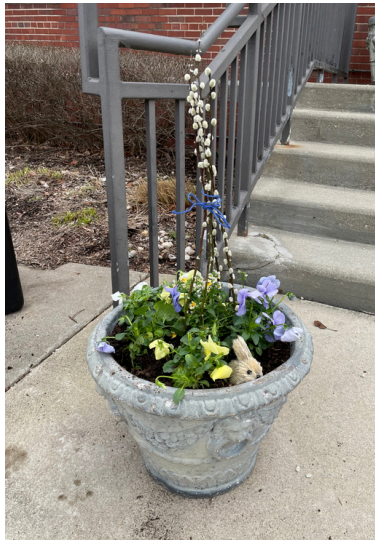
No matter what garden style you prefer, when you start getting out in your gardens this month, remember the most important part is to have fun and let the worries of the world melt away.

*Sue Hazelwood, President, TC&C*





# Civic Activities: Spring Plantings



Therese Schaefer, Bea Mikal, Liz Leonard  
not pictured - Risé Barkhoff



Liz Leonard

# Meeting Mug Arrangements



# 2025 GCI Annual Convention and Awards

Sue Hazlewood, President

GCI Convention, Lisle, Illinois – April 27 and 28, 2025

Congratulations Town and Country Garden Club! For the second year in a row, we've have been recognized as the GCI Garden Club of the Year for medium sized clubs. What an honor for our club! We should all be very proud of our club and the recognition at the state level. This speaks to our engagement and involvement in the club collectively and individually.

But wait, there's more..... We were also honored to win 8 additional state awards, plus submission by GCI for two National Garden Club awards:

- Digital Media Presentation 1<sup>st</sup> place: For the "Garden Walk" photo slideshow.
- Club Achievement Gold Seal: Represents a club's activities in a variety of categories such as civic projects, membership, GCI donations and more.
- Club Horticulture Silver Seal: Represents a club's activities across activities specific to horticulture.
- Blue/Gold Star Memorial 2<sup>nd</sup> place: For renovation of the garden around the Blue Star Marker.
- Gloria Greene Advanced Design Award 2<sup>nd</sup> place: For Mary Gay Kay's presentation on Ikebana arrangements
- Social Media 2<sup>nd</sup> place: For our Facebook page.
- GCI Garden Walk Honorable Mention: Recognizes our garden walk that is open to the public and supports the objectives of GCI and NGC.
- Newsletter Honorable Mention: For our Hidden Gems Newsletter.
- National Garden Clubs (NGC) entry: GCI submitted two of our awards that meet the requirements for an NGC award: Blue/Gold Star Memorial and Digital Media Presentation.

This recognition is all due to the great ongoing work of this club in serving our community. We owe this recognition to Ann Baker who fills out the award submissions so that everyone knows about our contributions. Thanks to our Club Members and Thanks to Ann!!





# Explore Beautiful Gardens at the 13th Annual Hidden Gems Garden Walk

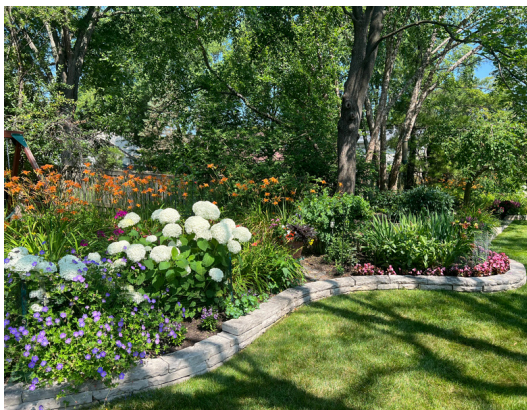
Join the Town & Country Garden Club of Libertyville for the 13th Annual Hidden Gems Garden Walk on Saturday, June 28, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.—rain or shine. This year's walk features five unique private gardens, each with its own charm. Visitors will enjoy a peaceful koi pond, a vegetable garden with espaliered fruit trees, and native plantings designed to support pollinators. One garden transforms a city lot into an inviting outdoor retreat, while another boasts over 100 hydrangeas in 15 stunning varieties.

Event co-chair Ann Baker is excited about this year's variety. "We have city lots and acre homes, created by gardeners ranging from passionate novices to experienced Illinois Master Gardeners. Each reflects a love for Midwestern blooms—both native and traditional."

Beyond the gardens, local artist Glass by Valerie will display floral-inspired stained glass, and craftsman Dan Z. will offer handmade birdhouses. Master Gardeners will answer questions, and educators from the Audubon Society and Lake County Forest Preserves will share insights on supporting wildlife and incorporating native plants.

Tickets are available online at [www.towncountrygardenclub.com](http://www.towncountrygardenclub.com), Libertyville Village Hall, and the Farmers' Market. Proceeds support community gardens, scholarships, civic plantings, and conservation projects.

Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just love being outdoors, this event offers inspiration for all. Don't miss this beautiful summer experience.





# Horticulture

# Chaos Gardening

by Laura Edwards, Master Gardener

Chaos gardening is a laidback approach to gardening compared to more formal manicured gardens. Linnea Harris, [Ecowatch.com](https://www.ecowatch.com) writer, explains that chaos gardening embraces the unexpected and unplanned. The results yield beautiful, bountiful gardens.

Chaos gardening is becoming more accepted as gardeners experiment with ways to create more natural spaces. It was featured in displays at the 2023 Chelsea Garden Show in London. Prairie Crossings Gardens are a local example of chaos gardening. These gardens embrace a more colorful, natural approach with tall grasses and wildflowers.

Chaos gardens require minimal maintenance. The seeds are sown directly into the soil, skipping the step of starting seeds indoors and transplanting. Part of the appeal is scattering the seeds in a bed and waiting to see what comes up.

Chaos gardening follows research based evidence that plants growing in isolation are more prone to disease and pests. Plant diversity is good for soil health. It also attracts more pollinators to the garden. By leaving the seed heads intact over the winter, the garden provides habitat for ground nesting bees and beetles.

Harris suggests following these steps to start your chaos garden.

- **Garden location:** Most plants require four hours of sunlight a day. Pick a seed mix particular to your light and moisture situation.
- **Soil health:** Start with healthy soil – you may need to add garden soil with some supplemental perlite. Loosen the top few inches of soil with a rake or shovel. Add compost.
- **Choose seeds:** Buy a quality seed mix, or create your own. Add sand to increase visibility during planting. Leave the seeds on the surface, rake into surface, or tamp down. Gently water the seed areas.

In conclusion, know that not every seed will take. Harris says this is when you let nature work its magic! Weeds will pop up – early summer weeding will minimize competition with your seedlings. Finally, check with your HOA or Village and follow local ordinances regarding gardening in your area. Happy Gardening!

Source: [Chaos Gardening by Linnea Harris](#)



# Conservation Corner

by Anne Stranberg



## THE NEW NEWS ON BEES

If there is a time to help bees, the time is now – let's take a closer look. You may have heard that commercial bee keepers are predicting record honey bee colony losses of 60 – 70% this year. While this is a shocking number, here are some important facts to consider. Honey bees make up only 5% of the entire bee population and are a commercial venture much like livestock. The colonies are owned and managed. Our native bees, however make up 95% of the bee population and are at high risk as well but we CAN help them.

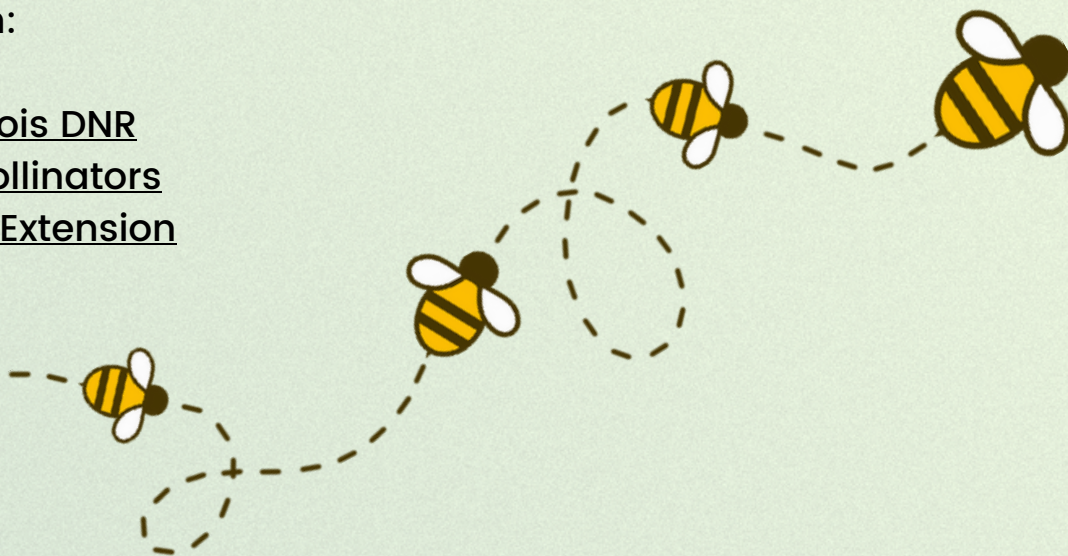
Our native bees are solitary and do not colonize. These bees nest in the ground or in existing cavities like hollow woods and stems or fabricated shelters and have a foraging range of 300 meters. This population is at high risk primarily from chemicals and habitat changes. Lawn chemicals, tree sprays, and garden insecticides have had the largest impact followed by loss of habitat.

Think about healthy alternatives for your lawn, tree and garden chemicals. Product labels will identify bee safe ingredients. Consider integrating native flowers that bloom throughout the season, even creating an area for them. Avoid heavy mulch which makes nesting impossible.

One out of three bites of food we eat exists because of animal pollinators like bees, butterflies, moths, birds, bats, and insects (USDA.gov).

For more information:

[Wild About Bees, Illinois DNR](#)  
[The Importance of Pollinators](#)  
[Native Bees – Illinois Extension](#)





# Meet a Member:

## Therese Schaefer

I am a lifelong Libertyville resident. Coming from an Irish Catholic family of six kids, all attending St. Joes and Carmel, my mom could make the budget stretch. I found her passion for gardening very inspiring. She split many plants over the years to share with me. All that I have left are her Siberian Iris, Giant Hostas, a couple of Asiatic Lilies, Garlic Chives, and Buttercups. If I had to pick one favorite flower, it would be Hydrangeas because I use them throughout the year (live and dried).



My background is in Real Estate. For 20 years, I worked with design, sales and marketing for local builders. For the last 10 years, I've been a local Realtor with Berkshire Hathaway in Libertyville. My husband also has a background in contracting, and I try to bring all my design knowledge (and his) to every home I sell. I like to keep in touch with my clients after they purchase and giving out TCGC Garden Walk tickets is a great way to share something beautiful that gives them inspiration for their gardens.

We raised our twin daughters in Libertyville and now with one purchasing a home in upstate New York, I will be splitting some of my mother's plants with my daughter. I will help her plan her future gardens making her feel more connected to her home.

Both my mom and sister had this talent of planting with four seasons in mind - bloom time, height, color, foliage. They utilized block spacing, limiting weeds. I am terrible at the bloom time etc. but find it very easy to plant for seasonal foliage I can cut for arrangements.

The knowledge and passion for gardening I've experienced in TCGC has surpassed anything I imagined and have truly loved my first two years with you all.



# Perennial of the Month: Garlic Chives

Garlic chives (*Allium tuberosum*) are also known as Chinese chives or oriental garlic, and are not to be confused with chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*). Garlic chives are a perennial herb, very similar to chives, but with a mild garlic flavor instead of onion, and white flowers instead of purple. They are native to China, where the leaves are a common ingredient in dishes such as stir fries, dumplings and egg dishes.

Garlic chives grow best in moist soil, in full sun, with a south or west-facing exposure. They flower later than chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), producing pretty, star-shaped white flowers in July and August which are attractive to pollinators. The flowers are also edible.

*Allium tuberosum* is toxic to dogs, cats and horses.



# Native of the Month: Virginia Bluebells

One of the most beautiful species of spring ephemerals are Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*). Bluebells enjoy rich yet well-drained soils where they can form large colonies over time. Growing fast, the flower shoots quickly give way to some of the most beautiful flowers east of the Mississippi. The flowers start off pink and gradually turn over to their famous shade of light blue as they mature.



Bees, especially female Bumblebees that fly in early spring, will often be seen visiting the flowers. Only the largest bees have the ability to push their way up the tube..

The blooms will last for many weeks in early spring (April and May) and will go dormant by mid-summer.



# NGC and GCI News

## NGC Gardening School

Gardening School consists of a series of four courses for those interested in becoming a NGC accredited Gardening Consultant. Courses cover all aspects of horticulture: gardening, understanding soil structure, pruning techniques, identifying plants, etc. Topics include basic botany, soils, annuals, perennials, trees, shrubs, fruits, vegetables, lawns, pests, plant diseases, plant classification and selected subjects of local interest. Additional topics may include reconciliation ecology and creating backyard habitats to help endangered species such as pollinators and amphibians as well as working with youth.

Click [HERE](#) to see when schools offered.

## The National Gardener

The official publication of National Garden Clubs, The National Gardener, appears quarterly. We highlight articles of interest to environmentalists, gardeners, landscapers, floral designers, educators, and even nature photographers.

Have you read the latest issue? Click [HERE](#) to access the newest issue and the archive.

DISTRICT IX, GARDEN CLUBS OF ILLINOIS  
2025 SPRING OUTING

## *ADVANCED* PLANTING FOR POLLINATORS

TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2025  
9:45 A.M. - 12 P.M.

RYERSON WOODS WELCOME CENTER  
21950 NORTH RIVERWOODS ROAD  
RIVERWOODS, IL 60015

Join us for a special class by Lake County Forest Preserve's environment education specialist, Eileen Davis. Discover the challenges our native pollinators are facing and how ongoing pollinator research by LCFP ecologists' is informing restoration work and providing insight on how home gardeners can support pollinators. Tours of the rain garden and other native plantings follow presentation.

The event is free, capped at 50 attendees. A group reservation for optional self-pay lunch is at Cheesecake Factory, Lincolnshire, 12 p.m. To REGISTER for the class and optional lunch, click [HERE](#). Questions? Email Ann Baker, [anfbaker@yahoo.com](mailto:anfbaker@yahoo.com)

## SAVE-THE-DATE

**The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc.**  
**2025 Summer Meeting**

Hosted by District I

**Monday, July 21, 2025**

Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden  
Rockford, IL



August 2 - 3  
District Flower Show,  
Chicago Botanic Garden,  
Glencoe, IL



# Upcoming Events



## June 28th, 2025 Mark your calendars! Five exceptional gardens

Meet the gardeners and be inspired by unique designs and specimens.

Online tickets Available. Village Hall sales open 6/2.

Members receive tickets 6/4.

Farmer's Market sales June 5, 19, and 26th.

**University of Illinois  
Lake County Extension  
Master Gardeners**

## PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 17, 2025  
9 am - 2 pm



**WE ARE OFFERING**

-  Natives, Perennials, Pollinator-Friendly Plants
-  Vegetables, Herbs
-  Garden Treasures
-  Gardening Advice from Master Gardeners

*All proceeds support Extension projects and programming for volunteers, youth and adults*

**Rain or Shine    Cash, Check, Charge**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

- Call 847-223-8627
- [www.extension.illinois.edu/lm](http://www.extension.illinois.edu/lm)
-  Lake County Master Gardener: University of Illinois Extension



University of Illinois  
Lake County Extension  
100 South US Hwy 45  
Grayslake IL 60030



University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact our office at 847-223-8627. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.

## 2025 Garden Learning Series

### Session 4 - Introduccion de Plantas Nativas.

#### Introduction to Native Plants in Spanish

When: May 7th 2025

Presenter: Lake County Forest Preserves

6 - 7:30 p.m. VIRTUAL

To register, click [HERE](#)

## Native Plant Sale

Saturday, May 17, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday, May 18, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Independence Grove Forest Preserve  
North Bay Pavilion

Plants from Country Road Greenhouses