

# The Trowel



September 2022  
Volume 10, Issue 3

## BLOOMINGDALE GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

### Greetings from our **President**



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*Your life is a garden,  
Your thoughts  
are the seeds.  
If your life isn't  
awesome,  
You've been  
watering  
the weeds.*

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Hello dear Members and Friends,  
What a beautiful day outside! After a weekend of rain, it is again bright and clear and apparently going to get hot once more . . . for September the temperatures are really unexpectedly warm. I am actually looking forward to the cool, crisp days of Fall!

I do have to say that the really warm weather this summer, and what appeared to me to be less than usual rain, did not help my garden. Snapdragons (my favorite) do not really like being hot and so many of them just gave up and it is only now that I am getting flowers. On the other hand my pots that are in mostly shade are gorgeous with really beautiful coleus and Rex begonias. I hate to see them go and if any of you would like to have the begonia inside I would be willing to give them to you! They are quite magnificent and make lovely indoor plants.

For those of you who were not able to join us for our Ball Garden tour, you really missed a wonderful day! Ours was quite a large group as we were joined by a number of Master Gardeners and we split into three groups to tour. There were awesome displays of coleus, lantana, begonias etc., and I just know that our plant sale committee

are going to have a challenge this year making choices! Thank you Linda, for organizing this outing for us.

The Community gardens really look very nice this year and I hope that all who could, volunteered to weed and water during the summer weeks. Joe Boccuzzi and I have done two stints. With both of us working, we watered in the late afternoon. Although it was hot, we enjoyed being out there in the fresh air and "working" on something so worthwhile. This garden helps to provide fresh vegetables to those in need and it is one of the very best endeavors of our Club. Thank you everyone who gives their time and effort to it—most especially Gail and her dedicated committee!

I mentioned to you at one of our meetings that next year (2023) is our Club's 60th Anniversary and I have now secured a date at the Bloomington Golf Course for Saturday 14th October 2023!! Mark your calendars!! And please consider joining my committee to make this a truly splendid gala event again.

Enjoy these last days of summer and stay healthy and safe!

Love to you all,  
Joyce

# Our November Christmas Craft

Please join us in creating angels for West Suburban Nursing and Rehabilitation Center on Tuesday, November 15th beginning promptly at 6:15 PM at Cornerstone Faith Community Church.

*Sometimes angels sing to you in the wind ...*

*Sometimes they call to you from your dreams ...*

*They walk beside you and whisper in your ear.*

*We wish you joy, inspiration, and the knowledge that you are truly cared about—today and every day!*

Angel wings will be white and skirts can be blue, silver, red, green, pink, or white (for all white angels). No wiring is needed, just 4 pipe cleaners per angel, a paper clip, styrofoam head, and maybe a little hot glue. (No faces please, or they'll look creepy.) We will color coordinate smaller ribbons for members to choose for their aprons and bows. Additional gem stickers can be added to bling-it-up. Ribbon will be pre-cut. The little wires in the ribbon can snag your clothes, so we will suggest wearing an apron. We will transport these in "kits" to help ribbons from sticking to each other and avoid fraying. A video will be sent out prior to the event.

We are very excited about this project and hope to see you there! Extra materials will be available for members to make or bring home additional kits to make at home for approximately \$5 each.



## IN THIS ISSUE

President's Greeting . . . . .	1
Angel Craft for West Suburban. . . . .	2
Outstanding Master Gardener Award . . . . .	3
Plot-to-Plate Garden. . . . .	4
Cantigny Tailgate and Walk . . . . .	5
Members' Gardens . . . . .	6
Members' Gardens . . . . .	7
Members' Gardens . . . . .	8
Best of Bloomingtondale Nomination . . . . .	8
The Gardens at Ball Outing . . . . .	9
Care Center Note of Appreciation. . . . .	10
Veronica Porter Recipe. . . . .	11
Travel Corner . . . . .	11
Septemberfest Girls . . . . .	11
About the Club . . . . .	12

The Bloomingtondale Garden club was formed to encourage the advancement of gardening, development of home grounds, and civic beautification. To stimulate interest, knowledge and love of gardening among amateurs. To aid in the protection of native trees, flowers and birds. To further the extermination of noxious weeds and to cooperate with other organizations in the beautification of the community.

# Gail Sanders Awarded A State Outstanding Master Gardener Award

**Linda Kunesh and Jan Hanson nominated Gail Sanders for the State Outstanding Master Gardener Award**



Gail has served in several key roles on the **DuPage Care Center Garden Team**. For many years, she has organized and presented information on the types of vegetables, herbs, and flowers that Resident Gardeners may select to plant. She organizes the Resident Gardeners' Sign-ups for Garden Club, tabulates and shops for the vegetables and herbs that the Resident Gardeners request, and

organizes the Resident Gardeners' Planting Day. With 50 to 65 Resident Gardeners in any given year, all of these tasks take a tremendous amount of time, planning, and organization. For the Sign-ups and Planting Day, she also meets with the Garden Team of Master Gardeners and additional volunteers to explain in detail the processes involved. Her engagement helps both processes to go extremely smoothly.

Each time that Gail comes to DuPage Care Center, she usually is the "go to" person if Master Gardeners have questions about vegetables and herbs. She also works directly with Resident Gardeners and has taught MANY lessons to them on a variety of topics, such as: Pollinators, Cucumbers, Tomatoes, and when it is the right time to harvest various vegetables. Whenever she presents, many of her fellow Master Gardeners comment on what they, too, have learned! Gail also has shared two travelogues from trips she has taken, emphasizing the gardens in New Zealand and China.

Previously, Gail was the **Team Leader for Klein Creek Farm**. In that capacity she organized the tasks the Master Gardeners were to complete weekly. She also presented at various public events at Klein Creek Farm, representing U of I Extension DuPage Master Gardeners. Gail continues to volunteer as a Master Gardener at Klein Creek Farm.



She also leads the **Bloomington Garden Club's Community Garden** plot that is part of the Bloomington Park District Community and Giving Garden. Further, Gail serves on the Community and Giving Garden Steering Committee helping to positively influence the gardening experience for novice and experienced gardeners alike. She also volunteers as a Master Gardener at the Master Gardener plot in the Community and Giving Garden.

Gail also serves as a **Master Gardener Docent at Cantigny Park** and works with young adults with disabilities at **West DuPage Special Recreation Association** (Rec & Roll WDSRA).

And finally, Gail has been a mentor to new interns for many years. **U of I Extension** benefits greatly! Time and again, Gail has demonstrated in many projects and at various venues her tremendous dedication to the **Master Gardener Program** and the people it serves. Since she has become a Master Gardener she has volunteered nearly 2,000 hours!





# Plot-to-Plate Garden

*Gail Sanders*

The days are getting shorter now and we see that things are starting to wind down in the Plot-to-Plate Garden. It has been a difficult year for the garden. Weather has played a major factor. A very wet and cool April was followed by bouts of extreme heat and several periods of drought. All of this has taken a toll on our plants and the output of the garden is less than half of what was produced in the record breaking 2021 season. The inability to keep plants adequately hydrated has resulted in a smaller harvest of onions, tomatoes, and tomatillos. While vigilance by garden club members have kept squash bug problems to a minimum, powdery mildew is now setting in. On the bright side, we have had nice cucumbers this year after being unsuccessful last year, but they too are starting to show signs of disease. The peppers and beans keep producing

Thank you to the people who have offered to help in the garden this year—Joyce Basel, Gail Berry, Joe Boccuzzi, Art & Marilyn Datillo, Jeff Dengler, Cathy Dicken, Laurie Dring, Sue Jurkus, Linda Kunesh, Peggy Laraia, Debbie Matuszak, Jeanette Moline, Jennifer Moore, Susan Pello, Hector Rivera, Jamie Schneck, Rich & Marietta Serenda, Henia Sullivan, Cheryl Svee, and Barb Underdown. Watering the garden takes over an hour each time you go out to adequately water at the base of plants and that doesn't include time spent weeding. Some people had to go out 3 times in a week but when everyone keeps up with the weeds that appear that week, weeding time is kept to a minimum. This time commitment is why we try to get at least two people each week to share the task. A special thanks to Laurie Dring for propagating lettuce to be planted for a fall crop.

Our meager offerings have been well received by the food pantries at the Bloomingdale Township

offices and Family in Faith Church. Due to the efforts of our club members their patrons can get some fresh, organic produce. We will keep working the plot to mid October if there are still things to harvest and hope that that experiment called "gardening" has better results next year.



We pulled all the thyme and oregano, left a few carrots amongst the red onions as they were hard to get without disturbing onions too much. *Photos by Susan Glick-Shore*



# Cantigny Tailgate and Evening Walk



As you all know, July 19th was our club's monthly "meeting" and many of us enjoyed a truly wonderful outing at Cantigny. We shared delicious desserts and other goodies, fun social time and then Linda and Gail took us to tour these beautiful gardens and the Alebrijes Mexican sculptures.

The weather was a concern and also the possible strenuous activity for some, however, it turned out to be hot, but not humid, and a fairly strong breeze was welcome. We split into two groups—one to do the full one mile (plus) walk and the other a shorter tour. I know that those of us who did the full walk enjoyed it enormously and I saw a few of the other group members upon our return and it appeared that they did too.

A huge "Thank you" to both Gail and Linda for being our "Tour Leaders"!! You are wonderful!







# How does your Garden Grow?

Laurie Dring



We are very happy with our harvest. Sliced Roma is from the BGC plant sale, such a deep crimson red and so fleshy. The Romaine lettuce, I started from seed mid-June. After the growing season, I feed my garden veggie scraps (no fruit !!!!). My garden drinks only clean rain water (after roof drain off is clear).

Linda Steck



My favorite is the Sparks will Fly Begonia. Pots are Lantana, Petunia, Tut Grass, Sweet Potao Vine and Asparagus Fern. Obedience Plant and Goldenrod have taken over the side of the house!

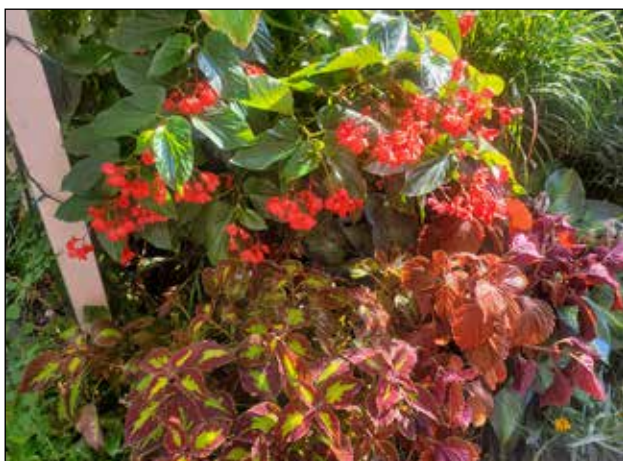


# Joyce Basel



My rex begonias and coleus are gorgeous again. And the little patriotic spot is fun!

# Jeff Dengler



Here are a few shots from our gardens . . .

# Cheryl Svec





# Cathy Gall & Jennifer Moore



Cathy's favorite photos this summer.

Jennifer's townhome pots look great this year!

## Cornerstone Faith Community Church for Best of Bloomingdale!



Nomination written by Joyce Basel

The Bloomingdale Garden Club has been an established entity in Bloomingdale since 1963 and has had several places to meet in the past 50+ years including the Library, the Police and the Fire Departments, but it is only in the last few years that we have found a permanent home at the Cornerstone Faith Community Church. Many of our members play a significant part in this congregation and have done so for a very long time. One of our most senior members Esther Ahlrich, is the wife of a former Mayor of Bloomingdale, who was an important member of this Church. The Pastor, Jeremy Heitkam, is a charismatic preacher but also a kind man and enormously energetic member of the Bloomingdale community, working tirelessly to further the mission of his Church and outreach. This institution has been part of the Bloomingdale landscape since 1887 playing a part in every aspect of the development and success of the village. In recent years they have participated in most of the important local events and even provided scholarships in several such as Septemberfest and Bloomingdale Area Women in Business. During the Bloomingdale Park District renovation, the Cornerstone Church housed the cooking program and in the past they have hosted a food pantry and a children's learning center.

However, it is because of the important role that they have played in the continuing success of the Bloomingdale Garden Club that I am privileged to offer our nomination on their behalf. The church hosts our Club's monthly meetings where we provide educational seminars not only on gardening but also on conservation, community participation and beautification. We are also permitted to use their audio-visual equipment (often with personal assistance from Pastor Heitkam) and furthermore, the Church allows us the use of their printing equipment for our informational literature etc. All of this is Free of Charge!! allowing us to use all of our funds for philanthropic purposes. It goes further . . . because we are permitted to use their large meeting room for our November craft project at which we make items to decorate the rooms for individuals at the West Suburban Nursing and Rehabilitation Center for Christmas, the Cornerstone Faith Community Church helps us to enhance the lives of the residents at that facility as well. This is an organization well deserving of being included in the Best of Bloomingdale and I trust that you will accept this nomination.

Members—hope you've been voting!

Joyce





# The Gardens at Ball Outing



Jeff Gibson, Landscape Business Manager, introduced us to the gardens. Ball Horticulture employs 7500 people. Jeff has been with the company for 32 years. Ball is the largest distributor of organic plant materials in the world and 1500 wholesale growers visited Ball last year. It is dedicated to sustainability on a global level. Its 18 gardens cultivate ideas for design, seed, business, perennial, what's new, containers, tissue, culture, and lab created plants. All genetics research is done in the Helix building. Did you know petunias come from Mexico but are bred here? Marigolds come from south Africa but are bred in Thailand.



## A Thank You Letter to Jeff . . . from Joyce

On Monday, August 22nd, a fairly large group of avid gardeners had the unique opportunity to visit your gardens and be welcomed by you! I was one of those privileged to be in the group and I want you to know that we were delighted to meet you and to have you share your knowledge and ideas with us.

On behalf of the members of the Bloomingdale Garden Club and the Master Gardeners, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your very nice welcome and also for the extraordinary experience of being able to tour your magnificent gardens.

The Bloomingdale Garden Club hosts a significant annual sale of annuals and our customers come from far and wide as we have always offered a variety of new flowers, many of which I know come from Ball. All of the proceeds from our sale are donated and we are extremely proud of our philanthropic endeavors. The excellence of your product certainly goes a long way to enhance our reputation.

We are all hoping that we may have the opportunity to return to your fine facility again and, meanwhile, please know that you have a large group of enthusiastic Ball product ambassadors! Thank you again.



# DuPage Master Gardeners & Residents of DuPage Care Center Note of Appreciation



To each of you very generous  
Bloomingdale Garden Club members,



Thank you, beyond words, for your incredible generosity to the DuPage Care Center Garden program over the past years. We are so grateful that you continue to bless the DuPage Care Center residents with such an amazing donation of flowers. Your generosity has been reflected in the selections made by our gardeners; more and more are selecting happy, colorful flowers to plant in addition to or instead of veggies and herbs.

The pandemic was especially difficult for our resident gardeners and in 2020 they were unable to be outside, hard for us to imagine. Conditions did improve somewhat in 2021 and many resident gardeners were able to get limited time in the gardens, although far from typical. This year continues to be a challenge; due to the uptick of variants there are many more people testing positive, primarily staff, yet causing temporary quarantines for all.

The good news is that despite all the hardships, the gardens have flourished and been a beacon of hope for our dear residents and their families. The Master Gardeners, many of whom are members of the Bloomingdale Garden Club, have worked tirelessly, tending to individual plots and containers. Everyone has benefited, as the Secret Garden continues to provide 'food for the soul'. Many of the flowers magically turn into bouquets and are delivered regularly by staff to the delight of the residents. The visual impact of such color and beauty brings smiles to those who can be outside, and Mother Nature continues to work her magic on all of our hearts. What an incredible gift that continues to give, long after the work of the day is done.

Like I said at the beginning of this note, thank you beyond words. Your generosity has impacted more lives and brought more smiles than you can ever imagine.



From the bottom of our grateful hearts,  
The Resident Gardeners of the DuPage Care Center and their Master Gardener friends

## Joyce's Reply



My dear Sally,

What an absolutely beautiful letter! Thank you so much for taking the time to send these lovely words and feelings to us—I have had it circulated to our entire membership and will ask our Editor to publish it in our next newsletter.

While we all endured some measure of discomfort and isolation during the two years of Covid, I doubt that most of us really realized just how much it must have affected the residents at DPCC. Our member Master Gardeners have kept us informed but it is heartwarming to hear from

you and to learn just how much joy the gardens and flowers bring to everyone.

Our Club is very proud of our continued cooperation with you and your wonderful gardeners at the Secret Garden. I know that Linda and her core group of Master Gardeners will keep us informed and continue to make a difference in the lives of your residents and their families. And our Club will remain committed to helping where we can.

Thank you again for your truly beautiful letter.

Joyce Basel, President  
Bloomingdale Garden Club



# Veronica Porter

**Cook-Eat-Grow**

*Presenter, August 2022*

Connecting  
what we cook, with  
what we grow, with  
how we eat.



## Roasted Tomato Soup

**AskAuntV.com**

4 cups cherry tomatoes  
1/2 cup onion  
3 cloves garlic  
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
salt & pepper  
1 teaspoon sugar  
1 teaspoon fresh thyme  
(or 5 tsp dried) plus  
more for garnish.



My crop at least once a week from 3 plants this summer. I made this soup/sauce 5 times now. Jamie Schneck

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Place tomatoes, onions, and whole garlic cloves in a large bowl.
2. Add oil, salt, and pepper. Toss to coat. Distribute mixture evenly on a sheet pan, reserve the bowl.
3. Roast until the tomatoes are about to burst, turning sheet pan every 20 minutes to cook evenly for about 1 hour +, depending on size of tomatoes. Do not stir.
4. Return roasted mixture to bowl. Toss and season with salt, pepper, thyme, and sugar to taste.
5. Transfer the tomato mixture to a blender, filling halfway. Blend, scraping down the sides as necessary. Puree until smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. (Use caution when pureeing hot liquids. Be sure to hold the lid on with a towel or potholder.)
5. Garnish with more fresh thyme. Enjoy!

## Travel Corner

Booking travel has become, in many ways, much easier, and yet, you might still need an advisor—someone who knows the vacation spot you are considering for your valuable time away from home! So much depends on the purpose of your travel . . . is it for educational or strictly recreational intentions—or possibly something else, something much more meaningful, like considering a retirement destination! A lot of travel agents find themselves researching those warm weather destinations for clients who are looking to retire in the next 3 to 5 years. Arizona and Florida lead the way! Truly search out your real estate agent carefully, and make sure you check with your travel agent about where to stay safely as you pull your future residential plans together. As the saying goes, knowledge is power.

Submitted by Marilyn Dattilo  
Travel Techniques



## Septemberfest Girls

Bloomington's Annual Septemberfest was September 10th. Club members, Mary Sue and Carole, both had booths this year featuring caged candles, crystals, and Avon. Hope you had a chance to visit the event and stop by to see them!







## OUR VISION

To educate members and the community about gardening through informative and educational meetings, workshops and activities

- To develop and promote projects for civic beautification and environmental stewardship
- To support philanthropic endeavors which aid the residents of the Bloomington community and surrounding areas
- To provide opportunities for fellowship for those interested in gardening and environmental and civic responsibility
- To aid in the protection of native trees, flowers and birds
- To further the extermination of invasive and/or noxious plants

## MEMBERSHIP



Membership is open to all persons at his or her request of application regardless of residence.

Annual dues for a single new member are \$20 and \$25 for a couple, when paid January 1 through June 30.

Half year dues for a single new member are \$10, and \$12.50 per couple when paid July 1st through December 31st.

Visitors are always welcome, but we encourage them to join the club after 3 visits in order to help out with the costs of our monthly programming.

## Meeting Location

The 3rd Tuesday of each month. Social time and announcements at 6:15. Program begins at 7 PM. Cornerstone Faith Community Church  
118 S. First Street, Bloomington, IL 60108

## Contact Us At

bloomingtongardenclub@gmail.com

## We're On The Web

bloomingtongardenclub.org



## 2022 Club Officers and Committees

\*President ..... Joyce Basel

\*1st Vice President..... Marietta Serenda  
(Membership)

\*2nd Vice President..... Laurie Dring  
(Programs)

\*3rd Vice President..... Linda Kunesh  
(Ways and Means)

\*Treasurer ..... Cheryl Svec

\*Publicity ..... Jamie Schneck  
(Website, Trowel, Graphics)

### Publicity Team

Publications..... Akhila Meda

Photography .....Debbie Matuszak

Proofreading .....Linda Kunesh

Facebook..... Cathy Gall

Website Support ..... Dan Vitacco

\*Recording Secretary ..... Linda Steck

\*Corresponding Secretary .... Joyce Basel

Plot-to-Plate Garden ..... Gail Sanders

Susan Glick-Shore, Eileen Spaman, Cheryl Svec

Good Cheer ..... Jennifer Moore

Hospitality..... Carol Lockerbie

Memorial Garden..... Joyce Basel

Nursing Home Liaison..... Chris Magnatowski

*\*Denotes Executive Board*

**Let Us Hear From You:**  
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**Call or Text 630-915-0051**

**Posting Months:**  
**March, June, September and December**