

The Trowel



September 2023
Volume 11, Issue 3

BLOOMINGDALE GARDEN CLUB NEWSLETTER

Greetings from our **President**



**INVITATIONS
ARRIVING SOON
for Bloomington
Garden Club's
60th Anniversary
Gratitude Gala
October 29th, 2023
11 AM to 3 PM
at Bloomington
Golf Club**



Hello Bloomington Garden Club!

It's hard to believe it is September and the last hurrah of summer, Labor Day weekend, is behind us. Our days are getting shorter and I can see the effect on my gardens. While my vegetable garden is still producing, things are certainly slowing down. It has been a wonderful and busy summer, with still plenty of warm weather ahead before we have to button things up for winter.

Again, many thanks to Fu-Mei and Bob Thrun, who hosted a magnificent garden party for us in June. Their property and gardens are amazing and truly inspirational. I walked through the yard several times, each time noticing something different. I came away with many ideas for my own gardens. The Thruns also generously provided us with a plentiful luncheon—no one walked away hungry! I know everyone who attended enjoyed the day.

Your Executive Board has been busy and we held a meeting on August 18. I hope you had a few minutes to review the minutes that went out recently. One important item we discussed was upcoming elections. The revised by-laws return us to holding elections in November to allow some time to transition positions. Positions expiring this year are

Membership/1st VP, Ways and Means (Plant Sale)/3rd VP, and Secretary. Also, Jamie needs to pass the Publicity torch. I appeal to you to consider helping your club by joining the board and taking on one of these positions. None of the positions are difficult by any means and require just a few hours now and then to keep the club activities moving. And, you will not be left alone. All of the incumbents indicated they would welcome a partner and will work with you over the upcoming term. Or, choose a partner of your own!

The 60th Anniversary Gala committee has been working diligently preparing for the big event on Sunday, October 29th. This promises to be a fabulous luncheon with lots of exciting auction prizes available. Be sure to mark your calendar to attend this celebration of our club!

Finally, I want to thank Debbie Matuszak and Kim Kennedy for taking over the Programs position mid-term when Kathy and Jeanette both had to bow out for personal reasons. Thanks to Debbie and Kim, we are sure to have engaging speakers and field trips next year.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and the fall....hope to see you soon.

Happy Gardening!
Cheryl

Autumn Butternut Squash Soup

From allrecipes! (Maplebird 2/3/23) / Jamie

This is a thick, rich butternut squash soup with tons of flavor.

Super easy, quick and a great way to use squash!

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 medium carrot, chopped
- 2 medium potatoes, cubed
- 1 medium butternut squash - peeled, seeded, and cubed
- 1 (32 fluid ounce) container chicken stock
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste



Photo by Valeria Boltneva
pexels.com

Directions

Step 1: Gather all ingredients.

Step 2: Melt butter in a large pot over medium heat, and cook onion, celery, carrot, potatoes, and squash until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Pour in enough of the chicken stock to cover vegetables.

Step 3: Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low, cover pot, and simmer until all vegetables are tender, about 40 minutes.

Step 4: Transfer the soup to a blender, and blend until smooth. Return to the pot, and mix in any remaining stock to reach desired consistency. Season with salt and pepper.

Step 5: Serve hot and enjoy!

Nutrition Facts

Per Serving: 305 calories; total fat 7g; saturated fat 4g; cholesterol 21mg; sodium 1151mg; total carbohydrate 60g; dietary fiber 10g; total sugars 11g; protein 7g; vitamin c 89mg; calcium 178mg; iron 3 mg; potassium 1650mg



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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.



60th Anniversary Gratitude Gala is October 29th!

Your invitation is on the way and everyone is invited. This is a fun-filled family event!

We'll have a fabulous luncheon, raffle, and silent auction with an awesome vacation surprise. We will honor our veterans and seniors for their sacrifice, charity, wisdom, and guidance. An archive of historical photographs will be presented throughout the event.

Please include your menu selections and payment in your RSVP. We hope all members bring significant others and really make it a priority to attend. This Bloomingdale Garden Club event will be a celebration of community and charities that have benefited from our members' joy of gardening.

The Bloomingdale Garden Club celebrates its 60 year anniversary of charter membership in the Garden Clubs of Illinois this October.

The club was started by seven ardent gardening friends and neighbors on April 19, 1963 at the home of Mrs. A.H. McClure. It was decided at this meeting that a garden club would be "helpful to the members and, in time, a benefit to our community." On October 22, 1963, application was made to the Garden Clubs of Illinois for membership. Dues were set at 50¢ per month or \$6.00 per year!

These seven original members would be thrilled to see the results of their little adventure. Today the Bloomingdale Garden Club boasts a membership of over 50 men and women, including a few who joined the Club back in the 60s like former president Jo Dabrowski, who is now our most senior member. The Club is indebted to these faithful members for their years of support and friendship. They are the foundation of the Club's goal to foster a love of gardening within the Club and community.

The Club's early years were filled with monthly programs, spring luncheons, floral

competitions and garden walks. The Club's first plant sale was held in 1965. This immensely popular annual event was first held in members' gardens, then at the Library, and at the Bloomingdale Village Hall for many years. The 2013 sale was relocated to the Park District Maintenance Building in Springfield Park, and the Club was elated with the huge response and success.

Over the past fifty years, membership declined as the founders retired, moved, or passed away. However a small group remained loyal and active, seeking to instill new interest and attract

younger gardeners. The present membership reflects the enthusiasm and dedication of the core group. The energy, affection and cooperation of the group is evident at the monthly meetings.



The prophecy set forth at the first meeting on April 19, 1963—that a garden club would be "helpful to the members and, in time, a benefit to our community"—has indeed become a reality for the Bloomingdale Garden Club.

Plot-to-Plate Garden



Gail Sanders

As we head into the last six weeks of the season, things are starting to wind down in the Plot-to-Plate Garden. Like every year, weather in part, determined our success. An early drought brought an end to a thriving pea crop while vigilance by garden club members in watering kept the rest of the garden going. Several hot spells have been additional stressors on the plants and those who have been trying to keep them hydrated. We never did come up with a successful way to thwart the bunnies and had no beans to donate this year.

We had two new experiences in our tomato planting which I think helped with their success. When the transplants were put in, a 2L bottle with several holes was buried next to each one. Throughout the season watering has been done by filling the bottles several times a week. We were also blessed with a donation of 10 extra-large and heavy-duty tomato cages from Better Bilt Products in Addison. The combination of these has helped to enable us to donate over 150 pounds of tomatoes this year!



Thank you to the people who have offered to help in the garden this year—Joyce Basel, Debbie Biondo, Joe Boccuzzi, Jeff Dengler, Laurie Dring, Kimberly Kennedy, Linda Kunesh, Dawn LaVeau, Debbie Matuszak, Mike McElroy, Jennifer Moore, Jamie Schneck, Rich & Marietta Serenda, Linda Steck, Henia Sullivan, Cheryl Svec, Barb Underdown, and Barb Weisenburger. Watering the garden can take over an hour each time you go out in order 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. We hope you will all be willing to do this again next year. Be sure to come to the October meeting so I can thank you in person.

Donations have been well received by the food pantry at the Bloomington Township offices. Due to the efforts of our club members, their clients can get some fresh, organic produce. We will keep working the plot until early October if there



One of our larger donations.

are still things to harvest. By the time you read this we should have been able to deliver over 400 pounds of produce. Thank you to Eileen Spaman, Susan Glick-Shore, and Barb Weisenburger for helping to harvest and deliver.

Fu-Mei's & Bob's Garden Party



On a glorious June Saturday, our members were once again treated to the wonderful hospitality of Fu-Mei and Bob Thrun in their magical garden. We are so fortunate to have this truly wonderful garden hidden in the middle of our town—and even more that the owners so generously share it with us quite regularly.

Fu-Mei has been a member of the club for many years and her husband Bob is well known to many of us as well. The garden is a delight with beautiful beds of colorful perennials, mature trees and flowering vines all connected by pathways leading from one to another.

This is an event that Fu-Mei and Bob also share with their neighbors and friends and so we met and mingled and then enjoyed a scrumptious meal and delightful camaraderie. Thank you, once again, to Bob and Fu-Mei for their generosity and their gracious hospitality!



Joyce Basel



I just came home from work and the light seemed perfect so I quickly took these images of a few things in my garden. The Rex begonia are magnificent this year and the large ones I managed to winter from last year and so they really had a head start on everything.

I know that the cardinal vine did not come from us, but I thought it was fun to have it climb up the old Direct TV pole and it is really flowering quite profusely—the hummingbirds love it. And the butterfly bush (orange) attracts everything from the tiniest bees to the fat ones and even some unusual flies.

Jeff Dengler



My doorstep pot has rose begonia, impatiens, and a repeat cutting (over 5 years) of old Mariposa Coleus. The tropical hibiscus is part of the California series called "Sunset Boulevard."

Linda Kunesh

This is the crazy Phantom Hydrangea I have in the SE corner of my backyard that is not patented! I will be taking MANY stem cuttings in April to root and pot up for our Plant Sale. Full sun; will tolerate part shade. Can get to 6' x 6' (although mine is probably 10' wide.)! Creamy white in the summer and turns pink in the fall. Conical blossoms/panicles that can get 12-15" long! Great plant or hedge. Good alternative to Annabelles. Interested?



Susan Glick-Shore



Kirt and I thought we were planting our few seeds of delicate squash. But to our surprise (after all but one seed died off) came this huge plant and on it was of course the beautiful yellow flowers that turned into squash we forgot I had bought last fall, (just the one) and really loved. It is called Sweet Dumpling Squash. We are excited as there are four that are fully grown and ripening and many many more coming. So to our surprise we will save these seeds, label them and try again next year!

Cheryl Svee



Laurie Dring



Want to share the San Marzano Roma tomatoes purchased at the plant sale. Excellent!!! Thank you to Ed (Springfield Park farm) for recommending and Linda for purchasing.

Carole Lockerbie



Milkweed Pods

Jennifer Moore



Begonia Dragon Wing; Black and Blue Salvia; Zinnias



Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, WI



Cheryl says in July: While on a long weekend trip with my sisters, we visited the Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, Wisconsin. These gardens were absolutely gorgeous! With Madison being only a 2-hour drive, one could easily drive up, tour the gardens and return home the same day. I highly recommended the trip. AND, the gardens are available to tour free of charge!

Touring the Gardens at Ball Horticulture



Linda Kunesh

On August 21, a beautiful partly sunny day, 47 people—13 Garden Club members, 18 Master Gardeners, and 16 friends & family members toured the Gardens at Ball in West Chicago which is the international headquarters for Ball Horticulture. The Gardens at Ball have been the evaluation and testing grounds for the world's wealth of horticultural introductions and improvements for more than 80 years. What began as a row trial garden for seed varieties in 1933 has grown to encompass more than 9 acres of 18 display gardens and areas for annuals, perennials, cut flowers and vegetables, including the newest plants from the industry's leading breeders and marketers. In a typical year more than 1300 different varieties and 250 different genera are on display. More than 70 different breeding companies are represented annually.



Purpose of the Gardens

The purpose of the Gardens is to serve as a living catalog as well as a Sales and Marketing tool. Ball hosts annual customer days for wholesale growers as well as landscapers, horticultural associations, and business groups on special occasions. Garden areas are used for photography, advertising, video, and education.

Ball Horticultural Company is a leader in all facets of horticulture. Its global family of breeders, research and development teams, suppliers, and distribution companies has a strong presence on six continents in 20 countries. It is in its 4th generation of family ownership.

Some Fun Facts:

- Ball is the largest supplier of genetics to Proven Winners.
- Beacon Impatiens is the 1st & only impatiens resistant to Downy Mildew. It took 13 years to develop.
- Bedding Plants: At one time, was a \$33 MILLION venture. Now it has declined to \$3 MILLION due to the decline of the use of bedding plants as more emphasis is now on container gardens and small space gardens.
- Calibrachoa is the largest category of annual sold.
- There are five types of Wave Petunias: Original, Easy Wave, Shock Wave, Tidal Wave, and Double Wave.
- Ball Horticulture is NOT affiliated with Ball Canning Jars.

We had the opportunity to see not only comparisons of plants (including many that we offer at our Annual Flower and Plant Sale) but also previewed the NEW plants that will be available at retailers next season.

A special thanks to Jan Hanson who provided a great brief history of the gardens and helped to lead the tours along with tour guides Gail Sanders, Pat Kosmach, and Linda Kunesh. Watch for information next summer as we will arrange for another tour at The Gardens at Ball.

One of the cool new plants is the Stingray Alocasia! (not shown)

Ideas for Your Summer Vegetable Bounty!

Jeff Dengler's Tomato Spread

The original recipe has this jam as a topping to crusty bread slices with Boursin-type soft herbed cheese—it is divine!

Cherry tomatoes
Minced garlic
Drizzle of olive oil
Herbs of choice chopped
Salt and pepper
Sugar (optional)



Preheat oven to 375°. Combine tomatoes, minced garlic, and olive oil in a bowl. Toss and season with salt and pepper as needed, chopped herbs, and a bit of sugar to taste (balances acidity). Distribute in prepared ceramic baking dish. My friend Pam likes to add a tiny drizzle of gourmet balsamic vinegar. Roast about 1 hour until the tomatoes are about to burst. The idea is to get the juices to burst stirring a couple times until thickened with a little caramelization on the edges, but not burn! You have to keep your eye on it, but it's worth it!

Now I feel like searching the farmers market for cherry tomatoes!!

CHEF JEFF TOMATO: Gigantic size, gigantic taste and an old favorite! Extra-large, deep red, meaty fruits makes this one of the most popular tomatoes grown. This long-time favorite bears large yields of 12 to 16 oz tomatoes on strong vines. Deep red, round and smooth, ripening uniformly on the vine, Beefsteak is a meatier tomato with excellent disease and virus resistance. I like this big tomato for slicing—great on a



Chef Jeff tomatoe given to Jamie by a neighbor, Gail, who purchased the plant at Caputo's.

BLT or big juicy hamburger. It's also a great tomato for dicing and adding to a salad. Stuff one of these big tomatoes with chicken or tuna salad for a nice summer entree.

Italian Zucchini Crescent Pie

Pillsbury Bake-off Grand Prize Winner / Jamie

Cook and stir:

4 (to 5) cups thinly sliced zucchini (8 to 9 inch)
1 (to 1 and 1/2) cup chopped onion
1/4 cup butter

(I simmer the onion first until a little soft, then I add the zucchini and cook until limp. Drain any residual liquid.)

Stir into zucchini mixture:

1/2 cup fresh chopped parsley or 2 tbsp parsley flakes
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper
1/4 tsp garlic powder
1/4 tsp basil
1/4 tsp oregano

Combine:

2 beaten eggs
8 oz (2 cups) Mozzarella cheese, shredded

And then stir into zucchini mixture.

Next...

Separate an 8 oz can of crescent rolls into 8 triangles. Place in ungreased 10" pie pan. Press over bottom and up sides to form crust. Spread crust with 2 tsp mustard.

Pour it into crust. Bake in preheated 375° oven for 18 to 20 minutes, or until center is set. (You may want to cover crust with foil during the last 10 minutes so crust doesn't get too dark.) Let stand 10 minutes before serving.



Another Zucchini Idea: Swap zucchini noodles for white pasta! With the abundant fiber and antioxidants found in zucchini, this swap boosts gut health, improves metabolism, and lowers the risk of heart disease. (Dr. William Li)

Getting Squirrelly in the Garden

From Horticulture Magazine / Linda Kunesch

We all want our gardens to attract wildlife. In theory. But when it comes down to it we're rather specific about which are welcome and how we expect them to behave (same as with family and friends). Meanwhile wildlife has its own agenda and, apparently, little regard for ours. It's perfectly natural that sometimes the peace unravels.



Illustration by Tom Beuerlein

The first deer and bunnies to timidly approach your Eden are adorable real-life visions of Bambi and Thumper. The new homeowner's universal response is to melt like butter, call the kids and then muscle the kids out of the way to get a picture.

A year later, a different universal response: bursting out the backdoor waving a meat cleaver and screaming like a lunatic to chase them off. That's what having hundreds of dollars of hostas devoured and your saplings mangled will do to a previously sane person.

I'd say bring on some bears and cougars to knock the population down, but then we'd have bears and cougars lurking around with agendas of their own. With wildlife, you see, it's a case of being careful what you wish for.

Deer are exasperating but squirrels are worse. Oh, sure, they're cute. But wouldn't they be just as cute depicted in books about dinosaurs and other extinct species? Here's what I want to know: How did an animal so notorious for indecision when crossing the road somehow piece together the

complex, intricate and interconnected steps to arrive at and break into a carefully sited, expertly engineered bird feeder?

Their secret, I'm convinced, is that they have time. Nothing but time. And determination. And, apparently, quite a hankering for bird feed. So all day every day, while we're out working, running errands and otherwise burdening ourselves with responsibilities, there the squirrels are. Scheming. And conditioning themselves to jump farther, grip tighter, hang upside down longer and stuff their chubby little cheeks fuller until, one day, you look out and there's the squirrel version of a test pilot dangling from your bird feeder, gorging itself.

Worse, all the other squirrels, appearing all innocent and half starved (as if they hadn't spent the day taking one bite each out of every one of your tomatoes), have been studiously watching this tutorial.

Nothing proves we're part of nature more than the utter lack of harmony you feel at that moment.

Harmony in nature? That's a ruse. It's all a battle. You bursting out the door waving a knife at squirrels is almost the same as a pack of wolves defending its turf. Maybe we can take some solace in that. We're at the top of the food chain and yet somehow powerless to prevent squirrels from raiding our bird feeders—but maybe, ultimately, hopefully, we're just fattening them up for the hawks. In a sense, we are doing exactly what we set out to do: Feed the birds.

EMPTY FLOWERPOTS

Thanks to those of you who brought over your empty pots to the shed at the Maintenance Building. We will use these for our perennials for next year's plant sale. At this time, we cannot take any more pots. If you still have some empty ones (no smaller than 1 gallon and NO MORE HANGING BASKETS, please) hold them until next April. Thanks.



2023 Club Officers and Committees

*President Cheryl Svec

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

*2nd Vice President Debbie Matuszak
(Programs) & Kimberly Kennedy

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

*Treasurer Laurie Dring

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

Publicity Team

Publications Akhila Meda
Photography Debbie Matuszak
Proofreading Linda Kunesh
Facebook Cathy Gall
Website Support Dan Vitacco

***Secretary Joyce Basel**

Plot-to-Plate Garden Gail Sanders
Susan Glick-Shore, Eileen Spaman, Barbara
Weisenburger

Good Cheer Jennifer Moore

Hospitality Carol Lockerbie

Memorial Garden Joyce Basel

Nursing Home Liaison Chris Magnatowski

**Denotes Executive Board*

Highlight denotes offices up for election in November.

Let Us Hear From You:
jschneck1233@gmail.com

Phone: 630-372-6003

Posting Months:

March, June, September and December

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 are \$25.00 for a single member and \$30.00 for a couple when paid January 1st through June 30th. (\$6.00 pays each member's State Garden Club dues; and \$7.00 for each couple).

Half year dues for new members are \$12.50 for single member, and \$15.00 per couple when paid July 1st thru 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.

NOTE: Meeting times will change to daytime in November.

Cornerstone Faith Community Church
118 S. First Street, Bloomington, IL 60108

Contact Us At:

bloomingtongardenclub@gmail.com

We're On The Web:

bloomingtongardenclub.org