



# The Trowel

**January 2026**

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## NOTE

NO MEETING IN  
JANUARY

## Upcoming Events

- Feb – Annual Business meeting
- March – Container Gardening
- April – Plant Sale Prep

Happy  
New Year

# PRESIDENT'S LETTER

FROM CHERYL SVEE



Greetings Gardening Friends,

The New Year is upon us, and I hope you all celebrated the holidays with family and friends. I would like to thank each of you for your continued enthusiasm and dedication. Your participation in meetings, programs, and community projects continues to make our club a place of learning, growth, and friendship. Whether you've shared your gardening expertise, volunteered your time, or simply offered encouragement to fellow gardeners, your involvement truly matters - not only within the club, but also to the community at large.

I am always heartened by our club's activities. From our plant sale helping to beautify the community and inspire gardeners, the plot-to-plate garden providing fresh produce to those in need, our support of the West Suburban Rehab & Nursing Center with holiday decorations and collection of much-needed personal items for the residents, and monetary donations to local charitable organizations. Our club is renowned in Bloomingdale and the surrounding villages for our contributions.

As winter brings a pause to our gardens, it provides an opportunity for reflection and renewal. While the landscape may appear quiet, we know that beneath the surface, roots are strengthening and plans for spring are already taking shape—much like the work of our garden club during this season. (The Plant Sale Committee has already begun preliminary discussions and will hold its first meeting in the coming weeks!)

The winter season is an ideal time to learn, plan, and dream. I encourage you to explore new ideas, review seed catalogs, and consider how we can continue to grow—both in our gardens and as a club. Our upcoming programs and activities promise to inspire and educate, and I look forward to another rewarding year together.

May this winter bring you moments of rest, inspiration, and anticipation for the beauty to come. Thank you for being part of our garden club community. I look forward to seeing you in the months ahead as we prepare for a vibrant and flourishing season.

Warm regards,  
Cheryl

BLOOMINGDALE GARDEN CLUB



# UPCOMING EVENTS

We meet at Cornerstone Faith Community Church,  
118 First Street, Bloomington, IL 60108

6:15 PM Social time / 6:45 PM Announcements / 7:00 PM Meeting Begins

For members who cannot drive at night, we will have volunteers available to pick you up if you'd like to attend. Don't hesitate to get in touch with Cheryl for more information.

January - No  
Meeting

## February - Annual Business Meeting

The New Year begins with our Annual Business Meeting. Agenda items will include a review of 2025 activities, upcoming events for 2026 (including our popular Annual Flower & Plant Sale in May), and a discussion about our charitable donations.

The club will also be making lanyards for name badges at meetings.

## March Meeting:

Get ready for our Club's annual plant sale! Learn how to plant and maintain container gardens so that they can become attractive season long additions to the home landscape.

This program will include suggestions for outstanding container displays and guidelines for plant selection. Our presenter will be our own Master Gardener, Gail Sanders.





# MEMBERS' PICTURES:

# SNOWMAN CROSSING

Several garden club members brought their creativity to Snowman Crossing at the library on December 1st to decorate the club's Christmas tree with handmade garden-themed ornaments - thanks to Henia Sullivan!

Cathy Gall had the foresight to bring a shovel and clear the snow around our tree. It was a sunny, chilly day, but we enjoyed each other's company and warmed up with hot drinks and cookies afterward in the library's lower level. Their cheerful work added a festive, welcoming spirit to the row of community trees at the library for the community to enjoy.



# NOVEMBER CRAFT PROJECT



**The club made 28 Christmas table decorations for the West Suburban Nursing Facility in Bloomingdale.**

**The wrapped package centerpieces are decorations for their dining tables.**

**The residents look forward to our centerpieces every year!**





# 2025 CHRISTMAS PARTY



Joyce and Cheryl

Our annual Christmas luncheon was held at Jameson's Restaurant.

The food and the camaraderie were excellent!

Everyone went home with a "unique" white elephant gift.

We once again honored our senior members, and Jamesons gave us gift cards for each of them to celebrate their birthdays this coming year. Their commitment to us is wonderful as our members 80+ may expect to receive these cards annually for the remainder of their lives!!

I doubt that the management thought that any of us would live to see 100, but that is exactly what our most senior member did on January 12, 2026!!! (See page 8)



Jason Orr (Dawn's husband)



# DECEMBER “MAKE AND TAKE” MEETING



We had a fun evening creating beautiful holiday centerpieces.

Kathi Rose walked us through making the decorations step by step.

We had stunning dining room tables this holiday!





# HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JOSEPHINE DABROWSKI!

100

On January 12, 2026 the Garden Club's most senior member, Josephine Dabrowski, turned One Hundred Years old!!! Several of our members turned up at her house that afternoon to sing "Happy Birthday" to her. We took a big, beautiful flower arrangement and stayed to visit for a short while. She was delighted and invited us to return for coffee whenever we wanted to do so. The group decided that we should take her out to lunch soon!

On Saturday, January 17th, her son, John, hosted a lovely party for her at Tony Spavone's Restaurant. There were about 80 guests, including the Mayor of Bloomingdale, the Township Trustee and the State Representative!!! All of these dignitaries had Proclamations detailing Jo's life and her many civic accomplishments. It was a splendid affair and well deserved for a woman who has lived an exemplary life and served in many capacities.



The proclamations  
all included her  
long membership  
in the  
Bloomingdale  
Garden Club!





# DONATIONS TO WEST SUBURBAN NURSING HOME

## Message From Cathy Gall

Once again I am amazed and overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of our Garden Club members! When I delivered everything to Vina at the nursing home, she expressed her appreciation to all!

We collected quite a nice variety of warm socks, gloves, scarfs and blankets to help keep off the chill of winter! The residents are sure to enjoy coloring and word search books, calendars, markers and crayons etc. Nice shampoos, lotions, and other toiletries are appreciated by all! Thank you all for your contributions! You've all helped to make the holiday a bit more special for everyone!!

I really would like to personally thank you all for your kindness. The members of our club always step up when called upon. You are the best!!

Merry Christmas!!

Cathy



# THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS...GARDEN EDITION

'Twas the week before Christmas, and all through the yard, not a gift was given, not even a card.

The tools were all hung in the old shed with care, with hopes that St. Nicholas soon would repair,

The shovel with blade all rusty and cracked, the pitchfork still shiny, but handle it lacked.

When out on my lawn, (it's brown and abused) I could see poor old Santa, looking confused.

No list had been left for Santa to see, no gardening gifts were under the tree. But wait there's still time, it's not Christmas yet, and gardening gifts are the quickest to get.

You can forget the silk tie, the fluffy new sweater, give something to make the garden grow better.

If she wants a gift shiny, then don't be a fool, it's not a dumb diamond, but a sparkling new tool.

If fragrance is listed you can forget French perfume, it's a pile of manure that'll make gardeners swoon.

Give night crawlers, not nightgowns, the type of hose that gives water. (Anything for the kitchen is not worth the bother.)

Give a great gift that digs in the dirt, it's better than any designer-brand shirt. Now look quick at Santa, this guy's not so dumb, Under his glove, he hides a green thumb.

His knees are so dirty, his back how it aches, his boots stomp on slugs, (he gives them no breaks).

The guy only works winter, you can surely see why, The rest of the year it's a gardening high.



# THE WEEK BEFORE CHRISTMAS...GARDEN EDITION, CONT'D

Elves plant in the spring, pull weeds merrily all summer, in fall they all harvest, but winter's a bummer.

And so Christmas gives Santa a part-time employment, 'Till spring when the blooms are his real life enjoyment.

So ask the big guy for garden gifts this year, Seeds, plants and tools, Santa holds them all dear.

You see malls may be crowded, vendors hawking their ware, but visit a nursery, stress-free shopping is there.

Now Santa's flown off, to the nursery he goes, and his voice fills the night with loud Hoe! Hoe! Hoe!

Adapted from  
Marianne Binetti &  
acknowledgment to  
June Vandervest



# GARDEN CLUB IN THE NEWS

The Garden Club was recently featured in 2 Bloomingdale publications



See page 75 of the Winter/Spring Park District booklet - here:  
<https://www.bloomingtonparks.org/about-bpd/communication/brochure>



See page 8 of the Bloomingdale Almanac - here:  
<https://villageofbloomington.org/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/1036>



# COOKIE RECIPES

Winter is a great time to bake a batch of cookies! Here are several of Jamie Schneck's family favorites!

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## PECAN SANDIES

Mom's best cookies!

### Ingredients:

1 stick of unsalted butter  
1/2 cup light brown sugar  
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 cup flour  
1 cup toasted pecans, chopped

### Directions:

Cream butter together with sugar, then add vanilla and salt. Add flour a little at a time until it is creamed. Add toasted pecans. Form balls and put on a cookie sheet. Press down with the bottom of a glass lightly dipped in water. Bake at 350° for 15 to 17 minutes.

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## Potato Chip Cookies

Mom's oldie but goodie!

### Ingredients:

1 lb margarine  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/2 cup potato chips, crushed  
2 teaspoons vanilla  
3 1/2 cups flour

### Directions:

Mix together in order and drop onto cookie sheet. Bake at 325° for 15 minutes.

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## Toffee

My sister's mother-in-law's favorite!

### Ingredients:

1 cup brown sugar  
2 sticks butter  
Saltine crackers, salted  
6 Hersey bars  
almonds or pecans, chopped

### Directions:

Melt sugar and butter in sauce pan. Bring to a rolling boil. Remove from heat and let stand 5 minutes. Spray 9 x 13" pan with Pam, then layer crackers in rows on bottom of pan. Spread sugar-butter mixture over top of crackers and bake at 350° for 7 to 10 minutes. Remove from oven and layer Hersey bars over top of mixture. Let melt and spread with spatula. Sprinkle nuts over top and let pan cool.

(When I made this, I used an 11 x 17" cookie sheet and made 1 1/2 batches of recipe (to quick set chocolate, let pan cool to touch and then put in freezer for about 5 minutes). To cut, I twisted sides of cookie sheet to loosen and slid toffee on to cutting board and sliced into squares.)

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# 2025 CLUB OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

- \*Cheryl Svee, President
- \*Jean Kurzynski and Marietta Serenda, 1st Vice President (Membership)
- \*Debbie Matuszak and Kelly Vitacco, 2nd Vice President (Programs)
- \*Linda Kunesh, 3rd Vice President (Ways and Means)
- \*Laurie Dring, Treasurer
- \*Joyce Basel, Secretary
- \*Jamie Schneck, Publicity

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Gail Sanders, Plot-to-Plate

## Plot-to-Plate Committee:

Susan Glick-Shore, Eileen Spaman, Barbara Weisenburger

Jennifer Moore, Good Cheer

Henrietta Sullivan, Hospitality

Joyce Basel, Memorial Garden

Chris Magnatowski, Liaison to West Suburban Nursing & Rehabilitation Center

\*Denotes Executive Board

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