



The Trowel

March 2026

**HAPPY
FIRST DAY
OF SPRING!**

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Upcoming Events

- April - Plant Sale Prep
- May - S.C.A.R.C.E.
- June - Monarch and Pollinator Project
- July - Don't Squash That Bug!



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

FROM CHERYL SVEE

Winter Aconite



There is a special kind of magic that happens this time of year. Just when we think the winter will never end, we spot that first brave crocus, daffodil or tulip bloom. I was so excited to see my Winter Aconite in flower the other day. Spring isn't just a change in weather; for us, it's a return to our passion.

As we move from planning our dream gardens in seed catalogs and our own plant sale presale order, to actually getting our hands in the soil, I want to encourage everyone to embrace the "slow spring." While it's tempting to tidy every corner of the yard immediately, remember that our beneficial pollinators are still waking up in those over-wintered stems and leaf piles! Let's garden with patience and a light touch until our insect friends emerge.

We have a vibrant season ahead for our club. From our upcoming Plant Sale, planting the Plot-to-Plate community garden, to our informative speakers, there are so many opportunities to learn from one another. Our gardens grow best when we share our successes, our "happy accidents," and even our occasional failures.

May you find some quiet moments to enjoy the sunshine and the smell of damp earth.

Cheryl



UPCOMING EVENTS

We meet at Cornerstone Faith Community Church,
118 First Street, Bloomingdale, 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.

April -
Plant

SALE

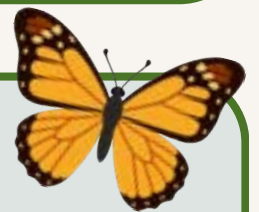
Prep!



May Meeting

In May, we will welcome **Kay McKeen**, who is the founder of **S.C.A.R.C.E. Environmental Recycling for the Environment**. This organization helps people discover how easy it can be to make a meaningful difference for our kids, our environment, and our future. She will provide many tips and important information on reusing, recycling, composting and what we should and should not do.

June Meeting:



On June 16 our speaker is **Kim White**, who will update our group on the **DuPage Monarch and Pollinator Project, and Waystations**.

Kim spent 19 years associated with Brookfield Zoo's Education Department as both a volunteer and an employee, teaching school groups. She is a naturalist, a former co-steward for the DuPage County Forest Preserve, education coordinator for the DuPage Monarch Project, and an avid gardener for both food production and habitat creation. Her summers are spent growing milkweed for the Monarch butterflies she raises from eggs and releases.

2026 FLOWER AND PLANT SALE

Spring arrives this month, and your Flower & Plant Sale Committee is getting ready!

We've reviewed and selected many plants for our Sale. Once again, we will receive our flowers from TWO professional vendors: Woldhuis Farms Sunrise Greenhouse, Grant Park, IL, and Clesen Wholesale, Evanston, IL.

The Annual Flower & Plant Sale will be at Bloomingdale Park District's Maintenance Building (east of the Community Garden), on the North end of Springfield Park on Springfield Drive, Bloomingdale.

Most of our 4 ½" plants will come from Clesen (including caladium, coleus, dahliettas, fuchsia, zonal geraniums, and many more), with the remaining plants coming from Sunrise. Sunrise plants include flats of 48 plants, grasses, tropicals such as Rex Begonias, Tuts, Wave petunias, and accessory plants. In addition to plants listed on the pre-sale order form, hanging baskets, herbs, vegetables, & additional plants will be available at the sale. Customers who submit a Pre-Sale Order have the first opportunity to select from the vast array of hanging baskets and additional plants when they pick up their pre-sale order on Friday morning, May 8.

We also hope to have available perennials from members' gardens.

Gift Certificates in any denomination are available for purchase. Recipients of the gift certificates must redeem them at our 2026 sale. These make great gifts for Easter (April 5), Mother's Day (May 10), and birthdays, and are suitable for any occasion or event. Day-of-Sale prices apply. To order gift certificates, send a note with a legible name/address and a check made payable to:

Bloomingdale Garden Club
c/o Henrietta Sullivan
1015 Tiverton Court
Schaumburg, IL 60193



2026 FLOWER AND PLANT SALE, CON'T



2026 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS & HOW YOU CAN HELP

March 1 to March 21st Pre-Sale Ordering Underway

The Pre-Sale Order form is available on our website:

www.bloomingdalegardenclub.org, along with a color chart of available plants to assist you with your plant color selections.

Pre-Sale Order form with payment by check is DUE on March 21st (no exceptions)

Tuesday, April 21st • 6:30 PM

Plant Sale Prep Meeting at Cornerstone Faith Community Church. We'll provide a brief overview of this year's Sale. Most importantly, Sign-up sheets for when you can commit to help, food you will bring, and if you will assist at Sunrise to pull plants will be distributed.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact Cheryl at 630-930-4990 or cheryl.svee@gmail.com to let her know WHEN you will commit to help. We ask that each club member sign up for at LEAST two, 3-hour time slots.

"Flat" Boxes Needed (the kind you get from Costco and Sam's Club that previously contained fruits or vegetables). Plan to drop them off at the Maintenance Building the last week of April & first week of May. These are used for our customers to carry home the plants they purchase.

Saturday, May 2, Perennial Potting Party 10 AM to 1 PM. Bring your perennials & we'll help get them potted up. "Guidelines for Perennials" will be emailed to all members in April. A copy will also be available at the April 21st club meeting. Start thinking now about what perennials you want to donate. Note that if you have had jumping worms in the past in your garden beds, we cannot take your plants.

2026 FLOWER AND PLANT SALE, CON'T



Monday, May 4th

Plan to leave about 6:30 AM, so you arrive at Sunrise Greenhouse by 8:15 AM.

Car Pooling is Suggested

A group of Club members will go to Sunrise to pick up part of our order for the Sale. This is a busy and fun day that will go into the early afternoon. "Super Bonus:" We'll probably stop at Mayberry Junction in Manteno for a delicious lunch after we are finished at Sunrise Greenhouse!

Let Cathy Gall know if you are interested in joining us (jocagallfam@att.net; 630-247-8493).

Tuesday, May 5th

Tables Arrive & Set Up for the Sale 9 AM to 3 PM

Wednesday, May 6th, Tentatively 8 to 12 or 1:00 PM

Flower Delivery from Sunrise. Help us unload the truck, set out the plants, and inventory them. Bring your family members, friends, and neighbors to help.

Thursday, May 7th, 7 AM to 6 PM

- 7 AM Club Members Arrive
- 8 AM • Flower Delivery from Clesen. Help us unload the truck, set out the plants, and inventory them.
- 11:00 AM to approximately 6 PM • Pull Pre-Sale Orders & Set them aside. Set out gently-used garden items & tools, and final set up for the Sale. Perennials will also be set out if available.

NOTE: Club members who help this day may take home their own pre-sale orders AFTER pre-sale orders are pulled and all remaining plants are re-inventoried.

2026 FLOWER AND PLANT SALE, CON'T

Friday, May 8th

- **7 AM** Club Members arrive
- **8 AM to 11:00 AM Pick Up of Pre-Sale Orders** – Open ONLY to Pre-Sale Customers. These customers may also shop for additional plants, including hanging baskets, herbs, & vegetables.
- **Noon to 6 PM:** Sale Open to the Public

Saturday, May 9th

- 8 AM Club Members arrive
- 9 AM to 3 PM: SALE Open to the Public
- 3 to 5 PM: Clean Up

Payment: Cash, check, or credit cards accepted. There is a \$2 service fee for credit card use.

Raffles—Two large pots/container gardens (one for sun, the other for shade) and a Fairy Garden will be available for the raffles.

For Sale—Gently-used gardening-related books, magazines, large pots and containers, tools, and other garden items

Master Gardener Help Desk will be available throughout the Sale.

**It takes our ENTIRE garden club to make this SALE a SUCCESS!
Thanks for YOUR Efforts!!!**



MEMBERS' PICTURES

Here is a lovely example of a container garden from Linda Campell.

Great examples of the Thriller, Spiller, and Filler details that Gail spoke about in her March presentation.



MEMBERS' PICTURES



Cheryl Svee's Bright Summer Containers



Joyce Basel's Fall Containtar Garden



FEBRUARY MEETING - ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

WELCOME NEW MEMBER:

Tressie Hope!!

2026 Donations:

Cornerstone Faith Community Church
DuPage Care Center
Midwest Shelter for Homeless Vets
Neighborhood Food Pantries
We Grow Dreams

“Live in each season as it passes; breathe the air, drink the drink,
taste the fruit, and resign yourself to the influence of the earth.”

Henry David Thoreau, Walden

MARCH MEETING - CONTAINER GARDENS

We enjoyed a very informative March meeting, taught by our very own Gail Sanders. She talked about almost everything you want to know about container gardening.

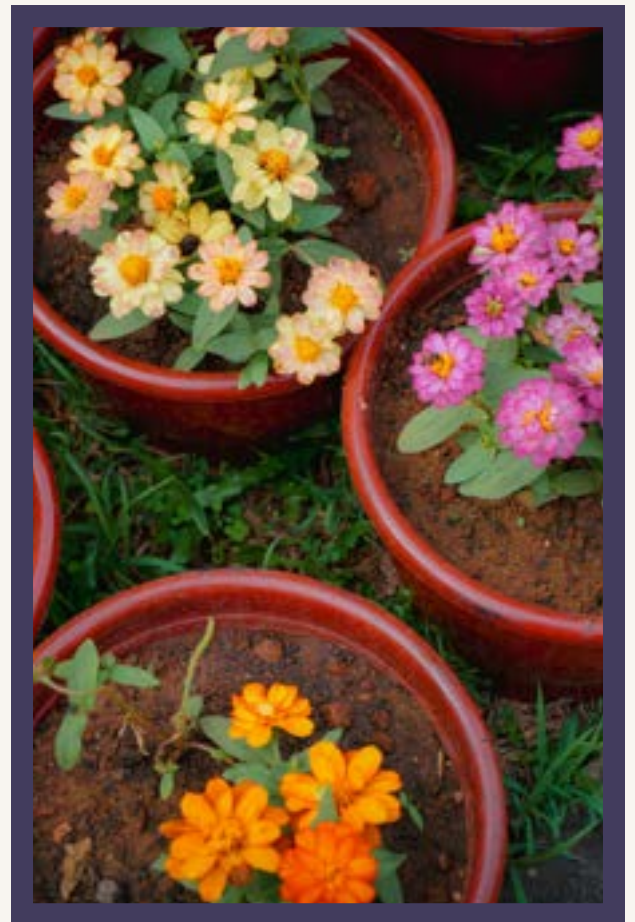
Gail started with factors to consider for container size, materials, color design, focal point, drainage, and placement. We saw many ideas for color and design.

Next, she covered soil mixes, fertilizer, watering, and maintaining your plants. We learned the differences between instant gratification and slower, fuller plants.

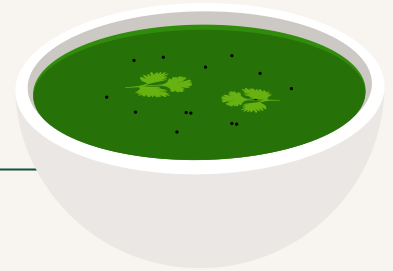
Many of her outstanding photos showed the spiller/thriller/filler recipe. The final ingredient is imagination. Gail provided suggestions for plant selection, many of which will be available at our plant sale. Our gardeners will be well-equipped to show off what they have learned from Gail's presentation.

More container gardening ideas can be found at <https://extension.illinois.edu/containergardening>.

MARCH MEETING - CONTAINER GARDENS



RECIPE



LETTUCE SOUP

Submitted by Laurie Dring (by members' request!)

Ingredients:

1 small onion, chopped

1/4 cup butter (pref grass-fed for better nutrition, but expensive)

2 large heads of Boston or 2 small bunches of Romain, finely chopped (approx 7 cups)

1/4 cup of all-purpose flour

3 cups filtered water (not from tap)

1 tablespoon chicken bouillon, almost bouillon or granules

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon pepper

Juice of 1/2 lemon or lemon zest (note: do not grate to include rind, will be bitter, just one swipe with grater)

Mint leaves: fresh or 1 tablespoon dried, to taste.

Directions:

Cook and stir the onion in butter in a 3-quart saucepan over low heat until softened

Reserve 1 cup of lettuce; stir the remaining lettuce into the sauteed onion

Cover & cook over low heat until lettuce wilts, about 5 minutes

Stir in flour, cook and stir for 1 minute

Add water, bouillon, and dried mint. Heat to boiling, stirring constantly. Boil and stir 1 minute

Allow mixture to cool a bit, then pour into a blender container. Cover and blend on high speed until smooth, about 30 seconds.

Pour into the saucepan. Stir in reserved lettuce, lemon (zest or juice)

Bon Appétit!!

Notes:

If you prefer cream of lettuce soup, refer to the Betty Crocker recipe, which you can Google. I modified the BC recipe for the lemon/mint. You can freeze excess soup.



2026 CLUB OFFICERS & COMMITTEES

*Cheryl Svee, President

*Jean Kurzynski and Marietta Serenda, 1st Vice President (Membership)

*Debbie Matuszak and Claire Krauss, 2nd Vice President (Programs)

*vacant, 3rd Vice President (Ways and Means)

*Laurie Dring, Treasurer

*Joyce Basel, Secretary

*Mike McElroy, Publicity

Publicity Contributors:

Mike McElroy, Publications

Cathy Gall, Facebook

Jamie Schneck, Website

Dan Vitacco, Website Support

Kimberly Kennedy, Trowel

Gail Sanders, Plot-to-Plate

Plot-to-Plate Committee:

Eileen Spaman, Barbara Weisenburger, Cheryl Svee, Mike McElroy

Jennifer Moore, Good Cheer

Henrietta Sullivan, Hospitality

Chris Magnatowski, Liaison to West Suburban Nursing & Rehabilitation Center

*Denotes Executive Board

**Submit Trowel
Submissions to:**

Kimberly Kennedy

kimberlykennedy8@hotmail.com

708-715-2209