

Dunesland Latest Dirt



PRESIDENTS' POINTS

Welcome to the Illinois Dunesland Garden Club November meeting.
Or at least as close as we can come to a meeting!

November is Thanksgiving month so I'm trying to count my blessings. One of them is that this club, which began in 1937, is still such an active organization—even in the midst of this pandemic. I really feel we will emerge from this as strong as we were before, and maybe even more energized and ready to dig into more gardening.



But right now there are a couple things we all can do to join in our venture. First, this newsletter: I'm happy to report that last month we emailed it to 69 people. 45 of those opened it, and 21 of those clicked on one or more links in it. Helen Koetz is the winner for opening it 16 times, followed closely by Delores Mink and Jan Melin. Yea, members! It's wonderful to know you're reading it!

Sadly, 24 people didn't even open it. However, 6 of those are unable to access their email right now so it is mailed to them. 4 more have left the club. But that means 14 people missed last month's meeting—they didn't open their newsletter at all. (It's not too late; it is always on our [website](#)).

All in all those are very good numbers. But we do need participation just as though this is a meeting. So when you see something interesting, click through the links to get more information. I'm sure you've seen the articles we've presented, hoping they are timely and of interest to a number of us. But we would really like to have any of you send in an article. It could be one you've written or just one you've seen that you would like to share. Let us know and we'll try to incorporate it in the newsletter. Or at the very least let us what kinds of things you'd like to see here. Just click this link to email us: info@duneslandgardenclub.com.

There is another way you might enjoy helping our gardening environment. It's all about the monarch butterfly. You will find an article in this newsletter about it and links to guide you in the process.

So enjoy the rest of fall; join in our "meetings" and activities through our newsletters, our website and Facebook. Count your blessings. Happy and safe Thanksgiving to all.

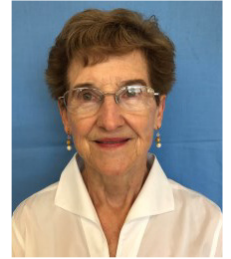
Sandi Shea

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SUNSHINE

As Sunshine Chairman I send cards to members who need a little brightening in their lives. Normally I share this news each month at our meeting so that others may reach out and offer support as well.



If you know of someone to whom we should send a card please contact me at HKoetz@comcast.net or (262) 237-1950.

The only new mailing we had for October was a get well card to Ruthann Davis.

Helen Koetz

As an ongoing fundraiser, I also have our garden gloves for sale for \$4 a pair. They are very durable and make excellent gifts.



Please let me know if you would like some.

You can also find news on our Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/illinoisduneslandgardenclub



PRESIDENTS' POINTS

I wish all of you veterans in the club a big "Thank You for your Service", and to all a great Thanksgiving Day this month.

If you haven't taken down your hummingbird feeders yet, it is way past time to change them out for suet feeders for your wild bird friends. Before you put away those hummer feeders, be sure to clean them. If you put them away already, you might want to get them out and clean them before you store them. There are several ways to clean the feeders. Scrub the feeder with a toothbrush and hot water. You can add bleach OR vinegar to the water. Let it soak, rinse well and then air dry. You can use Q-tips to scrub the holes and small nooks. Or put ¼ cup of rice and ½ cup of hot water in the feeder and shake it. The rice is abrasive and cleans the inside of the feeder.

For a recipe for homemade suet cakes, see Beth's Corner (pg 6) in this month's newsletter.

Look for short video clinics for homemade Christmas ornaments coming online in the next 2 months. Watch Facebook for details also!



Beth Dermody

DID YOU KNOW?



The monarch you saw this summer probably only lived a few weeks. Only one species of Monarch butterflies is capable of migrating from as far north as Canada to the

may take 5 to 7 generations for them to reach their final destinations, including Illinois.

Why do they take this perilous journey? One theory is "survival of the fittest". Monarchs are susceptible to parasites but the infected ones can't fly as well, so they don't make it Mexico, leaving only the strong uninfected ones to breed.

While monarchs may seem small and insignificant, the creatures play a crucial role in the ecosystems they inhabit.

mountains of Michoacán, Mexico, a distance of nearly 3000 miles. This super-generation that lives up to 8 months only appears every 3-5 generations.

They huddle together by the millions on fir trees in the Mexican forest to survive the winter. In the spring, they do a reverse migration to Texas where they feast on milkweed and mate. It



As adults, monarch butterflies visit countless numbers of wildflowers each year as they seek out nutrient-rich nectar. In doing so, the monarchs transfer pollen from one plant to another and assist in those species' reproduction.

The best thing that can be done is to provide habitat for monarchs and just let them do their thing.



You can find more in-depth information about Monarch Butterflies, Planting, Videos and more on our website

We are all in this together. If anyone needs a bit of computer advice or assistance, let us know.

If you don't know how to access Facebook or our website, we can answer your questions.

Let's all do this. Let's stay in touch with one another.

Let's find creative ways to use technology to get us through the restrictions we're all being forced to endure.

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

The monarch butterfly, with its unmistakable orange wings, is beautiful to behold. More importantly, it plays a vital role in pollination, contributing to our entire food chain. Numbers are down by as much as 53% this year for some varieties. The drop off is most likely due to loss of breeding habitat according to Doug Stotz, conservation ecologist at the Field Museum of Chicago.

Illinois is taking steps to combat this problem. On September 24, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and the Illinois Departments of Natural Resources, Transportation and Agriculture solidified their commitment to protecting monarchs and other pollinators by signing the Illinois Monarch Action Plan. The all-hands-on-deck plan, according to Coordinator Iris Caldwell, is part of an effort to add 1.3 billion stems of the native plant regionally. Monarchs depend on milkweed for breeding habitat and for food. Illinois has two dozen species of milkweed; five are threatened or endangered.



Are there ways we can be a part of this effort? Yes! Milkweed needs green space and natural areas to flourish. We have gardens! By planting milkweed and native plants and avoiding insecticides we can benefit monarchs and help ensure a healthy environment.

Well, isn't it too late now? No, November is the optimum time to plant milkweed seeds in this area. You can find seeds on Amazon, or maybe someone in our club has some to share.

“Almost everyone in North America can benefit from winter sowing milkweed seeds. The few exceptions are those that live in regions without a true winter.”

How to go about it? [Here is a link with directions for fall planting](#). And if you don't get that done, here's a [link for winter planting](#). (We will also have the winter planting article in the December print issue, space permitting)

And if you miss that time frame, you can still plant them in the spring—but you'll have to keep them in your refrigerator for a few months since milkweed seeds need to be cold stratified. You can even grow a plant or two in a pot.

So go plant some seeds, save the monarchs and contribute to our natural world.

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Bonnie Lolmaugh	3
Judy Leonard	10
Jean Studebaker	14
Judy Jensen	28
Julia Bishop	30



MIDWEST MONTHLY GARDENING

November starts crisp days and snuggly nights. Our gardens are winding down and the anticipation of snow is on the horizon. Winter is upon us and gardens should be put to bed.

1. **Perennials**—Leave most perennials for the birds and wildlife. However, some should be cut back (2-3") due to disease problems or flopping in the Winter. Plant garlic for next season. Make sure if you are planting perennials to allow 6-8 weeks before the hard frost sets in. No more fertilizing until Spring. Hosta, Peony, Baptisia or 6 ft. plus Ornamental Grasses to name a few.
2. **Indoor Plants**—Bring indoors all plants you are overwintering once temperatures are below 40 or 30 degrees. Before you bring the pots indoors check for bugs and spray with Insecticidal Soap to prevent an indoor infestation. Maintain a humidity for indoor plants to prevent dry, heated conditions.
3. **Containers**—Set up your Winter containers and swap summer annuals for something that will last through the Winter. If you aren't putting them outside now keep in a warm place so when you fill them for the holidays the soil isn't frozen. Wash and bleach (1 part bleach to 10 parts water) all unused containers.
4. **Seed Saving/Seed Supplies**—Last chance to collect seeds for next season. Stock up now on seed starting supplies. These supplies are cheaper now and may take longer when you are ready to start in late Winter.
5. **Weeding**—It's not time to stop weeding. Most weeds are perennial and will outlast our Winters, so continue to weed for less work in Spring.
6. **Mulching**—Do not mulch until the ground is frozen apply 2-3" layer of organic mulch around plants keeping it a few inches from stems and trunks. Make sure all tender, 1st year plants and bare spots get mulched. A great natural mulch is the bagged leaves and grass from your mower, because the chopped-up mix breaks down faster than many other mulches and eliminates the matting leaves if left on garden beds.
7. **Bulbs**—Finish planting Spring bulbs before the ground hardens.
8. **Lawn Care**—Mow until the grass stops growing. Apply Fall fertilizer if you haven't already done it.
9. **Vegetables**—Harvest any root vegetables remaining, plant Garlic, mulch asparagus and apply organic mulch or compost all empty beds.
10. **Trees, Evergreens and Shrubs**—If ground not frozen continue to water around base if dry.
11. **Maintenance**—Clean, sanitize, hang bird feeders and stock up on bird seed. Winterize fountains or bring in small water features. Bring in all lawn furniture and garden ornaments and repair/paint if necessary. Clean, sharpen, store or replace garden tools.

Note/Pictures—Hopefully you've been taking pictures throughout the season. Pictures and notes of garden successes and failures will help you plan for next year's garden.



April is a horticulturist retired from the Chicago Botanic Garden. She shares monthly gardening tips and would love to help you out with plant and gardening questions. Just [send her an email](#) and she will get back to you.



April Meyers

FALL PLANTING – Milkweed Seed

Here in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, fall is the best time to plant milkweed seeds. It's too warm for the ground to be frozen but too cold for seeds to sprout before winter sets in.

Exposing seeds to cool temperatures before the warmer temps of spring will cause them to break their dormancy and sprout in the spring. Fall planting is a great way to get your perennial milkweed varieties started, since the seeds will need cold stratification...and our winter weather will do this naturally.

Here's how to go about it:

1. Choose a spot (hopefully, quite sunny) and clear the ground. If it's dry, water it thoroughly.
2. Simply sprinkle seeds over the soil and cover lightly. Continue with step 6.

Or planting them a bit deeper make save more from predators like birds, squirrels and chipmunks.

3. Use a stick, a tool, or even you finger to make holes about an inch deep.
4. Make the letter L with your thumb and forefinger. Use the distance between the tips of each digit for approximate spacing. Seeds can move over winter and some won't germinate so exact spacing now is a waste of time.
5. Place a seed in each hole and cover it with the moist soil. You can mark them if you like so you recognize them next spring.
6. Cover the area with leaf mulch (the leaves you chopped up with your mower) to keep the soil moist.
7. 1-2 months after your seedlings have sprouted next spring, pinch off extra plants (or consider transplanting) to achieve ideal spacing milkweed. Most milkweed plants should be spaced 1.5 to 2 feet apart although in nature they grow (or not) where ever they land.
8. Enjoy watching them grow, and hopefully host some monarchs for you to watch.



Simply sprinkle milkweed seeds on well-tilled soil and pat them down, add a topdressing of soil and water them in. Fall-sown seed will be naturally stratified outside.

By: Jennifer Howell (Garden Gate Magazine online)

<https://monarchbutterflygarden.net/fall-planting-milkweed-10-steps/>
<https://www.gardengatemagazine.com/articles/how-to/start-seeds/how-to-harvest-and-plant-milkweed-seeds/>

RE-BLOOMING

Work of sight is done.
Now do heart work
On the pictures within you.

Rainer Maria Rilke



Another growing season draws to a close. While we clear our plots and store our pots many of us make mental notes of what worked and what we may do differently next spring. The more organized among us will actually write this down.

(Continued on page 6)

Homemade Suet Cakes

- 1 ½ cups lard or shortening (palm free)
- ¾ cup peanut butter
- 3 ½ cups bird seed
- 1 cup quick oats
- ½ cup corn meal

Mix dry ingredients together in a bowl

Melt lard and peanut butter. Pour over dry ingredients and stir to combine. Pour or press into molds. Freeze. Use these cakes when the temperature is cold.

Optional: chopped dried fruits and nuts can be added to the dry ingredients for an even tastier treat.



Beth's Corner

Cranberry Cake-Pie from the Pioneer Woman

<https://www.thepioneerwoman.com/food-cooking/recipes/a9555/nantucket-cranberry-pie/>

Makes 8-10 servings

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 stick unsalted butter, melted | 2 large eggs |
| 2 heaping cups cranberries | 1 tsp pure almond extract |
| ¾ cup pecans, chopped | 1 cup all-purpose flour |
| 1 ⅔ cups plus 1 tablespoon sugar | ¼ kosher salt |

Ice cream or freshly whipped cream, for serving

Preheat oven to 350° degrees. Butter a 9-inch cake pan or deep dish pie pan. Add cranberries to bottom of pan. Sprinkle on the pecans, then sprinkle on ⅔ cup sugar.

Whisk eggs in a bowl until lightly beaten. Into the eggs, whisk in the melted butter and almond extract. Gently stir in 1 cup sugar, the flour and salt until combined.

Pour the batter slowly over the berries in large ribbons to evenly cover the surface. Spread to the edges if necessary.

Bake until golden and toothpick inserted into the center of the cake part comes out clean, 45-50 minutes. About 5 minutes before removing from oven, sprinkle with the remaining 1 TBSP sugar for a little extra crunch.

Cut the pie into wedges and serve with ice cream or whipped cream.



RE-BLOOMING

(Continued from page 5)

I will consider whether to add sweet potato vine to the ancient concrete planters given to me by a beloved neighbor. In my Covid-induced haste (and lacking aforementioned list) I failed to buy them this year and didn't miss them until the containers were filled. But the petunias happily had more room to roam and looked glorious.

I will definitely plant more Sungold tomatoes—candy to the Grands and three squares for our chipmunk who always, thankfully, dined alone. I will not tempt fate and plant another pot of nepeta by my back door. Ground bees moved in and called it home until a nocturnal creature tipped it over and encouraged their search for new digs.

And I will redesign a once sunny section of my small side garden with more shade tolerant alternatives. Who knew serviceberries would grow so tall? I passed the sun lovers along to my children. How wonderful to see them create gardens of their own!

For many, a hint of sadness accompanies this process, reminded as we are of the passage of time. But the pleasures of gardens past and the dreams of gardens future linger and sustain us. As does gratitude for the days spent in their company.

Jan LaBelle