

Dunesland Latest Dirt



ISSUE 10

June 2021

PRESIDENTS' POINTS

It's Tea Time. June is the last meeting of our calendar year. That is when we always have our afternoon tea with scrumptious goodies, steaming cups of tea (except when the circuit breakers blow!) and sparkling socializing.

This year, though...it's a little different. So, grab your favorite teacup, fill it with the beverage of your choice, sit back and enjoy this newsletter, keeping in mind that we hope to be able to meet in person this fall.

We don't yet know what the fall situation will be. We have to follow the library's rules and keep safety in mind, but we certainly hope in-person meetings will be in our future. We are even tentatively planning a Welcome Back Luncheon. We will share details as soon as we can figure it out.

Since this is our last "meeting" it will also be our last official newsletter. However, we'd like to have a virtual garden tour of members' gardens since we're not having our usual one. If you **EACH** send in just one picture (or however many you like) we will publish a garden tour newsletter in July. We have worked hard this year getting newsletters out; now it's **your** turn to participate to make possible another. You can choose a picture from this year or previous years. Let us know if it's OK to post your name with the picture. Let's all go through photos or take new ones and create a gorgeous final newsletter.

As I write this, I'm thinking back over the past year which has been like no other in our 84-year history. We haven't been able to meet, except perhaps with a friend or two so we've missed sharing experiences with our gardening friends. Hopefully you've enjoyed and learned from the "speakers" that have graced the pages of our newsletters. There were opportunities to keep up with our activities, both virtual and now in person with our Winthrop Harbor planting project. Adversity has just made us stronger! Illinois Dunesland Garden Club survives to meet again! Garden on!

Sandi



I miss our teas. Maybe next year.

In Beth's Corner you will find recipes for some of our tea-time favorites including Southern Sweet Tea and mini quiches. There is already a recipe for Lemon Curd and scones on the website in the recipes section. So ask over a friend or two and have your own little tea.

You'll also find plenty of articles for growing tomatoes, whether in a large veggie garden, as an individual plant in a flower bed or hanging on a patio or gazebo. You can grow them almost anywhere!

Be sure to send in your "garden tour" photos for the summer newsletter/tour. Close-ups, whole gardens, critters in the garden, pretty garden art. Anything goes—well almost anything.

Hope you've all enjoyed the monthly newsletter this last year, and we look forward to seeing you in September at a fun kick-off luncheon if we are able.

Beth



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TOMATOES FROM SEEDLINGS TO DELICIOUS

Now that we have our tomatoes planted and growing, let's consider tomato care. That would be watering, feeding, staking, pruning and disease control.

I Love you
from my head
Tomatoes



Watering: The first and probably most important consideration is watering. Tomatoes require regular, consistent watering—in frequent, but deep is the best. The amount should equal about 1" (including rainfall) of water per week for in-ground. More frequent, daily or even twice daily, is needed for container tomatoes.

Water directly to the root zone; soaker hoses are ideal. Water early in the day and keep water off the foliage. This allows plants to dry off before nightfall which helps prevent the spread of disease.

Mulch to retain moisture. Mulch also helps prevent soil from splashing on plants. This limits diseases since many are soil borne.

Feeding: Next the plants must be fed. You should have fertilized when planting; the next time is when the plants start flowering. Then wait until the fruit is about golf ball size and fertilize again. After that, lightly fertilize every couple of weeks. Generally, a balanced fertilizer like 10-10-10 is better than a high nitrogen one which encourages lush green plants with fewer fruits. Three things to remember: Keep fertilizer off the leaves. Water deeply before planting. Compost is your best friend.

Staking is important for many reasons. See the accompanying article in Beth's Corner on how to do this.



Pruning is useful for production and disease control. First prune was done when planting by removing all leaves up to the last layer or two. Next, when plants begin to bloom remove all leaves below that first bloom. Finally, as plants grow suckers can be removed. Suckers are a smallish shoot that grows out of the joint where a branch on the tomato plant meets a stem. They don't harm the plant, but especially on indeterminates they can cause the plant to get out of control, becoming too dense and disease prone. But don't remove too many. They help nourish the plant and provide shade for the fruit, preventing sunburn.

Disease must also be taken into account. Prevention is best so start by staking your tomatoes.

Blight, both early and late, are fungal diseases that have been very prevalent lately. You see the signs in the leaves (target-shaped ring spots-early; irregular blotchy spots-late). Dark black with light centers in the leaf centers indicates leaf spot, another fungal disease.

To help control these, you need to remove the affected leaves and control the environment to prevent excessive heat, moisture and crowding. There are some chemicals, including organic, that can be safely used but they must be started early.

Blossom End Rot presents as black leathery spots on the bottom of the tomato where the blossom was. Many people know this is often caused by lack of calcium. But that doesn't mean the soil was deficient. It is most often caused by too much nitrogen or irregular water uptake which prevents calcium uptake. The lesson here is to fertilize properly and to water deeply and regularly.

Remember an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Care for your tomatoes and you will be rewarded.

NATIVE PLANT NERD

Hi, I'm Katie, your home-grown native plant nerd! I'll be popping in every once in awhile to share information with you about some of the lovely plants that are native to our area of the Midwest, their benefits, and why you might want to add a few (or a lot!) of native plants to your landscape.

If you have any questions - reach out at native@duneslandgardenclub.com



Kate



Native plants often have a reputation for being “aggressive”, “thuggish”, or “weedy”. Sometimes this reputation is earned. Common milkweed, for example, is great for monarchs, but can be a real pain for a gardener to try to control (only plant this particular variety if you have lots of space and an informal style!). And it doesn't help that so many natives have the term “weed” in their common names: Joe Pye Weed, Butterfly Weed, Milkweed, Ironweed... These plants need a new marketing team! Rest assured, though, that there are many lovely natives that will behave themselves in your landscape while providing benefits to the ecosystem. Here are a few to try:



Blue Star (*Amsonia tabernaemontana*) - clump forming and long-lived with lovely blooms for pollinators and hummingbirds

False/Wild Indigo (*Baptisia australis*) - forms almost a bush when mature, host plant for duskywing butterfly caterpillars, showy flowers

Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) - readily available in the nursery trade, long bloom time, tolerates drought, birds love to snack on the seeds

Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*) - a great milkweed choice to host monarch in a suburban landscape. Tolerates drought and likes sun. To prevent seeds from spreading, put a rubber band around the seed pods to keep them closed.

Royal Catchfly (*Silene regia*) - very showy red blooms, tolerates drought

Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) - readily available in the nursery trade, long and showy bloom time. Leave the seed heads for more plants next year and for your bird friends

Are you having trouble finding these and other native plants at your favorite local nursery? Planting native plants is a fairly new but very rapidly-growing trend. Be sure to ask for native options so they know their customers are interested!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

JUNE

Elizabeth Spannraft	9
Lauren Yahiro	14
Diane Sheehan	17
Mary Gustafson	19
Liz Grulke	25

JULY

Amy Miller	9
Sheryl Anderson	11
Jane Stried	17

AUGUST

Sandi Shea	5
Dolores Mink	7
Kevin Kinnavy	28
Carolyn Engelhart	29

MIDWEST MONTHLY GARDENING

June is planting time. Your dreams have now come to fruition. Sit back and enjoy your garden colors and blooms.



ANNUALS

Annuals are great to fill in the spaces your perennials, shrubs and trees leave. Remember which annuals you planted last year and watch for seedlings of those annuals (and make a note or list for next year if you add new ones!). Recognize weeds and remove.

PERENNIALS

Plant, transplant or divide perennials to enhance garden areas. Pinch chrysanthemums, aster and sedum so the plants stay midsize with more blooms. Remove spent blooms from perennials to promote a healthier plant. Fertilize roses after the first flush of blooms.

VEGETABLES

Plant pumpkins to be ready for Halloween remembering the area needs to be large since pumpkins take up space or plant them up a trellis (pumpkin support needed). Plant or direct sow all vegetables. Tomatoes need 50° at night to grow properly and tomato cages are needed. Replace cool season vegetables with summer vegetables. In late June stop harvesting asparagus and fertilize (10-10-10).

MULCHING

Apply mulch (3 inches) to the garden areas to keep weeds down and hold in moisture. Any weeds appearing need to be removed.

FERTILIZING

Actively growing plants need fertilizer. Apply a complete fertilizer such as 10-10-10 (1 pound per 100 square feet). Apply at the base and not the leaves of plants. If not water based fertilizer, then water immediately.

WATERING

Watering is essential during the hot times of June and beyond. Watering early is best; apply 1 inch of water per area. A drip watering system may be another good way to keep plants fully watered.

PEST CONTROL

Check the gardens for any problems and find solutions when necessary. Keep up to date on diseases and other garden problems, so when they develop a quick solution can be given.

LAWN CARE

If temperatures are high, mow grass at the highest level. When cooler weather starts, set the mower one-inch lower and set it higher when the temperatures get hotter. After three weeks of drought, grass goes dormant and turns brown. Watering is needed. Applying ¼ inch of water to rehydrate the crowns will keep it from dying.



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. [Send her an email](#) and she will get back to you.

— April



PLANT THUGS

WARNING! WARNING! WARNING!

When you see certain words, run the other direction as they generally indicate you are looking at a plant thug. Those are the plants that look good at first but threaten your sanity in a year or two. You can find these at garden centers all over. The plant might be ornamental but is very invasive. It could spread in your bed, into your lawn (and your neighbor's) or even into the wild, crowding out desirable native plants.



Establishes quickly—in two weeks it will be three feet across

Spreading—will attack you while you're sleeping

Invasive—comes with its own artillery

Easy to grow—and keep on growing

Ground cover—covers and smothers expensive plants

Hardy—requires a personal nuclear device to eradicate



Before you begin choosing your ornamental perennials, check to see how invasive they are. You can even google "how to get rid of ___" to see how much work they would require to eradicate! Here are a few that should come with a warning and a shovel.

Chameleon Plant (*Houttuynia cordata* 'Chameleon') A beautiful, edible, tri-colored leaved plant that will quickly take over a yard.

Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria* 'Variegatum') also called Bishop's weed. A beautiful green and white ground cover that never stays within bounds.

Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) A huge plant that can take over the world! It can even come up through asphalt.

Lily of the Valley (*Convallaria majalis*) A sweetly perfumed plant with tiny bells which is nearly impossible to keep from spreading everywhere. It is also highly toxic.

Mint (*Mentha* spp.) and all its dozens of species including Lemon Balm. One plant can overgrow your garden and even escape a pot.

Moneywort or Creeping Jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*) This is a creeping groundcover often used as a trailing plant in pots can escape and root at every node moving into the whole bed and lawn.

Loosestrife (*Lysimachia punctate* and *L. clethroides*) Beautiful flowers, but very invasive. Many have invaded the wilds.

Chinese Lantern (*Physalis*) Gorgeous orange seed heads dominate these plants which can spread by both seed and underground runners.

Ribbon Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea picta*) This has been spreading since the Victorian age. There are many other grass species that spread rapidly. Enough said!

Sweet Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) An edible herb flavored somewhat like vanilla. It may behave for a while, but eventually explodes to smother anything in its path.

Yes, you can find any of these for sale. But once you invite these bullies in your garden, you will probably spend years regretting it. You can dig, sift, smother, spray, cut and still find them returning. So as pretty as they may be, think carefully about your choices.

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WORKSHOPS



Available for your viewing pleasure and guidance, we now have three perennial plant-dividing workshops on the club website. If you want a non-professional tutorial with your own club officers doing a sometimes-entertaining film, be sure to watch them. They are included in your membership!

So far, we have presented **hostas**, **daylilies** and **iris** so you can see the process for each type of plant. There is also a workshop about **trimming plants** back and starting new ones from the clippings.

In a **Leopold Garden Bench** workshop, we actually make the bench step-by-step so it is easy to follow along and make it at home!



MINI QUICHE Makes 48

Beth's original recipe

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|--|---|
| 1 crust pie dough (can use homemade, a pie crust mix or premade pie crust) | |
| 1 onion, chopped | ½ lb breakfast sausage |
| 1 green pepper, chopped | 9 eggs |
| ½ cup to 1 cup milk | Salt and pepper, to taste |
| ¼ tsp garlic salt | 2 cups finely shredded cheese of choice |
| Broccoli florets, finely chopped | |

Grease each cup of a mini muffin pan with shortening or spray with non-stick spray.

1. Blanch broccoli for 1 minute in boiling water. Immediately drain. Cover with cold water. Drain again when cool.
2. Sauté sausage, onion and green pepper until sausage is browned.
3. Mix together eggs, milk, salt, pepper and garlic salt in a large measuring cup
4. Put a dime-size ball of pie dough in each cup of a mini muffin pan. Flatten each ball of dough in the bottom and up the sides of the cup.
5. Place 1 or 2 tiny florets of broccoli, then ½ to 1 tsp. of sausage mix in the pie crust. Pour egg mixture from a large measuring cup into each cup. Top with the shredded cheese.
6. Bake at 400° for 12-15 minutes – until the egg is set and cheese is melted and slightly browned.



Makes 48 mini bite-sized quiche.

SOUTHERN SWEET TEA

Better Homes and Gardens May 2021

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| 4 cups boiling water | 4 bags black tea (such as Lipton) |
| 1/8 tsp baking soda | ¾ cup sugar |
| 2 cups ice water | Lemon wedges and mint springs for serving |
| Bourbon (<i>optional—if you are watching the Kentucky Derby</i>) | |

1. Pour the boiling water into a large glass heatproof pitcher. Add the tea bags and baking soda; gently stir to combine.
2. Let the tea steep, uncovered, 15 minutes. Remove tea bags and discard.
3. Stir in sugar until dissolved. Pour in ice water and stir to combine.
4. Chill tea in the frig at least 1 hour before serving.
5. Garnish each glass with a lemon wedge and a mint sprig.
6. If desired, add a shot of bourbon.

Serves 4 to 6.



As an ongoing fundraiser, we always have our garden gloves for sale for \$4 a pair. They are very durable and make excellent gifts. Please let Helen K. know if you would like some.



GROW UP | TRAIN YOUR TOMATOES

Tomatoes are vines, so it's natural to grow them up. This not only saves garden space but also keeps plants healthy. Tomato diseases live in the soil. Fruit rotting on the ground invites slugs. And wouldn't you rather eat that tomato than accidentally step on it?

How do we grow up? Here are a few ideas.

BUY A CAGE. Many are very flimsy. Be sure they are made of heavy wire.

CRAFT A CAGE. Make a cylinder 18 inches in diameter out of fencing material. Wire the ends together. Be sure the fencing has holes large enough to get the tomatoes out. Anchor the bottom with tent stakes. A post in one edge of the cylinder will help keep the cage upright.

STAKE THE PLANT. Drive a seven-foot stake or post at least one foot into the ground. Put the tomato plant at the base of the stake. If using a metal post, it may have notches or hooks that will hold the twine that you use to hold the plant to the post. If using a wooden stake, put a roofing nail every six inches to hold your twine. Use soft material for tying the vines—t-shirt material cut in strips, old nylons, or jute twine.

USE AN OBELISK. If you don't have a veggie garden but want a tomato plant or two, these look great in a flower bed.

TRELLIS THE TOMATO. Place the tomato plant at the base of the trellis and keep tying it up the trellis as it grows. If you have a wide trellis, you may be able to fit two plants on it.

UPSIDE DOWN METHOD: Start with a five-gallon bucket (get one at a big box hardware store). Cut a two-inch hole in the bottom with a hole saw. Drill five or six ¼ inch drainage holes. Set the bucket upright on two sawhorses. From the bottom insert root ball of a compact or dwarf plant through the hole so the root ball is inside and the plant is hanging upside down. Cut a slit in a piece of paper or a coffee filter and slide it around the stem inside the bucket to support the plant as you fill the bucket with potting mix. Hang the bucket by its handle on a sturdy support. Water from the top until excess water runs free. Water daily. Fertilize weekly.



Find more images and links for the tomato ideas on our website!

HOLD ON TO YOUR HATS!



Hold on to your hats—don't lose them!

Even though we aren't able to use them this year, we plan on gathering for our afternoon tea next year. We all miss the fun of it now, but anticipation will make next year's even better. For now, just remember past teas we've had while planning which hat you'll wear next year. And please share and send in photos from years past!

IS IT DINNER TIME YET?

We all get hungry and need nourishment to live. Plants, too. Plants in the ground might get by without food, but for container plants, it is essential. Food and water—take Goldilocks’s advice: not too much, not too little, just right.

So let’s take a look at what’s on the menu for our plant babies. Fertilizer numbers consist of three numbers which indicate the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium in the fertilizer. Most plants do best with those nutrients in a 3:1:2 ratio which means you can choose 6-2-4 or 9-3-6 or 24-8-16 or anything close to that ratio.

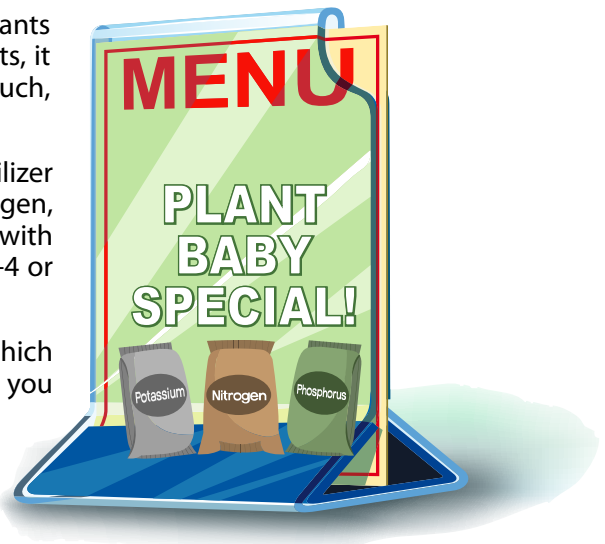
These come in different forms. The cheapest is *water soluble* which is usually a liquid or crystals you dilute in water. These are used every week or two.



There is also *slow release* which looks like little pellets. They slowly release the nutrients over several months by the work of microbes in the soil—more active in warm weather when plants are actively growing. So you only need them once or twice a season.

The newest form is *time release fertilizer* which is controlled by temperature only, not microbes. These tend to be more precise and more expensive. These can last several months to a year.

Choose which type you prefer and remember to use it. You can top dress with the pellets by sprinkling them over the soil top and scratching in or watering in. Use the recommended amount; too much can actually kill your plants. Of course they only fertilize when they are actively growing. Feed them well; water correctly and you will have lovely lush pots all season long.



RE-BLOOMING



“ Summer afternoon, summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language.

Henry James

”

Midwesterners are blessed with four distinct and beautiful seasons. Do you have a favorite? For many the answer is summer. Long days, warm nights, friends, family, gardens, picnics, concerts, beaches, trips and more...we happily make the most of it!

Normally our Garden Club meeting year ends on a high note with our June Tea. We celebrate our successes, then pause to savor the summer in all its glory. While there are no meetings to pause, there have been 10 newsletter issues. We’ve done our best to inform, entertain and hold our club together through the pandemic...cause for celebration if we do say so ourselves!

Now we take a break, but plan to stay in touch. Garden photo sharing (See the Presidents’ Points) and updates will continue. We hold out hope for a return to normalcy in the fall. Until then, *carpe diem*. Enjoy your summer!

Jan

