
CCGA May 2017 Newsletter

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» Chicago Community Gardeners Association



News for Community Gardeners

"In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt."

- Margaret Atwood, Bluebeard's Egg

Hello Community Gardeners!

Live events such as **CCGA's 5th Annual Conference**, with its six workshops, networking, lunch, and panel discussion provide a unique learning and growing experience for veteran community gardeners and first-time participants. Even the rainy day and cold weather couldn't stop the flow of people through the doors of the **Breakthrough FamilyPlex** in Garfield Park. Our heartfelt thanks goes to everyone who participated as organizers, speakers, volunteers, and attendees in this year's event. We hope you left as inspired as we did, even more excited about the future of community gardening in Chicago!

Our workshops gave community gardeners a place to share knowledge and skills gained 'in the soil' and developed through years of seeding, watering, and growing with other gardeners. From season extension to school gardens, our engaging and qualified academic and professionally-trained presenters provided evidence-based and environmentally-friendly practical solutions. The slideshow of photos of the many varied gardens in Chicago, along with those who tend and find joy in them, from workdays to plant distributions, demonstrate how we realize our conference theme '**Gardeners Grow Communities**' over and over throughout the year. Vendors and exhibitors brought new products, free seed packets, door prizes, and informational brochures. The many familiar faces at those tables were eager to share knowledge and chat, as always. They worked during the conference, but they all commented that it didn't feel like 'work'.

Seeing the integration of all these pieces - the workshops, the panel, the exhibitors, and YOU -

gave us a tangible road map of what we as CCGA aim to accomplish this season and in the year ahead. We invite you to join us as we continue to provide a platform to connect Chicago's community gardeners, to cultivate and facilitate plant distributions, develop new educational workshops, and publish timely news and information. With our continuing evolution and your feedback, we strive to be an even more vibrant CCGA.

To view photos from the CCGA conference click [here](#).



Ruth Kerzee of Midwest Pesticide Action Center and conference participants discuss action-oriented resources for maintaining vibrant vegetation at the Get Your Green On! Tips for Growing Natural, Vibrant Gardens workshop.

With all the rain earlier this month, the timing was perfect on Saturday, April 8th as the **CCGA Resources Committee** held its **Annual Spring Plant Distribution**. **Val Kehoe**, Horticulture Coordinator for the University of Illinois Extension program, discussed hardy plants for hardy soils here in Chicago. From annuals, both winter and summer, to biennials and perennials (both creeping and simple), Val gave a thorough explanation and the pros and cons of each for community gardens. Her presentation was packed with engaging information, graphics, and photos that illustrated every point she made. Attendees freely shared their gardening experience, and many asked follow-up questions and even sought her out after the presentation. The University of Illinois Extension program prepares excellent handouts for gardeners, and not one remained as folks left the event.

Following the presentation, the Resources Committee distributed 2,500 spring plants that went home with 88 registered participants! They cultivated 1,500 seedlings in the greenhouse in months prior to the event, and obtained an additional 1,000 plants from the **Chicago Flower and Garden Show**. Thank you to all who helped create another successful CCGA plant distribution event!

View the workshop documents and photos [here](#).

News from out in the Gardens

This Saturday! Join the CCGA Resources Committee for our Annual Spring Vegetable & Flower Distribution

Please register in advance with **Mamie** at mamie@uic.edu by sending her your name, the name of your community garden and your garden address.

This year, we have 28 varieties of tomatoes! Plus, eggplant, peppers, parsley, chives, hyssop, clary sage, brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, broccoli, thyme, iresine, plectranthus, tradescantia, coleus, rudbeckia, salvia, reseda, digitalis, asclepias, ageratum, oxalis, marigolds, stock, lisianthus, geraniums, Mexican petunia, snapdragons, chamomile and dahlias that are ready for your gardens!

We also have varieties of giant cannas for \$2 each.

When: Saturday, May 6 at 10am

Where: Chicago Center for Green Technology at 445 N. Sacramento Blvd.

Cost: \$5 per garden

Questions? Please email Mamie.

Helpful tip: Please bring a couple of boxes to help carry your plants!

For more information see our full site post [here](#).

Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse Annual Plant Sale - Sat. May 20 and Sun. May 21 from 10am-2pm

Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse will offer more than 150 varieties of organically-grown vegetable, herb, and flower seedlings. Customers can expect a wide variety of open-pollinated and heirloom tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants. Other highlights include an assortment of herbs, greens and onions.

This year will feature many new plants selected for city gardening in small spaces and containers. These seedlings are grown with the support of a team of dedicated volunteers who make this Plant Sale possible. Volunteers will be on hand to answer questions about plant selection and planting. This yearly fundraiser supports the greenhouse and our work to connect kids to nature and healthy foods.

Also Available at the Plant Sale: Perennials and other plants donated by volunteers of the Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse, organic compost, and light snacks. In addition, a cookbook

compiled by the Friends of Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse will be available for purchase. Look for the Friends of Kilbourn Park Organic Greenhouse tables just outside the main gate to the gardens.

When: Saturday May 20, and Sunday, May 21, 2017 from 10am-2pm

Where: Kilbourn Park, 3501 N. Kilbourn Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60641 Tel: [\(773\) 685-3351](tel:(773)685-3351)

Cost: Free Admission, Plant Prices between \$2 to \$5 CASH ONLY

<http://www.chicagoparkdistrict.com/events/Organic-Plant-Sale-at-Kilbourn3/>

23rd Annual Pullman Garden Walk and Tea - Saturday June 24th

The Historic **Pullman Garden Club**, with co-sponsors the Historic Pullman Foundation, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and Pullman State Historic Site, invite you back to the Victorian era of the 1880's during the **23rd Annual Garden Walk - A Garden Walk and Tea**, on Saturday June 24, 2017, from 10am to 4pm.

Victorians passed the summer days more leisurely than we do today and so can you, as you step back in time within this picturesque historic neighborhood. The event begins at the Pullman National Monument Visitor Center, 11141 South Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago IL 60628, where you will pick up a ticket brochure/map to begin your tour.

Tickets include a light Summer-themed tea to be held on the veranda of the Hotel Florence. You can enjoy one of the guided walking tours of the historic district, or use the self-guided tour map and stroll at your own pace. The tour will wind through the row house lined blocks to visit the public gardens, including the Gateway Garden, a part of the **NeighborSpace** community garden network, select private gardens, plus our community food garden and urban gardens. Tea service will begin at 11am.

Tickets for the event are \$12 in advance by emailing historicpullmangardens@gmail.com or calling [\(773\) 568-2441](tel:(773)568-2441) until June 22 or \$15 on the day of the event.

For more information see our full site post [here](#).

Cultural Heritage Spring Gathering in Little Village - Saturday May 20th

Cultural heritage panel! Seed swap! Community slideshow of urban farms and gardens! Potluck! Chicken care workshop! Know Your Rights Resource Table! Come together with us to enjoy all this and more at **AUA's Cultural Heritage Spring Gathering!**

This is a free, fun afternoon of culture and community on Chicago's southwest side on Saturday, May 20th, from 12pm-3pm at **La Villita Community Church**, 2300 S. Millard Ave. The event starts with a community potluck, followed by a chance to swap culturally significant seeds, and then explore

Chicago's urban agriculture community in photos from gardens and farms across the city. Then an amazing panel of urban agriculture leaders will celebrate our cultural connections to agriculture.

For more information see our full site post [here](#).

News you can use

UIC Extension Master Urban Farmer Training Program Spring/Summer Session 2017

The University of Illinois Extension has just announced an **Urban Ag training program** being held on 12 consecutive Wednesdays from **May 10th through July 26th** from 5:30pm to 8:30pm.

Location: [the Children's Farm at The Center](#), 12700 S. Southwest Highway, Palos Park, IL.

Intended for Entrepreneurs who want to start an urban produce farm operation, Community members in underserved/food insecure communities who want to increase food security and/or establish a community food system project in their neighborhood, Educators who want to bring food production knowledge back to their organization; and new growers interested in more intensive training programs.

Class size is limited to 25 participants in an effort to engage individual participants at greater level. There will be "eyes on" and "hands on" opportunities to incorporate concepts learned during the modules:

Site Selection Issues • Intro to Soils, Testing, Analysis, and Corrections • Composting • Vegetable Production Systems, Planning, and Scheduling Transplant Production • Season Extension • Insects, Diseases, Weed Management • Integrated Pest Management • Tools, Equipment, and Irrigation • How to Choose a Farm Enterprise • Business Planning, Financial Statements, and Marketing for your Urban Agriculture Project • Bees & Native Pollinators • Food Safety, GAP's, and Post-Harvest Handling • Keeping it Legal • Fruit Production • Grant Programs and other farm programs/resources

For more information see our full site post [here](#).

Green Living Tips for the Garden

Gardeners play a unique role in lessening the ever-growing pressures within the ecosystem. Studies have also shown that eco-gardening has made a positive impact on the slowing of climate change.

- A **DIY watering can** for the garden that won't take up much space at all can be

made simply from a gallon water jug or any container. Just poke a few holes into the lids of plastic bottles and use them to sprinkle your crops.

- **Recycle your plastic plant trays, pots, and those plant tags.** You can bring them to Lowe's garden centers even if you didn't purchase them there. Your local garden center might also accept them too. Home Depot takes them too. They put them in a pile where people can help themselves.
- **Birds can serve as exceptional and natural protectors.** Install bird feeders for a variety of birds and nesting boxes to encourage more birds to visit. Using will also help eliminate the need for synthetic insecticides, fungicides, and weed killers that are toxic to the environment.
- **Reuse!** Seek out old tarps from a local lumber store that they used to cover wood during shipping instead of purchasing expensive weed-blocking landscape cloth.

And finally...

Interested in co-creating a vision and plan for the CCGA as an organization? We need your input!

Now that we've been inspired at the 5th Annual Conference and had a chance to plant some seeds, we've landed on a date for our 2017 planning retreat:

Saturday, June 3 from 11am-3pm
North Park Village Nature Center
5801 N Pulaski Rd, Chicago, IL 60646

We welcome anyone who is ready to roll up their sleeves and help co-create an organizational plan for the CCGA. We are growing and are ready to define and streamline our structure and vision for the future.

Please RSVP by May 19 to communications@chicagocommunitygardens.org. We will provide background documents and updates about the agenda for the day as the date gets closer. Depending on the number of folks attending, we will either have a potluck or catered lunch. Please join us!

Next CCGA Coordinating Meeting – Tuesday May 23, 6pm

The next CCGA Coordinating Meeting will be Tuesday, May 23 at 6pm at the **Chicago Center for Green Technology CCGT** at 445 N. Sacramento Blvd. and our focus will be **preparation for our retreat** and **wrap-up reporting on the CCGA 5th Annual Conference** in March.

We will meet on the 2nd floor and there is parking behind the building. Bring a snack or drink to

share if you can.

NOTE: All CCGA coordinating meeting minutes are available for you to review on the website. Look under the menu tree at 'Who We Are' and then 'CCGA Organization' and you will see links here for the coordinating committee documents.

Hope to see you there!

Have ideas, suggestions or news you would like to share with fellow community gardeners in the next CCGA email? Please send those items to communications@chicagocommunitygardens.org.

For questions about CCGA and how to get involved, email membership@chicagocommunitygardens.org or visit chicagocommunitygardens.org/ccga-organization

Need resources for your community garden? Have resources to offer? Email resources@chicagocommunitygardens.org.



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Our mailing address is:

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