

Lake Minnetonka Garden Club Meeting November 21, 2024
Held at the Snyder Auditorium in the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Vice President Melissa Johnson called the meeting to order at 1: 00 PM. She asked for guest introductions and then introduced Andrew Gapinski, Director of the Arboretum, the garden for all Minnesotans. Andrew thanked the LMGC for our long-shared history in making the organization work. Our support is much appreciated and is essential for the Arboretum's success. Andrew introduced Rebecca Haddad, Managing Director of Development who will be our point of contact for future meetings and events at the Arboretum. Andrew shared his background, current Arboretum projects and future work. The beauty of the Arboretum is what drew Andrew to apply and accept this position. He showed a map of all the Arboretum land acquisitions over the years, including 2024. He highlighted the newest buildings including the Myers Kitchen in the Burton and Virginia Myers Education Center. He told us about the Arboretum's Mission Pillars: Research, Collections, Education, and Conservation. Elevating and amplifying the Arboretum is the goal and work of the new Strategic Plan and into the future. Road work around the Arboretum will impact the future: 82 Street being paved and Route 5 to a 4-lane highway in front of the Arboretum. The Arboretum entry will move west with a traffic light entry and the Apple House will be located to the east of the current entry. He ended with again thanking the LMGC for our support.

Melissa passed around the sign-ups for the one remaining date for the Lake Minnetonka Historical Society Saturday AM volunteer work.

Melissa announced that long time member Barbara Savage passed away last week. Barbara joined the club in 1971 and was the LMGC President from 1984-86. We honored her with a moment of silence.

Mary Meyer asked for a motion to approve them October 2024 LMGC meeting minutes, motion made by Kate Bryant and seconded by Shelly McGinnis. Motion passed.

Melissa thanked Jill Pflaum and Connie Linder for planning the workshop and meeting today.

Mitzi Magid and Mimi Keating gave an update on the Endowment Fund which has been started for scholarship and community projects. \$507,000 has been pledged, \$320,000 in donations and \$45,000 in interest has been received to date. The formal campaign will run until 2027. Support for the endowment is much appreciated. Remember the endowment in your year-end gifts and memorials. Thank you!

Kimberly Walsh asked members to remember that when visiting gardens, winter traveling, etc. it is a good idea to post stories post on the [GCA Connect site](#). Similar to Instagram; post a photo, etc. This is a nice way to share what is happening and connect with other

club members.

Nancy Guldberg and Mary Meyer shared photos and information about the September 2024 Shirley Meneice Conference in Chicago. See Nancy's report attached to the end of these minutes. The 2025 SM Conference will be remote and held via Zoom on September 18, 2025, hosted by GCA clubs in Virginia and Zone VII.

Melissa auctioned off the designer arrangement; thank you Chi Chi Steiner for scholarship donation.

Connie reminded us of the next meeting on April 17, 2025 on Sustainable Farming Practices. She spoke highly of the lunch caterer, L and L Catering in Mound. Connie adjourned the meeting at 1:55 PM.

Minutes submitted by Mary Meyer.

Shirley Meneice Horticulture Conference
September 15-18, 2024
Chicago Botanical Garden

Participants:

- Mary Meyer – Lake Minnetonka Garden Club, Zone XI Horticulture Representative
- Nancy Guldberg – Lake Minnetonka Garden Club Horticulture Chair, author of this report

We arrived in Chicago early Saturday evening in time for a dinner with other conference goers and organizers.

Hort learnings

○ **Sunday, September 15**

Pre-trip Mary attended:

- Crab Tree Farm: Historic large farm on Lake Michigan that includes one of the few remaining indoor tennis courts, complete with live Ficus.
- Camp Rosemary Nine acres of formal gardens with vistas and swimming pool
- Mettawa manor Bill Kurtis home with 15 acre prairie and formal gardens

On waitlist for Pre-trip so....7 of us (including Nancy) on the waitlist headed into downtown Chicago

- Chicago River Architectural boat tour



- Visit to the Millennium Park and its “secret garden”, Lurie Garden – I shared the secret passage that goes into the arborvitae hedge at the Lurie

Dinner Speaker: Jack de Vroomen

Jack de Vroom owns and operates a third-generation family business that sells bulbs and other perennials to the trade. Along with his manager, Jill Selinger, they discussed the spring varieties (old and new), how they are propagated and distributed worldwide. I would like to say more, but the audio system was so poor I only heard about 1 of every 4 words.



○ **Monday, September 16 – Day 1 – Chicago Botanical Garden**

- During breakfast a table set up for seed sharing – we brought back things to share with the club.
- **AM Speaker Fred Spicer: What It Takes to Become a Premier Botanical Garden**
Fred Spicer is the Executive Vice President and Director of the Chicago Botanical Garden. He introduced us to the 52-year history, of the garden, showing images of where they started and where they are today. He took us behind the scenes with pictures of the garden’s creation.



Interesting note....rather than a Mission Statement, Fred Spicer spoke to the Ambition Statement of the Botanical Garden (Pictured above). The garden has an impressive 3 million documented plants, four national collections, and is an AAM accredited Museum.

Fred had a few other things to say about plant breeding. That inbreeding is bad for plants. Farming pesticides and loss of habitat are eating away at the pollinator population. Because of these things, farmers are becoming more aware of cross breeding plants from other places as well as planting pollinator ditches to provide corridors for migrating insects and birds. Boxwood blight is a major concern both here in the states as well as Europe.

- **AM Speaker Carrie Waterman – GCA Initiatives**
Carrie Waterman encouraged everyone to consider nominating a plant for the 2026 Freeman Medal. The plant is to be an underutilized native that is a herbaceous perennial. Information on how to submit and deadline can be found at <https://www.gcamerica.org/members/freeman-medal-instructions>. For questions or help with a nomination email freemanmedal@gcamerica.org. The 2026 nomination form is online now.

GCA publications are online and can be found by logging into the GCA website and

going to publications. There are 6 including our outstanding Bulletin, ConWatch (conservation topics and concerns), Focus (photography publication with tips and images produced by our membership), The Real Dirt (featuring in-depth articles and handy tips for gardeners of all levels), Call to Action (requests for GCA club members to contact their legislators in support of particular bills, actions, or other matters related to the GCA's purpose), and By Design (full color, floral design magazine).

Native Plant Month is now occurring in 47 states and is **permanent** in 6 of those states.

▪ **Morning Session: Zone Meeting Breakouts**

The Zone XI Hort meeting was hosted by our own Mary Meyer. Thirty-eight Zone XI participants shared ideas for engaging club members in horticulture learnings.

▪ **Afternoon Tours in Lake Forest**

The afternoon consisted of visits to 4 amazing gardens

- **Craig Bergmann's Home** – Landscape Architect that uses the grounds of his home as his demonstration gardens for his customers to see the plants that “work” in the Chicago area. Information on Craig and his business can be found at <https://craigbergmann.com>
- **Elawa Farms** – Historic farm established in 1917. Property today is used to demonstrate sustainable farming practices and used for both formal and informal education on the topic of sustainable gardening. Property contains and culinary center, market and food-access initiatives.
- **Three private Homes in Lake Forest** – Homes included an Italianate villa, Georgian Revival home, and the Chandler House on 35 acres of restored prairie. Gardens were amazing with the Chandler House boasting a very large restored prairie.
- **Jean and John Greene Nature Preserve** – A 61-acre preserve restored and open to the public. There are miles of hiking trails.

▪ **Dinner Speaker – Jack Pizzo, Re-establishing and Maintaining Native Prairie Plantings**

Jack Pizzo, founder of the Pizzo Group of Leland, Illinois, addressed large scale re-establishments of native prairies.

○ **Tuesday, September 17 – Day 2 – Chicago Botanical Garden**

▪ **2024 Freeman medal Winner: *Passiflora incarnata*, Passionflower,**

Proposed by: Cheryl Welch, The Garden Club of Jackson, Zone IX
Seconded by: Katie Breese, The Garden Club of Jackson, Zone IX

Nomination forms for the 2026 Freeman Medal can be found at:
<http://form.jotformpro.com/form/51585246224960>



- **AM Speaker 1: Dr. Christie Klimas: Conservation through Collaboration**

Christie (**GCA Scholar**) shared a historical perspective of what has happened to our forests in just the last 45 years. Driving the loss of forestation are: community-driven deforestation, shifting agriculture practices, forestry, wildfire and urbanization. She also shared a project called, *Evanston Host Plant Initiative, Native flowers for the Rusty patched Bumble Bee*. She addressed the value of home gardeners and home gardening, as citizen scientists, providing corridors of host plants for the bumble bees. These corridors make for continuous pathways for the bees and other pollinators. Extensive data was collected throughout Evanston that showed how a once “food desert” for pollinators was transformed into a continuous feast of sorts for all pollinators.

- **AM Speaker 2: Lydia Scott – Adding Trees to Our Urban World**

The value of trees should not be underestimated was the main theme of Lydia’s talk. She shared information about how heat is reduced in areas with tree cover, and that trees had a large impact on positive social feelings within a community...vandalism, and other crimes are diminished, families utilize the outside and nature more freely.

“Heat is the deadliest extreme weather event, killing more people than hurricanes, floods and tornadoes combined,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She suggests that we all make a plan for progress within our own communities and those surrounding us.

Lydia’s talk included a wealth of information for those seeking financing for big plant initiatives. Listed below are places where large funds are available to cities and organizations.



Trees are helpful in the following ways

- Trees can make a 15degree difference in temperature on hot days
- Trees reduce flooding. Their helps shed water more slowly
- Forest bathing is a real thing for reducing stress

\’;”:?.

- **PM Breakout sessions**

Participants choose from a collection of breakouts. These are the ones Nancy attended:

- **Lily Lust presented by Patsy Smith, Hort Judge**, Winchester-Clarke, Zone VII. This session discussed the types of lilies, when they bloom and how to care for and show lilies. By selecting specimens from all of the categories of lilies, you can have lily blooms May – August.
- **Bonsai**: CBG has 300+ bonsai trees. We met with the curator of the trees and he talked about professional tree care as well as how the more casual “home” gardener could care for the little guys. He shared the tools he worked with and identified the “basic” tools needed.... all of which could be purchased at local home improvement stores. Interesting fact, while a

miniature tree could be turned into a Bonsai, actual bonsai trees are full size trees, trained and manipulated to remain small.

- **Healthy Soils = Healthy Plants = Beautiful Gardens presented by Tom Tiddens**, Supervisor of Plant Health Care for Chicago Botanical Garden. Tom shared the process that CBG goes through when creating and re-designing gardens on the ground. He discussed the difficulty of keeping trees and plantings healthy. His general formula for those of us with clay soil.... FIRST, have a soil test. Find out the composition of silt, sand and clay you have, test for phosphorous, potassium and nitrogen levels and the ph of the soil. From there you can decide how best to amend the soil. His suggestion for clay: you will be adding coarse sand (not sandbox sand, but coarse san).

His basic recipe:

- 50% soil from your yard/garden -
- 25% coarse sand - Coarse sand has a grain size of 0.5-1.0mm. This means when passed through a #35 sieve a 65-75% of the sand will pass through. ...if you purchase horticulture sand, it should be the right coarseness.
- 25% high quality compost.
High quality compost has active organic matter. Tom suggests you ask your supplier if in fact the compost is active organic compost. He also says that they will probably look at you like you are crazy.... like they have NO idea if what you are talking about! If your compost is healthy, there will not be a need to enhance the soil with fertilizer.
- PLUS 5% biochar -...yes....this makes for 105% ☺
Tom suggests that the biochar adds a little extra punch to the mix. In their test plots, the plots that had biochar added to any of their text mixes it demonstrated enhanced performance on the of whatever plants were in the ground.

▪ **Evening Presenter – Ernest C. Wong: Changing Communities One Garden at a Time**

Ernest Wong is Founder and Principal, Site Design Group, LTD. Ernest has been instrumental in the evolution of the landscape of Chicago, transforming available space in neighborhoods all across Chicago into welcoming family-friendly spaces. He also transformed the Chicago River front. His talk was both entertaining and inspiring.

Other learnings

- Collaborating with others from all around the country.
 - Hearing how they conduct Hort offerings for their clubs
 - Gaining friends all around the country
 - GCA committee crossovers, how they work together
 - Horticulture
 - Conservation
 - NAL
 - Crossovers with other committees

- Visiting Gardens
 - Civic Improvement
 - Photography
 - Flower Shows
- Finding and sharing resources
 - Individuals can make a difference
- Next year Shirley Meneice Hort Conference is virtual – everyone is encouraged to attend.

Books

- **Silent Spring, Rachel Carson** - Published in 1962, *Silent Spring* documents the environmental harm caused by the indiscriminate use of DDT, a pesticide used by soldiers during WW2. Craigbergman.com
- **Last Child in the Woods, Richard Louv** – Published in 2006, *Last Child in the Woods* is the first book to bring together a new and growing body of research indicating that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development and for the physical and emotional health of children and adults

In This Ravishing World, Nina Schuyler – Published in 2024, *In this Ravishing World* is a sweeping, impassioned short story collection, ringing out with joy, despair, and hope for the natural world. Nine connected stories unfold, bringing together an unforgettable cast of dreamers, escapists, activists, and artists, creating a kaleidoscopic view of the climate crisis