

May—June 2025



# Kewaunee County Garden Club Newsletter

## Why Native Plants?

### 1. Supports Biodiversity:

Native plants provide essential food and shelter for a wide variety of insects, birds, mammals, and other animals, creating a complex and interconnected web of life. They offer nectar and pollen for pollinators like bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds which are vital for plant reproduction and ecosystem health. Native plants create diverse habitats that support a wider range of species compared to non-native or ornamental plants. Many native insects rely on specific native plants for survival, with some species even being host plants for certain insect larvae.

### 2. Ecosystem Services:

Native plants with deep root systems help improve soil structure, prevent erosion, especially on slopes, and maintain water infiltration. Native plants are often well-adapted to local climates, requiring less water than non-native plants. Native plants can help reduce air pollution by absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen. Native plants can help regulate local weather patterns and contribute to climate resilience.

### 3. Environmental Benefits:

Native plants are generally low-maintenance, requiring less pruning, fertilizing, and pest control than non-native plants. Native plants help protect pollinators and other beneficial insects. Native plants, particularly trees, can store significant amounts of carbon in their root systems, helping to combat climate change.

### 4. Benefits for Wildlife

Native plants provide a variety of food sources for wildlife, including nuts, seeds, fruits, and nectar. They offer shelter and nesting sites for animals, protecting them from predators and harsh weather conditions. Native plants are well-adapted to local conditions and can help wildlife survive changing climates.

### Recommended native plants for Kewaunee County

**Flowers:** Cardinal flower, Canada anemone, anise hyssop, goldenrod, black-eyed Susan, wild bergamot, coneflower, northern maidenhair fern, red columbine, swamp milkweed, butterfly weed, cinnamon fern, and lance-leaved coreopsis,

**Shrubs:** Ninebark, elderberry, viburnum, and roundleaf serviceberry.

**Trees:** American larch, balsam fir, white pine, and sugar maple.

## KCGC Program, Meetings, and Events

**Tuesday, May 20**—'Bugs' with Barbara Piechocki—Dana Farm Warming House 6:30 p.m.

**Saturday, May 24**—KCGC Plant Sale at Lakehaven Hall grounds, Kewaunee

**Thursday, June 10** - Dana Farm Clean Up at 1:00 p.m. (*backup date: Tuesday, June 17*)

**Thursday, June 19**—Chicago Botanical Garden Trip

Algoma St. Mary's Church School Parking Lot at **5:30 a.m.**

Kewaunee Grade School Parking Lot at **5:50 a.m.**

**Tuesday, June 24**—'The Mystery of Photosynthesis' - Joel Weichert, 1326 Miller Street, Kewaunee at 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, July 22**—Garden Tour with Mary Ouradnik, N6308 Crevice Road, Casco 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, August 26**—'Irrigation System' with Kathy Pederson, N2740 Lakeshore Road, Kewaunee 6:30 p.m.

**Saturday, September 20 and Sunday, September 21**—Ag Heritage Days, Luxemburg Fair Grounds

**Tuesday, September 23**—'Leaves ... Are Not In Vein' - Sue Hepp at ESI Hub 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, October 28**—Tom Zenner (*Topic, location, and time TBD*)

**Tuesday, November 25**—'Amaryllis—Growing in Water' Jean Rankin and Barb Smith at KC Highway Department 6:30 p.m.

**Tuesday, December 9**—KCGC Christmas Party (*location and time TBD*)

## KCGC—Bird City Algoma WMBD 2025

The annual Bird City Algoma WMBD event was a success thanks in part to the Kewaunee County Garden Club. Sue and Warren did an awesome job. Warren's oriole feeders were a big hit.

Tom answered many questions regarding the Merlin and eBird Apps. Both apps are great for birders whether new to birding or an avid birder.



## Plant A Row for the Hungry Project

**Plant A Row's Mission** is to mobilize the community to grow and distribute fresh produce to local families facing food insecurity and promote sustainable practices that combat climate change.

Founded in 2010, Plant A Row for the Hungry empowers residents to help their neighbors have access to nutritious food by growing and donating fresh produce. With more than 325,000 servings of fruits and vegetables delivered to food pantries, we unite the community through our volunteer programs and enduring partnerships. We welcome residents of all ages to join us as we work together to make a difference in our town. Keep scrolling down to learn more about our initiatives.

Thanks to Nancy Lamack for bringing this project to the garden club. It is doable whether one has a small or large garden space. Even if you don't have either, there is an alternate ... containers.

One way to get more per row or container is to multi-seed. Try planting the following veggies according to the number of seeds shown. This affords more produce as well as the ability to stagger harvest.

**Radish**—5 seed per/hole    **Onions**—8 seeds per/hole    **Peas**—3 seeds per/hole    **Chard**—3 seeds/hole  
**Beets**—5 seeds/hole

## Growing Potatoes in Bags

While it's not essential, you may want to chit (*or pre-sprout*) your seed potatoes two to four weeks before planting. To chit your potatoes, lay them in a single layer in a warm spot with indirect light. A good way to prevent rot during this stage is to place your potatoes in egg boxes or seed trays. Once your potatoes put out shoots that are 1 inch (2.5 cm) long, they are ready to plant.

Mix potting soil and organic compost to prepare a growing medium. You can add a little granular fertilizer to the mix, but not too much since potatoes do not like rich soil. Moisten this soil, then put about 4 inches (10 cm) of the soil in the bottom of the bag. Plant small, whole potatoes, but cut larger ones into chunks the size of limes for planting. As long as a seed potato piece has one or more "eyes," it should grow into a new potato plant.

Place the seed potato chunks – three to five per bag – on the surface of the soil, spacing them around evenly. Fill with just enough medium to cover the tops of the tubers. Keep the soil mix evenly moist and cover the sprouted potato greens with a compost mix as they come up. Then place the bag in a site with at least six hours a day of direct sunlight, and step back and watch the potatoes grow.

Place bags in full sun and keep the soil evenly moist but not soggy. The young sprouts will not thrive in dry soil, and during the hot summer days you may have to water several times in one day to prevent dry out. The plant should grow vigorously and blossom during the summer.

Keep an eye out for pests, especially chewing insects which can affect the vigor of your plants. Occasionally unearth a small tuber and check for any damage to the young potato. If you use clean, new compost, you are unlikely to have any major soil-borne insect problems. While grow bags take care of a lot of issues, potato plants do have a few other needs. Check to make sure the tubers are covered with soil to prevent greening or sunscald.

As summer wanes, the plant's leaves will begin to wilt and turn yellow. At that point, the potatoes are ready to harvest. Harvesting is easy, just dump out the bag to harvest the potatoes. The potatoes are smaller but there are more of them. They are a good size for grilling and very tasty!

# Kewaunee County Garden Club Annual Plant Sale 2025

[www.kcgardenclub.org](http://www.kcgardenclub.org)



**Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup>**

**9:00 a.m. – Noon**

**Lakehaven Hall, Kewaunee**

(on the grounds)

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- Annuals
- Perennials
- Native Plants
- Tomato Plants
- Crafts
- Garden Kits (**Free**)

## Natural Insect Repellent

Plants are a natural and sustainable way to deter pests without harmful chemicals. Without spreading chemicals, there is no risk to children or pets. Many of the insect repelling plants are culinary herbs, decorative flowers, or medicinal remedies. Plus, they are easy to grow and require minimal care.

1. **Lavender** has a soothing fragrance which mosquitoes, moths, and flies dislike.
2. **Basil**, a kitchen staple, has a pungent aroma which mosquitos detest.
3. **Mint's** strong scent deters ants, mosquitoes, and flies. Advice—grow in containers!
4. **Rosemary**—It's woody scent repels mosquitoes, cabbage moths, and carrot flies.
5. Plant **French Marigold's** around veggies to protect them against aphids, mosquitoes, and nematodes.
6. **Lemongrass** contains citronella which is a well-known mosquito repellent.
7. **Thyme** repels mosquitoes and whiteflies with its earthy scent.
8. **Chrysanthemums** contain pyrethrum, a natural insecticide that deters ants, roaches, fleas, and ticks.
9. **Sage** is another herb that repels mosquitoes, flies, and other insects.
10. **Petunias** are natural pest repellents for aphids, tomato worms, and squash bugs.
11. **Garlic** deters aphids, mosquitoes, and Japanese beetles with its strong sulfuric odor.
12. **Catnip** contains nepetalactone, a compound that repels mosquitoes, flies, and cockroaches.

## Perennials Looking Tired?

To keep your perennial garden looking its best, plants need dividing. Plants will have diminishing blooms, less vigorous foliage growth, and missing flower parts. Dividing rejuvenates tired old plants, improves bloom production, encourages stronger stems, and decreases disease issues. A bonus, division gives extra plants to share at the plant sale or with a friend/neighbor.

Bearded iris, coreopsis, daylilies, heucheras, and Shasta daisies are a few of the perennials that tend to need division every three or four years. Plants that spread vigorously by creeping roots should be cut back every other year.

**Spring:** Divide perennials that flower from midsummer to fall as well as those grown primarily for foliage.

**Summer:** Finish dividing spring bloomers in early summer. At the end of August, finish the division process.

**Fall/Winter:** Finish dividing plants by early fall so there is time for new roots to grow before winter. From late fall through winter, check on plants that have been divided to make sure freeze and thaw cycles have not pushed the crowns out of the soil. Cover any exposed crowns and roots with soil or mulch until they can be replanted in spring.

## Officers:

**President:** Tom Zenner

**Vice President:** Cheryl Eberle

**Secretary:** Sue Hepp

**Treasurer:** Ann Brunner

## Marketing Committee:

Tom Zenner

Barb Smith

Cheryl Eberle

Nancy Lamack

Joel Weichelt



## Plant Sale List Reminder:

If you haven't turned in your plant list to Sue Hepp, please do so now so she can make and print labels for your flowers, veggies, herbs, trees, shrubs, or houseplants.

<https://www.kcgardenclub.org/>

### Black Russian Tomato

**Light Requirements:** full sun

**Soil Requirements:** well-draining

Indeterminate

4" fruit

Summer



## Plant Color Tips for Shade Gardens

1. Plant colors in generous groups for the most effective shade garden. Single plants scattered here and there tend to get lost visually.
2. Use dark colors up front so that they don't blend into the background or disappear into the shade.
3. White or pastel colors can be used to brighten up shady areas.
4. Strong, bright colors are quite effective in sunny gardens, but pastels and dark colors are overpowered by midday sun.
5. Play light colors against dark ones and warm tones against cool in order to achieve the most dramatic results.
6. Play up other elements in the landscape such as a path, fence, or planters with color. Suggestion: Drape a fence or trellis with creamy pink roses or periwinkle blue morning glories, or adorn a reddish brick patio with white sage or silver artemisia.