



www.springvalleynatureclub.org springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com

Editor: Al Larson

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July / August 2017

Happy Birthday USA!

July is full of fireworks both from the celebratory kind that most municipalities put on for their residents and friends to view but also from those wonderful little creatures, Fireflies! Everyone can remember their childhood quest to find the most fireflies and put them in a mayonnaise jar to act as a nightlight in their room. I can remember running around catching those illusive fireflies while the night sky was ablaze with fireworks. It is great to reflect on those simpler times and be thankful for this great country that we live in!

I would like to thank all our members and friends who made our Heirloom Vegetable and Herb Sale such a great success! We had a record number of orders for our Heirloom Veggie plants and the newest addition Heirloom Seeds from Baker Creek Seeds! If you would, keep www.rareseeds.com in mind when planning your 2018 seed purchases. We have a unique arrangement with Baker Creek Seeds of Mansfield Missouri whereupon our members and friends can submit their seed order and check made payable to Spring Valley Nature Club! Nature Club will place a group order in January. As a courtesy from Baker Seeds we do not pay a shipping charge and Nature Club gets a special rate, please continue your loyalty to our cause, it is with support from our members and friends of Spring Valley, that we are able to assist the Spring Valley Nature Center in its educational and environmental efforts to provide programs for the community.

Spring Valley Nature Club Meeting – Wednesday July 5th 2017 has been cancelled.
Do to unforeseen circumstances we regret to announce no meeting or program for July.

Nature Club meeting Wednesday August 2nd 2017, 7:00 pm

Pickling Your Garden's Bounty, Presented by: Donna Johnson, Master Gardener

Donna Johnson will have a hands-on demonstration on preserving your garden's (or farm stand's) bounty! No wasteful blanching, chilling and freezing! Learn how to put up pickled green beans, pumpkins, squash, overabundant cherry tomatoes, overgrown cucumbers, humungous watermelons and many other garden vegetables and fruits. Turn your over stock of veggies into this seasons welcome giftable. Relive summer memories with pickled watermelon rinds. Treat your Thanksgiving hostess with some pickled pumpkin, load up those winter weary hot dogs with homemade pickle relish! We will have samples of all kinds of lushes pickled wonders. Spring Valley will have "The Pickled Pantry" recipe books available so that you may have the easy to follow and great recipes to enjoy at home.

Questions? Contact Nature Club at; springvalleynatureclub@gmail.com or 847-985-2100

Summer Happenings at Spring Valley - 2017

Bison's Bluff Nature Playground makes a BIG Splash!

The Grand Opening of Spring Valley's new nature playground was officially dedicated on Earth Day – April 22. The Grand Opening celebration attracted a large crowd, and due to viral social media exposure, the play area (and Spring Valley as a whole) has been experiencing a surge of interest from families throughout the area. The enthusiasm and response to Bison's Bluff has been overwhelmingly positive. Families love the unique play features, which provide something for toddlers and older kids alike. It should be noted that this larger than expected surge of visitor interest has presented a few challenges – mainly parking availability, impact on restrooms, etc. Staff has been working diligently to address these operational issues; however in the meantime, we encourage those coming to walk the trails on busy weekends call ahead for parking updates. Alternate parking and shuttle service will be arranged on any day an event is scheduled. This is a good problem to have but know it can also be frustrating. Please know we are doing our best to address these issues.

Late spring and summer features numerous events and programs at Spring Valley! Mark your calendar for these unique special events. Note that some programs require pre-registration due to limited space. Visit www.parkfun.com for more information or call (847) 985-2100.

Buzzin' About Insects! Sunday July 9th Noon – 3 p.m.

What's the buzz about! Insects of course! There are more insects than any other type of animal in the world. Dive into the wonderful life of insects through games, pictures, and activities.

Drop by the nature center and take your own hike to explore the buzzing around Spring Valley.

Star-Gazing Party! Saturday August 12th 8:00 – 11:00 p.m.

Enjoy a star-studded party celebrating the beautiful summer sky. It's time for the Perseid Meteor shower. Several telescopes will be set up around the Nature Center to view the summer constellations and hopefully see meteors, as well. There will be several star-related activities inside the nature center. You're guaranteed to have a great time!

Horse-drawn Wagon Rides at the Farm

Every Saturday and Sunday from April through October, AND on Wednesdays during June-August, visitors can take a narrated tour of the Heritage Farm via horse-drawn wagon. Rides are offered between 12 and 3pm, with tickets being available on a first-come, first-served basis. The last ride departs at 2:30, and tickets can be purchased at the Farm Visitor Center.

Nature

The pond shimmered with reflected light. Early, spring, it had been a gathering place for flocks of Canada geese using it as a way station for the long journey north. A number had stayed over, finding the grasses succulent and the tops of the muskrat dens homey enough for nesting purposes, and now the parents, fore and aft, sentry their yellow-brown fuzzy goslings on grazing trips along the water's edge

Canada geese, mallards and muskrats are obvious examples of pond life. Turtles, frogs, and fish are others. But there are creatures who inhabit ponds whose lives are not quite so well known.

There is a spider who hunts small creatures beneath pond water's surface, who builds an underwater lair, collecting air bubbles under a canopy of woven silk threads tied to plant stems. The spider traps the air among the fine hair on its body, securing the bubble that is formed between its hind legs and then ferries it to its underwater air chamber. From here it stalks its prey of aquatic insects and small crustaceans, and brings them inside to be eaten.

Water striders, those familiar insects that seem to glide so effortlessly across the water, use surface tension to keep them afloat. The surface film acts as a telegraph system, triggering special sensors in the strider's legs that cause it to quickly respond to any nearby disturbance. The ends of their middle and hind legs are covered with water-repellent hairs, allowing them to row at relatively high speeds, using the long middle legs as oars and hind legs as rudders to scurry and pounce upon whatever unfortunate falls into the water.

Jet black whirligig beetles are also well adapted to life between the water's above and beneath. Their eyes are split, with one half able to see under the surface, while the other half can view above. The upper eye half repels water, while the lower stays wet. They will dive when necessary, carrying a bubble of air attached to the hind end of their body. And, if they have to, they can lift out of the water and just fly away.

So now the shimmering pond warms in the July sun. A turtle head surfaces and then disappears, leaving not even a ripple. A dragonfly flashes overhead, only to settle on a cattail as the sun is interrupted by a cloud. The world doesn't wait for us. Summer is upon us and life in the pond rides the season.

Al Larson

Create an Edible Garden for You & Butterflies Too!

Where are all the butterflies? Seeing less of our favorite garden visitors than the year before? We need to create a place that butterflies like to visit! We need plants that provide nectar from flowers for adults and larval food from leaves for the young caterpillars as well. You can plant milkweed plants to attract and feed Monarch butterflies. The Native Plant & Heirloom Vegetable Sale is a great place to find at least two milkweed varieties and hundreds of vegetable and herb plants for sale to feed yourself and the butterflies.

Many people do not realize that most herb, many vegetable plants, and their flowers provide for our graceful visitors. Dill, parsley, chervil, celeriac, and fennel provide both nectar for adults and food for juveniles of the Swallowtail Butterflies. Flowers of sage, verbena, basil and rosemary feed butterflies and hummingbirds as well! Myriads of small butterflies will sip nectar of mint, oregano, thyme and various vegetable flowers. Don't forget the pollinators! They love the flowers of all the vegetable and herb plants; Borage in particular!

Getting Your Garden Started

Choose an area in your garden where it is well drained (has no standing water or marshy spots) and receives at least 6 or more hours of sun every day. An optional soil analysis can be helpful in determining the concentration of nutrients and pH of your soil. You can purchase a home garden soil test kit at the hardware store or plant nursery. Clay soils, though dense and heavy, are rich in nutrients and need humus to lighten the soil and make it more permeable and able for your plant roots to enter deeply within the loam and make use of the nutrients stored deep within its depths. You can achieve this by incorporating at least 2 or more inches of humus or sphagnum moss into the top 6" of soil, till to remove large clumps then fertilize with an organic fertilizer or compost according to package directions. Vegetable plants are heavy feeders and require a continuous supply of nutrients and moisture to achieve optimum results. Do not use too much nitrogen on tomatoes; it tends to grow more plant than fruit.

Most hot weather crops (tomatoes, peppers, eggplant & squash) need to be planted after danger of spring frosts which is usually around May 15th. Cool weather crops such as lettuce, fennel, Swiss chard and most herbs (except basil) are not usually bothered by cold weather.

Container Gardening

Do not have the energy to dig up a garden plot? Not enough sun in your backyard? Find an area on a deck or patio or even in between shrubs or foundation plantings that has an ideal exposure. Many a Giant Brandywine tomato has grown in a well-tended container, giving the gardener many delicious salad additions! Pepper plants, eggplants, lettuce, endive, Swiss chard, etc., have graced containers and even had a few floral roommates to share its space. I always grow tomatoes and peppers on my deck and adorn the container with petunias or marigolds.

With containers, you need a good soilless mix (Miracle Grow, Schultz's, etc.) and enhance it with bone meal, compost, organic fertilizer, etc. according to package instructions. Remember to water daily in dry weather and fertilize weekly, weakly with an organic liquid fertilizer or fish emulsion. You will find that even though you water almost daily, the water consumption is much less than watering in the open ground.

Seed Starting with Baker Creek Seeds

Want to include vegetables not on this year's order sheet? Nature Club has partnered with Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds of Mansfield Missouri. They are a premiere source for unique vegetable seed. Visit their website, www.rareseeds.com

1974 And Beyond

Spring Valley began as a dream by one of the founders of the Village of Schaumburg, Ellsworth Meineke. Early on he referred to it as “The Spring Valley Dream.” It was he who convinced the Schaumburg Park District and the Village of Schaumburg to work together to acquire and preserve land for Spring Valley. Ellsworth founded the Spring Valley Nature Club in 1974 as a not-for-profit service organization which provides volunteer and financial support for Spring Valley and promotes conservation, nature and environmental education. The Club sponsors nature programs and teacher field trips, and members volunteer at festivals and fund raisers. We have been working hard since 1974. Won’t you join us?

These words reflect the dedication that the founders felt for the purpose of the Club and the love of the natural world around us. Since the Schaumburg Park District assumed the responsibility of recruiting volunteers, Nature Club’s purpose has evolved to share its love of Spring Valley by offering timely programs that reinforce a more wholesome lifestyle. We have initiated monthly educational programs that instill a comprehension of our ability to lessen our carbon footprint by reducing waste, recycling and reusing our valuable resources. Our monthly programs enlighten us to appreciate our environment and respect its fragile beauty.

We have lessened our impact on landfill waste by eliminating the mailing of our bimonthly News Leaf. We are encouraging members to attend educational programs which teach us the importance of the wildlife around us, the art of using our natural resources wisely and being more self-reliant by advising how to live a more wholesome lifestyle, grow and live more organically and become more self-sufficient.

With the kind donations and assistance from local merchants and organizations, we can exist more ecologically by shopping locally. Some of the wonderful supporters and contributors to the club have been, Roselle Ace Hardware for their support in offering a discount coupon for purchases at their location; Schaumburg Park District for the 1-day Fitness Pass; Platt Hill Nursery for their support and discount coupon at their garden centers; Holistic Art Studio for their discount coupon; Bon Ton Stores for their coupon book for discounts throughout the store. The Bon Ton coupon books are valid for their other stores that are located throughout the US. A listing of their stores is on the membership dues page.

Our wonderful supporters have given us a way to lessen our footsteps by offering valued products and services at discounted prices while saving our energy dollars by reducing the number of miles we travel. Please support our supporters. With their help, we have been successful in raising additional funds to sponsor educational programming for our Club members, Spring Valley Volunteers, and school children and teachers from our community. We have supplied funds for books for Spring Valley’s Library and have sponsored various free to the public programs and events that the Center has offered.

Thanks to you all, and especially our valued Members and Supporters of Spring Valley Nature Club!

Please take time to review all the wonderful benefits we are offering to our members with their Nature Club membership. Won’t you join us?

Spring Valley Nature Club is a 501(c3) organization and contributions may be tax deductible. Check with your tax advisor.

Spring Valley Nature Club 2017 Membership Rates

To show our appreciation for our members' loyalty, we have come up with special benefits for all members.

“Discount Coupon Packet” This packet will include certificates and coupons for various merchants, i.e. Holistic Health Studio (massage discount), Schaumburg Park District (1 day Fitness Pass), Roselle Ace Hardware (discount on purchase), Platt Hill Nursery (discount on purchase), Chick-Fil-A (Free Sandwich - Schaumburg Stores only), Back In Line Chiropractic (Discount on Services) Bon-Ton Stores Seasonal Discount Coupon Book (Carson's, Younkers, Herberger's, Bergner's, Elder-Beerman, Boston Store, etc., estimated value up to \$500.00

A special benefit is an invitation to the Spring Valley Volunteer/Meineke Award Picnic on the first Friday in August. A postcard will be sent to current members in good standing by mid-July asking for an RSVP.

Free Entry to the Nature Club Programs: Allows you to attend any or all of the ten Spring Valley Nature Club monthly meetings and educational programs from February through November where you can enjoy some refreshments and camaraderie with fellow supporters of the Nature Club and the Spring Valley Volunteers.

Membership Card: Identifies you as a supporter of the Nature Club's efforts.

****All current Life Members** are eligible to receive the **“Discount Coupon Pack”** for just \$10.00 a year

Life Membership: In addition to the above items, this membership includes a Nature Club Commemorative Fleece Throw (\$35.00 value); this fleece throw is for **New Life Memberships Only.**

Family Fun Membership: In addition to all of the standard items above, this membership category includes a Spring Valley Annual Family Pass (\$120.00 value) to be used for a 15% discount on most Spring Valley Programs; 10% Discount on Summer Camps and Birthday Parties; 15% discount on Honey & Gift Shop purchases at Spring Valley and free admission to all Spring Valley events including the Pancake Breakfast. (The discounts do not apply to the Solstice Hop & Vine or the Haunting in the Valley.)

Your Membership Packet needs to be picked up in person at the Spring Valley Nature Center 9:00 – 5:00 daily.

Yearly Memberships Begin February 1st through January 31st

Your dues are now payable for the year 2017

Individual		\$15.00
Family		\$25.00
Supporting		\$35.00
Senior		\$10.00
Family Fun		\$120.00
Life	**	\$150.00
Sponsor		\$1000.00

Individual – Family – Supporting -- Senior -- Family Fun -- Life -- Sponsor

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Checks should be made payable and mailed to:
Spring Valley Nature Club - 1111 East Schaumburg Road, Schaumburg, IL 60194