

GROW-ZONE

A Quarterly Journal Review of our Seasons

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MAY - JULY 2025

The Glory of the Gardens



The transition from spring to summer can be traced by the growth of our morning glory vines. These plants grow on arched trellises in the Pumpkin Patch Garden every year. Tiny sprouts begin popping up along the bottom of these trellises during the month of May, as morning glory volunteers can seed year after year. We will often supplement these volunteers with new seeds, ensuring even growth and cover. By the end of June, larger leaves form around the base of the trellises, and the first few vines begin their ascent. The race begins with the heat of July! With full sun, regular watering, and a helping hand to wrap around the trellis, these plants can reach 6 - 10 feet in the matter of a few weeks. By the end of July, these trellises are almost completely covered. Their flowers are known for opening first thing in the morning and closing back up by the afternoon. Morning glories are sensitive to the barometric air pressure. For the flower to bloom, the plant's internal hydrostatic pressure must exceed the surrounding atmospheric pressure. These conditions typically takes place in the morning, as the sun is just beginning to rise. As the ambient atmospheric pressure builds throughout the day, the flowers begin to close up. This is technically a defense mechanism, preserving the flowers' energy and preventing water loss during the warmest part of the day.



The Birds....



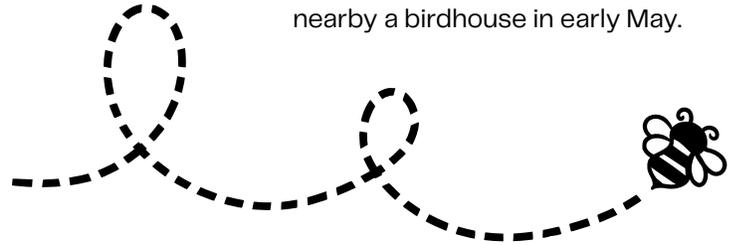
Though we prepped the bluebird houses (and added a few) along our Bluebird Trail back in February, the bluebirds really got busy nest building in the month of May, as the spring insect activity accelerated. Members of the Sheboygan County Cancer Care Fund take turns monitoring the Bluebird Trail, opening every birdhouse each week, to collect data for things such as bird species, egg/chick counts and signs of predation. Their nesting season will go into the month of August - the next newsletter will detail the results of this current season.



A female eastern bluebird perches nearby a birdhouse in early May.



A bluebird house has a squatter - this grey tree frog has chosen the underside of the door as a hideout!



....And the Bees

The spring beekeeping season was an exciting one for us. Keith Weiland got a call from a friend in need - in need of someone to get a swarm of bees out of his tree! Keith and Robyn drove to Cleveland, cut the swarm out of the tree, and successfully brought them to their new home here at the CF&G. This colony was in need of a new queen, so one was purchased from a local supplier and introduced successfully. Nucleus hives were also purchased for the apiary and were installed in early May. These colonies quickly grew their numbers, needing additional boxes in the matter of just a few weeks.



A swarm of honeybees cluster around their queen as they search for a new home.



Keith Weiland cuts the swarm out of a small apple tree in Cleveland, WI.



As the honeybees produce honey, they need more top boxes or, **supers**, for storage. The purple hive got so large that we split the hive into two

smaller hives, in an effort to keep ½ from swarming and leaving us. We added a new queen to the smaller half as well.

Gather in the Gardens

On May 17th, 350 locals spent a day in the gardens, enjoying family-friendly activities and supporting the Sheboygan County Interfaith Organization. Since this organization plans the weekly farmer's market in Sheboygan, they brought some of their vendors to sell their wares in the gardens. Booths were set up around the Conservatory Patio and Perch Pond area to offer various food, drinks and crafts. Guest enjoyed activities such as face painting, story time, music from singer/songwriter John Doll, yoga on the lake, Sheboygan North High School's drumline, and Lakeland University's "Elementastic" hands-on science presentation. It was a beautiful day in the gardens for so many families!



A "Wicked" June-A-Palooza

At the end of June, about 400 guests attended the annual June-A-Palooza event, a benefit for the Fresh Meals on Wheels of Sheboygan County. The chosen theme was 'Wizard of Oz' & 'Wicked' in a wise attempt to play on the recent reboot of the latter film. Guests followed the yellow brick road to find refreshments, delicious hors d'oeuvres, and unique items to bid on at the silent and live auctions. A divinely on-theme dinner was enjoyed by all under the main tent that night, provided by the Fresh Meals on Wheels kitchen team. There's truly no place like Sheboygan!



Theater For Young Audiences

At the end of June, a summer picnic was held at the Conservatory Patio for the Theater for Young Audiences members and their families. This year, children & teens ages 9 - 13 had the opportunity to participate in a 3-week summer camp called "Game of Tiaras", where they learned valuable lessons in the world of theater like how to audition and explore character development. Their summer camp culminated with the final performance of "Game of Tiaras" on the patio that afternoon, followed by an awards ceremony as a finale for their season.



Sheboygan County Cancer Care Fund

Members of the local "SCCCF" are often our most frequent visitors to the gardens. Their activity leader, Tim Renzelmann, works with us to plan outdoor activities in the gardens, such as game nights on the patio, bonding bonfires, bluebird trail monitoring & planting projects. On June 1st, they celebrated the National Cancer Survivors Day by having presentations by various members about their survivorship and battles with cancer at the Conservatory Patio, followed by exploring the gardens solo or on a guided tour.



School Field Trips



Between late April and July, we hosted about 500 students at varying ages, from 4K preschool to seniors in high school. Spring educational programs that we offer include topics like pollinators, planting & harvesting, and spring ephemeral woodland flowers – a very popular choice during the month of May! A school tour of the garden includes visits to the Bee Shed to see our observational beehive and the Children's Educational Farm to learn the basics about gardening and to meet our small farm animals. Of course, we always make time for a Dairyland Express train ride or a pit-stop in the Jayrassic Park sculpture and Hosta garden!



Garden Clubs



As the spring turns to summer, students head home for summer break and the adults get a turn to enjoy the gardens. Garden clubs from across the state visit us to learn about the history, horticultural strategies, and landscaping techniques that make our botanical gardens unique. Our guided tours typically last about 2.5-3 hours, and involve 2+ miles of walking, though many of our guests tell us that the time seems to have flown by when they get finished with their tour. There really is something for every visitor to enjoy here in the gardens, between the labeled perennial and annual plantings, artistic sculptures and water features.

Transportation Museum Addition Update



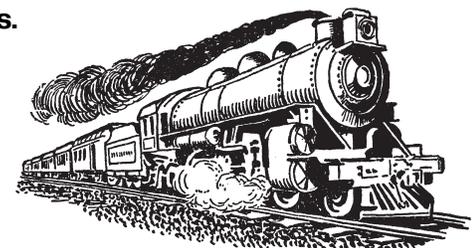
The addition to the Transportation Museum has been moving at a steady pace through spring and into summer. The bones and boards for the roof, walls and floors have been installed and a hole for the basement steps is established. In this new addition, the first floor will feature a fully furnished dining and lounge car, along with several display cases for railroad artifacts. The basement level will house a working model train that Jay has been collecting various themed elements for over time. Soon, siding and windows will be installed, along with the entrance to this new room cut into the existing outer wall of the museum.



Barn Construction



On the far west side of the botanical gardens, a new barn has been constructed and nearly finished by this point in the summer! This barn will house equipment, supplies and any new artwork that needs to be hidden inside during the harsh winter months. The next phase of this west-side development will include creating a landscape plan for the area around the new barn. This plan will account for the increased need for drainage in this area with the new structure, using plants and hardscape techniques to offset any heavy rainfall events.



Phenology - “the study of cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena, especially in relation to climate and plant and animal life.”

Date: May 16, 2025

High Temp: 62; Sunny

Notes: Trilliums, Virginia bluebells and spring beauties are blooming in the Bear Woods; weeping cherry trees are at peak bloom



Date: June 1, 2025

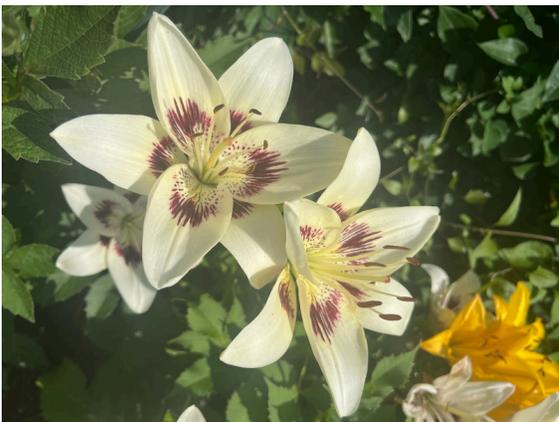
High Temp: 64; Sunny

Notes: The first tree peony outside the Peony Garden is blooming; allium are blooming by the Heritage Garden

Date: June 26, 2025

High Temp: 68; Overcast

Notes: Wisteria vine is blooming on the Conservatory Patio; a monarch caterpillar was seen on milkweed near the Bee Yard



Date: July 15, 2025

High Temp: 84; Sunny

Notes: Lillies and astilbe are now blooming throughout the gardens