



**NATIONAL GARDEN PROJECT
BUTTERFLY GARDEN
NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.**



In November of 1996, four members of National Council of State Garden Clubs, Inc. (NCSGC) met in Washington, D.C. to learn firsthand about plans for establishing a National Garden on a three-acre site adjacent to the United States Botanic Garden Conservatory. One of the purposes of the meeting was to determine if NCSGC could participate by raising funds for a **Butterfly Garden**.

Those in attendance were Barbara Barnette, the incoming President 1997-1999, Deen Day (Smith) Sanders, the incoming President 1999-2001, who was appointed National Garden Project Chairman, Gerry St. Peters, who was appointed Vice-Chairman, and Joan Craig the Shell/PETALS Chairman. Since Philip J. Carroll, President and CEO of Shell Oil Company, had suggested the possibility of NCSGC being involved with the National Garden, the meeting was held at his company's headquarters in Washington, D.C. Also attending the meeting were Stephen Ward, Vice President of Government Affairs for Shell Oil Company; Betty Lynn McHam, Shell Oil Company Program Manager, and Robert Hansen, Executive Director of the National Fund for the U.S. Botanic Garden (NFUSBG). A nonprofit tax-exempt organization, NFUSBG was established to be the primary vehicle for raising funds for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of the National Garden.

We were impressed with the mission of the proposed National Garden: "To promote the great diversity of American plants and their importance to the environment, emphasize the need to conserve many plant species, and demonstrate how plants can be used to improve and enrich our daily lives." The garden would feature an Environmental Learning Center, a Water Garden honoring America's First Ladies, a Rose Garden exhibiting varieties of our national flower, the rose, and a Showcase Garden for flora and fauna native to the Mid-Atlantic region. Cost was estimated at \$10 million.

The plans for a Butterfly Garden were welcomed, and the area selected was along Maryland Avenue near the Lawn Terrace. Besides plants that attract butterflies, the plans included a bronze sundial and four benches featuring butterflies and roses. Informational materials would also be provided to educate the public on butterfly gardening.

With the acceptance of our Butterfly Garden plans, the challenge to raise the necessary funds began. To be successful the project needed to be ready for implementation at the very beginning of the 1997-1999 administration. With financial assistance of \$50,000 from Shell Oil Company, the State Presidents for the 1997-1999 administration went to Washington, D.C. following the 1997 National Convention in South Carolina. They toured the site, were immersed in the plans, and left with an overabundance of enthusiasm. They became very instrumental in the success of the project.

To promote the Butterfly Garden Project, each state was provided with an informative folding display board to use at state, district and club events, flower shows, symposiums, fairs, garden center displays, etc. Colorful brochures with a diagram of the proposed garden were supplied to each state. A booklet, *Fun(d)raising Ideas for the National Garden*, contained many innovative ideas to assist the clubs in raising funds and, at the same time, to enjoy the experience.

To raise funds, it was important to provide quality items for sale that would appeal to the general membership. Steve Bixby of Orion Marketing in Virginia had designed Christmas ornaments for Florida's state federation. He was asked to design four limited edition ornaments for the National Garden, one for each of the years of the project – 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000. The ornament sales created a great deal of revenue, and NFUSBG also sold the ornaments to the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives gift shops. Selling price was \$15, with the costs ranging from \$6.19 to \$7.23 depending upon the design. Each was accompanied by a brochure explaining the significance of the design and our involvement in the National Garden Project. Approximate quantities ordered per year were:

1997 – 7,800	1998 – 10,100
1999 – 5,800	2000 – 7,200

Members expressed a desire to display the ornaments, so Bob Saunders of Mr. Frame in Virginia designed a gold frame with green matting custom cut to hold two ornaments. Cost was \$19.50, with the selling price of \$30.

When NCSGC celebrated its 70th anniversary in 1999, a commemorative plate by Lenox was designed to benefit the National Garden. The 500 limited edition plates, which featured roses and bluebirds, cost \$30 each and sold for \$49.95.

Robert Hansen, NFUSBG Executive Director, provided our members with other opportunities to increase funds for the National Garden Project. He proposed that we sell garden pavers that would be placed on the Nation's Garden Path, an area for 500 4"x10" engraved bluestone granite pavers. For a gift of \$1,000, the name of an individual, club, state, etc. could be forever etched in stone and placed in the Nation's Garden Path. For each paver purchased, NCSGC was credited \$1,000. We are proud that pavers will bear the names of our clubs and members from every state in the nation. The pavers were relocated to the Butterfly Garden Terrace.

A 1997 U.S. Botanic Garden Silver Dollar, a product of the U.S. Mint, was available either as a proof or as a piece incorporated into jewelry. Prices ranged from \$42 to \$69.95, with a \$10 credit given to NCSGC for each coin sold.

For an annual membership fee of \$40, one could become a Supporter of the National Garden (SONG). A credit of \$8 was given for each membership sold.

NFUSBG also produced a National Garden Butterfly Pin, which we purchased at a cost of \$4 each and sold for \$8. Order forms were supplied to the states for all the above items being offered.

The Butterfly Garden Project was overwhelmingly received by garden club members. Their response was unprecedented and produced a tremendous amount of revenue.

A bronze sundial, especially designed for the Butterfly Garden by Clydetta Fulmer of Alabama, features butterflies and roses. It was purchased during the second year of Barbara Barnette's administration at a cost of \$7,500. Additionally, a contribution of \$125,000 was sent to NFUSBG from the National Garden Project restricted account at Headquarters.

In celebration of the National Garden Project's progress, special events were planned in Washington, D.C. in 1999. A symposium was held April 24 and 25, and a Standard Flower Show was held April 24, followed by a dinner. In attendance at the dinner was Alan Hantman, Architect of the Capitol, under whose jurisdiction falls the development of the National Garden.

On April 25, President Barbara Barnette made a special presentation on the steps of the U.S. Capitol, where she unveiled the bronze sundial. A symbolic check was presented to the National Fund for the U.S. Botanic Garden, representing the proceeds earned during the 1997-1999 administration. The amount was an astounding \$357,228.13.

The support of our members continued throughout the 1999-2001 administration of Deen Day Sanders. Four butterfly benches were purchased at a cost of \$46,666.67. As of June 30, 2001, items sold to benefit the National Garden Project were: 332 pavers, 28,868 ornaments, 500 Lenox plates, 721 gold frames, 2,311 butterfly garden pins, 500 coins, and 167 SONG memberships. Outright donations totaled more than \$49,000. Credit given to NCSGC by NFUSBG was \$491,903.86.

It was hoped that the National Garden would be completed at the end of the four years. Original plans were to reopen the U.S. Botanic Garden Conservatory, which was undergoing renovation, simultaneously with the National Garden. However, the government's plans changed, and the Conservatory was completed first, reopening in December, 2001.

During the 2001-2003 administration of Lois Dupré Shuster, it was decided to offer the individual states the opportunity to sell ornaments as a fundraiser for their own projects. Member Services handled the sales, with a percentage of the proceeds going to the National Garden Project. Steve Bixby designed two additional ornaments for NCSGC, now known as National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC). However, few states actually used the ornaments as a fundraiser and sales declined, so the ornaments were discontinued at the end of 2002. There were 3,200 ornaments purchased in 2001, and 3,000 in 2002.

Pavers continued to sell throughout the 2001-2003 administration pushing the total number of pavers sold to 356 by our regions, states, clubs and individual members.

On August 29, 2002, bidding information on construction of the National Garden was made available to 30 contractors. Bids were due October 10, 2002, and after government review, a contract was expected to be awarded the first part of 2003. However, the process was delayed.

In February 2003, we were saddened to learn of the unexpected death of Robert Hansen, Executive Director of NFUSBG. He had been a staunch supporter of NGC, and had worked closely with our organization since November, 1996. Stephen Ward was later appointed to the position of Executive Director.

In addition to the death of the Executive Director, delays resulted as a consequence of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The grounds of the U.S. Botanic Gardens were designated as a part of the U.S. Capitol grounds, bringing added restrictions. The added security became a significant factor in the substantial increase in cost of constructing the National Garden, as originally designed. A decision was made to construct the garden in phases.

It was on March 16, 2004, that a contract to build the National Garden was signed in the office of Alan Hantman, Architect of the Capitol, with construction was expected to take 24 months.

April, 2004, marked the start of Phase I, which includes the Butterfly Garden, the pavers, Rose Garden, Lawn Terrace, Hornbeam Court, pergolas, contouring and ornamental fencing. The donor pavers have been placed in an attractive pattern in the Butterfly Garden Terrace, adjacent to the trellis. One of the pergolas was donated by a National Garden Club Member.

The Board of Trustees of the U.S. Botanic Garden worked diligently to raise the funds to complete Phase II, the Regional Garden and Phase III, the First Ladies Water Garden.

After successfully raising \$11.5 million in private sector funds to build the National Garden, the board is committed to raising additional funds to complete Phase IV, the Environmental Learning Center which is not contracted for at the present time. The Trustees of the U.S. Botanic Garden need the help of everyone to complete the National Garden Project.

As of December 31, 2004, credit given to NGC by NFUSBG was \$525,057.96. At the end of 2005, there was more than \$89,000 in the National Garden Project Account at Headquarters. These funds are to be used for providing informational materials to educate the public on butterfly gardening.

We are anxiously anticipating the celebration planned at the National Garden September 28-30, 2006. This exciting Butterfly Garden Project has been a tremendous success because of the enthusiastic response, overwhelming support, and extraordinary efforts of our members. We are deeply grateful to all.

Gerry St. Peters
National Garden Project
January 2006