



Keeping In Touch

MAY 2018



Nancy L. Hargroves
2017-2019 NGC President

The next big event for National Garden Clubs is its annual convention in Philadelphia on May 21-24. Philadelphia is known as America's Garden Capital with more than thirty (30) gardens within thirty (30) miles. With this administration's focus on gardening, how appropriate that our meeting is in this part of our country!

The members of the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania have the wealth of these garden venues and resources to use for planning a meeting with exceptional speakers and tours – and May is a glorious time of year for many gardens in that area. There will be a tour to Longwood Gardens on Sunday, May 20, before the Convention begins so that everyone may take advantage of seeing one of the premiere gardens in the United States. More details about the convention schedule and registration information can be found on the NGC website at www.gardenclub.org/about-us/convention-philadelphia-2018.aspx

This Spring projects were begun by the twenty-eight (28) clubs that received the NGC **PLANT AMERICA** Community Project Grants. There was an overwhelming response to this new NGC Program with 415 garden clubs submitting an application. This is wonderful that so many clubs are active in their communities. These projects will be featured in future issues of Keeping in Touch, The National Gardener and on NGC's social media sites.

This level of response shows the needs of NGC's clubs. One of our roles as a national organization is to support our clubs in accomplishing our mission. NGC must do all it can to expand the funding for these grants to help clubs all across the country with their projects.

In order for this fund to increase so that NGC can give more grants, P. Allen Smith is providing a fundraising opportunity for **PLANT AMERICA** Grants. He offered his gardening and business advice and expertise for the plant selection, for obtaining the plants and for the method of distribution to our members. He believes in our organization's purpose and mission and has helped develop this promotion in many ways by giving his time, his staff's time and by donating a very generous percentage of the sales.

I am very proud to announce that from now until June 15, National Garden Clubs will be selling plants selected by P. Allen Smith. This promotion, entitled Inspiring Gardens Across America, includes three different collections of plants. Each item was chosen because of a special feature in its hybridization for performance or beauty or for its limited availability in the general marketplace. More detailed descriptions of these plants are included in the brochure/order form that is in this publication on pages 3 and 4.



www.gardenclub.org

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St. Louis, MO 63110-3406

(314) 776-7574

headquarters@gardenclub.org



(continued)

Orders can be placed in two ways:

- NGC Website Online Shopping - www.shopgardenclub.org/shop
- Mail a check with the order form to NGC Headquarters, 4401 Magnolia Ave, St. Louis, MO 63110. The order form can be downloaded from the NGC website on the **PLANT AMERICA** page: www.gardenclub.org/projects/plant-america

This promotion is not meant to be “We’ve got a bargain for you.” These are quality items chosen by P. Allen Smith that he knows will perform well in your home and garden or as a gift for someone. Allen and NGC share the goal of “Inspiring Gardens Across America” by contributing to the **PLANT AMERICA** Grant Fund so that we may give as much help as possible to NGC garden clubs in their projects all across America.

I hope you will join me in two things this Spring: coming to the NGC Convention where LOVE Blooms in Philadelphia and helping grow the NGC **PLANT AMERICA** Community Project Grants Fund by purchasing some of your spring gardening plants and gifts from NGC. Thank you for your support, as all of us working together can benefit so many of our garden clubs throughout the country.

Nancy



President's Travel Schedule

- May 20-24 – National Garden Clubs Convention, Philadelphia, PA
- June 3-4, Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont Convention, Manchester, VT
- June 5-6, Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs Convention, Tacoma, WA
- June 7-8, Garden Club of Ohio Convention, Cincinnati, OH
- June 10-12, Garden Clubs of Idaho Convention, Nampa, ID
- June 18-20, Garden Club Federation of Maine Convention, Phippsburg, ME
- June 29-30, Wyoming Federation of Garden Clubs Convention, Cheyenne, WY
- July 16-18, NGC Headquarters, St. Louis, MO
- August 5-12, Convention of Garden Clubs of Central America, Panama City, Panama

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- Membership
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- Heritage Gardens and Heirloom Plants
- "Around the Town" Featuring Our Clubs' Preservation of Historic Gardens and Buildings

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Joyce Bulington, Gerry St. Peters and
Gerianne Holzman, Editorial Review

Submissions for KIT are due July 1, 2018



"Inspiring Gardens Across America"

Our purchases of these specially-selected plants will help grow the NGC **PLANT AMERICA** Grant Fund. Thank you for your support as all of us continue working together to benefit so many of our garden clubs throughout the country.

Please note that some items will be shipped when it is appropriate for your growing zone. Order early while supplies last. The last day to order to guarantee your purchase arrives by Mother's Day is Sunday, April 29.

Whitewashed Wooden Stand with Succulents

This selection is for succulent lovers and those who no longer have a garden. The whitewashed wooden stand of reclaimed wood holds three pots of succulents. You'll receive one pot planted with Hens and Chicks, and two pots planted with an assortment of other succulents. The succulents work best in a sun-drenched area of your home, and require minimal watering. It's also a great gift item for Mother's Day, Father's Day and other spring occasions.



Lacy Daily Daylily



Rediculous Daylily



Unlock the Stars Daylily

Peony Flowering Daylily Collection

This collection includes three prolific, reblooming, double-flowering daylilies. They will grow and bloom for years, and will be the envy of all your gardening friends. One is a pastel creation in a soft coral-pink with ruffled edges, another features bright, fire engine red blooms with a yellow throat, and the third produces a lavender-pink flower, edged with a picotee of yellow ruffles surrounding a yellow eye that flares out from its center—all truly special specimens, arriving as bare-root plants.



Sunpatiens® 'Razzle Dazzle' Collection

This is not your grandmother's impatiens! Sunpatiens® is a hybrid impatiens bred by Sakata. These remarkable plants represent a breakthrough in flower breeding: they are low maintenance, sun-loving and bloom from spring through frost. P. Allen Smith has grown these in containers and on the grounds of Moss Mountain Farm, where they survive the hot summers of Arkansas with no wilting.



Inspiring Gardens Across America

Orders due by June 15, 2018

Quantity	Includes	Retail	Total
	Whitewashed Wooden Stand with Succulents 1 Whitewashed Wooden Stand, 1 terracotta pot with Hen & Chick, 2 terracotta pots with assorted succulents	\$39.95	
	SunPatiens® 'Razzle Dazzle' Collection 1 each of Compact White 'Starstruck', Compact Blush Pink 'Wowza', Compact Lilac 'The Ultimate', Compact Royal Magenta 'Wild Child'	\$35.95	
	Peony Daylilies 1 each of Lacy Doily, Rediculous, Unlock the Stars	\$29.95	
		Subtotal	
		Shipping & Handling Fee (see chart)	
		Grand Total	

Each order
includes planting
instructions
and a free
mystery daylily.

SHIPPING AND HANDLING CHART

MERCHANDISE TOTAL	STANDARD DELIVERY
\$25.00 - \$39.99	\$8.45
\$40.00 - \$59.99	\$10.62
\$60.00 - \$79.99	\$12.49
\$80.00 - \$99.99	\$13.57
\$100.00 - \$150.00	\$14.95
\$150 AND OVER	\$23.61

MAILING ADDRESS:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

SHIPPING ADDRESS: (IF DIFFERENT THAN MAILING ADDRESS)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

If you would like UPS tracking, please provide your email address.
Only one shipping address per order form. If you'd like to ship to
multiple addresses, please complete one form per shipping address.
Note: We only ship to the lower 48 states.

CHOOSE METHOD OF PAYMENT:

☐ Payment enclosed: Amount \$ _____

Please make checks out to National Garden Clubs, Inc. No money orders.

☐ Your credit card will be charged when we receive your order.

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION:

Card Type: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Cardholder Name: _____

Card Number:

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Expiration Date (mm/yy): _____

CIN #: _____

Signature: _____

Place your orders online at www.ShopGardenClub.org

Or Mail Order form to:

National Garden Clubs Inc., 4401 Magnolia Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110

PLANT AMERICA COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS

The **PLANT AMERICA** Community Project Grants Committee was thrilled and overwhelmed with the massive response from NGC Clubs. One or more applications were submitted from 90% of the states, including National Capital Area Garden Clubs. They represented a diversity of gardens at schools, museums, highways, churches, memorials, libraries, hospitals, nursing homes, parks, and trails. In addition to gardens, there were requests to fund hardscape, irrigation systems, solar lighting, workshops, public seminars, and signage. Clubs recognized needs and found creative solutions. In many ways, the projects were all winners. The list of grant winners is on the NGC website under News and Events.

The applications from the winning grant recipients had the following in common:

- The project was a new one or a new addition to an existing project, not reimbursement for a project underway at the time the application was submitted.
- A significant portion of the membership was involved with the project in physical planting, design, administration, PR, etc.
- In most cases one or more collaborative organizations (e.g. another garden club, local municipality, a volunteer organization like the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Boy Scouts, etc.) joined the club's project.
- The proposed budget included specific product and labor costs.
- When the project required more funds than the grant supplied, the source of the balance was documented.
- At conclusion, the project would result in long-term, significant improvement.

It should be noted that the application form required statements on three subjects and a budget. It also provided a scale of points upon which judging would be based. That scale included topics which were expected to be covered in the required statements.

- Ellen Spencer, **PLANT AMERICA**
Community Project Grants Committee

CERTIFIED WILDLIFE HABITAT SIGN FROM NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

Receive \$10 off your total when you certify and purchase any Certified Wildlife Habitat sign. This is a limited time offer available online only May 1-31, 2018. Please share the coupon directly below during May on your newsletters, emails, websites, and social media channels to spread the word. Go to www.nwf.org/gardenclubs and enter Promo Code GARDEN 18 to receive the discount.



Peeper

She was such a little thing when I first set eyes on her. I had heard that you need to let a chicken break her shell when she's first emerging into our world – it helps make them stronger just when they need to be – so I held back that urge to help. I can't say she was beautiful at that moment, but when she saw me she decided that she was mine, and I couldn't have been happier!

I never had chickens when I was young; it wasn't a popular thing back then if you lived in town. Later, we had a winter home in Florida, and my husband came home with a pair of chickens one day. I resisted, but only for a short time – they were a delightful addition to our garden. We let them have free reign during the day and kept them in a covered, fenced area at night to protect them from the other critters that roamed the garden.

The male was a beautiful, big red rooster. He sure could strut his stuff. He would scratch at the mulch around our bushes until he found something delectable, then he would cluck to the female. She would come right over to enjoy whatever morsel he

had discovered, and he would stand guard while she ate. He was such a gentleman!

The hen was a happy chicken, as you can imagine. And, she showed us so by laying eggs everywhere. She would leave them and lay some more somewhere else. We decided to try incubating them. Sure enough, after three weeks, that delicate little chicken pecked her way out of that shell and into my heart. She became my “Peeper” – you can probably understand why – and followed me everywhere. She didn’t have any idea she was a chicken. After all, she had bonded with a person! She’d sit on the game table while we played cards and have the best time, and so would we.



Peeper grew up quickly and enjoyed being wherever I was. However, when I had to return to Fairbanks - we were only half-time Floridians, I had to find her a new home.

A friend of mine who had many other chickens and a soft spot for those “special ones,” took her and promised to make sure she had a good life.

“Backyard chickens” have become extremely popular, even in our cities. I would be a little careful about having roosters. I had a neighbor once who had a rooster that didn’t understand that he was supposed to crow only in the morning. But hens make such good gardener helpers! And, most cities allow you to have them.

They give you high-quality eggs. Your kitchen scraps go in one end, and nitrogen-rich fertilizer comes out the other. Composting it with leaves gives you great soil additives and reduces landfill costs. They are organic pest exterminators, and they love to eat weeds. Their natural scratching and digging are good for your soil. They make the cutest noises. Also, having chickens garden by your side helps unleash a stress-lowering chemical in your body so you can garden happier, and I can certainly personally vouch for that! Many call them “therapy chickens.”

Be careful not to let them too close to your seedlings, though. They seem to like tomatoes and zucchini, so plant a little extra to share. A little fence can help protect the things you don’t want them on top off.

According to Justin Rhodes, AbundantPermaculture.com, one chicken can de-bug 120 sq. ft. a week, convert 10 lbs. of food “waste” into eggs, fertilize a 50 sq. ft. garden in a month, break the life cycle of pests and diseases of one fruit tree within an hour, level a pile of leaf mulch in 2 days, till 50 sq. ft. of sod in 4-6 weeks, help do a quarter of the work turning a compost pile, and produce enough manure in a month to make 1 cubic yard of compost from leaves!

Add a chicken or two to your garden, and help save our beautiful heritage chickens from possible extinction. Hopefully, you’ll experience a “Peeper” in your life as I did.

- Becky Hassebrook,
Wildlife Gardening Chairman

PLANT IT PINK GARDENS

The gardens pictured here were planted by the North Haven Garden Club of Connecticut. The small club made a commitment to plant splashes of Plant It Pink gardens in several locations of their community. Please send pictures of your club's Healing or Sensory gardens to [Carcille Burchette](mailto:Carcille.Burchette@gmail.com), Chairman of Healing Gardens for Hope & Awareness. The pictures will be used in NGC publications and on social media.



NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK JUNE 3-9, 2018

National Garden Week is sponsored by National Garden Clubs, Inc. the first full week of June each year with this year being June 3-9, 2018. Clubs should utilize the posters found on the NGC website to help promote the event. Another great way to publicize the event is by asking local and state government bodies to sign proclamations honoring National Garden Week.

National Garden Week is a time when NGC club members are encouraged to promote garden club efforts within their communities on NGC objectives including, but not limited to, beautification, environmental awareness, horticulture education, conservation, landscape design, and gardening. Members are encouraged to coordinate activities with similar organizations to increase awareness of the many worthwhile efforts of our local, state and national organizations. This week-long effort is an excellent opportunity to promote public awareness of the many goals of NGC within your local cities and towns. Each project, no matter how small, helps to educate our citizens to the many worthwhile programs of NGC.

Clubs are encouraged to think outside of the box when it comes to promoting National Garden Week. Here are some ideas to get your creative juices flowing:

- Create an object (life-size stand, wreath, etc.) that can be placed in the yards of local businesses or high-traffic areas in your communities and cities to promote the week-long event.
- Plan to educate the public with educational programs designed to focus on NGC's objectives and programs.
- Work with your local schools and youth groups on a beautification project in your area in celebration of this week.
- Pass out flyers and hang posters in your area highlighting some of the many things your club does which further the initiatives of NGC.
- Contact your local city officials and other civic organizations to work together as a community-wide effort.



This celebration is a great avenue to publicize worthwhile projects your clubs are doing in your communities, while also educating the public on the purpose of NGC and what NGC does on a much larger scale. Remember, that there is no project or idea too big or too small to celebrate National Garden Week. This effort raises public awareness of garden club activities and the importance of NGC's objectives as a whole.

If you have any questions about National Garden Week, please contact me at sraelisabeth@gmail.com. Also, please send pictures and details of your National Garden Week projects as well so we can inspire clubs with great ideas.

- Sara Hemphill
National Garden Week Chairman

IT WAS THE BEST OF TIMES, IT WAS THE WORST OF TIMES

Charles Dickens wrote A Tale of Two Cities. Dickens' famous opening sentence introduces the universal approach of the book:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way—in short, **the period was so far like the present period...**(emphasis added)."

Unfortunately, the chaos in public life and discourse that Dickens so eloquently described is still with us today in our current "present period." Political partisans spew venomous words at each other; public speeches are often interrupted with shouts and booing; and there are many other examples we could cite. We see the chaos on our televisions, in our news, in our theatres, and in our everyday life.

Our garden club members are part of this world and have diverse social-economic, religious and political views. But, thankfully, most garden club members view their clubs as "safe havens" from the chaos of everyday life. We respect one another and focus on common interests and shared values that unite us. Club members gather together to improve their community through club action and a shared commitment to education, gardening, horticulture, floral design, conservation, civic and environmental concerns. These are the issues and shared values that unite us, and we must strive to create a harmonious environment for the fellowship which holds us together for the common good.

We should discourage any potentially divisive behavior, activity or expressions of religious and political views that might offend members or make them uneasy. When conducting club meetings, we should not assume because a member is silent he or she agrees with a potentially controversial position proposed. To ascertain the membership's actual views, and remove the pressure to conform, voting should be by ballot. When there are differences of opinion on the conduct of club business and affairs, they should be discussed, voted upon and resolved

in accordance with club bylaws and rules of order in a civil manner. It is possible to "disagree without being disagreeable."

Successful clubs may want to follow the advice suggested by the famous Johnny Mercer song "*Accentuate the Positive*" by eliminating negative behavior and attitudes. Members are more likely to join and remain involved in clubs and committees with a friendly, positive environment; where the conversation is on gardening and related matters of mutual interest with members who are affirmative of one another and make each other happy; and when controversial topics that stir up divisions are avoided. We should be gardeners who make our souls bloom!

- Donna Rouch, Membership Chairman

NGC TOUR ARKANSAS GARDENS AND ART OCTOBER 8-13, 2018

Join NGC President Nancy Hargroves for an exciting exploration of some of Arkansas' most beautiful gardens and mountainous landscapes. Learn about the history of the famous Hot Springs resort (now a National Park) and the Victorian town of Eureka Springs. Discover the phenomenal art and architecture of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Spend a day at P. Allen Smith's Moss Mountain Farm where we will tour the gardens, the cottage built for Google, Allen's home, and the animals; enjoy a farm-to-table lunch and dinner, and participate in a workshop on container gardening.



Photo courtesy of Moss Mountain Farm

Price per person based on two sharing a room - \$2,050*

*Includes a \$100 Donation to NGC. A copy of the tour brochure and registration form can be found at <http://gardenclub.org/resources/ngc-arkansas-tour-2018.pdf>

For more information, contact Mary Ann Bryant, NGC Tours Chairman, 770-893-1570, Maryannbryant1@gmail.com

DEEPER DEFINITIONS; HISTORIC PRESERVATION, HERITAGE AND HEIRLOOM PLANTS

Reprinted from **Garden News**, West Virginia Garden Clubs, by **Katy McClane**, Historic Preservation/Heritage Plants
Chairman, Spring 2018

The words heritage and heirloom are similar in meaning, and both are used in referring to plants. Around the year 1533, the word herit became inherit. Heritage means that which has been or may be inherited. Heritage is the act of inheriting, inheritance and hereditary succession. The meaning of heirloom derives from someone who inherits land, but it also refers to inheriting a thing, like a weaving loom.

Other meanings of inherit include: Any piece of property that has been in a family for several generations. Anything inherited from a line of ancestors or handed from generation to generation. In the plant world, an heirloom variety is a plant variety that has a history of being passed down within a family or community, similar to the generational sharing of heirloom jewelry or furniture.

Now that we understand the definitions of heritage and heirloom, let's turn our attention to what historic preservation means and how this pertains to garden clubs. The quote below is from the list of awards for garden club projects in the South Atlantic Region Handbook for Historic Preservation. "A \$25 award to a club, group of clubs or council for the most outstanding project, continuing or completing work on a historic preservation project, such as a trail, park, cemetery, garden or grounds around a historic building and/or garden of importance to local, state or national heritage.

"Our heritage landscapes are our regional identity." This is a quote from Lucinda Brockway's article, Planting the Seeds for Citizen Advocacy for Heritage Landscapes, in The National Gardener, Spring 2017. She explains that the way one views a landscape depends on each person's perspective, experience, and values. In my home state of West Virginia, heritage farms are beginning to be valued and preserved. At one time, they were plentiful. Now that they are becoming rare, they are being valued, not only a food source but also as a tourist experience demonstrating simpler times. Many of these farms grow heirloom plants.

Heirloom vegetables, fruits, flowers, and herbs are varieties that have remained popular with home gardeners because they grow well and taste great. Heirloom plants are loosely defined as plant varieties that have been grown for at least three generations and sometimes for three or more centuries! When plants of an open-pollinated variety self-pollinate or are pollinated by another representative of the same variety, the resulting seeds will produce plants roughly identical to their parents. An heirloom variety must be open-pollinated, but not all open-pollinated plants are heirlooms. Some companies create heirloom labels based on dates, such as a variety that is more than 50 years old.

Because heirloom plants come from open-pollinated plants that pass on similar characteristics to the offspring plants, it then becomes important to save the seeds of these plants. Seed Savers Exchange is an underground storage area in Iowa. They identify heirlooms by verifying and documenting generational history by preserving and passing on the seed. Seed can be saved by gardeners from year to year, which is an important consideration for food security and self-sufficiency. Heirloom seeds are never genetically engineered. Hybrid seeds can be stabilized, becoming open-pollinated varieties, by growing, selecting, and saving the seed over many years.

There are many popular heirloom tomato varieties. For example, Abraham Lincoln consistently produces huge crops of extra-large, meaty fruit, and resists foliage diseases, making it ideal for organic growers. It has a wonderful, summery tomato flavor, and it produces heavily right up to the first killing frost. These traits will be passed on to the next crop that you grow. 'Abraham Lincoln' was introduced in 1923, and over the years it has proven to be one of the great tomato classics that happily survived the big shift to hybrids during the 1940s.

In the area near the Seneca Rocks Discovery Center, WV there is a wonderful heritage site, complete with a heritage garden. Kaila St. Louis oversees this garden. She says the mission of the Sites Homestead is to interpret and depict home and family life in the 1800s. The kinds of plants cultivated in gardens of that time were vegetables, flowers, herbs, and shrubs, often grown in the one, large garden. Sites Homestead has a heritage orchard, as well as flower and vegetable gardens. These plants are heirloom varieties. In pioneer times there was a tradition that seeds and plants were shared with neighbors. You can get seeds and plants from the Sites Homestead by making a small donation or exchange with Kaila. Knowing that these seeds and plant starts come from pioneer days is very satisfying, since you become part of the line passing down an heirloom variety. The Sites Homestead hours are Thursday, Friday, Saturday, mid-April to mid-September.



Sites Homestead Ladies, Seneca Rocks, West Virginia.
Photo by K. McClane

Seed Savers Exchange is another good place to start when it comes to buying heirloom seeds. Their mission is to protect America's heirloom varieties because once an heirloom plant is gone, it is gone forever. I searched their catalog online and found Suttons Harbinger Pea, and this is what it says about this variety. English introduction by Suttons Seeds in 1898 "won an Award of Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1901. This is a very early, heavy-cropping variety, excellent quality eating pea. Plants are 28-32" tall. Shell in 52-60 days." This gives you an idea of what you will find when you start searching for heirloom seeds and plants. In conclusion, here are some tips on storing seeds.

1. Keep seeds at a cool to cold temperature of 40 degrees or less in a place without fluctuations in temperature. A paper bag is a useful way to collect seeds. Be sure to label and dates these bags.
2. To store your own saved seeds, spread them out and allow them to air dry. Once dry, put them in paper envelopes and label them. You can then store them in your refrigerator or freezer just like store-bought seeds.
3. Avoid light and never store seeds in direct sunlight or a well-lit room.
4. It is possible to keep your seeds in moisture-proof containers. A Mylar bag or mason jar is perfect as is a food saver bag. Even a standard Ziploc® bag will work if you take care to squeeze out all of the air first.
5. As with your food stores, rotate seeds every few years. This is not 100% necessary, but if you are gardening anyway, why not rotate?
6. When you are ready to use your seeds, keep them in their closed storage container until the seeds come to room temperature. This will prevent unwanted condensation from settling on the seed packets.

Sources:

Heritage and Heirloom Definitions - Oxford English Dictionary

Online Source <https://www.motherearthnews.com/organic-gardening/heirloom-plants-zl0z0703zswa>

Heritage Harvest Seed

Online Source <https://www.heritageharvestseed.com/glossary.html>

Seed Savers Exchange

The National Gardener, Spring 2017, Planting the Seeds for Citizen Advocacy for Heritage Landscapes by Lucinda Brockway

Online Source https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_pollination

Online Source <https://www.seedsavers.org/heirloom-seeds>

Online source <https://www.backdoorsurvival.com/8-tips-for-storing-seeds-for-the-long-term/>

Phone Interview with Kaila St. Louis, Sites Homestead Manager, WVU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer

Around the Town

featuring Preservation of Historic Gardens and Homes

*Harrinton House
Garden Club of Bala Cynwyd*



In 1978, members of the Garden Club of Bala Cynwyd, Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania helped restore a flower garden at the home of Charles Thompson. He was the only secretary of the Continental Congress and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Today, the restored 1704 house and 16 1/2 acre park in Bryn Mawr, PA are open to the public as a cultural resource owned by the Township of Lower Merion and administered privately by the Harrinton Association. The garden is currently maintained by club members.



Union Church *Harpswell Garden Club*

When you think of New England, gazebos on village greens and old historic churches come to mind. In Harpswell, Maine, the Harpswell Garden Club has been preserving the 1841 Union Church for 68 years! When the Club's former Civic Committee decided back in 1950 to rescue the church from ruins, it had stood abandoned for more than 30 years. Windows were broken, and a family of raccoons had taken up living in the choir loft. Members worked alongside ship's carpenters to restore the church to its original beauty. Today the church stands as a testament to the dedication of a group of volunteers who continue to maintain the church without the help of a congregation. The Church is now on the National Register of Historic Places thanks to the efforts of the Club. In 2015, the Club was honored by the NGC by winning the May Duff Walters Achievement Award for Preservation of Beauty.



How does the club do this? Volunteers use their own flower gardens to provide hundreds of flowers for weddings both at the church and at various venues in this coastal community. The Wedding Committee, made up of about a dozen volunteers, spends a few hours before each wedding making all the arrangements, including bouquets for the bride and her attendants, corsages, and multiple one-of-a-kind floral arrangements. In a given year, the Club will raise about \$4000 from their wedding flower program. The Club refuses to charge "market" prices for arrangements as they look at this as a way to give back to the community.

Phelps-Hatheway House and Garden

Suffield Garden Club

The Phelps-Hatheway House and Garden highlights the luxurious lifestyle enjoyed by two wealthy 18th-century Connecticut Valley families. Shem Burbank, a Suffield native, built the center chimney structure in 1791, where he and his wife raised nine children. The house was sold to Oliver Phelps of Windsor, Connecticut. In 1794, Phelps commissioned the addition of a substantial wing decorated with imported Parisian wallpaper. The Hatheway family took possession of the house from the early 1800's to 1914. Sumner Fuller and his mother carefully preserved the property which was donated to the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society upon Mrs. Fuller's death in 1956. In 1964, the club commissioned well-known Hartford landscape architect Mary Wells Edwards to design the formal garden as well as a large herb garden. Today the museum boasts an extensive collection of 18th-century antiques while the grounds feature a formal parterre garden.



In 1963, the Suffield Garden Club adopted the restoration and maintenance of the gardens on the south lawn as a civic project. Inspired by the historic wallpaper in the house, Mary Edwards chose a combination of early Dutch formality and late 18th-century free design used in England. Featured are the pink and white 19th-century peonies already at the house that are now 150 years old. The Suffield Garden Club has maintained the garden for 55 years.



Richard Wall Herb Garden *Old York Road Garden Club*



Richard Wall purchased land from William Penn, and built his home in Cheltenham, Pennsylvania, the first suburb of Philadelphia, in 1682. His home was the scene of Quaker weddings and services, making the house one of the original Quaker meetinghouses. In 1994, the Old York Road Garden Club established the herb garden to illustrate the way those first inhabitants used herbs in their daily lives. The herbs in the Wall House garden are the same varieties as those used by early American households.

The irises that bloom in the garden of the Wall House are historic irises, often referred to as "species irises," and they are over 100 years old. The particular iris rhizomes seen here have resided in Pennsylvania, New York, and Oregon and were presented to the community as a gift from the Malone family, descendants of early Irish settlers in Cheltenham. The iris were replanted here in the fall of 2007.



Longfellow Garden

Longfellow Garden Club

The historic Longfellow Garden is a secluded Colonial Revival style garden that is an oasis in the heart of downtown Portland, Maine. In 1924, the Longfellow Garden Club began the restoration of the garden, and members of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's family assisted to duplicate plants that would have been found in the garden during the lifetime of the poet. In 2009, the garden was rehabilitated following preservation standards and replicating the original landscape design.

The Longfellow Garden Club continues to nurture and maintain the garden which is free and open for the enjoyment of residents and visitors from May through October. The Club developed a comprehensive Plant Identification Guide which includes a landscape plan of the garden and documentation of all plant materials used.



Fair Lane - Home of Clara and Henry Ford

Garden Club of Dearborn



Fair Lane was built in 1915 by Henry Ford, the owner of the Ford automobile company, and his wife Clara. She was the first president of the Garden Club of Dearborn, Michigan from 1915-1920. Clara loved gardens, and her greenhouse still stands on the estate. The grounds and gardens were designed by esteemed landscape architect Jens Jensen.

Club members have supported the Fair Lane estate gardens and grounds for many years. They partner with the estate foundation on special fundraising events such as a Tea to support creation of a reduced sized replica of Mrs. Ford's peony garden, which was originally planted in 1922 but removed after Mrs. Ford's passing in 1950. Garden Club members helped care for the new peony garden for many years, and, more recently, the club funds maintenance of the garden by student interns. The Club has continued to support Fair Lane garden restoration and maintenance with annual gifts. In 2015, in celebration of both the Club's and Fair Lane's centennials, a special gift of \$10,000 was made to the Fair Lane gardens. All of these funds were raised by Garden Club members through the Club's annual Holly Berry Brunch fundraiser. Garden Club gifts have been used to recreate the historic Cutting Garden, support the purchase of plantings for the Blue Garden, repair and restore historic structures and plantings in the Early Rose Garden, and have purchased numerous native trees and shrubs for the landscape. They also support Fair Lane's annual Plant Sale & Garden Market and Halloween Trick or Treat in the Gardens.



The Chicago & West Michigan Railroad's first train arrived in Charlevoix, Michigan on June 26, 1892, continuing service for almost 90 years. On the 100th anniversary of the first train's arrival, the old train depot and surrounding property were deeded to the Charlevoix Historical Society.

Depot Heritage Garden

Charlevoix Area Garden Club



In 2001, the Charlevoix Area Garden Club was asked to create a vintage garden at the Depot, incorporating a set of 1900 wrought iron gates. A designer of historic gardens created a plan in the late 1890's style. In the fall of 2002, the Club planted 100 Winter Gem boxwoods to define four garden rooms which became the bones of the garden. Simultaneously, members researched, through life-long residents and the Historical Society, plants which grew in the Charlevoix area between 1870 and 1930—the time period established for the garden. The garden is thriving, and visitors enjoy historic peonies, irises, daylilies, daises, and a lovely, red shrub rose growing next to an old fashioned Lutyens bench. Charlevoix Area Garden Club members continue to maintain this beautiful, historic garden.

Grettenberger Farm House Garden

Meridian Garden Club



This historic home and garden, built around 1860, is located in the Meridian Historical Village in Okemos, Michigan. The Meridian Garden Club plants and maintains seven gardens at the Village. The Backdoor Garden includes the vegetable, herb and fruit gardens behind the Grettenberger farm house, the outhouse garden, and the garden enclosed by the picket fence behind the red barn. The gardens are dedicated to horticultural education for all ages and the members who maintain it have developed a curriculum for Historic Village events that stresses a hands-on appreciation of vegetable gardening.

Steepletop Garden Club of Kinderhook



Steepletop was the home of Edna St. Vincent Millay, prolific writer, actress and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1923. In 1925, she and her husband Eugen Boissevain purchased an abandoned berry farm and additional acreage on a hilltop in Austerlitz, New York, a few hours' drive north of Manhattan. Millay named their new home "Steepletop" after the pink-flowered Steeplebush that grew wild in the fields and meadows there. They transformed the property into an elegant country estate with flower, herb and vegetable gardens; guest houses; a tennis court overlooking the Berkshire Hills; and a sunken garden area in the foundation of an old barn ("the ruins") consisting of seven garden rooms separated by stone walls and arborvitae hedges. The "rooms" included a bar area, complete with stone benches and a fountain, a rose garden, iris "room," and a spring-fed swimming pool (where they and their guests swam *au naturel*). The couple planted raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, currants, apples and pears for personal use and to sell. The gardens were designed, planted and maintained by Millay with help from her husband and a handyman.

Restoration of the gardens at Steepletop was started in 2008. Volunteers from the Garden Club of Kinderhook began helping under the direction of the head gardener. The ladies helped to pull weeds, transplant existing plants and clear areas of the garden (above). Most of their time was spent helping to restore the kitchen garden (below). Club members volunteer throughout the growing season to help maintain not only the kitchen garden, but the other gardens on the property as well. Steepletop is a beautiful, peaceful place to be, and the club members come away feeling renewed by the contribution they have made to its upkeep.

Excerpts from an essay by the Edna St. Vincent Millay Society at Steepletop Literary Executor Holly Peppe. Photos courtesy of The Millay Society, millay.org. Visit their website for information and tours of the house and gardens.

