

March/April 2021

# KEEPING IN TOUCH



**National Garden Clubs, Inc. 4401 Magnolia Avenue  
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*Helleborus Niger*

## President's Postcard

**GAY AUSTIN**



Welcome to the Spring issue of *Keeping in Touch*. March 20, 2021 is the first day of spring. This particular day is determined by the vernal equinox, which is when the sun crosses over the plane of the earth's equator, making night and day approximately equal lengths all over the world. How does this affect us as gardeners? Along with longer daylight and warmer temperatures, our natural world awakens, bringing bountiful beauty for us to enjoy. Encourage everyone you know to get outside and enjoy this season of growth.

Taking a deep breath of fresh air in a garden is both invigorating and inspiring. Gardeners come in many shapes, colors and most definitely energy levels! For a few, sitting back and viewing someone's established garden is enough to satisfy their need for outdoors. For others, being able to experience the beauty of outdoors, digging in soil and planting, helps to invigorate and lift our spirits.

With 2020 behind us, we have high expectations of garden club activities in 2021. We continue to create interesting ways to meet and communicate. Sadly, we were forced to cancel the annual meeting that was scheduled for May 18 - 21, 2021 in New Jersey. As this administration moves towards its completion, we are planning to provide interesting presentations about the many accomplishments of our 2019 - 2021 term. Despite strict limitations, we undertook worthwhile projects, many of which will be showcased on the NGC website. Specific information on accessing these presentations is coming soon.



## EARTH DAY AND SPRING GARDENING

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## Earth Day 2021

**JUDY NEWMAN**

*Growing the Planet - One Seed at a Time*

Wisconsin's Senator Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day, organized the first event on April 22, 1970. He chose that date, falling between Spring Break and Final Exams on college campuses, to maximize student participation. Senator Nelson wanted to use the energy of students to increase public consciousness about air and water pollution. The first Earth Day inspired 20 million Americans, 10% of the total US Population, to take to the streets, parks and auditoriums to protest against the deteriorating environment. The first Earth Day led to the creation of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and two years later, the Clean Air Act plus other environmental laws.

*"A healthy planet is not an option – it is a necessity."*

In 1990, Earth Day went global, mobilizing 200 million people in 141 countries placing environmental issues on the world stage. In 2000, 5,000 environmental groups in 184 countries organized groups of activists around the world. Citizens around the world wanted quick, decisive actions on global warming and clean energy. Earth Day is a day of action to change human behavior and create local, national and global changes. The fight for a cleaner environment continues to become more urgent as the effects of climate change become more apparent every day.

The 2021 Earth Day theme is "Restore Our Earth" and focuses on natural processes, emerging technologies and innovative thinking to restore the world's ecosystems. The challenge is for each of us to restore our earth not just because we care about the natural world, but because we live on it. We need a healthy earth to support our livelihoods, health, survival and happiness.

Visit [earthday.org](http://earthday.org) to learn more about Education & Science, Personal & Civic Action and Conservation & Restoration. Each section contains a wealth of information and exciting opportunities to improve the world we live in. From earthday.org: "A healthy planet is not an option – it is a necessity."

Consider attending our Environmental Schools, many in a virtual format. See listings on the [NGC Website](#). It is an easy opportunity to increase your awareness about environmental issues in the United States and around the world - taking care of our earth starts in your backyard!

### Help Wildlife

**JULIA GILMORE**

Earth Day is April 22 and this worldwide event, recognized in many countries, is a great opportunity to get involved in helping wildlife in your own backyard. Many people around the globe have devoted this special day to raising awareness about habitat preservation, sustainability, and the health of the planet. From large service projects to small gestures, there are many ways to make a difference in reducing harm to our environment so wildlife can thrive.

- 1. Garden for Wildlife** Add birdbaths, feeders, bee houses, nest boxes or bat houses to your yard or property to provide shelter, food and water for migrating or residential wildlife. Adding native trees, bushes and flowers can also provide natural sources for nesting, perching and protection.
- 2. Spread the Word about Wildlife** Share information about wildlife with your friends and family.
- 3. Bring Wildlife Awareness** to your workplace, school or community.
- 4. Make a gift** or monthly pledge to support wildlife.



Members of the North Shore Garden Club planting native plants for pollinators on town property in Manchester, MA.

## Native/Endangered Plants

**ARABELLA DANE**

It is not only rising sea levels and the flooding of our coastlines that concerns us here in New England. How will native plants be affected by rising temperatures and changing precipitation? Can they and the critters that depend upon them in their current habitats survive? Can they migrate, adapt, change?

The Native Plant Trust is “on it” ([Native Plant Trust](#)) identifying resilient sites to provide land trusts with a framework for protecting plant diversity, banking seeds of rare plants to ensure their survival, studying plant genetics and more. Several of Native Plant Trust’s core initiatives aim to meet goals in the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation, part of the United Nations’ Convention on Biological Diversity.

A recent issue of the organization’s magazine, [Native Plant News](#), focuses on the result of a two-year collaboration with The Nature Conservancy’s Eastern science division. The report on conserving plant diversity under climate change scenarios:

- Analyzes the distribution of habitats and rare plants in New England
- Uses two international targets to assess progress toward protecting plant and habitat diversity
- Identifies how much and where each kind of habitat needs protection to ensure plant diversity endures as the climate changes
- Includes interactive maps enabling users to see resilient sites and what needs protecting in the entire region, in individual states, and in specific parcels



Part of saving plant diversity is to focus on the region’s rare and endangered plants. For nearly 30 years, Native Plant Trust has monitored populations of imperiled plants in every county in New England each year. In recent years, it has ramped up its collection of seeds from the 389 globally and regionally rare species in the area. The goal of this Seed Ark program is the collecting and banking of seeds and tissue from at least two-thirds of the 3,300 populations of these rare plants, to preserve the range of genetic diversity and to monitor each species’ ability to adapt to changing conditions.

- The Seed Ark is about halfway to its goal, with seeds of 92% of the 309 species, whose seeds can be preserved, collected from about 47% of the populations.
- Collecting and preserving tissue from the 80 species (such as orchids) whose seeds cannot be dried and frozen is the next step in the project.
- To date, Native Plant Trust has raised about half the funding needed to fill the Seed Ark, with another \$2.5M needed to meet the goal. At this time, there is also a challenge match: a donor has pledged \$500,000 to match gifts to endow the Seed Ark and support perpetual storage, viability testing, and recollecting seed and tissue if needed.

While banking seeds and tissue ensures the preservation of genetic diversity, conservationists want species thriving on the landscape. To that end, Native Plant Trust uses its seed bank to restore and stabilize rare plants in the wild and

*(Continued on page 17)*

# Conserve Water

JACQUELINE CONNELL

**Choose Plants Wisely** Plants native to your area are beneficial to wildlife and often eliminate or cut down on the need to water. Smaller, narrow-leaf plants generally need less water than large-leaf plants. Intersperse these with drought resistant broad-leaf structural plants to add interest to the overall design. Replace water guzzling lawns with swathes of pollinator plants.

**Water at the Right Time of Day** Recent research suggests there are optimum times of the day to water your gardens. Water in-ground plants in early morning to lessen evaporation. However, studies have shown container plants grow stronger and healthier if they are watered in the afternoon. Avoid watering in the evening as it may promote fungal pathogens.

**Water the Right Amount** Do not overwater. Use a water gauge and watch weather conditions, only water when necessary. Instead of using oscillating sprinklers, install drip irrigation. Soaker hoses distribute water to where it is needed and lessen water evaporation and runoff. Less frequent but deeper watering encourages plants to grow deeper roots.

**See to Your Soil** Mulch to retain moisture and keep weeds out. A 2-3 inch layer of coarse mulch is best to allow water to permeate the soil and avoid compaction. Increase organic matter in the soil by adding compost made from leaves and vegetative food scraps.

**Recycle Household Water** Cool the water you steam or boil vegetables in and pour it on plants instead of down the drain; it is rich in nutrients. Put a bucket in the shower and save the water that would otherwise be wasted while waiting for your water to get hot.

**Capture Rain Water** Rain can be collected in buckets, barrels, tanks and stone cisterns. Replace a downspout with a rain chain to add a decorative and musical element as you collect water. Top containers with a fine-screened lid to keep out mosquitoes and other pests.

**Slow Water Run-off** — Keep rainwater in your yard with a Rain Garden, essentially a depression planted with water tolerable plants (able to be wet for 24 hours or less). This garden collects runoff and filters out pollutants allowing cleaner water to seep in to the earth and aquifers. Rain gardens enhance backyard habitats as they attract butterflies, birds and other beneficial visitors.



*Drought Tolerant Garden-Spring Island, SC*



*Rain Barrel*



## Tips & Tricks - Recycling

Old Boots Make Great Planters

### STRAWBERRY BASKETS

**Gail Vanderhorst**

Strawberry time is coming soon. In some parts of the country, it is time to plant strawberry plants and in a little while time to eat the fruit. Here is an idea for recycling those little green plastic strawberry baskets that we all get when we buy strawberries in the market. Eat the yummy strawberries and save the container. Place it right side up over newly planted seeds, like lettuce seeds. The seeds will sprout and grow right through the openings in the basket and keep your lettuce leaves off the ground and make the picking of the lettuce much cleaner and easier.

You can also do this for any starter seeds that you might want to grow in starter cups. This time place the strawberry basket upside down over the new seeds that have been planted in the starter cups. It will protect them from birds, bugs and other critters eating the new growth.

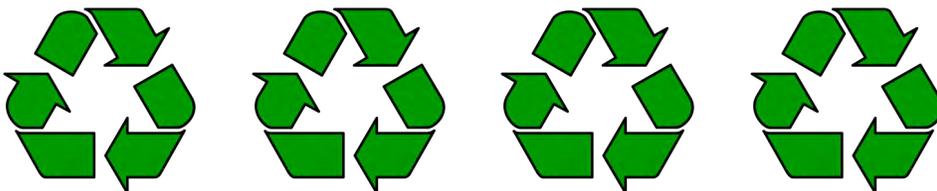


Upside Down Basket Protects Seedling

### Collect Markers

**Gerianne Holzman**

Keep spent markers out of the landfill! Crayola has a program called [ColorCycle](#). They repurpose the entire marker and turn it into reusable alternatives such as oil, electricity and wax. In addition to Crayola products, they accept all brands of plastic markers including Sharpies, dry erase and highlighters. After signing up for the program, schools can set up a box to collect old markers. When it is full, they just contact Crayola ColorCycle for a free shipping label. The program is currently available in the US and Canada and is temporarily on-hold during the pandemic. Students and teachers can start collecting now and be ready to send in a box when the program restarts. Imagine all of the plastic that will be diverted from the landfill.





## Invite Birds

**MARIE HARRISON**

*Leucistic Robin*

Each morning, the antics of various birds enthrall me as I walk around the garden sipping my morning coffee. Ruby-throated hummingbirds indulge in the offerings of the red Pentas. House finches and cardinals vie for perches on the sunflower feeder. Nuthatches and tufted titmice scurry up and down among branches of shrubs looking for food. Carolina wrens flit in and out among the cypress knees searching for bugs and spiders. A woodpecker's drumming resonates through the morning air as it investigates a pine snag. My world is alive with a cacophony of sounds and fluttering of wings.

How did I get to be this lucky? What special things have I done to orchestrate this daily extravaganza? Birds, I have learned, require shelter from the elements, protection from predators, water, natural food and nesting sites. I began the venture in my garden by paying attention to the native plant species that already existed and making sure they were retained. I was lucky because I started with a mature assortment of native trees that included oaks, pines, junipers, hollies, and black gum, all of which established an effective canopy. Native shrubs and small trees at mid-story included beautyberry, wild blueberries, persimmon, hawthorn, sparkleberry and saw palmetto. Underneath it all was a groundcover of wildflowers and creeping vines. To these I added more native trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants that increased the availability of food and shelter and increased diversity.



*Pileated Woodpecker*

Plants are not the only important feature in my yard that birds like. I frequently see woodpeckers debarking pine snags and dead limbs. They are searching for insects that hide in the crevices or hollowing out nesting sites. Birds of various kinds use the dirt pathways for their dust baths and grit requirement. A brush pile provides hiding places for mice, garter snakes, lizards, toads, and many insects of immense interest to the wrens and other ground-feeding birds. Rocks incorporated among the flower borders are used as perches for birds and hiding places for tasty ants and beetles. Natural mulch underneath the trees and shrubs is home for worms, millipedes, and other scrumptious morsels. Birdbaths meet water needs.

Since my love affair with the birds, I have become a more responsible environmental steward. I am more tolerant of the insects that manage to damage some of my plants. Not surprisingly, my avian friends' list of gourmet treats closely resembles my list of dreaded pests. The birds devour aphids, cutworms, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and other unsuspecting insects whose sole intent is to dine on my ornamental plantings. My yard is not a mess of as one might assume from this description; it is where I enjoy sitting while immersed in the sights and sounds of nature.



## PLANT AMERICA WITH TREES

**VICTORIA BERGESEN**

*Cercis canadensis*

**Each One-Plant One!** This project will continue in the next administration under the Horticulture Committee. Last year was very difficult for garden clubs and many plans and projects were postponed. As we recover, look for opportunities to plant native trees at your home and in your community. Whether projects are small or large, *every tree planted makes a difference.*

The Beaufort Garden Club celebrated our 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary by purchasing 85 redbud saplings (*Cercis canadensis*) to give away to the public at our local farmers market. We wrote an article for a local free paper to advertise the event. With each sapling we included a flyer about the tree including folklore and culinary uses along with basic tree planting instructions. We set up at the market's gazebo and prepared to spend the morning. The trees were gone in fifteen minutes! Only one tree per family, but 85 trees were snapped up by excited gardeners. This project, costing us less than \$100, resulted in many trees being planted throughout the community.

Garden Club of Georgia members planted 31,696 native trees from May 2019 to December 2020. One garden club member planted 31,000 loblolly pines on her property in Cuthbert, Georgia. Other members planted 696 natives and 379 non-natives for a total of 32,075. Whether we have small resources or large, **Each One can Plant One.**

## PLANT AMERICA WITH TREES PROCLAMATION

**BARBARA HADSELL**

Florida Federation of Garden Club's District X's Plant America with Trees Committee's Gardening Consultants, at the request of the Ocean Ridge Garden Club, has created a generic Proclamation to be used in conjunction with cities and municipalities, to declare support for the NGC initiative Plant America with (native) Trees. This Proclamation can be used in conjunction with various tree-planting events such as Arbor Day or Earth Day. (The Proclamation is on the following page as a fillable pdf.)



*Pinus taeda (Loblolly Pine)*



# Plant America with Trees City Proclamation

*Whereas, the Earth's Biosphere is an interconnected living web of life of which humans are part;*

*Whereas, the Earth's Biosphere is experiencing an increase of global temperatures, unprecedented levels of habitat destruction, loss of biodiversity, extinction of species, and rising of and lengthening of heat waves;*

*Whereas, the Earth, our home, is experiencing increases of extreme weather, glacial retreat, loss of sea ice, and increasing sea levels;*

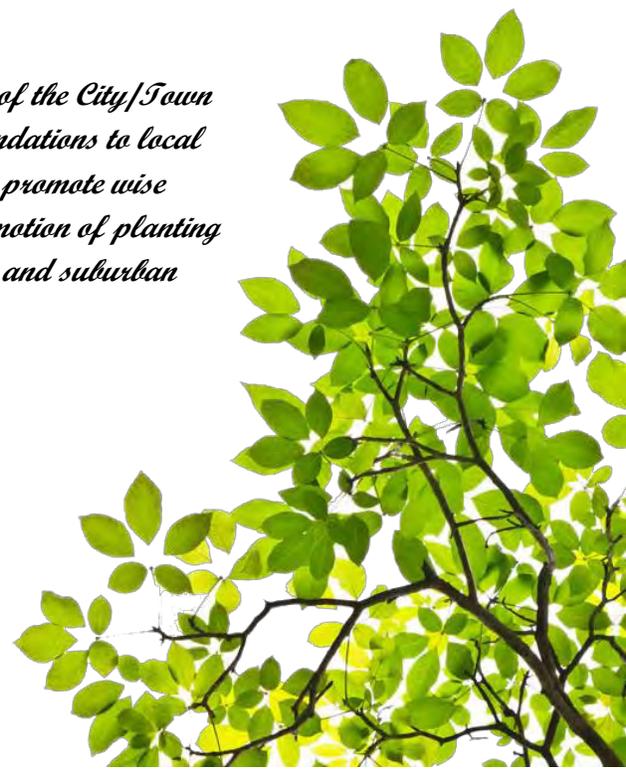
*Whereas, the Earth's Biosphere is made up of many smaller living webs of life called habitats;*

*Whereas, native trees represent the very foundation of most land-based habitats and represent the very lungs of these habitats, restoring life webs, wildlife, watersheds, and living soil;*

*Whereas, native trees incorporated into the landscape of our yards and communities helps increase the amount of habitat available to our native wildlife displaced by human development and necessary for supporting complex life webs and helps decrease the amount of resources, such as water and chemicals, used in our public lands and in our yards;*

*Whereas, native trees stabilize erosion, improve the soil in a way non-natives do not, improve air quality, reduce ozone, cool cities, decrease pollution, prevent runoff, improve human health and living conditions, conserve water, improve local climates, and produce oxygen and absorb carbon dioxide;*

*Now let it therefore be resolved, \_\_\_\_\_ of the City/Town of \_\_\_\_\_ provides recommendations to local governments, developers and residents regarding landscaping to promote wise restoration and stewardship of local habitats, including the promotion of planting native trees as well as the maintenance of their habitats in urban and suburban settings, dated \_\_\_\_\_.*





## Raised Beds - Soil

### BUD QUALK

*Raised Bed of Spring Greens*

“What is the perfect soil type for plants?” Answer, the nutrient-rich crumbly soil called loam is the medium in which most plants thrive. When you scoop a handful, the color is dark and the soil has a sweet earthy fragrance. The consistency is similar to a Dutch apple pie topping, clumping together when squeezed but easily crumbling when you sift it between your fingers.

Loam is the perfect soil because of its diversity and balance of ingredients. It is a mixture of approximately equal parts of decomposed organic matter, sand, silt, and clay. The clay and silt particles supply fertility and stability for plant roots by absorbing and holding moisture. Clay and silt also hold soluble plant nutrients where the roots can absorb them. Sand loosens loam’s texture and adds vital spaces between the silt particles for the passage of air and water into the root zone. Hummus lightens loam’s texture and increases its moisture retaining capacity and fertility. This diversity produces a crumbly soil that drains well and is moist and fertile. This perfection is a condition called tilth, the thing of gardener's dreams.

The next exclamation from the inquirer is sometimes, “My plants are doomed, my soil is clay, holds water and I hit the hard pan (gray concrete-like substance) about 12 inches down!” My response is do not panic. You can “fix it.” You could simply start by adding compost, which improves the soil’s texture and encourages development of a thriving community of vital soil organisms and earthworms. This solution does take time.

If you prefer a quicker solution, you might consider raised beds, which are a practical solution to poor soil. Beds of loam soil framed by landscape timbers or other weather tolerable wood, bricks, etc. provide a great environment for most vegetables, herbs and flowers. Some think treated wood is okay for ornamental plantings but it is best to avoid its use for vegetables and herbs. Personally, I think treated wood can be used for all beds. You decide.

If you prefer a more natural look, simply mound your loam soil into a berm atop your poor soil. Many gardeners use framing for the vegetable, herbs and cut flower beds and berms for the landscaping plants and flowers. For a more finished look, edge your berms with stacked stones and top the wood frames with a flat board to provide a handy seating area.

*(Continued on next page)*



*Perfect Soil*



*Planting Time*



## Raised Beds, cont.

Raised beds are great for many reasons beyond the soil issue. They allow you to plant earlier in the spring because the sun warms the soil and they drain more quickly. The soil stays loose because no one walks on it. Weeding is less since the plants are closer together and the plant shade stunts weed growth. Yield will be increased because your gardening is intensified. Intensified, what is that?

With most vegetable gardens, the gardener spaces plants one to six inches apart in rows depending on the vegetable, spacing larger plants like tomatoes up to 12 inches apart. Then the gardener leaves two to three feet between the plant rows. Yes, you are correct, that is wasted space. With intensive gardening, the plants are the same distance apart on all four sides. For instance, you can plant green beans four inches apart in the row and have only four inches between rows. There is no need for large spaced rows between vegetable plants since you can reach them from all sides.

When building a raised bed, keep it to no more than four feet wide so you can reach the middle of the bed more easily. The sides can be as long as you like but eight feet is the norm. Most vegetables, flowers and herbs have fine, short roots so the bed depth can be about six inches, but if you plant perennials and woody plants, make the depth at least 12 inches.

Fall/Winter cleaning is easy with raised beds. Simply remove the dead plant material. Then cover the bed with a layer of compost, then with a layer of shredded leaves. This keeps weed growth to a minimum and by spring, the compost and most of the leaves have decomposed into the soil. Remove what is left of the leaves, plant the seeds or plants and then mulch them with the same leaves you just removed. Any time you have extra top soil, compost, potting mix, etc. throw it in your bed. After a few years, the soil is solid black and will grow prize-winning vegetables, flowers or herbs. Planting in raised beds will spoil you and may never ever go back to wide row planting again.

### BUILDING AN 8 X 4 FOOT RAISED BED

#### Materials:

- ✂ Three 8 foot 2x8's (treated preferred)
- ✂ Twelve 3" deck screws
- ✂ Drill
- ✂ Saw
- ✂ Tape measure & pencil

Determine where you want to place the bed, it will need at least 6 hours of sunlight each day for most vegetables

1. Build the bed on site.
2. Cut one of the 2x8's in half to form two 2x4's.
3. Place the wood where you want the bed.
4. Attach the 2x4's to each end of the 2x8's to make the bed 8 x 4 feet.
5. Roll the bed out of the way while you till where the bed will be located.
6. Roll the bed back in place over the tilled soil.
7. Add compost, peat moss, top soil or any other additive you can find.
8. Till once more, the first year it will not be extremely fertile but every year it will improve.



# Spring Garden Planning

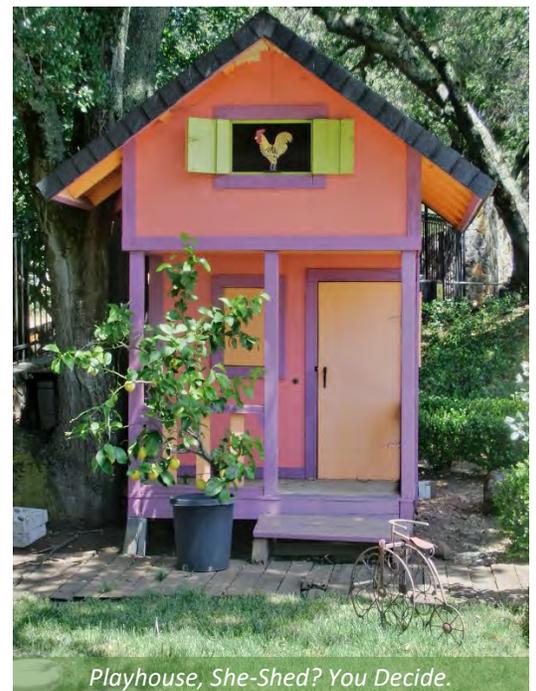
**ALEXIS JOAN SLAFER**

*Chicken Friendly Garden*

As we look forward, spring becomes a bouquet of opportunities. No matter what time of year you plan your garden, the best designs use the design process, incorporating the principles and elements of design. As soon as weather permits start preparing for spring: clean your tools and your beds.

Then map your garden to scale and put your desires on paper. As you walk around, indicate the sun's path, any concerns you have, possible hardscape features and/or structures you would like to include. Would a playhouse be perfect in that corner? Remember this is just one moment in time. What would you like to experience in your garden with your morning cup of coffee or evening glass of wine? Consider all of the seasons - what design qualities will be enhanced in summer or mid-winter? How will the shade patterns change as newly planted trees mature? Will activities be active or passive? Be sure to include anything that is important to you. You want to consider who will use the space - children and/or adults. What about climate including temperatures and plant growing zone? Think about the amount of rainfall and when it occurs, soil structure and pH, sunlight as well as wind speed and direction.

Of paramount importance is asking, *"What are the results that I'd like to see? How will my goals be achieved immediately after installation, during the transition to maturity and beyond?"* Based on those answers and if you plan well, your garden will be enjoyed to the fullest.



*Playhouse, She-Shed? You Decide.*

## INVASIVE PLANTS

**BEVERLY KAZICKAS**

February 22 - 26, 2021 was National Invasive Species Awareness Week. Calls-to-action nationwide recognize the threat of invasive species to plants, birds, wildlife and habitats. Invasive flora and fauna negatively affect the balance of our ecosystems. Invasive plants include both native and non-native species. Invasives spread easily and grow densely by outcompeting desirable vegetation for light and nutrients. Some common invasive plant species to remove and control:

- Honeysuckle - A non-native bush, remove the Tartarian variety (*Lonicera tatarica*)
- Buckthorn - A non-native plant which includes the Common (*Rhamnus cathartica*) and Glossy (*Frangula alnus*) varieties
- Japanese Barberry - A non-native shrub (*Berberis thunbergii*) spreading in forests, meadows and wetlands
- Hay-Scented Fern - A native fern (*Dennstaedtia punctilobula*) grows in dense mats and outcompetes desirable vegetation on the forest floor

A few good sources for more information on invasive species are [invasive.org](http://invasive.org), [National Wildlife Federation](http://NationalWildlifeFederation.org), [invasivespeciesinfo.gov](http://invasivespeciesinfo.gov) and on the NGC website.



## Spring Clean-up: Tools

SUZY ANDREGO

Preparing for Tool Clean-up

Put your down time to good use by preparing your garden and design tools for spring gardening and spring flower shows. Late winter is the perfect time to clean, sharpen and repair your tools. It is definitely not the most glamorous or favorite task; but doing this now will set you up for a great growing season.

The first thing is to wipe each tool down with some Dawn® dishwashing liquid. This removes grease and oil that has built up on your tools from the past growing season. Follow this with a good warm water rinse, making sure to dry them well after their bath. If there is some grease or grime that will not come off, use Goof Off® or Goo Gone® on a paper towel to remove it.

The next step is to CameO Cleanser® and a green top Scotch® scrubbing pad (I prefer to use a new one for faster results) and work the remainder of the dirt and grime off all sides of each tool. You will need to wash them off one more time to get the CameO® residue off.

Once you have finished that task, inspect each tool for any needed repairs. After making any necessary repairs, use WD-40® to oil all moving joints. After the tool's joints are oiled, take a flat edge sharpener and sharpen all the tools that have blades. The final task is spraying each tool with Lysol disinfectant. This ensures a successful start to the growing season with clean, sharp and sterile tools.



Before Cleaning



After Cleaning



Scrubbing



Oiling



Sharpening

## Good Advice

PAT NEASBITT

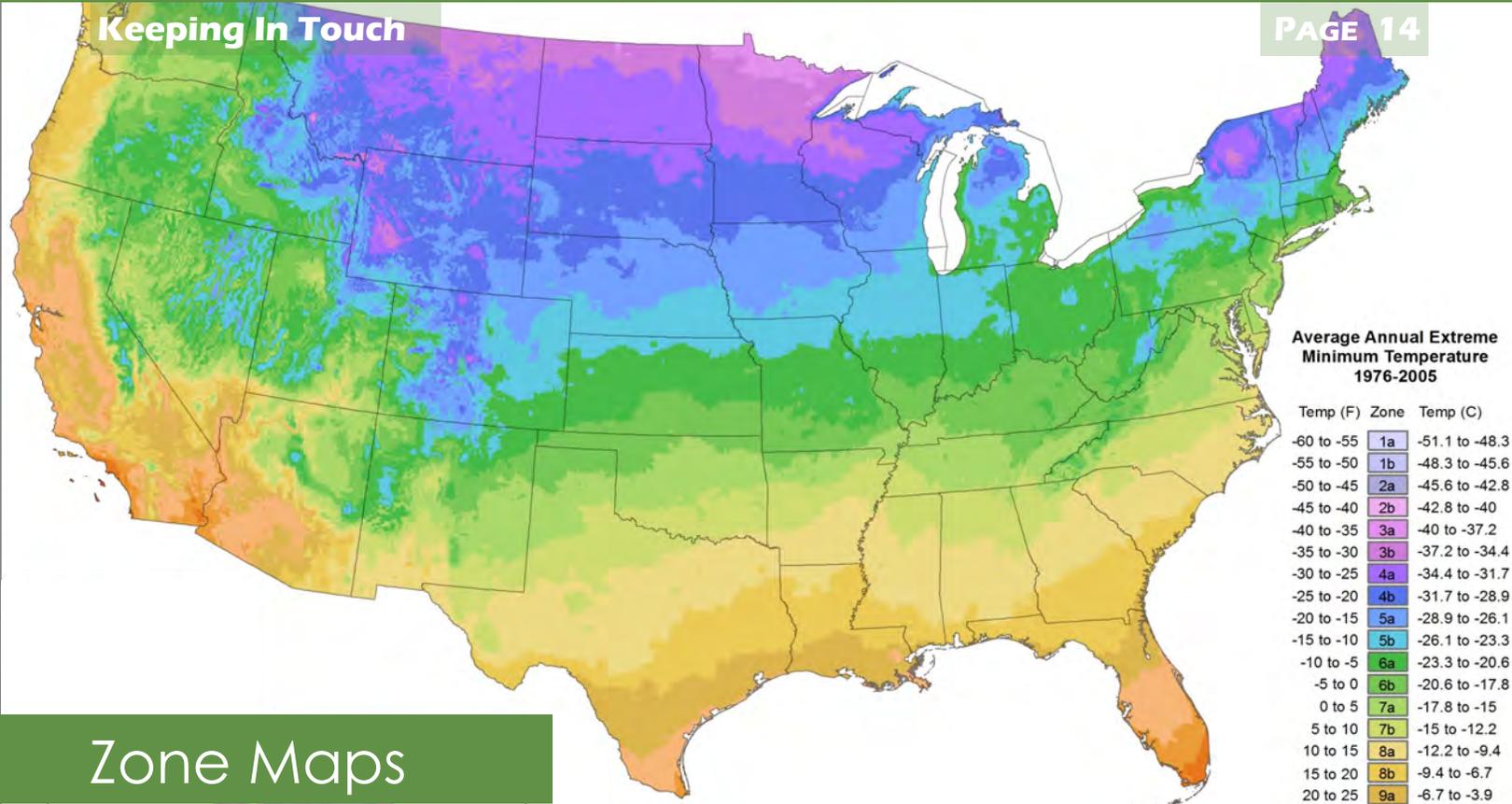
*Yellow Swallowtail on Buddleia davidii*

Are you a beginning gardener who is just trying to remember the difference between annuals and perennials or an advanced gardener propagating daylilies in your own greenhouse? Either way, there are things we all wish someone had told us. While it is too cold, wet, snowy and windy to work outside, we get ready for spring gardening season by shopping printed and online gardening catalogs. There are a few things to keep in mind to make this season less work and more enjoyable.

- ⇒ **They really will get as big as the tag says.** You saw the tag that said the crepe myrtle would get 20' tall and 20' wide, but it looked so tiny and pathetic when you rescued it from the parking lot on clearance at the end of the season and planted it 2' from the house. Five years later it really did get that big and is now overhanging the roof and threatening to block the entry to the front door. It does pay to read plant labels and space plants so they have room to reach their full potential. Many plants consistently get even larger than the label suggests, even in heavy clay soil!
- ⇒ **If the label says "can be aggressive" - heed the warning.** It is tempting to want to plant things that will spread and fill in quickly, but you do not want to spend the next ten years trying to pull out things that take over the sidewalk, driveway and all your other plants.
- ⇒ **Roses are red... and have thorns and bugs and many diseases.** Everyone loves roses, but the reality is that they are high maintenance and have diseases like black spot, powdery mildew and Rose Rosette Disease. They are also plagued with insects like thrips and aphids. If you love roses and still want some, get only a few that are hardy for your area and plant them in ideal conditions for the best chance of healthy roses without a lot of work on your part.
- ⇒ **Keep it simple.** Do not plant one of everything you see in the plant catalog. Your yard may end up looking like a confusing hodgepodge. When planting trees and shrubs, plant only a few different ones and repeat them in various places around the yard. Plant at least three of the same perennials in a group for impact. Plant only things recommended as growing well in your zone. (See zone maps on the following page.)
- ⇒ **Start small.** Sprawling flowerbeds can be beautiful but take a lot of time to weed, water and deadhead. Avoid things that need constant pruning, dividing or staking to keep them from overtaking all the plants near them.
- ⇒ **Do not be afraid to get rid of some plants.** If your "English Country Garden" just looks like a crowded mess, it is time to thin out the number of plants. If the coneflower and garden phlox have totally taken over, it is time to dig up some of them and share with friends or relegate them to the compost heap.
- ⇒ **Relax and enjoy your garden.** Do not set unrealistic standards by expecting your garden to look like those you see in magazines. They have a large staff to care for them and airbrush the pictures to make them look perfect.



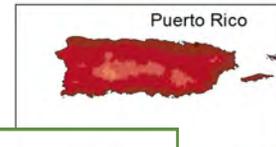
*Goldenrod is Aggressive but Great for Bees*



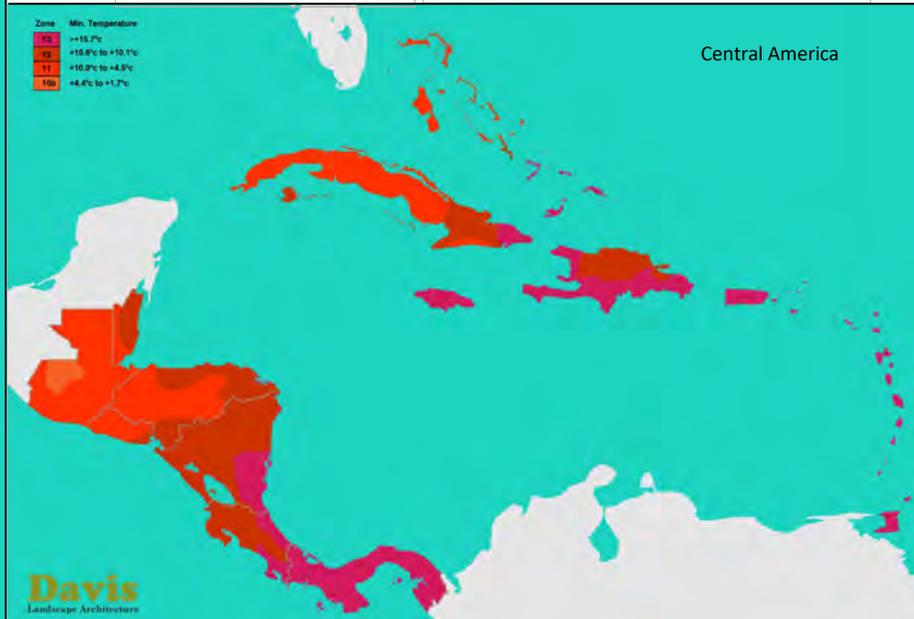
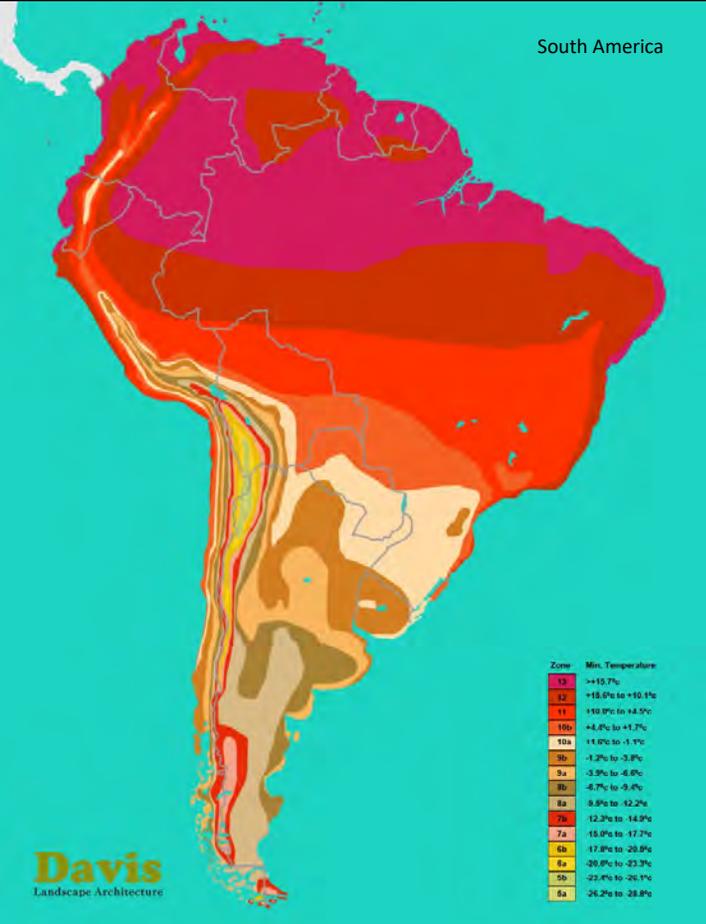
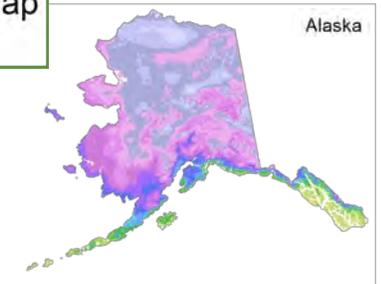
# Zone Maps

Plant hardiness zones help gardeners determine how likely a plant is to survive in their area. An online description or plant tag should list a plant's zone to tolerate cold or heat.

- [Interactive Plant Hardiness Zone Map \(USA\)](#)
- [Interactive Plant Hardiness Zone Map \(International\)](#)



## USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map





## Around NGC

**DEBBY WALTERS**

*Spreading Valentine Cheer*

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, can the same be said of borrowing ideas from other garden clubs? In a recent *Keeping in Touch* article, the Rake and Hoe Garden Club of Westfield, NJ shared information on the mini-arrangements they provide for their local Mobile Meals program. The Botany Belles and Beaus Garden Club of central St. Croix County in Wisconsin thought this was a wonderful idea and contacted our local Meals on Wheels programs operated by the Senior Centers to see if they would like mini-arrangements for Valentine's Day. They were pleased with the idea so the club set to work.

Members used individual yogurt containers set into folded boxes created by a club member. Meeting in a heated garage (it was below zero outside), members assembled mini-Valentine's Day arrangements of pink and red carnations, baby's breath and assorted greenery for filler. These colorful arrangements along with a few chocolates were delivered with meals in time for Valentine's Day. The club has already received phone calls expressing appreciation from recipients.

Working with lovely flowers, creating with garden club friends, and spreading some cheer . . . what a wonderful way to spend a cold winter morning! Thanks so much to the Rake and Hoe Garden Club for sharing an idea that spreads cheer and makes a difference.



*Miniature Beauty*

## Something Exciting is Coming to NGC

**Gerianne Holzman**

Beginning in Summer 2021, *The National Gardener* will have a new look. Along with your favorite articles, *TNG* will include the best of *Keeping in Touch* plus exciting new features. All members are encouraged and welcomed to submit articles by the deadline of June 1, 2021. See the new *The National Gardener* page on the website, beginning April 1, for more information and guidelines for submission. The new *TNG* all-volunteer staff includes an editor, assistant editor, advertising/marketing manager and copy editors. Your new *TNG* team looks forward to providing our readers with great articles, special information and wonderful opportunities. We thank current editor, Pat Binder, for her many years of service. For more information or questions, please contact future editor [Gerianne Holzman](#).



*Ellen Eno with Valentine's Day in a Yogurt Cup*



## Grateful

**PAM DOWD**

*Annette and Charles Tinnin*

Have you ever met someone who you knew would turn out to be a good friend because of a common interest? On September 19, 2019, I met Charles and Annette Tinnin at a Gold Star Families Memorial Marker dedication held in the Clarksville Veterans Park, TN. This timely introduction turned out to be a good decision for our Blue Star and Gold Star Families Marker Program. The dedication was held during “Veterans Days,” a five-day celebration for veterans and their families from the area and Fort Campbell Army Base located astride the Kentucky and Tennessee borders. Working with local officials and the Beachaven Garden Club, the Tinnins donated funds for the Marker.

In early October 2020, Mr. Tinnin contacted me concerning donating funds for multiple Gold Star Families Memorial Markers to be installed in different counties in Tennessee. He was not concerned about not having their names on the markers. Mr. Tinnin stated, “So many of our service men and women did not get to come home to their families after serving our country. I did! I just want to honor the families who lost loved ones and remember those who gave their lives to this country for our freedom. We need to honor them ALL.”

Corporal Charles Tinnin, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division, served in Okinawa, Philippines, Japan and Vietnam from December 1, 1969 to October 21, 1971. He has worked to place Gold Star and Purple Heart designated parking signs at various locations across Tennessee. Eight of these parking signs are located at a large funeral home in Clarksville for use by US Armed Forces members who are stationed at Fort Campbell and the families of those who lost their lives in service to our country. Mr. Tinnin has also worked with legislators in different counties to have Gold Star Highways designated. He continues this work and encourages others to contact their legislators to have highways designated as Gold Star Highways.

To date, Mr. and Mrs. Tinnin donated funds for five Gold Star Families Memorial Markers sponsored by TFGC districts. Other than Clarksville, dedication of these markers is on hold due to COVID-19. The Tennessee markers are in Veterans Park in Clarksville, Visitors’ Center in Dover, Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Gallatin, Maury County Courthouse in Columbia, and Gatlinburg Welcome Center in Gatlinburg.

Charles and Annette Tinnin are both grateful and generous patriots through their work in honoring veterans, remembering those who have given their lives for our country and honoring the families of the fallen heroes. He keeps a supply of The Blue Star & Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Program brochures in his truck just in case he might meet someone who would be interested in having a Gold Star Families Memorial Marker in his/her city or county. Mr. Tinnin sends this message to NGC members, “Follow your heart.” As folks in Tennessee say when they approve of friends and acquaintances, “The Tinnins are GOOD PEOPLE.”

If you would like to speak with Mr. and Mrs. Tinnin about their work in donating GSF Markers in TN and their work with legislators for gaining designated Gold Star Highways, they would be happy to share their work and experiences with you. Please contact [Pam Dowd](#) for information on contacting them.





## Native Plants, cont.

*Spheg ichneumoneus* (Great Golden Digger Wasp) on *Asclepias incarnata*

(Continued from page 3)

collects seeds of common species for restoring degraded or threatened habitats. For example:

- Native Plant Trust is working with state and federal agencies to augment populations of Jesup’s milk vetch (*Astragalus robbinsii* var. *jesupii*), a plant that exists nowhere else in the world but three sites along the Connecticut River in New Hampshire and Vermont that are scoured by ice flows every year.
- In 2021, Native Plant Trust will complete a five-year project with the National Park Service to restore the vegetation on the summit of Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park, Maine. The project has involved collecting seed from the mountain and experimenting with soil, propagation and techniques for successfully replanting native flora in designated protected nooks and crannies off the tourist pathways. Native Plant Trust is not alone in working with the Park Service in Acadia. Various conservation-minded groups, such as the Garden Club of Mt. Desert, have been monitoring the status of the native plants in Acadia, removing invasive plants, and have sponsored the publication of the Plants of Acadia National Parks.
- After Hurricane Sandy devastated much of the East Coast, Native Plant Trust collaborated with the Bureau of Land Management’s “[Seeds of Success](#)” initiative. They worked in partnership with North Carolina Botanic Garden and Mid-Atlantic Regional Seed Bank, to provide locally sourced, genetically appropriate plants for restoration projects from Maine to Virginia.

No matter where you live, YOU can help to mitigate the effects of climate change on the vulnerable habitats in your area. Here are a few suggestions from Native Plant Trust on how to become involved with the solutions to these problems.

- Plant native species:
  - ◊ Plant native plants in your garden to replace your lawn and even on the roof of your shed
  - ◊ Source your seeds and native plants from growers whose inventory has not been treated with systemic pesticides
  - ◊ Grow plants that assist our pollinators throughout the growing season
- Advocate for:
  - ◊ Planting native plants/pollinator gardens in your town’s public spaces
  - ◊ State and national legislation to reduce the use of pesticides and the protection of endangered plants and pollinators
  - ◊ Control of invasive species
- Join: local groups working to control invasive plants in your area
- Become informed:
  - ◊ Take classes, attend webinars, follow the issues and read
  - ◊ Participate in field studies
  - ◊ Monitor invasive plants in your neighborhood
  - ◊ Learn your pollinators, and the beneficial insects that control your plant pests
- Volunteer with: Native Plant Trust, garden clubs and other organizations in your area to protect habitats with the most vulnerable native plants and their pollinators and all the other native critters that depend upon them
- Share: Your knowledge, your contacts, your photographs, and your voice
- Support: programs such as Native Plant Trust’s Seed Ark to protect vulnerable habitats throughout New England

By working together, we may find solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change on these fascinating ecosystems.

Please contact [Arabella](#) for more information and resources.

# Healing Gardens

**CARCILLE BURCHETTE**

*Daffodils Push Through the Snow*

Are not healing and hope intertwined? How many times have we heard or read that the only thing that got people through terrible times was HOPE? Without hope, despair and depression set in and people give up. Can there be healing of the mind or spirit when there is no hope?

A couple of days ago, my brother sent me a picture of a daffodil pushing up from the brown, cold ground. This little touch of green gives hope for the springtime and a renewing spirit in all of us. This past year has been such a void in so many ways, so stressful and so sad. Moreover, it continues, BUT we have hope of a better year! With this hope, there can be healing.

These next several months, you could create a Healing Garden in your own yard. Remember, it does not have to be large but peaceful, filled with fragrances and textures plus the sounds of nature's inhabitants. Tucked away could be a bench, a chair, even a stool.

As we still wear our masks and social distance, the outdoors provide a safer environment. A Healing Garden, while working alongside fellow club members, could be created somewhere in your community. Consider a local hospital, a clinic, a drug rehab facility, a church, a library, a school, a memorial park. Select plants that provide a variety of textures and fragrances along with trees or shrubs that surround seating away from high traffic areas. If possible, include a water feature to add a comforting dimension. Be cautious of sculptures, they sometimes do not promote peace but fear in people. As you and your club members plan and dig and plant, you will experience healing of your spirit and gain hope while providing an inviting and peaceful place where you and your community can visit.

When we have hope, we expect and desire certain things to happen. My hope is for a better spring, an even better summer, and a fall and winter where we can gather with families and friends without fear...and along the way, healing is found.



*Water Fountain*



*Lambs Ear (Stachys) Provides Texture*

- Argentina
- Brazil
- Costa Rica
- Guatemala
- Italy
- Mexico
- Peru
- United States
- Uruguay
- Venezuela



Hosted by  
Michigan Garden Clubs

## Lunch & Learn 2.0

**LAURA GRAINGER**

Since the Pandemic began, finding ways to conduct the order of business and planning technology tools has been critical. Michigan Garden Clubs (MGC) began planning its Tri-Refresher, virtually, in the wake of cancelling its 2020 Annual Conference last June. In June 2021, a virtual conference with a marketplace and an evening mixer is in the works!

Beginning this past January, MGC offered a new "Lunch & Learn" Tech Series focused on using Zoom to introduce new users to the videoconferencing tools. Attendees, from across the world, learned new ways to conduct meetings and events in an effort to keep moving forward in pursuit of their missions. For this series thirteen hundred registrants from forty-seven states and nine countries have attended with an average of 150-250 people/weekly session.

MGC began with the free Zoom® Basic Plan. Holding meetings of 40-minutes\* or less made for efficient meetings. We quickly realized, in planning for a virtual Tri-Refresher we needed the Zoom ProPlan with one host. It worked great but a backup would have been two hosts or \$24.50/mo. That meant an alternate host could start the meeting if the main host was suddenly unavailable. Next, we decided to equip out seven district directors as hosts to support their events and help local clubs. Zoom® Small and Medium sized business package was the next step at a minimum requirement of 10-Host at \$999.50/annual. We purchased an additional 100 GB storage at \$40/month as storage space of recorded meetings filled fast.

MGC formed a Technology Committee in November 2019, Zoom® was not on our foreseeable Technology Plan and it ended up being under "Other." It is now our primary daily operational communication tool. We see it continuing while we choose our in-person events selectively for a while. Virtual meetings and less travel may provide more time in the garden with Zoom being utilized for planning, learning and continuing to grow and share!

*\*Editor's note: at the time of publication, the Zoom basic, free plan is not limited to 40-minute sessions.*



### DID YOU KNOW?

This is a developing tech series? It keeps environmentalists, gardeners, floral and landscape designers connected and moving ahead during the pandemic

**WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN ABOUT WHILE CONTINUING TO GROW AND SHARE?** Contact [MGC](#) with your suggestions, comments and requests.

# Calendar of Events

## WHERE IN THE WORLD IS PRESIDENT GAY?

Mar 29	Garden Club of Alabama	Birmingham, AL
Apr 5 - 8	Texas Garden Clubs	San Antonio, TX
Apr 13	Garden Clubs of Kentucky	Virtual
April 14	Federated GC of Connecticut	Virtual
April 18	Design Program	Pike County, MS
April 19	GC Federation of Pennsylvania	Virtual
April 24	Garden Clubs of South Carolina	Virtual
April 26	Virginia Federation of GC	Virtual
April 27 - 28	Louisiana GC Federation	Baton Rouge, LA
May 5	Federated GC of Missouri	Virtual
May 10 - 12	Garden Clubs of Mississippi	Hernando, MS
May 17 - 21	National Garden Clubs, Inc.	Virtual

## PRESIDENT-ELECT MARY'S MEETINGS

Mar 23	Federated GC of Maryland	Ellicott City, MD
Apr 28	Garden Club of Indiana	Virtual
June 3	Michigan Garden Clubs	Virtual
June 10	Garden Club of New Jersey	Virtual
June 16	Oregon State Federation of GC	Virtual

During these challenging times, all schedules are subject to change without notice. Thank you for understanding.

## COURSES THROUGH MAY 2021

### ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOOL

Mar 15	CR 2	<a href="#">Gloria Whyte</a>	MO-Virtual
Apr 15	CR 4	<a href="#">Jeri Decker</a>	FL-Virtual

### FLOWER SHOW SCHOOL

Mar 21	CR 4	<a href="#">Joanne Nelson</a>	FL
Mar 28	CR 3	<a href="#">Poss Tarpley</a>	MD
Apr 26	CR 4	<a href="#">Marjorie Glennan</a>	MD
May 11	CR 1	<a href="#">Deborah Wyght</a>	OH

### GARDENING SCHOOL

Mar 31	CR 1	<a href="#">Denise Clegg</a>	MI-Virtual
Apr 8	CR 3	<a href="#">Linda Jean Smith</a>	MA-Virtual
Apr 28	CR 2	<a href="#">Denise Clegg</a>	MI-Virtual
Apr 28	CR 3	<a href="#">Cheryl Cappiali</a>	CT-Virtual

## Keeping in Touch Guidelines for Publication

Please keep the length of articles to 200 - 250 words and submit as a word document. Send images in high resolution jpg files as attachments. Obtain permission to use a person's likeness. (An authorization form is available on the NGC website.) We cannot guarantee a specific publication date. Articles may be modified at the discretion of the editor.

## Coming in May/June: MEET OUR INCOMING OFFICERS, 2019-2021 TERM IN REVIEW, SUMMER PLANNING.

Send us your photos and YOUR clubs plans for the summer.

The deadline for submissions is April 10, 2021. Please send to [geriannewgcf@gmail.com](mailto:geriannewgcf@gmail.com) THANK YOU!

## Looking for New Members?

Keep your club information up to date on the NGC website so people can find you. Consider a generic email address to protect privacy. Update your club info on this form: [Club Finder Update](#)

### LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL

Mar 23	CR 2	<a href="#">Karin Ohr Pyskaty</a>	CT-Virtual
Mar 30	CR 3	<a href="#">Linda Ellinghausen</a>	IL-Virtual
Apr 13	CR 2	<a href="#">Linda Harris</a>	MD
Apr 23	CR 1	<a href="#">Gretchen Vest</a>	WI-Virtual

### MULTIPLE REFRESHERS

None scheduled through May, 2021.

### SYMPOSIUMS

Apr 26	<a href="#">Dorothy Bertram</a>	WA
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See the [NGC website](#) for more information on schools, refreshers and symposia along with course updates. Due to the ever-changing COVID-19 situation, all dates are subject to change. All courses are in -person unless indicated as virtual.



Pinecone Buds

# Acknowledgements

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- Suzy Andrego, Social Media Committee
- Gay Austin, NGC President
- Victoria Bergesen, Each One, Plant One Chair
- Carcille Burchette, Healing Gardens Chair
- Jacqueline Connell, Water Protection Chair
- Arabella Dane, Photography Chair
- Pam Dowd, Blue/Gold Star Chair
- Julia Gilmore, Wildlife Conservation Chair
- Laura Grainger, MGC Technology Chair
- Barbara Hadsell, Gardening School Chair
- Marie Harrison, Florida Federation of GC
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- Judy Newman, Environmental School Chair
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- Gerry St. Peters, Joyce Bulington & Jan Sillik, Editorial Review

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# Sitting on the Porch

Sitting on the porch...Well as with most of you, the past 60 days since our last issue of *KIT* all seem to run together. Staying at home, taking walks, cleaning closets and reading some good books all merge together. Seeing people face-to-face, albeit via Zoom® is a great way to stay connected but will never compete with the literal personal touch that we all miss. As our local clubs, judges' councils, tri-councils and state clubs begin and continue plans for meeting virtually, we also miss the camaraderie of laughing together and perhaps sharing a glass of wine. What will we all remember during this time of isolation? What will we learn to value?

Personally, I miss the freedom of just going where ever I want, whenever I want. Yet, not all of us had this freedom even before the pandemic. Without going deep in to politics,

## GERIANNE HOLZMAN

we have all become aware of privileges afforded to some in our communities and denied to others. As we look forward, we have learned to value all of the people in our lives even more than before the pandemic. Over one-half million people in the USA, alone, are no longer with us. This seems unfathomable to have happened in twelve short months. As life starts to have some normalcy, we all look forward to the pleasure of visiting with family and friends. They are like individual flowers and when thought of as a whole, they are the garden of life. *Please Keep in Touch!*

***Let us learn to appreciate there will be times when the trees will be bare, and look forward to the time when we may pick the fruit.***

Anton Chekhov