

Go Green -

PLANT AMERICA!

THE NATIONAL GARDENER

Spring 2025
gardenclub.org



The National Gardener

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GO GREEN - PLANT AMERICA



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ABOUT US

National Garden Clubs, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization that aims to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility. We help coordinate the interests and activities of state and local garden clubs in the U.S. and abroad.

CONTACT US

NGC Headquarters: Monday - Friday 8:00am-4:00pm
4401 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110-3492
314-776-7574, [Email: Headquarters Staff](mailto:Headquarters Staff)

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Page 2 • Tada

Page 4 Columbine • Klickblick, Moving Forward • Azay

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We welcome ALL NGC members, garden writers, designers and outdoor enthusiasts to share their club, community or personal story. You do NOT have to be a professional author to submit an article. See [The National Gardener page](#) for submission information.

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BRENDA'S JOURNAL

Change may not always bring growth, but there is no growth without change.

Roy T. Bennett

Two years/seven hundred thirty days/17,529 hours seemed like such a long time in May 2023, but it has gone by quickly. As time passed, I quickly realized I would not achieve all my plans and goals. In the beginning, if I was not traveling, I was constantly on the phone or the computer. Only recently have I relaxed and realized that not every e-mail has to be answered immediately. Since the last Fall Board meeting, I realized change was coming, so I needed to start bowing out of some things to make way for our President-Elect, Donna Donnelly. Please welcome her as you welcomed me.

Thank you for the support you have given to me. I had the privilege of working with a wonderful Executive Committee and Board of Directors. These individuals are exceptional, and I feel fortunate to have served with them. I traveled to state and region meetings and enjoyed interacting with many of our members. My April travel schedule is very full as I try to squeeze in a few more visits while I am still your NGC President. With the help of my visitation schedule, I can now say I have been to all fifty states - not all during my time as president.

April became PLANT AMERICA month during Mary Warshauer's administration. Click here for the [PLANT AMERICA Month Poster](#) to download or see the last page for this TNG.

This issue is the last *The National Gardener* magazine put together by 2nd Vice President and TNG editor Gerianne Holzman and her committee: Assistant Editor Pat Young, International Editor Pampa Risso Patrón, Advertising/Marketing Manager Debi Harrington, Subscription Manager Emily Kiske, Copy Editor Gerry St. Peters, and Copy Editor Linda Harkleroad. They have set the bar very high and set a standard for this very informative magazine. I also recognize past and current featured

authors for TNG – Bruce Crawford, Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich, Melinda Myers, Charlotte Swanson, Ana Calejari, Silvia Malan, and Pilar Medellin de Miñarro.

I especially appreciate the work of the chairs of the president's projects – Suzanne Bushnell of *Plant America*, *Feed America*, Virginia Schmidt of *Plant America*, *Plant for Pollinators*, and Barbara Campbell of *Plant America*, *Landscape for Wildlife*.

Thank you for giving me the privilege of serving as your President of the National Garden Clubs.

Happy Gardening!
Brenda

Charleston, a Charmingly Southern Destination

96TH ANNUAL NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS CONVENTION

NGC 2025 CONVENTION NEWS FROM THE COMMITTEE

The NGC 2025 Convention is fast approaching. When you see this message, you may already be packing your suitcases! The committee has so many wonderful surprises in store for you! We plan to offer you a taste of Charleston that you will always remember via cuisine, tours, workshops, seminars, vendors, sights, and plenty of Southern hospitality. Many tours are filled, but do not worry; there are still some openings, along with some workshops and seminars. We offer a free shuttle service to and from the [Historic Charleston City Market](#) several times a day. Walking through the Market and strolling along the cozy tree-lined streets, beholding the gorgeous historic homes with their lush window boxes will make you feel like you have been on a tour. The quaint southern scenery and vibe are not to be missed!

Check out the schedule on the [NGC Convention Registration](#) page, and plan to join us for many of the luncheons and banquets. Remember to dress up for the splendid Installation Banquet. We plan for a graceful and lovely evening to recognize and thank the current officers and board for their work and volunteerism and to congratulate and celebrate the incoming term of people. We look forward to seeing y'all in Charleston, South Carolina!



Tuesday, May 20 Luncheon Jennifer Lawson

As the President and CEO of Keep America Beautiful, Jennifer Lawson is a visionary leader committed to creating cleaner, greener, and more beautiful communities nationwide. With a distinguished background in social impact and sustainability, Lawson spearheaded transformative initiatives during her tenure at organizations such as The Nature Conservancy and Points of Light. Under her leadership, Keep America Beautiful and its 700 local affiliates are mobilizing millions of volunteers and partnering with businesses, governments, and communities to harness the power of beauty as a force for positive and sustainable change. Most recently, Keep America Beautiful launched the *Greatest American Cleanup for America's 250th Birthday*, the largest initiative of its kind in history, with the ambitious goal of removing 250 billion pieces of litter and engaging 25,000 communities across the United States by July 4, 2026.

(Continued on page 6)



Wednesday, May 21 Keynote Banquet Rebecca Wesson Darwin

Cofounder and CEO of *Garden & Gun* and president and CEO of the Allée Group LLC., Darwin grew up in Columbia, South Carolina, attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and then moved to New York. She established her career at *GQ*, where she implemented national retail advertising and promotion programs. Darwin later became the first female publisher of the *New Yorker*, the publisher of *Mirabella*, and the marketing director of *Fortune*. She currently serves on the board for Spoleto Festival USA. In 2021, she was inducted into the prestigious North Carolina Media and Journalism Hall of Fame. In 2024, Darwin received The Order of the Palmetto—the highest civilian honor awarded by the Governor of South Carolina. Darwin resides in historic downtown Charleston with her husband, Cress, her two daughters, Lily and SaSa, and her French bulldog, Penelope.



Thursday, May 22 Design Luncheon Sharon McGukin AIFD, AAF, PFCI

McGukin began working in a flower shop during her high school years. Later, she owned a small-town flower shop in Carrollton, Georgia. Over the years, flowers led her around the world as a floral instructor, stage presenter, showroom designer, blogger, podcaster, and freelance design consultant. McGukin is a design director for Smithers-Oasis North America in Kent, Ohio, and a floral design instructor for Floriology in Jacksonville, Florida. For Smithers-Oasis North America, Sharon writes a weekly blog for floral enthusiasts on the [Floral Hub blog](#) and hosts the [How We Bloom podcast](#).

Hotel Update

Your convention plans and enthusiasm are so fantastic that you already filled the Embassy Suites room block. Check out the following hotels for room availability.

- ★ [Hilton Garden Inn](#), which has a boardwalk path directly to Convention Center
- ★ [Marriott Residence Inn](#) is a short walk to the Convention Center.
- ★ [Hyatt Place](#) is a short walk to the Convention Center.



Lantern Silhouette • Alexangel21
Rainbow Row, Charleston • Bryan T Boyle

NO WIMPS ALLOWED

Bruce Crawford

Recently, I overheard a gardener mention how she was not overly fond of native plants due to their wimpy nature. Wimpy is certainly not an adjective I would use to describe native plants!

Unfortunately, I feel this is a notion shared by many, especially those uneducated about native plants. In reality, these plants support much of the biodiversity we enjoy in nature, including around 160 bee species native to my state of New Jersey and upwards of 4,000 in North America! Sadly, these populations are thought to be declining due to habitat loss, and this is where native plants and gardeners can lend a hand!

Interestingly, most of our native bees are solitary, living alone in nests burrowed into well-drained soils. Hence, they are often termed ground-nesting bees. The female bee builds these nests, which consist of one or a network of tunnels sporting small “rooms” in which she deposits one egg. For about three months, she visits numerous flowers in pursuit of lipid and protein-rich pollen to bring back to the hive while she imbibes on sugar-rich nectar. During her quest to gather this pollen, she inadvertently transfers some pollen from one plant to another, ensuring the plant’s survival via pollination. Back in her hive, she combines the pollen with a little nectar to create small balls of food she deposits by the egg as provisions for the larva to come. Once this process is complete, she dies. The eggs transition to adults over the next nine or so months. The male bees only serve to fertilize some of the eggs, which typically become the next population of females. The unfertilized eggs become the males!

Numerous scientists are studying these friendly creatures that rarely sting, and Dr. Rachael Winfree of Rutgers has provided me with much of my understanding over the years. Winfree has long been a proponent of planting native plants, as has Dr. Laura Russo of the University of Tennessee. Russo’s recent research revealed how it does not matter what plants your neighbor is growing or not growing. If **you** grow native plants, native bees will come! Russo also highlights another vital key – be sure to add a diversity of plant families. For example, plants in the mint family (Lamiaceae) are a wonderful choice for supplying much-needed nectar, while the aster family (Asteraceae) provides large amounts of readily accessible pollen. It is also important to grow plants that bloom from early spring to late fall, as different bee species mature at varying times. As Winfree points out, some bees overwinter as adults and leave the nest early in search of those first blooms of spring.

As you plan your garden, one of the best early sources of nectar, naturally growing east of the Mississippi, is serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*). Gardeners often take their time choosing a small tree, but with white flowers in April and blueberry-like fruits in June, what could be better? Granted, birds often harvest the

(Continued on page 8)



fruits, but there is no harm in supporting our bird populations. If something closer to the ground is needed, consider Alleghany *Pachysandra* (*Pachysandra procumbens*), as seen on the right in December. Although often regarded as herbaceous, it is actually a subshrub characterized by its ground-hugging rhizomes and short, upright, woody stems. A native of the Southeast and Pennsylvania, the name is derived from the Greek *Pakys* for thick and *Anēr* or *Andrus* for man, referring to the prominent and thick stamens displayed from March to April. These stamens are an excellent pollen source, and when planted 12 - 18" apart, the plants provide an attractive 8 - 12" tall ground cover for dappled shade.

Another great spring bloomer that readily naturalizes in both shade and sun is bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), pictured on page 7. A native from Texas north to Manitoba and east to the Atlantic, the 5 - 8" tall flowers produce ample amo pollen but no nectar. Aside from their outstanding beauty, the white flowers produce seeds with lipid-rich attachments called elaiosomes that are much beloved and eaten by ants. Once eaten, the unharmed seed is discarded and free to germinate in its new location!



Pachysandra procumbens • Bruce Crawford



Aster oblongifolius 'Radon's Favorite' • Bruce Crawford

they become floppy. False indigo thrives in soils with average nutrient levels in full sun. The nearly black fall color looks great paired with the orange fall color of the native grass, little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*). If a small tree in the Fabaceae family is preferred, consider the eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*). The pink flower clusters are beneficial, ornamental, and are tasty in salads.



Solidago caesia • Bruce Crawford

If you are seeking plants that bear pollen with a higher protein content, consider plants of the pea Family (Fabaceae), such as false indigo (*Baptisia*). Growing 2 - 4' tall and wide, False Indigo provides a rounded, shrublike constitution sporting beautiful blue, yellow, or white flowers in mid to late spring. A native from New York to Nebraska and south to Georgia, one can shear the plants lightly after blooming if

Come summer, a great nectar source is mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*), whose 2' tall flowers overflow with a diversity of pollinators. Spreading in full sun to create a dense, weed-suppressing groundcover, the showy silver bracts subtending the flowers add a wonderful glimmer to the summer garden. Late summer marks the season for the Asteraceae. Goldenrod is certainly a key member of this family, and not all are large and sun-loving. Pictured left, displaying blue stems with attractive yellow flowers, the blue-stemmed goldenrod (*Solidago caesia*) is a mere 18" tall and prefers light shade. For late autumn blooms, consider the aromatic aster (*Symphyotrichum oblongifolium*). Native from Montana and New Mexico east, they require no pinching. Aromatic asters make a fantastic 18 - 24" tall ground cover with beautiful sky-blue flowers that provide color well into November - pictured center.

Clearly, many great natives are far from wimpy. Regardless of what your neighbor grows, consider adding a diversity of these mighty native plants to your garden this spring. Your pollinators will thank you!

Bruce Crawford, of New Jersey, is the Manager of Horticulture, Morris County Parks Commission, Morris Township, NJ





SMALL STEPS = BIG IMPACT

Brynn Tavasci

It is easy to recognize the benefits of recycling and upcycling. It is common knowledge that using these practices reduces landfill waste, saves energy, protects wildlife habitat, conserves resources, reduces pollutants, and saves money. Once begun, it takes a bit more effort to make good recycling habits stick, and it is worth it! The reasons people cite for not continuing to participate in recycling are many and varied. Sorting and storing recyclables can be inconvenient. They may lack services offered in their area of the country. People may be uncertain about how to participate in recycling programs and not really understand what is available. Others are just overwhelmed by the excesses faced each day. All of the above can lead to a feeling of, "Why try?"

These factors are understandable, and many problems are out of reach for the average citizen to fix. What we **can** do is remember that a bit of modification can go a long way, and that is a good motivator. Take the small steps even if the path is kind of confusing and full of plastic water bottles.

Small steps:

-  Choose products with minimal packaging.
-  Use reusable bags and containers.
-  Reuse and share durable goods.
-  Repair and refurbish.
-  Consider second new uses for materials.
-  Purchase goods made from recycled materials.
-  Shop thrift stores, donate, and freecycle.
-  Compost.
-  Research your local waste management programs.

To make the recycling process move more smoothly, refer to the rules of your local waste management service. Recycling facilities may have different equipment and procedures, and you do not want to make their job more difficult.

Fortunately, gardeners are naturally resourceful, thoughtful, and generous. We gravitate toward that soft, old, worn-out t-shirt to rip strips out of and use to tie up our tomatoes and vines. If we **can** compost, we **do** - and do not waste a scrap. Some garden club members gather up scraps at luncheons to take home for their homemade black gold. We always look for everyday items to protect our bulbs and plants from squirrels and rabbits. It is a built-in impulse for us to always think about what we could use to help grow, support, and improve the quality of our green garden babies. We often find helpful items already in our possession. We share our stories of successes and failures with our fellow gardeners.

Encourage creativity and the sharing of ideas. Help educate others who are timid and uncertain of what steps that they can take. Share your tools, supplies, and know-how to help fellow gardeners achieve their goals. It is fun and satisfying, and it is the garden club way.

Brynn Tavasci, of Washington, is the NGC Recycling, Upcycling and Stewardship Chair.



PLANT AMERICA FEED AMERICA

Suzanne Bushnell



PLANT AMERICA, Feed America • Greens Farms Garden Club, Westport, CT

Shortly, we will be at the end of our two-year campaign for *PLANT AMERICA, Feed America*. It has been quite the journey since NGC President Brenda Moore announced this as one of her three president's projects in May 2023. In fact, the first donation to a local food bank was made by Brenda's own West Virginia Garden Club, Inc. They donated the fruit basket centerpieces to local organizations. These were used on the tables at the Greenbrier Resort during Brenda's first meeting with her new Board of Directors. The organizations included the Lewisburg Area Food Pantry, Greenbrier County Senior Citizens Committee on Aging, and Meals on Wheels. As of the end of February 2025, we received 253 *PLANT AMERICA, Feed America* donation forms through the NGC website. Over 300 local organizations feeding those who are hungry benefit from the generosity of our members.

On March 12, NGC hosted a webinar showing highlights of clubs nationwide that supported Brenda's efforts to fight food insecurity. (Watch for this webinar soon in the [NGC Video Café](#).) Thirty-two state federations participated in the two-year project. In one state alone, almost 40 clubs stepped forward to be a part of the effort to help feed people who are hungry. At the time of this article's writing,

our members donated approximately 122,000 pounds of primarily fresh-grown vegetables, fruits, and herbs. While donations of fresh produce typically drop off in the winter months, many clubs continue to donate other food items to local soup kitchens, food pantries, and food banks. Several donors have taken the time to write notes on their donation forms to say this project has struck a chord with their members, and they plan to continue to donate to local community organizations after the NGC project ends.

There is still time to take part in our efforts since many states have the opportunity to plant early spring crops. And as you grow your vegetable garden, I hope you consider "planting a row for the hungry." In closing, whether you donated 10 pounds or 1000 pounds, you made a difference in the lives of young and old alike. I hope it inspires you to continue to help those less fortunate long after this NGC project has concluded. Finally, thank you to everyone who has answered the call to *PLANT AMERICA, Feed America*!

[Suzanne Bushnell](#) is the *PLANT AMERICA, Feed America* President's Project Chairman, and the NGC Community Garden Chair. She gardens on the coast of Maine.



DOWN THE GARDEN PATH
Landscape Design
School News
Carol Yee

Spring Garden • Neirfy

Thank you to a very talented group of volunteers serving as Accrediting Chairs (AC) on the NGC Landscape Design School Committee this term: Barbara Campbell (New England and Central Atlantic), Terri Ewers (Pacific and South Central) and Anna O’Kelly (Central and South Atlantic). Thank you all for contributing many hours to help state and local chairs complete all requirements for accrediting their courses. Thank you, Caroline Carbaugh, for editing the NGC *Newscape* newsletter, which now covers all NGC Schools, and who also serves as NGC Landscape Design School Consultants Councils Chair. We are saddened by the recent loss of AC Marty Bowers (Deep South and Rocky Mountain) and appreciate her long-term dedication to National Garden Clubs.

A special thanks to Greg Pokorski, who helped during the transition and helped elucidate the many changes the school has gone through before, during, and after COVID-19. Thank you to the many state and local chairs who organized course series and continued to be flexible with the new curriculum changes. We could not have done it without you! Thanks to students and consultants as you attend and support our schools and refreshers! Last but not least, thank you, Katie Roth, NGC Assistant Executive Director, for accrediting courses, keeping track of records and forms, and updating the schools’ consultant database.

The Landscape Design School’s committee will continue in the next term to help accomplish NGC’s mission of providing “...education, resources, and national networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility.” Please continue to support our efforts as you are doing now. We welcome your input and suggestions. We are always willing to help and answer any questions you may have.

[Carol Yee](#), of Illinois, is the NGC Landscape Design School Chair, contact Carol with your questions or to start a School in your state or visit the [Landscape Design School](#) webpage.



Click on the image to read current and past issues of NGC Schools' Newsletter.

ATTEND FLOWER SHOW SCHOOL

Judy Binns

Flower Show School is a comprehensive program that teaches garden club members about judging, entering, competing, and chairing an NGC flower show. There are four courses, each generally scheduled over two to three days. Each course has a specific curriculum that includes horticulture, design, and flower show procedures.

Qualified instructors teach each course and provide outlines. If you are considering becoming a flower show judge, planning to chair a flower show, or simply want to learn more, Flower Show School may be for you.

While the primary purpose of these courses is to train those wishing to become flower show judges, any garden club member may attend.

Flower Show Procedure encompasses the procedures and rules for flower shows of all types.

Attendees learn what makes a “flower show” an NGC Standard Flower Show, all about flower show awards, and most importantly, how to write a Flower Show Schedule using the NGC *Handbook for Flower Shows* guidelines. (Download a free electronic version of the [*Handbook for Flower Shows*](#).)

The **Horticulture** curriculum consists of basic general information on growing and showing different plant types, emphasizing exhibiting and judging. Combination plantings, as well as collections and displays, are included. Creating a Horticulture Division Schedule with appropriate plant nomenclature and ways to innovatively stage horticulture is part of the classroom training.

Design instruction covers design types, starting with traditional floral arrangements and continuing through all creative design styles. The courses prepare students to judge flower show exhibits according to the Principles and Elements of Design. It also helps write Design Division Sections and Classes for a Flower Show Schedule.

Instructors provide designs to illustrate the specific design types studied in each class. However, the emphasis is on recognizing and judging those design types, not a workshop on making those designs.

These courses are not only for prospective flower show exhibitors and judges, but many garden club members attend for information only and to gain insight into “What do judges look for?”

Attendees may take courses in any order, and students may take any number of courses a year to accelerate the process of becoming a judge.

Visit the NGC website for a listing of [Flower Show Schools](#) in your part of the country and for more details on the [curriculum](#).

Judy B. Binns, of Kentucky,
is the NGC Flower Show
Schools Chair.



Creative Mass Design • Peter Etchells' Image



NGC SCHOOLS PORTAL NEWS

Sarah McReynolds and Donna Donnelly

Portal • Tommy

Time is moving swiftly, and the 2025-2027 term will soon commence. A new set of eyes and ears allows us to refresh, update, and review everything that needs it and cast a new light on things! This includes the NGC Schools and, most especially, the NGC Schools Portal. It will provide several exciting advantages.

NGC Headquarters staff is putting significant effort into loading each school's information into the Schools Portal and testing the outcome. It may take some time, but your patience will be well rewarded when you notice how greatly improved communication will be between instructors, students, and committee members.

The Schools Portal will streamline access to important information like grades and schedules while maintaining security and privacy. It will be a more organized strategy for school management across the board. This efficiency is all possible through a centralized online platform. Eventually, the Schools' Committee members, accreditors, state chairs, and students will be instructed on using the Schools Portal. If you have any questions, please contact [Donna Donnelly](#).

It is still necessary to notify your state school chair PRIOR to attending any school so they may send your current form to the hosting school chair. No forms equal no credit. There are also other forms to be sent to the regional accrediting chair by the state chair. For example, if a person wants to go emeritus, you may still help your school by proctoring or performing other duties. (Emeritus Flower Show Judges are no longer able to judge.)

For local chairs, Form 15 is a certificate you may complete and give to non-members upon their completion of classes. There are also extension and reinstatement forms. Remember, you must be in good standing to receive an extension. Go to the [Schools Resource](#) webpage and familiarize yourself with all the available forms and their function. There are many Zoom courses and in-person courses for you to attend. Thank you for supporting the schools, and we can all look forward to a brighter future for our educational process with NGC.

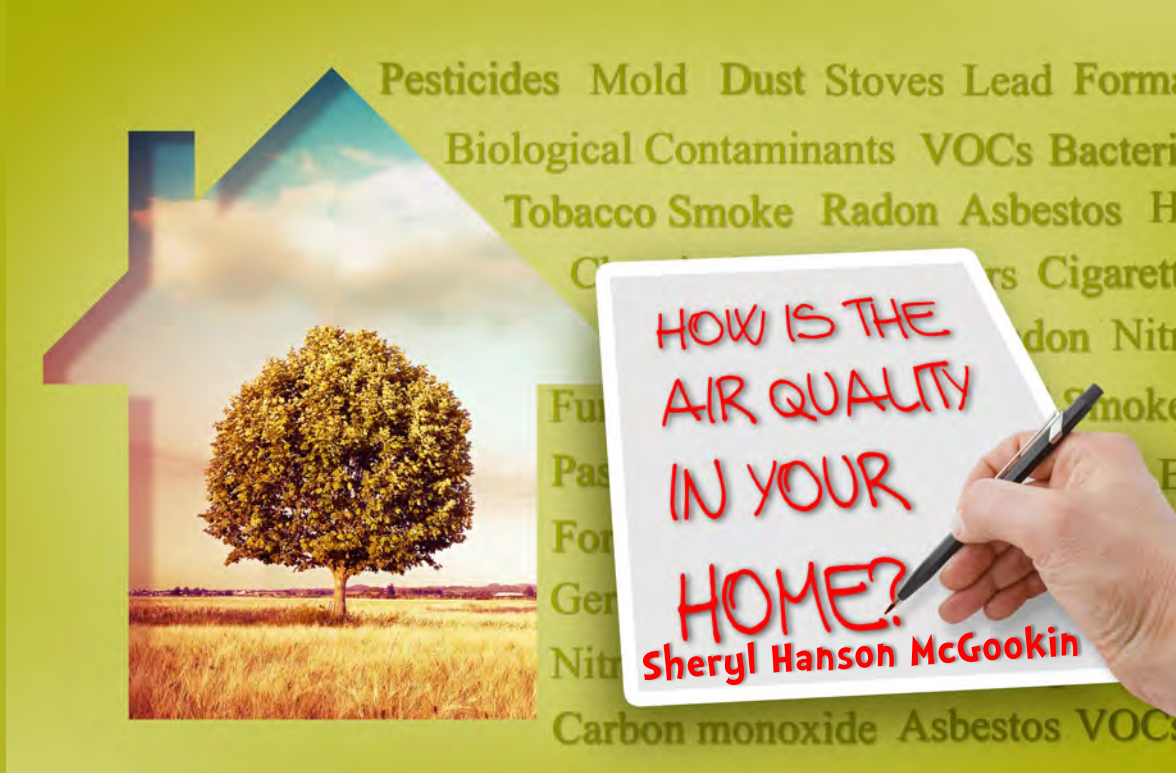
Sarah McReynolds, of Texas, is the NGC Gardening School Chair and South Central Region Director. Donna Donnelly, of South Carolina, is the NGC President-elect.

SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS

Carol Norquist

Did you know NGC has a [Video Café](#) on the website under the [Member Resources](#) tab? There are many valuable webinars and videos to watch, and you can use them as club programs. Some of the webinar topics include Doug Tallamy's *Homegrown National Park Program*, *Bees in Ancient Egypt*, *Power of Plants to Prevent, Heal, and Cure Diseases*, *How Plant Trials are Conducted*, *Single-Use Plastics*, *Dark Skies*, and much more. If you missed a *Membership Monday*, we post them in the *Café*. There are many other useful videos and topics, such as floral design and how to sharpen your pruners. Follow NGC on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and [YouTube](#), and go out and explore the *Video Café*. [Sign up](#) to be the first to learn about upcoming events.

Carol Norquist, of Alaska, is the NGC Social Media Chair and the Pacific Region Director.



Let us take a few minutes to think about all the features of our homes that impact the air quality inside our homes and living spaces. The list is considerable: paint, carpeting, air fresheners, appliances, perfumes, pets, cleaners and detergents, mold and mildew, and heating and cooling systems, to name only a very few. These sources combine with the fact that as time marches forward, contractors build homes more tightly, thus keeping the outdoor elements from seeping inside and vice versa. Poor air quality can lead to adverse health issues, ranging from simple congestion to difficulty breathing and more serious conditions like cardiovascular disease. These are not just potential risks but real dangers that we should be aware of and address.

How do we know that our indoor spaces are having a negative impact on us? You may note improved health issues when you leave the room or building. Pay attention to noticeable odors and the sight of mold or mildew. It is safe to say that many pollutants go unnoticed and undetected. Headaches, nausea, dizziness, drowsiness, and breathing difficulties may be signs of poor indoor air quality.

How does one identify possible sources of indoor pollution? The [American Lung Association](#), [Good Housekeeping](#), the [Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America](#), the [Environmental Protection Agency](#), and [Harvard Health](#) are just a few trusted online resources. Exhaust, odors from paint, carpets and appliances, cleaning products, air fresheners, and leaky pipes are examples of sources that may cause adverse health effects.

How do we improve the air quality of our homes and living spaces? If the pollutant is identifiable, you have the power to eliminate the source yourself or contact an appropriate agency for help. Avoid air fresheners; instead, consider using

essential oil diffusers and beeswax candles. Fix leaky water fixtures, install a carbon monoxide detector, and use a ventilation hood to help reduce the effects of appliance emissions. Increase the ventilation and airflow in your home by opening doors and windows. It is good practice to change air filters in your HVAC system routinely. Consider purchasing stand-alone air filtration units for your home. (With pets in our home, we have three such units, and the filters need to be replaced every couple of months. We also have an agency visit our home annually to clean the HVAC system.) Use a vacuum cleaner equipped with a HEPA filter. Clean your window curtains and bedding. Dust and pet hair tend to accumulate and cling to curtains, bedding, and other clutter. You are the key to improving your indoor air quality.

Do house plants contribute to healthy air? This concept is a controversial topic, but as gardeners, removing them from our living spaces goes against our nature. As members of garden clubs, we know how to do this correctly. Plants filter the air we breathe and add humidity to our homes. However, they also attract and capture dust, so keeping them clean is essential. The soil in your planters can encourage the growth of mold and mildew, so be cautious of overwatering your houseplants. In addition, plants can attract pests. It is better to avoid using chemicals to eliminate these buggers - use mechanical removal techniques instead. Lastly, many years of scientific research determined that it would take approximately 680 plants in a 1,500-square-foot home or office to positively affect indoor air quality via house plants. Check out these short videos about Indoor Air Quality: [How to Understand Indoor Air Quality | Ask This Old House](#) and [How Indoor Air Quality Impacts Your Lungs](#).

Sheryl Hanson McGookin, of Rhode Island, is the NGC Air Quality Chair of the Environmental Concerns and Conservation Committee.



Chalkboard Flowers • NKTW

Schools Policy and Procedure

Pat Rupiper

We all have heard that NGC Headquarters is creating a portal to house our school attendance records. The portal is not yet in place; in the meantime, every system we currently use will remain. ***This means forms!***

You must continue to notify your region chairs, who must receive your forms. You must submit your personal forms (Yes, keep an active copy.) prior to attending a class to receive credit. There are options for sending the course roster for credit to your region chair, including a spreadsheet and accompanying cover letter, or the regular form 5. All forms must be electronic (NOT SCANNED) so the chair can work with them.

It has been a pleasure to work with such a great team. I thank all of them as I leave the NGC Board. Please continue supporting schools as they continue to be offered in Zoom, hybrid, and classroom formats. Zoom has helped keep many consultants accredited who had no local school to attend and provided knowledge to many who had never attended - all at an affordable price. Thank you for being so supportive.

Pat Rupiper, of Ohio, is the NGC Schools Policy and Procedure Chair and the Environmental School Chair.

Why can't horticulture and humor go together?

Whether it's a speaker for your special meeting (offering, in the words of one club, "a horticultural lecture unlike anything we've ever heard") or books that will keep you turning pages well past your bedtime, Neal Sanders needs to be at the top of your contact list for your next 'fill those seats' meeting.

He is one of the most entertaining speakers you'll ever hear. 'Gardening Is Murder' is equal parts humor, psychology, and gardening wisdom; a husband's point of view of what goes on in the garden. State federations from Maine to South Carolina and Michigan to Kentucky have enjoyed his talks. In 2025, he'll be at the Washington State federation and Central Atlantic Region meetings and, in 2026, Florida and Pennsylvania. To book him for your club, state, or regional event in 2025 and 2026, write Neal02052@Gmail.com.

His 16 fast-paced, intricately plotted mysteries draw rave reviews from readers. They all feature strong, independent women – some of whom solve crimes, and some who commit them. Many of his books use garden club settings and 'women of a certain age'.

But don't mistake these for 'cozies': his plots involve everything from romance scams to 'protect your assets' schemes and fraudulent reverse mortgages. There's frequently a strong horticultural element.

New in 2025: the fifth entry in the Garden Club Gang series – "The Murderous Trophy Wife"



You can order his books in print and Kindle formats on Amazon. Or, to read first chapters, go to www.TheHardingtonPress.com.

NGC'S CERTIFIED POLLINATOR GARDEN PROGRAM

Virginia Schmidt

President Brenda Moore's PLANT AMERICA: *Certified Pollinator Garden* program has been a tremendous success! We have certified 488 gardens. Forty-three states participated – that is excellent participation! Florida retains its position as the state with the most applications, with 79. Texas is second with 45 applications. Pennsylvania had 33, Arkansas had 32, and Virginia had 29, with 14 or more in Alexandria alone. Missouri and Tennessee tie with 23 applications.

Everyone who participated in the *Pollinator Garden* program views their garden as a thing of beauty and a habitat for pollinators. They know that the more attractive you make your garden to pollinators, the more enjoyment you can get from it. It is so much fun to see monarchs laying eggs on your milkweed, bumblebees bouncing around your patch of coneflowers, and hummingbirds hovering as they feast on your cardinal flowers. Planting native plants is the best way to attract pollinators. It is essential to have different plants in bloom from early spring to late fall, as insects emerge and feed at specific times.

Late winter and early spring are an excellent time to take advantage of the many free webinars offered by pollinator organizations, state university extension offices, and state or local garden clubs. Here are a few resources:

- ⇒ [Pollinator Partnership](#)
- ⇒ [Pollinator Friendly Alliance](#)
- ⇒ [Western Pennsylvania Conservancy](#)
- ⇒ [Florida Wildflower Foundation](#)
- ⇒ [Xerces Society](#)
- ⇒ [Ohio State University/Northeast Ohio Pollinator Society](#)

Most of these organizations record the webinars so you can watch them at your convenience. Perhaps you could even host a “watch party” or incorporate an online seminar into your garden club meeting, followed by a group discussion.

April is National Native Plant Month! Where can you get native plants in your area? [Homegrown National Park](#), founded by renowned native plant advocate Doug Tallamy, assembled a list of specialist native plant nurseries by state. The website is also an excellent resource for general information and videos. Your state or local garden club may also have a list of native plant growers. As demand for native plants increases, your local greenhouses are also stocking these plants.

As we educate ourselves and learn more about the delicate balance between humans and nature, we realize how our decisions impact the environment. Let us consider what we can do in our gardens to have a positive impact on pollinators while creating beauty. Suzanne Laporte, president of the American Horticultural Society, said, “Every front yard with a garden makes a passerby's day.” We can take that further by considering pollinators as passersby; let's make their day!

Virginia Schmidt is an Ohio gardener, active in her state and local clubs, and a Master Gardener Volunteer. She chairs the PLANT AMERICA: *Plant for Pollinators* program.



Finch on Coneflower • Raghu Mishra



Bee on Sunflower • Virginia Schmidt



Bee on Monarda • Virginia Schmidt



Butterfly on Pentas • Margie Robertson

PLASTIC ORGANIZATION IN FLORAL DESIGN

Pilar Medellín

Floral design, like any aesthetic expression, requires careful planning. Plastic organization refers to the integration of all the elements that make up an arrangement and the relationships established between them, which is known as composition. Just as in music, where we combine notes to create melodies, in floral design, we arrange elements to achieve an effect of unity and harmony.

Plastic organization involves arranging materials in such a way that the result is attractive and interesting, presenting balance and dynamic visual weight. It is crucial to consider both full and empty spaces in the design, as both are essential to creating an effective composition.

Each object or shape is configured around one or more points, which is a structural property of the composition. In order to achieve a dynamic balance, we use techniques such as space penetration and juxtaposition, which generate tension, rhythm, and interest in floral design.

Visual weight is defined as the force that an element exerts within a composition to attract or repel other nearby elements. This weight depends on factors such as size, shape, position, color, and texture. There are different placements that affect visual perception:

- ❖ Horizontal - transmits stability and a feeling of firmness.
- ❖ Vertical - suggests balance and elevation, with an upward movement.
- ❖ Square - offers stable balance and a centered visual path.
- ❖ Circular - creates a sense of enveloping movement.
- ❖ Triangular - provides stability at the base and limits expansion at the top.

The weight of an element depends not only on its size but also on its position in relation to the other elements. Continuous practice in floral design improves our intuition to find a dynamic and creative plastic organization. It is not only about learning; it is about applying these concepts in regular practice!

Pilar Medellín de Miñarro, is a TNG international feature writer and NGC Instructor. She lives in Mexico. **View more information on the [Plastic Organization in Floral Design](#).**



Plastic Organization • Pilar Medellín

ORGANIZACIÓN PLÁSTICA EN DISEÑO FLORAL

Pilar Medellín

El diseño floral, como cualquier expresión estética, requiere una cuidadosa organización. Esta organización se refiere a la integración de todos los elementos que componen un arreglo y las relaciones que se establecen entre ellos, lo que se conoce como composición. Al igual que en la música, donde combinamos notas para crear melodías, en el diseño floral ordenamos elementos para lograr un efecto de unidad y armonía.

La organización plástica implica disponer los materiales de manera que el resultado sea atractivo e interesante, presentando un equilibrio y un peso visual dinámico. Es fundamental considerar tanto los espacios llenos como los vacíos en el diseño, ya que ambos son esenciales para crear una composición efectiva.

Cada objeto o forma se configura alrededor de uno o más puntos, lo que es una propiedad estructural de la composición. Para lograr un balance dinámico, se utilizan técnicas como la penetración del espacio y la yuxtaposición, que generan tensión, ritmo e interés en el diseño floral.

El peso visual se define como la fuerza que un elemento ejerce dentro de una composición para atraer o repeler otros elementos cercanos. Este peso depende de factores como tamaño, forma, posición, color y textura. Existen diferentes formas de organizar la plástica que afectan la percepción visual:

- ❖ Horizontal - transmite estabilidad y la sensación de firmeza.
- ❖ Vertical - sugiere equilibrio y elevación, con un movimiento ascendente.
- ❖ Cuadrado - ofrece un equilibrio estable y un recorrido visual centrado.
- ❖ Circular - crea una sensación de movimiento envolvente.
- ❖ Triangular - proporciona estabilidad en la base y limita la expansión en la parte superior.

Este peso, no solo depende de su tamaño, sino también de su posición en relación con los otros elementos presentes. La constancia en diseño floral mejora nuestra intuición para encontrar una organización plástica dinámica y creativa. ¡No solo se trata de aprender, sino de aplicar continuamente estos conceptos en la práctica!

Pilar Medellín de Miñarro, es escritora internacional de artículos especiales para TNG e Instructora NGC. Ella vive en México. **Ver más información sobre el [Organización Plástica en Diseño Floral](#).**



Organización Plástica • Pilar Medellín



NGC Certified Wildlife Habitat Barbara Campbell

Thanks to the 223 members, representing 36 states, who registered their gardens as Wildlife Habitats with NGC. It has been so satisfying and rewarding to read the applications. I offer deep gratitude to nationwide participants practicing sustainable gardening, providing food and shelter for animals while helping to save and preserve for the future. By using more native plants, eliminating invasives, cutting back on lawns, leaving dead trees, providing pollinator plants, keeping seed stalks, mulching with natural products, and limiting pesticides, these gardeners "get it!" Florida has the most certified gardens at 23. However, small Delaware wins on a per capita basis with 18. Florida President Tina Tuttle attended a short course in which I also participated. She spoke to the attendees, providing information on certifying your garden as a Wildlife Habitat. I raised my hand to thank her, and immediately, the members on both sides of me registered on their phones. Several more had applied by the time I got home. That was a good day! Remember to certify your garden, [Garden for Wildlife](#). The animals will thank you. I thank you, and thanks to President Brenda Moore for allowing me to chair this very worthwhile project.

[Barbara Campbell](#), of New York, is the NGC PLANT AMERICA - Landscape for Wildlife Chair

Hummingbird & Bleeding Hearts • Freebilly



April is
**PLANT
AMERICA**
Month

		1	2 National Walking Day	3	4 National Carrot & Walk to Work Day	5
6 Fresh Tomato Day	7	8	9	10	11	12
13 Intl. Plant Appreciation Day	14 National Gardening Day	15	16	17	18	19 National Hang Out Your Clothes & Garlic Day
20	21	22 National Earth Day	23 National Park & National Volunteer Week	24	25 Arbor Day	26 Audubon Day
27	28	29	30			



EARTH DAY 2025

OUR POWER, OUR PLANET

Roxanna Champagne

Alexis Rockman's artwork (left) perfectly captures Earth Day's 2025 theme, *Our Power, Our Planet*, with a solar panel rising above a celebratory crowd of people. The imagery invokes hope, combining the beauty of nature with the promise of a cleaner, greener future for all.

On April 22, 1970, 55 years ago, the First Earth Day burst upon the scene. Americans were awakening to the need to protect the environment. Air and water pollution were featured in headlines, giving rise to a new environmental consciousness among Americans. The public began to demand changes to protect our water, air, land, and wildlife. Earth Day, a nationwide demonstration, gave rise to concern about environmental issues and secured political action.

Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisconsin) is considered the founder of Earth Day. He created Earth Day to force environmental issues onto the national agenda. Senator Nelson intended it to be, "a national teach-in on the environment to send a message to Washington." Earth Day is responsible for creating the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the resulting environmental protection legislation, including the 1970's Clean Air, Clean Water, and Endangered Species Acts.

What began in the United States is now observed globally every April 22, with events planned in many communities. The theme for Earth Day 2025 is [Our Power, Our Planet](#), inviting everyone around the globe to unite behind renewable energy and to triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030. How? Encourage all to act by educating, advocating, and mobilizing. Pledge an Earth Action on social media. People can attend, plan, and register a local event at [earthday.org](#).

Ten Simple Things You Can Do to Help Protect the Earth Every Day ([National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration](#))

1. **Reduce, reuse, and recycle** by cutting down on what you throw away, thus reducing landfill space and conserving natural resources.
2. **Volunteer** for cleanups in your community. You can get involved in protecting your watershed, too.
3. **Educate** yourself and others. When you further your education, you can help others understand the importance and value of our natural resources.
4. **Conserve water.** The less water you use, the less runoff and wastewater that eventually end up in the ocean.
5. **Choose sustainably.** Learn how to make smart seafood choices at [NOAA Fish Watch](#).
6. **Shop wisely.** Buy less plastic and bring a reusable shopping bag.
7. **Use long-lasting light bulbs.** Energy-efficient light bulbs reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Also, flip the light switch off when you leave the room!
8. **Plant a tree.** Trees provide food and oxygen. They help save energy, clean the air, and help combat climate change.
9. **Do not send chemicals into our waterways.** Choose non-toxic chemicals in homes and businesses.
10. **Bike more.** Drive less.

Roxanna Champagne, of Louisiana, is the NGC Land and Soil Conservation Chairman and serves on the NGC Environmental Concerns and Conservation Committee.





*Spring is day to day,
minute to minute...*

THE DISHEVELED GARDEN OF VERO JOLLIFFE/ EL JARDÍN DESPEINADO DE VERO JOLLIFFE Eduardo Fortunato



Disheveled Background • Design Toon

Verónica Carolina Jolliffe, a lawyer and Official Criminal Public Defender, finds in gardening a deeply rooted need since her childhood. It is not just a pastime.

Her garden in Hurlingham, a suburb of Buenos Aires, is an atypical space with an incredible variety of plants and flowers that take turns to show their beauty. We are talking about *Echinaceas*, poppies, *Dahlias*, and more.

Vero describes her garden as "disheveled," ruled by nature itself. She prioritizes water conservation by opting for fewer lawn areas which require more irrigation due to their shallow roots. She dedicates daily time to the garden, enjoying the discovery of new shoots and controlling each plant's needs. On weekends, she delves into heavier tasks like changing the soil in pots.

She divides the garden based on sun exposure and water needs for each specimen, learning through observation, and exchanging knowledge with other gardeners. She uses her compost to fertilize, taking advantage of organic waste.

Among her favorites are *Hydrangeas* that remind her of her mother and sweet peas that remind her of her grandmother; a linden tree was planted, following her father's advice. It is a central point in the garden. In her greenhouse, she enjoys growing cacti and succulents.

For Vero, the garden is a space where plants have control; she adapts to their whims while allowing them to follow their course naturally. Her focus is to create an environment where plant life can thrive naturally and spontaneously.

Eduardo Fortunato, from Buenos Aires, Argentina, is the editor of the magazine [Hurlingham casaxcasa](#). This article was published in their December 2024 issue. See more images of [Verónica's Garden](#).

Verónica Carolina Jolliffe, abogada y Defensora Oficial Penal, encuentra en la jardinería una necesidad arraigada desde su infancia, no es un mero pasatiempo.

Su jardín en Hurlingham, un municipio próximo a la Ciudad de Buenos Aires, es un espacio atípico con una variedad increíble de plantas y flores que se turnan para mostrar su belleza. Estamos hablando de Echinaceas, Amapolas, Dalias y muchas más.

Vero describe su jardín como "despeinado," gobernado por la naturaleza misma. Prioriza el ahorro de agua, optando por pocas áreas de pasto que al tener raíces superficiales necesita más riego. Dedicar tiempo diario al jardín, disfrutando del descubrimiento de nuevos brotes y controlando las necesidades de cada planta. Los fines de semana profundiza en tareas más pesadas como el cambio de tierra en las macetas.

Divide el jardín según la exposición al sol y las necesidades de agua de cada ejemplar, aprendiendo a través de la observación y el intercambio de conocimientos con otras jardineras. Utiliza su compostera para fertilizar, aprovechando los desechos orgánicos.

Entre sus especies favoritas, las Hortensias le recuerdan a su madre y las Arvejillas a su abuela, el Tilo, que fue plantado siguiendo el consejo de su padre, es un punto central del jardín. En su invernadero disfruta del cultivo de cactus y suculentas.

Para Vero, el jardín es un espacio donde las plantas tienen el control, adaptándose ella a sus caprichos y permitiendo que sigan su curso. Su enfoque es crear un entorno donde la vida vegetal pueda prosperar de manera natural y espontánea.

Eduardo Fortunato, de Buenos Aires, Argentina, es editor de la revista [Hurlingham casaxcasa](#). Este artículo fue publicado en su revista en diciembre 2024. Ver más imágenes de [Jardín de Verónica](#).

FUNCTIONAL TABLES = TIME TO EAT!

Frances Thrash

What is a functional table? It is a table design where we can "actually pull up a chair, sit down, and dine." We all do functional tables; many of us do so every day! For flower shows, we often create a functional table for two, four, or more, but most often for two. These tables include tablecloths, other coverings, napkins, plates, glasses, and a floral exhibit. The one item that **MUST** be included is the **NAPKIN** and, of course, the floral exhibit for a flower show. The designer may use several napkins folded together. The schedule determines the length of the tablecloth and whether it should reach the floor or have a certain length of overhang.

Caution is always advisable when considering the height and size of the floral exhibit. If placed between the diners, it should be low enough for them to see and talk over the top of the design. Designers may place the floral exhibit at the back of the table. Here, it may be taller as no one needs to be able to talk or see over it. However, it should not dwarf the table nor make diners feel it will overwhelm them. The design should be in proportion to the size of the table and not occupy more than one-fourth to one-third of the table's surface area, combined with any serving pieces, menus, or candles also placed on the table. A container-grown plant is **NOT** considered a floral exhibit. All the serving pieces, menus, candles, and floral exhibit (design) are lumped together and called the "decorative unit."

Placemats and runners are common table coverings used over the tablecloth. Just as with the size of the floral exhibit, these items should not overwhelm the table. Place (charger) plates may be used in conjunction with plates and glasses but should

(Continued on page 23)



Dining Background • Slim3D



Two Very Different Functional Tables for Two Using
the Same Tableware • Frances Thrash Photos



Tray Table for One • Frances Thrash



Tray Table for One • Frances Thrash



Semi-formal Table • Frances Thrash

be proportionate to the size of the table and the other plates used. Glasses, coffee cups, or mugs should be included in the display (something to drink from). Coordination is essential among all the pieces' colors, textures, formality, and sizes. Often, glasses will be too small for the number of place plates, plates, salad plates, and bowls used. If clear, they often blend in with the other items on the table. Colored, stemmed glasses seem to be a better choice to maintain their presence on the table, but color is not mandatory.

Designers may include candles, but they should not obstruct the view of the diner across the table. The flame, although not present, should not be in the eyes of either diner. The candles do not have to be charred, and the imagined flame should be above or below the diners' view. Real candles are never lit in a flower show, but battery-operated "candles" may be used and turned on.

Flatware is often not used as it seems to clutter the table. But if we are going to eat at this table, how can we do it without flatware? Flatware MAY be used and can be plastic, wood, inexpensive metals, or other materials. Expensive flatware is not permitted in NGC flower shows, e.g., your sterling, due to concern of theft.

Additional types of functional tables include the following:

- ❖ Buffet table with service for four or more must have the pieces all arranged logically for serving oneself. At least one serving piece MUST be included. The schedule should say how many people this buffet is expected to serve.
- ❖ Alfresco is any type of functional table done outdoors, with any degree of formality.
- ❖ Informal is casual dining.
- ❖ Semi-formal is a more formal and sophisticated dining. (Formal tables are not allowed in an NGC flower show).
- ❖ Tray for one is literally a tray that would serve one person. The schedule should list the size of the space the tray will occupy. The decorative unit should be in scale to the size of the tray and be stable on the tray as it will most likely need to be moved intact. Napkins are not allowed to be placed on the plate.

Frances Thrash, of Virginia, is the NGC Floral Design Coordinator.





From Top Clockwise: Garden Today, Plaque, Garden Before • Carleton Park Garden Club

FROM NOTHING TO FANTASTIC

David Robson

The Carleton Park Garden Club in Seattle, WA, received a \$2000 PLANT AMERICA Community Projects Grant for the year 2024. Working with a landscape company from the Magnolia neighborhood, they designed and upgraded the garden space around Fire Station #41.

The project originated when a firefighter observed the garden club working on a local median and jokingly asked if they could upgrade the firehouse garden. (Never say anything jokingly to a garden club!) Club members designed the project and worked to secure funds, not only from the National Garden Clubs' PLANT AMERICA Community Projects Grant fund but also from the City of Seattle Neighborhood Match fund. The club worked with a local landscaping firm to provide \$10,000 worth of donated labor.

The planning team was adamant about matching the firehouse's Art Deco nature and color scheme. A black and red color theme, along with pollinator-friendly and water-wise plants, were key components to complement the architecture. Plants selected include roses, *Weigela*, fringe flowers, coneflowers, and beard-tongues paired with *Heuchera* 'Obsidian' and black stonecrop.

Members incorporated an underground irrigation system into the design. Curved pathways with square pavers and a circular patio provide a welcoming invitation to passersby. Added to the landscape was a public artwork display – an interactive kinetic sculpture at the back right side of the garden. It incorporates 66 stainless steel firefighters with movable arms and legs that dance and march when one turns a side handle. To conclude the project, a plaque commemorating the project was placed among the plants, recognizing the Carleton Garden Club and the NGC PLANT AMERICA program.

David Robson, of Illinois, is the PLANT AMERICA Community Grants Chair and serves on the PH&E Committee.



Let's
COOK!

ASPARAGUS QUICHE

Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich

Asparagus season is coming soon. For those of us fortunate enough to have our own patch of this delicious vegetable, we can hardly wait. I have a patch that has provided a continuous yield for over forty years - grown from a five-dollar packet of seeds. You do not have to wait as long as I did from the initial planting. Asparagus crowns are widely available, allowing you to harvest within two years and for many years to come.

Pie crust

- ½ cup vegetable shortening
- 1 ½ cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- ⅓ cup cold water

Place flour and salt in a bowl and combine. Cut the shortening in with a fork or pastry blender until it is incorporated and the size of small peas. Add approximately ⅓ cup of water and incorporate it with a fork. Then, gently knead the mixture with your hands until it forms a ball of dough. Roll out on wax paper or parchment until the circle is about an inch bigger than the pie pan you will use. Transfer the pie crust to the pie pan and crimp the edges.

Filling

- ½ to ¾ pound fresh asparagus cut into ½-inch pieces
- 5 slices bacon
- 1 cup shredded Swiss cheese (or cheddar if you prefer)
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup half-and-half
- salt and pepper to taste
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg (optional)

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Steam or boil asparagus for four to six minutes until tender.
3. Cook the bacon until it is crisp, then dry it on paper towels and crumble it. (You may use pre-cooked bacon.)
4. Place bacon and asparagus evenly in the pie shell, and sprinkle cheese on top of the bacon and asparagus.
5. Beat the eggs, half-and-half, salt, pepper, and nutmeg in a bowl.
6. Pour the egg mixture into the pie shell, placing it on top of the other ingredients.
7. Bake quiche in a preheated oven until the filling is set, for about 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool slightly before serving.

Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich is the NGC Food to Table Chair. She cooks and gardens in Ohio. [Click here for printable Asparagus Quiche recipe.](#)

PLANT COMBINATIONS TO HELP MANAGE INSECT PESTS

Melinda Myers



Companion Planting • Melinda Myers

Companion planting often means different things to different gardeners. You may consider companion planting strategies as those based on ideas passed along from one generation to the next or plantings that worked for you in the past. As a former Extension agent, I always rely on research-based information when sharing information with gardeners.

I like Jeff Gillman's *The Truth About Organic Gardening* definition of companion planting. He refers to it as, "polyculture, growing unrelated and different plants together to reduce insect and disease problems while promoting health and productivity." The University of Massachusetts also shares a wide range of benefits that one can obtain by companion planting in their article [Companion Planting in the Vegetable Garden](#). When partnering two or more plants, consider how they can increase nutrient uptake, improve pest management, reduce pesticide use, enhance pollination, and boost productivity.

Start by diversifying your ornamental and edible gardens whenever possible. You will enjoy the added beauty while reducing the risk of insect and disease problems. Avoid monoculture plantings composed of just one type of plant and garden beds filled with members of the same plant family. These related plants tend to be susceptible to the same insect and disease problems.

Diversity also helps confuse insects that use visual clues to find their preferred plants. Combining plants of different colors, heights, and shapes makes it harder for insects to find

their favorites. Including plants in your garden that look like those insects prefer attracts them. But when they begin feeding, they realize it is not their preferred plant. Misdirection causes the insects to waste energy and can help divert them away from your desirable plants.

Most people use companion planting to manage insect pests, so let us focus on a few common pest problems and plants that can help reduce damage. In this case, you combine plants to repel or attract and trap insect pests, preventing them from damaging your desirable plantings. Marigolds are often the first plant that comes to mind. This plant is promoted as an insect repellent and trap plant when grown in and around a vegetable garden. Unfortunately, the scope of control and the way to achieve results is often overlooked. Both the French and African marigolds produce a substance that is toxic to root nematodes. However, the plants must be tilled under at the end of the growing season to release the chemicals into the soil.

A few studies found that marigolds and basil planted among tomatoes helps reduce thrip damage. An Iowa study found that both marigolds and nasturtiums planted with squash reduced damage from cucumber beetles and squash bugs. Research supports the old practice of planting nasturtiums with squash to reduce squash bug populations. As for marigolds repelling rabbits, however, I think many of us have discovered rabbits and woodchucks dine on these plants.

(Continued on page 27)



Ladybeetle Pupa • Melinda Myers



Braconid Wasp Larva on Hornworm • Melinda Myers

The University of Minnesota's [Companion Planting in Home Gardens](#) article shares a few research-based companion plantings that seem to work. Growing spicier members of the cabbage family, such as arugula, mustard, rapeseed, and napa cabbage, helped trap flea beetles, thus reducing the damage to other members of that family. Just make sure you are willing to sacrifice the "trap" plants for the good of the others. Perhaps covering susceptible plantings with row covers that allow air, light, and water to pass through while keeping out flea beetles and preventing cabbageworm damage may be a better option. Row covers prevent damage, protect plantings from birds and rabbits, and help you enjoy a more diverse harvest.

Thyme, onions, and nasturtiums grown near broccoli reduce damage from cabbage looper and cabbageworm pests. Including marigolds, onions, and nasturtium among cabbage plants also reduced the damage done by these two insects to cabbage plants. Plus, you will enjoy the additional herbs, onions, and the beauty of the edible and ornamental nasturtium leaves and flowers.

Blue Hubbard squash is an effective trap for cucumber beetles, squash bugs, and squash vine borers. Plant it away from your desirable plants several weeks before planting your other squash and pumpkins for the best results. A thorough cleanup of this and other susceptible vine crops in fall also helps to reduce pest populations the following year.

Include plants that attract [Predatory Insects](#) (University of Maryland Extension) and [Parasitoid Insects](#). (University of Kentucky, Entomology) These insects feed upon or parasitize other insects helping to reduce damage in the garden. Lady beetles, praying mantises, and spiders are the most well-known insect predators. However, the smaller predatory wasps and mites often go unnoticed, but they also feed on other insects in the garden. Predatory insects eat their prey, while insect parasitoids lay their eggs on or in their prey and feed on the host until the host dies.

You may have noticed a parasitized tomato hornworm with white rice-like protrusions from its body. These are cocoons of a braconid wasp. The wasp lays its eggs on the hornworm; the eggs eventually hatch, and the larvae feed on the inside of the caterpillar until they are ready to pupate into an adult wasp. The cocoons where this transformation occurs are the white rice-like protrusions. When you see these protrusions, leave the infected hornworms on the plants. Once the adult wasps emerge, they attack other hornworms in your garden.

[Plant Flowers to Encourage Beneficial Insects](#) (University of Wisconsin Extension) in your garden. Grow carrot family members, like cilantro and dill, that attract small parasitic wasps and flies. Plant colorful members of the aster family, such as blanket flower, coreopsis, goldenrod, and sunflower, that are attractive to lady beetles and soldier beetles. Include members of the pea family that attract a variety of beneficial insects. Grow some sweet alyssum, basket-of-gold alyssum, and mustards to attract both parasitoids and predatory insects. Pop in some verbenas that are pretty to look at and also help attract a variety of beneficial insects to the garden.

Consider companion plantings as one of several strategies to boost the health and productivity of your gardens while reducing pest problems. As with any strategy, monitor for issues throughout the growing season, record success and challenges, and adapt as needed.

Melinda Myers authored more than 20 gardening books, including *The Midwest Gardener's Handbook* and *Small Space Gardening*. Look for more gardening tips on [Melinda Myers' website](#).

HOST AN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION DAY

Sheryl Hanson McGookin

The Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs (RIFGC) has hosted an annual free Environmental Education Day for many years. Attendance increases each successive year. The planning takes a reasonable amount of effort, and the outcome always gets a high score from attendees. The **basic structure**: We keep the day to 4 hours with a bring-your-own lunch or a provided boxed lunch. (Providing lunch may require additional planning if attendees need to pay for it in advance.) The local library auditorium or a community program room is a perfect place to hold this event. Speakers typically need a podium, projector, screen, and microphone.

Speakers should, of course, meet the trends of your state or region. Ours have included Bartlet Tree Experts to discuss current tree diseases and their treatment, Sodco sod experts who provide environmentally conscious products, including one with flowers native to the North East, and a speaker from The Green Animals Topiary Garden in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Arabella Dane attended and spoke about how to use one's smartphone and the numerous editing apps (applications) available to help amateur photographers create beautiful pictures. We always include a design program with a floral designer using environmentally conscientious materials, an expert on Ikebana floral design, or the attendees' favorite of a floral challenge demonstration. We aim to include a speaker with crafting experience using materials from the natural environment, such as how to create a gorgeous scarf using floral imprints or how to make stepping stones. We have invited a speaker from the Newport Mansions to discuss the diverse array of tree species planted on the grounds. Save-the-Bay has spoken on the health of the Providence River. An interesting expert on soil health made himself available for home visits, and we were very fascinated by a presentation from Prudence Memorial Park about green or natural burial.

The strategic use of **downtime** between speakers is important and can add character to the event. We found it helpful to plan 15-30 minutes between speakers. This time allows for bathroom breaks, lunch, speaker setup, and takedown. We set up exhibits related to environmental issues around the event space. Attendees stretch their legs and interact with the exhibits. We encourage attendees to take pictures of exhibit information, thus cutting down on paper handouts.

Community organizations staff some exhibits and answer questions. Wild Plant Society provides handouts and answers questions about native plants and ongoing volunteer planting projects. One year, we set up a station so attendees could make beeswax wraps during the break. Other options include inviting a Rose or Orchid Society or Master Gardeners to answer questions during breaks.

RIFGC creates a budget for this event to cover the costs of speakers and provide attendees with a **swag bag**. The swag bags included items such as a reusable glass (Pyrex) straw, Eco-Friendly detergent samples, dryer balls, eco-friendly toilet paper, small spray bottles with homemade insecticide or window cleaner including the recipe, and beeswax wraps.

Environmental Education Day is an event that state garden clubs can tailor to their own state's interests and have fun with. Remember, your state's members are incredibly creative and experienced people with fabulous ideas! Form a committee and see what comes out of their brainstorming. You are welcome to contact RIFGC with any questions.

Especially knowledgeable would be [Vera Bowen](#), [Sarah Lee](#), and [Sheryl Hanson McGookin](#).

Sheryl Hanson McGookin, of Rhode Island, is a member of the NGC Environmental Concerns Committee.





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CHINA ROSE/LA ROSA CHINA

Silvia Malan

China Roses • Silvia Malan

China Roses are delicate, ethereal, and occasionally climbers.

FLOWERING: They produce relatively small flowers, from 1.5 to 2.5 inches in diameter, slightly fragrant, semi-double or double in a palette ranging from pale pinks through crimsons to intense reds. They have glabrous pedicels or glandular hairs. They bloom in early spring, either solitary or clustered, continuously until late autumn and, in temperate climates, even until the beginning of winter. The color darkens as it declines. A white stripe on any rose demonstrates evidence of China genetics.

FOLIAGE: The foliage is elegant, delicate, and shiny, almost metallic, in contrast to the languid leaves of the Gallicas, Damasks, and Albas roses. The leaves are born with a reddish tint; they have three to five broadly ovate or ovate-oblong leaflets three-fourths to two and one-half inches long, acuminate, serrated, dark green, and glossy on the upper side, paler on the underside. It is not very dense and has many small branches.

FRUIT: The fruit is ovoid or turbinate, 0.5 to 1 inch long.

SHRUB: They are low, upright, with drooping branches, a solid and robust trunk, with curved thorns. In general, they are somewhat lax, airy, and not very compact.

LOCATION: The best place is in full sun.

CARE: They need little pruning, mostly to remove dry branches to keep a clean shrub. Like other repeat-blooming roses, they need fertile soil, which is greatly benefited by the application of a specific rose fertilizer in early spring and following the first flowering.

DISEASES: Along with China Roses come the typical disease of rose bushes: black spot. They are not very resistant to cold.

Silvia Malan is a member of the Garden Club Edelweiss in Nueva Helvecia, Department of Colonia, Uruguay. She has been a Council delegate for the Garden Club of Uruguay and an NGC Flower Show School collaborator, she is an NGC Master Judge and gives lectures on horticulture and design. **See more information** [China Rose](#).

Las rosas chinas son delicadas, etéreas y ocasionalmente trepadoras.

FLORACIÓN: Producen flores relativamente pequeñas, de 4 a 6 cm de diámetro, levemente fragantes, semi-dobles o dobles en una paleta que va desde los rosas pálidos pasando por algunos carmesí a rojos intensos. Pedúnculos glabros o con pelos glandulosos. Florecen al comienzo de la primavera, en forma solitaria o agrupada, continuamente hasta entrado el otoño y, en climas templados, llegan a hacerlo hasta comienzos del invierno. El color se oscurece al declinar. Una raya blanca en cualquier rosa demuestra evidencia de genética china.

FOLLAJE: Elegante, delicado y brillante, casi metálico, en contraste con las lánguidas hojas de las Gallicas, Damascenas y Albas. Las hojas nacen con un tinte rojizo, presentan de 3 a 5 folíolos anchamente aovadas o aovado oblongas de 2 a 6 cm de largo, acuminadas, aserradas, verde oscuro y lustrosas en la cara superior, más pálidas en la cara inferior. No es muy denso y se observan muchas ramas chicas.

FRUTO: Ovoide o turbinado, de 1,5 a 2 cm de largo.

ARBUSTO: Bajo, erguido, con ramas que caen, tronco sólido, robusto, provisto de aguijones curvos. En general son algo laxos, aireados y no muy compactos.

UBICACIÓN: El mejor lugar es a pleno sol.

CUIDADO: Necesitan poca poda, mayormente para quitar ramas secas y limpiar el arbusto. Como otras rosas reflorecientes, necesitan suelo fértil, el cual se ve sumamente beneficiado si se le agrega un fertilizante específico de rosas al comenzar la primavera y siguiente a la primera floración.

ENFERMEDADES: Con ellas llegó la enfermedad típica de los rosales: la mancha negra. No son muy resistentes al frío.

Silvia Malan es integrante del Garden Club Edelweiss de Nueva Helvecia, Departamento de Colonia, Uruguay. Ha sido delegada del Consejo del Garden Club de Uruguay y colaboradora de las Escuelas de Exposición de Flores NGC, es Juez Master NGC y ofrece conferencias sobre horticultura y diseño. **Ver más información** [Rosa China](#).

PATH OF SUCCESS

Brenda J. Moore
NGC Pres. 2023-25
WVGC Pres. 2011-13

Donna & Harold
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MARCH 2025

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HQ UPDATES

Bill Trapp

To many people, March means "March Madness," the NCAA basketball tournament, but to headquarters, March means "MULCH," the wonderful aroma and look of freshly spread mulch. As I write this article, the landscaping company is cleaning up the old leaves and spreading mulch over the 6.2 acres, and soon, spring will begin.

Over the last year, there have been many improvements to headquarters, including new window treatments, painting, and additional outside lighting. The construction for the final part of the Path of Success will be completed in the next couple of months. Completion will allow people to walk around the entire grounds and view the gardens and art surrounding the National Garden Clubs' property.

If you are looking for a special way to honor your past president, consider purchasing a paver and have it included in the wonderful Path of Success.

Bill Trapp, of Missouri, is the NGC Executive Director.

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EL BUEN RETIRO PARK IN MADRID/ PARQUE DEL BUEN RETIRO EN MADRID

Susie
Braithwaite



Palacio de Cristal de la Arganzuela • Susie Baithwaite?

Spanning 309 acres and boasting over 19,000 trees of 167 species, El Retiro Park is a verdant oasis in the heart of Madrid that became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2021.

Highlights include the vibrant Rose Garden with 5,570 specimens, the elegant French Parterre featuring the ancient ahuehuete (*Taxodium huegelii*), and a sprawling lake. The iconic Crystal Palace, originally built for a Philippine plant exhibition in 1887, adds a touch of historical grandeur.

Beyond its botanical richness, Retiro Park is a treasure trove of art and architecture including the imposing monument to Alfonso XII, offering panoramic city views, and the captivating "Fallen Angel" sculpture by Ricardo Bellver. The transplanted hermitage of San Pelayo and San Isidoro, with its medieval and romantic charm, provides a glimpse into the past. Other attractions include a puppet theater and a collection of unique greenhouses.

The park's 19 antique and four modern greenhouses, a rarity in Spain, occupy 8.65 acres near the Fallen Angel roundabout. The Tropical Plant Greenhouse, divided into three distinct climate zones, offers a remarkable experience. A raised walkway allows visitors to observe the diverse flora from a bird's-eye perspective, highlighting the dramatic environmental differences between each section.

Susie Braithwaite was a member of the Garden Club Argentino-Grupo Olivos for over 40 years and is an avid floral designer. She has moved to Barcelona and now shares with our readers some of her garden experiences in Spain. **See more images of the [El Buen Retiro Park](#).**

Con una extensión de 125 hectáreas y más de 19.000 árboles de 167 especies, el Parque del Retiro es un oasis verde en el corazón de Madrid que se convirtió en Patrimonio de la Humanidad de la UNESCO en 2021. Se destacan los vibrantes Jardines de la Rosaleda con más de 5,570 ejemplares, el elegante Parterre francés que alberga el anciano Ahuehuete (*Taxodium huegelii*) y un extenso lago. El icónico Palacio de Cristal, construido originalmente para una exposición de plantas traídas de las Filipinas en 1887, añade un toque de grandeza histórica.

Más allá de ser un jardín botánico, el Parque del Retiro es un tesoro de arte y arquitectura. El imponente monumento a Alfonso XII, que ofrece vistas panorámicas de la ciudad, y la cautivadora escultura del "Ángel Caído" de Ricardo Bellver. La ermita trasplantada de San Pelayo y San Isidoro, con su encanto medieval y romántico, ofrece un vistazo al pasado. Otras atracciones incluyen un teatro de títeres y una colección de invernaderos señoriales.

Los 19 invernaderos antiguos y 4 modernos del parque, únicos en España, ocupan 3,5 hectáreas en el entorno de la rotonda del Ángel Caído. El Invernadero de Plantas Tropicales, dividido en tres zonas climáticas distintas, ofrece una experiencia notable. Una pasarela elevada permite a los visitantes observar la diversa flora desde una perspectiva de pájaro, destacando las dramáticas diferencias ambientales entre cada sección.

Susie Braithwaite fue integrante del Garden Club Argentino-Grupo Olivos por más de 40 años y es una ávida diseñadora floral. Se ha mudado a Barcelona y ahora comparte con nuestros lectores algunas de sus experiencias de jardines en España. **Ver más imágenes de [Parque del Buen Retiro](#).**



Magnolia macrophylla Michx. • Nick Kurzenko

THE ROOTS OF AMERICAN FLORA

Mary Ruden

Many people know that Thomas Jefferson was a plant enthusiast and that George Washington loved trees. But do you know that the plant explorer André Michaux was at the root of American flora? André Michaux (1746-1802) was a French plant explorer who came to America and made approximately 742 botanical discoveries. Among them are some of our most beautiful flowers, such as *Magnolia*, *Rhododendron*, azalea, mountain laurel, the North Carolina lily, *Trilliums*, and more. He began as the royal botanist to King Louis XVI. He searched American forests for a new species of trees to rebuild the forests of France and to use for shipbuilding for the French navy. Michaux had already explored regions of Europe and Persia, successfully bringing numerous plants back to France. This experience made him an excellent candidate for the new American exploration. As a widower, he was accompanied by his teenage son, François André Michaux.

Meanwhile, the French Revolution had exploded. Michaux's benefactor, King Louis XVI, was assassinated along with his wife, Marie Antoinette, during the dissolution of the monarchy in 1793. Without his benefactor, Michaux desperately needed a new opportunity to pay for further botanical exploration in America. However, being well-placed and having met influential people such as Thomas Jefferson, he secured an arrangement with the American Philosophical Society. At the time, it was the nation's foremost scientific organization. Several of its members were our Founding Fathers. The *Michaux Expedition Subscription List* is a historical document that outlines the concept for the scientific expedition that would become a forerunner to the Lewis and Clark expedition. It explains the advantage of having geographical information about the areas west of the Mississippi and lists the sponsors willing to support this expedition. The document is in Thomas Jefferson's handwriting and names André Michaux as the official botanist. Signers included four living presidents: Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, John Adams, and James Madison. There was a total of thirty-six sponsors, a third of whom were members of the American Philosophical Society. The Lewis and Clark expedition's primary goal was to explore and understand the geography of the West. This document marked the beginning of exploration in the uncharted areas of North America.

Michaux was very active in early United States botany. *Jeffersonia bartonis* Michx., a lovely white flower, was named in honor of Thomas Jefferson. Michaux gave it to William Bartram, famed botanist and lifelong friend, to present to Jefferson. Michaux visited George Washington at Mount Vernon in 1786, and Washington invited him to keep some of his plants there. They

(Continued on page 34)

planted tulip poplar trees, which Michaux had discovered. One still stands at Mount Vernon and is over 140 feet tall. His voyages took him to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Ohio. He took his botanical collection to a plantation he established in Charleston, South Carolina. It is no longer intact today, but many of the plants are at the nearby Middleton Place Historic Landmark, the country's oldest landscaped garden. (The owner, Arthur Middleton, signed the Declaration of Independence.)

In 1796, Michaux discovered the yellowwood tree on the historic Avery Trace in Tennessee in today's Jackson County. It has pale flowers in delicate bunches that hang from its branches. Colonists used wood from the yellowwood tree to make gunstocks and to produce yellow dye. It has been named the Bicentennial Tree of Tennessee, and a gavel made from yellowwood was used to open the 1996 session of the Tennessee legislature. A marker bearing Michaux's name and a stately tree stands proudly in front of the Gainesboro, Tennessee, courthouse.

One of Michaux's most fantastic discoveries was the bigleaf *Magnolia* (*Magnolia macrophylla* Michx.), native to Tennessee and other southeastern states. It resembles the southern *Magnolia* but has enormous leaves, the largest simple-shaped leaves and the largest flower of any tree native to North America. It is rare. Bigleaf *Magnolia* grows in well-drained, loamy soil, slightly sheltered to protect the leaves. These can be up to three feet long and one foot wide. The tree caused a sensation when Napoleon's Empress Josephine enjoyed it in her garden in France after Michaux brought it there.

Michaux was one of the first explorers to reach the summit of the Black Mountains in North Carolina. He reached the summit of Grandfather Mountain, Mount Mitchell, and Roan Mountain. Michaux's most celebrated words from the new French national anthem, "Long live America and the Republic of France, long live liberty," were recorded in his journal in 1794 after his summit climb of Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina. His journal of the North Carolina expedition was lost when he shipwrecked off the coast of Holland

around 1796, but most of the plants he collected were saved. He discovered the Carolina lily (*Lilium michauxii*), North Carolina's state wildflower; a showy lily resembling a tiger lily.

Orchids are one of the most sought-after flowers to see in the wild. Even though wild orchids are rare, Michaux found five species. These orchids grow in bogs or moist areas. One of the showiest is the crested-fringed orchid (*Platanthera cristata*). Its apricot color is yellow-orange, and it is sometimes called yellow-fringed orchid. Michaux also discovered the green-fringed bog, green adder's mouth, and little club spur bog orchids. Michaux's orchid (*Habenaria quinqueseta* Michx.) is seen in the south and as far west as Texas. Its characteristic spidery-looking white flower has a nectar spur that is about ten centimeters. It may include a dozen flowers on the bloom spike. The famed botanical artist Blanche Ames illustrated it in her book *Drawings of Florida Orchids*, published in 1947, which includes two other orchids discovered by Michaux.



Platanthera cristata • GracedByTheLight

In 1788, he discovered Oconee bells (*Shortia galacifolia*). Michaux collected the plant, but Harvard botanist Asa Gray named it in the nineteenth century. Michaux State Forest in Pennsylvania is home to many Michaux plants. He also made plant discoveries in Canada, Florida, and the Bahamas. Many plants bear his name with the suffix "Michx." He authored two books, *The History of North American Oaks* and *Flora Boreali-Americana*. Perhaps he is not as widely known as other botanists because he did not lecture or teach at a university. There are no known portraits of him, but several exist of his son, François. André Michaux died of a fever in 1802 on the island of Madagascar, where he was exploring after spending time collecting plants in Australia. His legacy lives on in our gardens today.

Mary Ruden authored and illustrated two folding field guides on Native Orchids of North America for Waterford Press' *A Pocket Naturalist* series. *Native Orchids of North America* has 75 species illustrated with descriptions of them and their habitat, and *Native Orchids of Florida* covers 83 species. Visit Mary Ruden's [website](#) for more information. [Click for Mary's Illustrations of Five Michaux Orchids and Article Sources.](#)



A. brevistyla • USDA



A. laramiensi • Wikicommons



A. canadensis • Wikicommons



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WEDDINGS ON MAGNOLIA

Last year, NGC started marketing weddings at headquarters. The 6.2 acres of ground create a fantastic location for a wedding. We are currently only allowing outdoor weddings, and have booked several weddings for this year. We look forward to adding more weddings soon.



GARDENCLUB.ORG

The NGC website contains a plethora of information for garden club members and others. Use the tabs on the homepage to find the topic of your choice, or use the handy search feature to explore many options. If you get lost, just click on the NGC logo, on the top left of every page, to return directly to the homepage.



PRESERVE OUR HISTORY

State Presidents, please remember to record the history of your term using the State President & History Form on the [State President's](#) webpage. Our NGC 100th Anniversary is approaching and we want to include YOU!



Images are of the native *Aquilegia* (Columbine) species that are depicted on the above NGC Sculpture "Columbine" • Holzman



A. formosa • Wikicommons



A. pubescens • Wikicommons



A. saximontana • Wikicommons



Similar to *A. hinckleyana* • Boyy22



A. longissimi • Wikicommons



President Brenda's Travels

- ❖ April 2: Texas Garden Clubs, Nacogdoches, TX
- ❖ April 6: Louisiana Garden Clubs, Alexandria, LA
- ❖ April 8: Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Grenada, MS
- ❖ April 15: Delaware Garden Clubs, Rehoboth Beach, DE
- ❖ April 23: Garden Clubs of Missouri, Springfield, MO
- ❖ April 30: Garden Clubs of Kentucky, Paducah, KY
- ❖ May 18 - 22: NGC Convention, North Charleston, SC
- ❖ June 17: Garden Club of Ohio, North Canton, OH

President-elect Donna's Travel

- ❖ May
 - ◆ Garden Club of New Jersey, Middletown, NJ
 - ◆ New Hampshire Garden Clubs, Keene, NH
 - ◆ Nevada Garden Clubs, Las Vegas, NV
- ❖ June
 - ◆ Garden Club of Maine, Wells, ME
 - ◆ Wyoming Garden Clubs, Cheyenne, WY

Looking for Events? Search the [NGC Calendar](#) for upcoming in-person and virtual events near you or across the globe.

Coming Soon, In-Person & Online

- ❖ April - September, 2025: [Environmental School](#)*
- ❖ April - October, 2025: [Flower Show School](#)*
- ❖ April - October, 2025: [Gardening School](#)*
- ❖ April - August, 2025: [Landscape Design School](#)*
- ❖ April - June, 2025: [Multiple Refreshers](#)
- ❖ April - November, 2025: [Symposiums](#)*
- ❖ [International Events](#)*

*Clicking on the above links takes you directly to the most up-to-date course listings and details on the website. Looking for a specific course? **Click on Course 1, 2, 3, or 4 or the month on the course listing chart.**

[Subscribe to TNG](#) to assure email notification of future NGC events including webinars. **NOTE: Throughout TNG click on ads to go directly to our advertisers' webpages and click on blue, underlined links to get more information, contact a committee chair or author.**



From Gerianne Holzman, Editor

On behalf of all the writers, photographers, members, advertisers, and I-Stock contributors, thank you for reading *The National Gardener* during this editorship. My thanks especially go to assistant editors Pat Young ('23 - '25) and Dawn Mozgawa ('21 - '23), international editor Pampa Risso Patrón, copyeditors Gerry St. Peters ('21 - '25), Linda Harkleroad ('23 - '25), and Joyce Bulington ('21 - '23), advertising managers Debi Harrington ('23 - '25) and Pat Wolanski ('21 - '23) and subscription manager Emily Kiske. Thanks to our featured writers, Bruce Crawford, Melinda Myers, and Charlotte Swanson. Finally, thanks to Presidents Brenda Moore and Mary Warshauer for encouraging me to take this journey as your TNG editor. It has been our pleasure and honor to serve the NGC members.



Door County, Wisconsin • Gerianne Holzman

Life is a daring adventure, or nothing at all.
Helen Keller

Sitting on the Porch

Gerianne Holzman, Editor

Spring has sprung in Wisconsin, and we can finally sit out on our porches. As I sit here contemplating the four years that I served as your *The National Gardener* editor and the editor of *Keeping in Touch* before that, I think of all the stories that we told and perhaps some left behind. Whose story do we tell? We learned of NGC aid for natural disasters and our concerns for the environment. Our four schools, Environmental, Flower Show, Gardening, and Landscape Design, are prominently featured in each issue. Nationally renowned authors graciously shared their extensive knowledge at no cost. You have shared stories of your individual club's successes with workshops, community projects, gardening for people in need, and landscaping unique places. Space restrictions kept us from featuring every club that received an Espoma, Ames Tools, or PLANT AMERICA grant. However, we appreciate all of you and congratulate you on taking the time to apply and receive your grants. National Garden Clubs' Blue and Gold Star Memorials project brings civic pride to our publication as we help to honor those who served. Our floral designers always bring their creativity.

My road to becoming the *TNG* editor was winding, bumpy, and interesting. Some day, you will hear how I got talked into taking a floral design class in the early 1980s that eventually led me down this path, but that is a story for another day. I was shocked and intrigued when Mary Warshauer called me in 2020 and asked me to be *TNG* editor. Mary saw *The National Gardener's* potential as an online publication and thought I would make a good fit. Soon, Idalia Aguilar connected me with Pampa Risso Patrón as I had shown a desire to expand our reach to our International Affiliate members with more bilingual articles. A friendship was born, and our colleagues in Central and South America now feel more included in the National Garden Clubs. The road has not always been easy as deadlines approached, articles did not appear, or personal issues took precedence. However, we have always provided an interesting, colorful, and informative publication. Thanks for reading. My story now follows another path of a page yet to be written and a story yet to be told. I will try to fill those pages wisely as I become your NGC First Vice President. So, this is not goodbye; it is see you another day - nos vemos otro día.

Gerianne

*There are places I remember, All my life, though some have changed
Some forever, not for better, Some have gone and some remain.*

John Lennon & Paul McCartney

We appreciate all of the amazing stories, articles and images in this issue of The National Gardener. Send comments and suggestions for future issues to the new TNG editor to be announced soon. We encourage all NGC members to submit articles.

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