

THE NATIONAL GARDENER

2025 SUMMER ISSUE

VOLUME 96, NUMBER 3

U N I T E D

National Garden Clubs, Inc.

National Garden Clubs, Inc. provides education, resources, and national networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design and civic and environmental responsibility.

SCAN ME

01 Summer 2025 | FREE





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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.

The National Gardener

(ISSN:0027 9331) is published quarterly by National Garden Clubs, Inc.
4401 Magnolia, Av.,
St. Louis, MO 63110-3492

Contact Us

NGC Headquarters: Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
4401 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63110-3492
Phone: 314-776-7674 | Email: Headquarters Staff

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PLANT AMERICA for the next 100 years





The National Gardener

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Victoria Schmidt

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INTERNATIONAL EDITOR

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Write for TNG

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.

Submission Deadlines:

- Fall Issue September 1 (Publish first week of October)
- Winter Issue December 1 (Publish first week of January)
- Spring Issue March 1 (Publish first week of April)
- Summer Issue July 1 (Publish first week of August)

Advertising: Full Page \$650 | Half Page \$350 | Quarter Page \$175

See the [TNG page](#) for more information on advertising.

FROM THE EDITOR



Hello fellow gardeners!

I'm excited to join The National Gardener staff as editor! It's been a whirlwind experience so far but I'm blessed to have a great team to work with and enthusiastic contributors. I've been working directly with our new NGC President Donna Donnelly to refresh our TNG look. Our goal is to make TNG something interesting to read as well as informative about NGC events, programs, and updates with a modern magazine look. We hope that you like it! Let us know what your thoughts are on the new look.

We are also changing our formatting to have shorter articles that focus more on topics of interest for gardeners and designers and shift away from "reports" and more "how to" and "check out this new thing" type of articles. This will take time as our Chairs also need to switch their mindset and have time to be able to write articles about with a new focus. We'll also need to find a place on our website/blog area to post the reports from Chairs so that information is still accessible to those that need that valuable information.

Be sure to let us know what topics would be of most interest to you and we'd love to have more people write articles and submit them. You do not need to be a Chair or on the NGC BOD to submit an article. We are also starting a Q&A section so be sure to send us your questions! We look forward to your future contributions to TNG and thank you to all that submitted articles for this first issue of the new TNG.

Victoria Schmidt

TNG EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

A native of Staten Island, New York, Donna and her family moved to a small pecan farm in Elloree, South Carolina, in 2001. Many sacks of pecans were harvested during those first few years, and in her opinion, there is nothing like a fresh-picked buttery pecan! Donna is the mother of three grown sons and Mimi to seven grandchildren. She was a Registered Nurse for thirty-eight years, specializing and RNC Certified in Labor & Delivery and Perinatal Nursing.



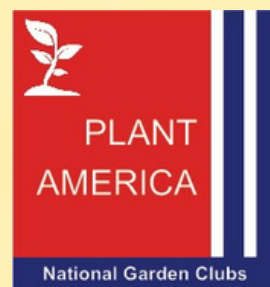
For the first half of her adult life, she dedicated 23 years to volunteering at the Staten Island Historical Society. Shortly after relocating to the Southern Hemisphere, she joined the Elloree Garden Club. Donna discovered that being part of a garden club was more than just about gardening; she found it gave her a complete sense of well-being and provided excellent programs. Over the years, Donna has taken advantage of educational opportunities offered by NGC and became an NGC Accredited Master Flower Show Judge, a Landscape Design Consultant, and a member of NFA and CFAA.

She has held several chair positions on the Board of Directors of The Garden Club of South Carolina (GCSC), including District Director and State President in 2017. Donna has served on the South Atlantic Region (SAR) Board of Directors since 2011. Since 2015, she has been part of the National Garden Club's Board of Directors and is currently the 49th NGC President for the 2025-2027 term. Additionally, Donna is proud to be a certified South Carolina Wildlife Federation Pro-Birder and a Yellowstone National Park Junior Ranger.

These experiences have enriched her life, and she feels fortunate to have met many talented and sophisticated individuals from across the United States, including International Affiliates. Where else can you experience such diverse cultural encounters along with all the educational benefits? National Garden Clubs is an incredible and rewarding organization. She is deeply committed to securing the future of NGC and preserving everything that is respected and admired about the organization.

Donna Donnelly

NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.
PRESIDENT



2025-2027 NGC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the 2025-2027 administration!



It is with great joy and excitement that together we embark on this exciting journey promoting PLANT AMERICA and all that NGC has to offer during the next two years!

Your membership and participation in NGC projects, programs, and meetings will keep you connected to the NGC mission: providing education, resources, and networking opportunities, and promoting the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility which will ultimately give rise to a deeper relationship and involvement with our environment and the planet.

The next two years' vision for National Garden Clubs is to continue to grow and thrive, embracing progress while honoring traditions. Together we will explore new ways to engage our communities, educate our future generations and promote the importance of PLANT AMERICA to connect with nature and each other across the entire nation!

The 94th NGC Convention in Charleston, South Carolina, was a fabulous event hosted by the Garden Club of South Carolina and facilitated by NGC. Many thanks to the 2025 convention committee, 10 real-life gnomes who worked tirelessly to orchestrate a successful convention. A highlight of the convention was the attendance of NGC Honorary President Deen Day Sanders (1997-1999) a special treat for all of us.

I would like to extend my thanks to Brenda Moore and her administration for their hard work and commitment to NGC. An inspiration for us all.

Thank you to my wonderful family for your love and support during these challenging months, you know I could never have gotten here without you!

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2026 Convention at NGC Headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

2025-2027 NGC PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

(CONTINUED)

The NGC website is currently under a redesign, but still available to use. Thank you for your patience!

The following are the OFFICIAL themes and projects of the 2025-2027 term:

(Do not misprint from previous information)

1. The President's theme for the 2025-2027 Administration is:

'PLANT AMERICA for the next 100 Years!'

2. President's Projects:

A. PLANT AMERICA, KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL

B. PLANT AMERICA Red, White, and Blue to Celebrate America's 250th Birthday!

3. Poetry themes:

2025-PLANT AMERICA for the next 100 Years!

2026-PLANT AMERICA Red, White, and Blue to Celebrate America's 250th Birthday!

Warm regards,

Donna Donnelly

NGC President 2025-2027

***State Presidents-please send this to all of your Garden Club members if possible.

Send on behalf of Donna Donnelly by Laurie Churchill, NGC Corresponding Secretary.



**CONVENTION UPDATES/REPORTS
FROM CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
THE BEAUTIFUL GEM OF THE SOUTH**





NGC 2025 Convention

Enjoy these photos from the 2025 NGC Convention, which was held in beautiful Charleston, S.C.





NGC 2025 Convention Speakers



Sharon McGukin
Design Director, Smithers-Oasis



Rebecca Darwin
Garden & Gun Magazine



Rebecca Darwin and
Donna Donnelly

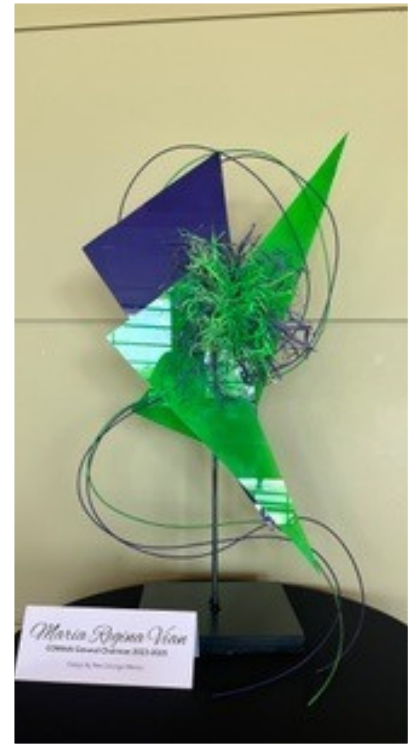


Jennifer Lawso
President-CEO
Keep America Beautiful



NGC 2025 Convention

Floral Designs



2025 NATIONAL CHILDREN & YOUTH GARDEN SYMPOSIUM



National Garden Clubs' sponsorship of the 2025 Youth Garden Symposium GREATLY APPRECIATED!



Bob Markey, NGC Youth Coordinator, joined **Courtney Alsua, Director of National Programs for the American Horticulture Society,** along with hundreds of educators from across the country, at the 33rd Annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium held from July 8th through the 11th.

This year's theme was "Science and History in Youth Gardening," which included interactive learning sessions and workshops suitable for students from pre-K through 12th grade.

Field trips also took attendees to many of Hartford area's impressive college gardens to show how they teach their students about horticulture and how those students then teach local kids about plants.

"I was glad to represent NGC at this wonderful event and share information with attendees about NGC and its growing role in promoting youth gardening nationwide," noted Bob Markey.



AMERICAN
HORTICULTURAL
SOCIETY

The symposium was held at The Connecticut Science Center, a nine-story museum located on the Connecticut River in Hartford, Connecticut which features interactive child-oriented exhibits consisting of videos, audios, visuals, tactile components, programs, and live demonstrations.



Mr. Bob the Gardener
Bob Markey

2023 NATIONAL GARDEN CLUB (NGC) WINNER "AWARD OF EXCELLENCE"
NGC BOARD OF DIRECTORS & YOUTH COORDINATOR

Creator and Director: Mr. Bob's Gardening Foundation for YMCA's Campers 501-C3

Certified: Square Foot Gardening Instructor, Master Gardener & Master Tree Steward

Board of Directors-Garden Club of NJ, National Garden Clubs, Square Foot Gardening Foundation

Bob@MrBobtheGardener.com | PO Box#1504, Rahway, NJ 07065

URBAN GREEN CORRIDORS:

A network of life and sustainability in our cities



The renovated Paseo Verde (formerly Paseo de los Pescadores) was inaugurated in November 2024 on Presidente Wilson Boulevard in front of the quarries of Parque Rodó, Montevideo. The work was partially financed by the U.S. Embassy in Uruguay, as compensation for the temporary use of public space.

SCAN ME



URBAN GREEN CORRIDORS:

A network of life and sustainability in our cities



URBAN GREEN CORRIDORS:

A network of life and sustainability in our cities

Urban green corridors emerge as crucial elements in the search for sustainable cities. These networks of interconnected natural spaces cross the urban site, offering multiple benefits. They act as vital habitats and dispersal routes for biodiversity, counteracting ecosystem fragmentation.

The vegetation in these corridors filters atmospheric pollutants and contributes to thermal regulation, mitigating the heat island effect.

In addition to their environmental benefits, green corridors improve quality of life. They provide spaces for recreation and exercise, promoting the physical and mental health of citizens. Their presence beautifies the urban landscape and can increase the value of surrounding properties.

The implementation of green corridors presents challenges such as the availability of space and the need for integrated planning. However, their potential to increase urban resilience to climate change, acting as buffer zones against floods and heatwaves, underscores their importance. The promotion and development of these corridors are essential to build cities that are more livable and in harmony with nature.

Authors: *Jacqueline Rodríguez Vieyto and María Graciela Antognazza*

Jacqueline Rodríguez Vieyto, interior designer and landscape designer, graduated from the ORT University in Uruguay and received a Master's Degree in Landscaping and Sustainable Urbanism from Es Design Barcelona. She is an active member of the Carrasco Este Garden Club in Montevideo, Uruguay, since 2024.

María Graciela Antognazza is an architect graduated from Udelar and a landscape designer trained at the ORT. She has been a member of the Los Lirios Garden Club in San José, Uruguay, since 2002. Graciela is an NGC, Inc. Standard Judge and a Four-Star Consultant in the Schools of Horticulture, Environment and Landscaping.

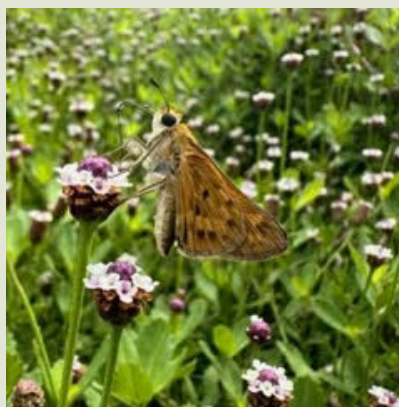
SCAN ME



URBAN GREEN CORRIDORS:

A network of life and sustainability in our cities





Frogfruit

The most versatile groundcover you've never grown

Two decades ago, in the native plant community, we were just beginning to understand the magic of managing our landscapes with the living mulch of groundcovers.

The goal is to fill all the space you have with living, flowering, and fruiting plants that, in turn, provide the much-needed food for all the bees, butterflies, and birds that we all want to adorn our garden space. I spent much of my career trying and abandoning many potential new recruits to my public garden spaces. The ideal groundcover would be one that is shallow rooted to allow for the interplanting of deeper-rooted bulbs and larger emergent perennials and one that would flower for an extended period, look good most of the year and grow in a variety of soil conditions. In all of my trials I come back consistently to the Frogfruit, specifically the Turkey Tangle Frogfruit (*Phyla nodiflora*) as the top performer.

Though its common name may not be made for marketing, it is hard to forget. This creeping plant grows extremely fast, forming a matted network of stems with small opposite leaves and adorned with tiny clusters of light pink or lavender flowers that, when examined up close look for all the world like a miniature lantana (and they are related). The leaves are evergreen in zones 8b and warmer, turning a dark purplish coloration during the winter, but they are fully hardy in zone 7, and I've been growing them for years now in the mountains of North Carolina in what is a borderline zone 6b. Naturally, these plants can be found growing on seashores, ditches, wet roadsides, and brackish marshes in a broad swath across the lower half of the US from Pennsylvania to Oregon with scattered inland locations in places like Kentucky and Kansas. It is also to be found growing wild on 6 of the 7 continents!

The best trait of Frogfruit is that if you have a warm to hot sunny spot, it will grow there. I've used it in places that regularly flood, on banks of sandy soil, on dry, heavily eroded clay banks, and I've yet to find a spot where it doesn't thrive. The drier the site, the lower the stature of the plant and the less rapidly it will grow. In every application, it has proven to dramatically reduce the need for weeding, and perhaps best of all, it begins flowering in April and continues through November! If you live in the Deep South, it may flower all 12 months of the year. It is also a smorgasbord for pollinators.

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Frogfruit

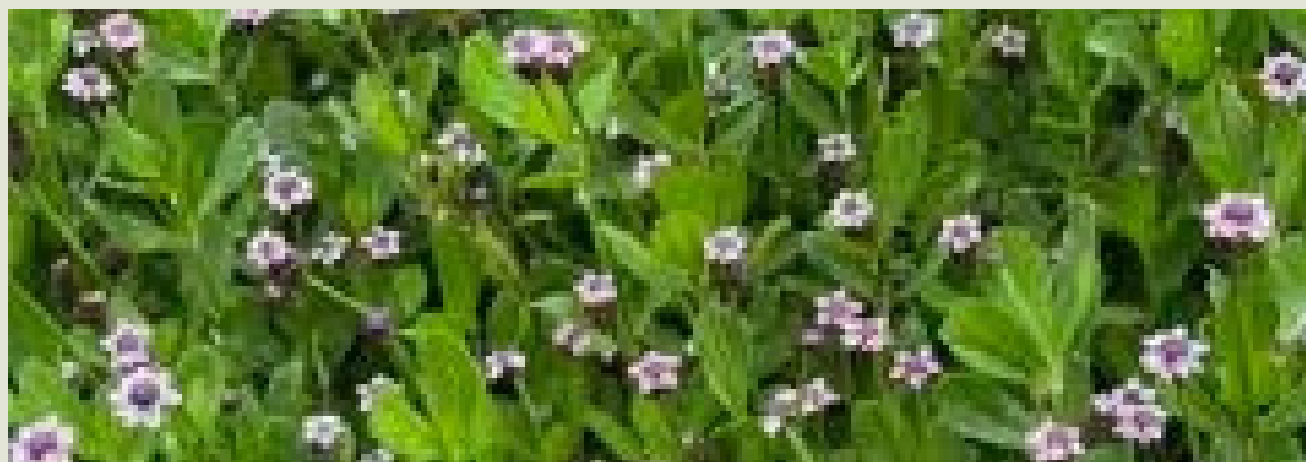
The most versatile groundcover
you've never grown
(Continued)

The flowers are favored by Skipper butterflies, particularly the smaller species, and there is an all-day-long collection of hundreds on our patch every day. In addition, small flies, native bees, sweat bees and tiny wasps are fond of their constantly produced flowers.

Try planting bulbs such as Daffodil, Magic Lilies (Lycoris), and Spider Lilies (Hymenocallis) in your Frogfruit patch, and taller plants such as Iris, shrubs, and Hibiscus mix nicely with it. Frogfruit is a rapid grower that is easily trimmed back from walkways and areas you'd rather not get turkey-tangled. I'd much rather spend time edging than weeding! If you haven't heard of it, seek it out and give it a try—the Skipper butterflies will thank you!

This article was written by Dr. Patrick McMillan.

An NGC 2019 Award of Excellence Winner, Patrick is well-known in the horticultural, taxonomic, and conservation circles. For over 30 years, he has worked as a professional botanist, horticulturist, naturalist, biologist, educator, and author. He has added hundreds of new species and cultivars to the horticultural world. He won an Emmy Award as host, co-creator, and writer of the ETV nature program Expeditions with Patrick McMillan.



GRANT DATES & PROCESS

Community Project GRANTS



This outstanding project grant program is calling you and your clubs to apply!

NGC has been donating grants since 2017, awarding more than \$225,000 to 250 recipients. Now “you” need to be the next in line to receive up to \$2,000. Project grants to NGC member clubs help educate adults and children about the joys of gardening and create a pride throughout the community. Grants may be used for physical landscaping or environmental projects, or for horticultural or educational opportunities for the community.

- Plant America Community Project Grant applications are open to NGC member clubs from April 1 through October 15 of the calendar year to fund new or continuing projects carried out during the following year.
- Committee member review applications and notify grant recipients in December.
- Funds are released in January or February for projects to be implemented during that year. Project completion must be within approximately one year, but no later than February 28th of the year after funds are received. Final reports are due by April 1 of that year.

Information can be found on the NGC web site. There will be a new application form and explanation, guidelines and a wealth of information. The application is a “fillable” form. Feel free to ask questions.

Val Story, Community Project Grant Chairman



THE MIRACLE IN SALTA

**CHECHI HORTELOUP
SAN LORENZO GROUP,
GARDEN CLUB ARGENTINO**

SCAN ME



The city of Salta, capital of a northern province of Argentina, celebrates a Catholic religious festivity every 15th of September. This event is called the Festivity of the Lord and the Virgin of the Miracle.

The story goes that Fray Francisco de Victoria (1540-1592), who was appointed Bishop of the Diocese of Tucuman in Argentina in 1578 during his last trip to Spain before his death in 1592, commissioned statues of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary to be sent to these lands.

The ship sank and years later two crates were found floating in the Port of El Callao in Peru. One of them was an image of Christ, which was sent to the mother church in Salta, and the other was an image of the Virgin of the Rosary that was sent to the church of Santo Domingo in Cordoba, both cities in Argentina.



When the image of Christ was sent to Salta, it was tucked away in a basement and forgotten, until a horrific earthquake hit the province in September of 1662. Faced with despair, the population went in search of these images and took them out to the streets on procession. The earthquake stopped immediately.

Ever since that year, this traditional celebration takes place honoring the Lord and the Virgin of the Miracle, patron saints of Salta. Preparations begin many months before with the enthronement of the statues at either side of the altar in the Basilica Cathedral. All schools in Salta, as well as public organizations, health personnel, police and different organizations are called upon to attend Masses during these early days of preparation.

The activities begin in July and groups of ladies who volunteer come twice a week to create the floral arrangements for the altars and also to decorate the statues of the Lord and the Virgin of the Miracle when they go out in procession through the streets of Salta. Many of these ladies belong to various groups of the Garden Club Argentino in Salta. As we write this article, we rejoice celebrating the appointment of Pope Leo XIV to whom we wish a long life and a clear and sound mind.

Chechi Horteloup has been a member of the Garden Club Argentino for 40 years, always in the San Lorenzo group. She is a dentist by profession and a gardener at heart ❤️





Interpreting through Floral Design

SCAN ME



What is floral design and how does one achieve this form of expression with flowers? If you are an art and flowers enthusiast, you will love interpreting with floral design. Let's go over what it is and how to achieve this goal.

To begin talking about floral design as an expression, we first need to differentiate between a floral arrangement and floral design. The former is the product itself that we buy in flower shops and usually find in stock.

Floral design, on the other hand, is an artistic discipline that focuses on planning, designing, and conceptualizing a composition based on a theme. Floral design is dynamic; it responds to changes in time, style, types, environments, and even trends in components and mechanics. It plays with and utilizes flowers and all types of materials, according to the desired interpretation, with imagination and skill.

Whether planned for a special occasion or presented at a flower show, floral design not only focuses on functionality but also on aesthetics, proportion and the message it seeks to convey with each creation. With this in mind, floral design is based on the theme it seeks to interpret. It uses diverse materials outside of realistic or conventional forms. It employs not only flowers, but also resources such as fruits, vegetables, ribbons, fabrics, aluminum, acrylics, lights and more. The subtler and more subjective the expression, and the less obvious in this aspect, the better the result.

When designing, play with lines, space, shapes, colors, and textures. It is not a literal graphic representation but the product of what is born from within the artist and what the observer perceives, feels and discovers. In art, imagination is the ability to create images, ideas, or mental concepts, which may or may not correspond to reality. It is fundamental to artistic creation. It is the power to visualize and construct representations from what is perceived by the senses, even without the need for real external stimuli.

In this article, we encourage you to explore how to use flowers to interpret the work of three surrealist artists who developed their entire careers in Mexico: Sofia Bassi by birth, Leonora Carrington by choice, and Remedios Varo by destiny. If you care to learn more about their history and careers, we recommend you explore their wonderful work online!



The National Garden Clubs Headquarters is expanding our brand to include the Path of Success in addition to PLANT AMERICA. The Path of Success is a walking path located on the grounds of NGC's headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri and will link to the Missouri Botanical Gardens. Look for exciting information on our brand in the next issue.



Beyond the Title of President

You've just been elected president of your club, your district, maybe even your state. You've celebrated, thanked those who supported you, and now the reality sets in: What happens next? How do you even begin? Start by asking yourself a fundamental question: Do you want to simply be the president, or do you want to lead your organization? There's a big difference.

Being president means overseeing meetings, calling votes, managing the board of directors, organizing fundraisers, and staying within the framework of your organization's bylaws and standing rules. Those are important tasks—but they are the bare minimum. True leadership goes beyond fulfilling a checklist. Leaders inspire. They energize their team. They look to the future and position their organization for success, not just during their term, but for the long haul.

Start with Vision

A leader must have a vision. You need to know where you're going before you can lead others there. Ask yourself: Where do I want this organization to be in a year? In five years? What lasting impact can I make? Let your personal values and the mission of your organization guide you. Is your group struggling with engagement? Stuck in outdated routines? Facing financial uncertainty? Or perhaps is it thriving and ready to grow? Your vision should reflect both your aspirations and your reality.

Understand How You Got Here

Before you set goals, take a moment to reflect on your journey. Did you work your way up the leadership ladder? If so, you've likely had time to think about your goals and shape your leadership style. If you found yourself in this position unexpectedly—maybe you stepped up because no one else would—then it is even more important to pause and define your direction now. Regardless of how you arrived, you are here. And that means your organization believes in your potential.

Goals with Purpose

Once your vision is clear, translate it into achievable goals. But always include the “why.” Saying “We need to raise money” is uninspiring. Saying “We need to raise \$5,000 to fund a scholarship for a deserving student” gives your team a reason to care. When people understand the purpose behind your goals, they are more likely to engage and support them. Prioritize your goals and communicate them clearly. Your board and members need to understand your direction to stay aligned with it.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

LEADERSHIP

Beyond the Title of President (Continued)

Build the Right Team

Surround yourself with a board of directors who share your vision and are excited about the future. These individuals are not just your support system—they are your organization's future leaders. Part of your role as president is to mentor them.

That does not mean micromanaging them. In fact, the more you try to control every detail, the more likely you are to lose their enthusiasm. Empower them to lead their own committees and projects. Give them the space to make decisions—even if you would have chosen a different path. Trust breeds growth.

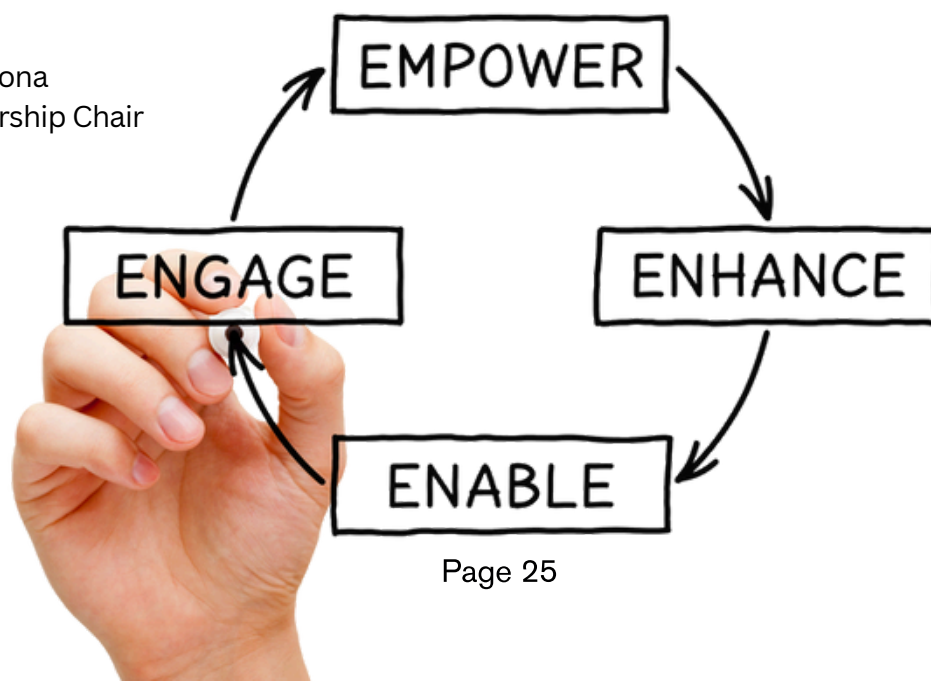
Lead with Accountability

Above all, be accountable. Do what you say you are going to do. Be honest when things don't go as planned. Admit your mistakes and learn from them. Leadership isn't about being perfect; it's about being reliable, transparent, and committed. Your organization needs to trust you—not just to run meetings and sign off on forms—but to lead them forward.

Final Thought

Being elected president is an honor—but being a leader is a responsibility. One is a title. The other is a calling. Step into the role with purpose, vision, and humility, and you will do more than serve your term—you will leave a legacy.

Ginny Cardona
NGC Leadership Chair



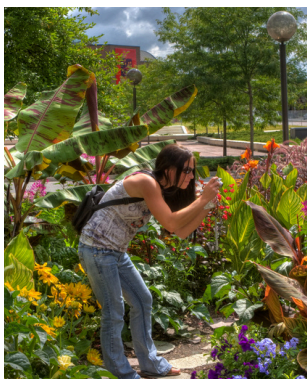
REGIONAL NEWS

Rocky Mountain Region

In early June I had the opportunity to attend a Colorado Federation of Garden Cubs annual convention in Vail, Colorado. We had a great time making pinecone crafts, getting to know each other and hearing what the state has done to further the love of gardening.

While in Vail, I was treated to a tour of the Betty Ford Alpine Gardens. They were beautiful and lush with so many colors. Included is a picture of the blue flowers. Blue is just stunning to me although there were many beautiful flowers and tree textures everywhere. It was a wonderful tour. I want to thank the Colorado Federation of Garden Clubs for inviting me as Regional Director to get to know their state and members.

*Shirley Pursel, Rocky Mountain Regional Director
Member of Wyoming Federation of Garden Clubs*



New England Grows Photographs and Photographers

In these times, we need to look to new, as well as revised ways, to entice gardeners to join us. One of the ways we do this is through our Photography Exhibit at the New England Garden Clubs, Inc. Annual Meeting in October. It showcases the award-winning photographs from the summer's competition.

This year's competition is titled "We Grow Gardens & Gardeners," while the 6 Class titles mirror our Presidents' Federations' themes. The competition is open to all members of New England Garden Clubs.

Because we noted the popularity of the competition and the quality of the photographs, we are pursuing formal training for our members. Gratefully, Arabella Dane found Lisa and Tom Cuchara, in Connecticut, to lead a Zoom webinar workshop on August 14.

FLOWER PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP: Mastering Composition, Exposure, and Depth With Your Camera and Smart Phone. If you are a member of a New England club, I hope you'll participate in these events.

*Polly Brooks
Director, New England Garden Clubs, Inc.*

YOUTH NATURE DAY CAMP

01 Aug, 2025
Youth Articles

Starkville Garden Club Hosts Lanoux Youth Nature Day Camp

Starkville Town and Country Garden Club and the Garden Clubs of Mississippi hosted a Lanoux Youth Nature Day Camp for students at the Oktibbeha County Heritage Museum on June 28, 2025. Girls who participated were thrilled with the outcome of our first day camp."

"We were thrilled to have Allison Ashmore, program coordinator for the Garden Clubs of Mississippi, with the assistance of Sandra McCaulla, a Grenada Garden Club member, to help us host our first Lanoux Youth Nature Day Camp," said Lynne Strickland, president of the Starkville Town and Country Garden Club.

"The day camp was jampacked with information and hands-on activities, and all the parents of the girls who participated were thrilled with the outcome of our first day camp." The day camp was to teach youth about nature, and the first thing participants did was to build and decorate a birdhouse. They then created bird feeders from pinecones covered with peanut butter and bird seed.

"Kids spend too much time inside, and our day camp got them outside and taught them about insects, birds, and plants," said Program Coordinator Ashmore. "The program taught them that everything is connected and about the importance of pollinators. Hopefully, the information we shared will help them grow up to be our future gardeners and encourage them to get outside more."

Starkville Mayor Lynn Spruill was a surprise visitor, and she talked to the girls about what a wonderful community we have and the importance of taking care of nature and giving back. Starkville Town and Country Garden Club members who helped with the day camp included Lynne Strickland, Linda Acy, Joan Hamilton, Laura Bryan, Catherine Ray, and Kathryn Davis. "We want to give a shoutout to Derrick Aaron, the executive director of the Oktibbeha County Heritage Museum, for allowing the museum to stay open after hours for our youth camp," said Strickland.

In the garden Catherine Ray read them a story of the metamorphosis of a butterfly, and while she read the story, they passed around plastic examples of a leaf with eggs, a caterpillar of a monarch butterfly, the chrysalis (where the caterpillar transforms into an adult butterfly), and then a monarch butterfly.

Allison and Sandra then helped students create a paper plate illustrating the lifecycle of a monarch butterfly. Students toured the pollinator garden at the Heritage Museum and learned of the benefits of creating one. The day ended with the students dividing into two groups for a 20-item scavenger hunt.

The Starkville Town and Country Garden Club strives to improve the knowledge of its members through monthly educational programs, regional workshops, and the sharing of information and resources among club members and the community.





ORGANIC
A Family Tradition Since 1929.



**ESPOMA ORGANIC AND NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS
WANT TO HELP YOUR CLUB**

Plant America!



Your local garden projects and programs provide inspiring opportunities that bring neighbors, cultures and generations together to share the experience and joy of gardening. As recognition of the valuable resource that your club contributes to your community, up to 20 local garden clubs across America will be awarded grants. Recipients will earn up to \$250 of Espoma Organic Plant Foods & Potting Soils. So be inspired America! Join our effort to Plant America Together. Register your garden club today! Sign up at: www.espoma.com/garden-clubs.



Gardens to Tour

For garden enthusiasts, few experiences rival the joy of walking through a beautifully curated botanical garden—where the art of horticulture meets education, conservation, and pure inspiration. Across the United States, countless public gardens offer this experience, but three stand out for their unique contributions to the world of plants and the people who love them.

LONGWOOD GARDENS: KENNETT SQUARE, PENNSYLVANIA

Nestled in the heart of the Brandywine Valley, Longwood Gardens is a horticultural wonderland spanning over 1,000 acres. Originally the private estate of industrialist Pierre S. du Pont, the garden has become a world-class destination featuring 20 outdoor gardens, 20 indoor gardens within a stunning conservatory, and over 11,000 types of plants.

Highlights include:

- The Main Fountain Garden, a dazzling display of water choreography set to music.
- Seasonal displays, such as the vibrant Chrysanthemum Festival and the festive Holiday Garden.
- Educational programs and sustainability initiatives, including state-of-the-art composting and water management systems.

Whether you visit in spring bloom or winter sparkle, Longwood inspires with its artistry and vision.

DESERT BOTANICAL GARDEN: PHOENIX, ARIZONA

A striking departure from the lush greenery of traditional botanical gardens, the Desert Botanical Garden in Phoenix is a celebration of arid beauty. Set on 140 acres in Papago Park, this garden showcases over 50,000 desert plants from around the world, including towering saguaros, colorful succulents, and rare cacti.

What makes it special:

- Sonoran Desert trails that offer immersive desert ecology experiences.
- The Las Noches de las Luminarias event, where trails glow with thousands of hand-lit lanterns.
- A commitment to conservation, especially of endangered desert species.

Visitors come away with a deepened appreciation for the resilience and diversity of life in dry climates.

CHICAGO BOTANIC GARDEN: GLENCOE, ILLINOIS

A horticultural gem just north of Chicago, this 385-acre garden is situated on nine islands surrounded by lakes and features 27 distinct gardens. The Chicago Botanic Garden is both a living museum and a research institution, with strong emphasis on plant conservation and education.

Must-see attractions:

- The Japanese Garden (Sansho-en), a serene retreat reflecting principles of harmony and balance.
- The English Walled Garden, designed by famed British landscape architect John Brookes.
- The Plant Conservation Science Center, where groundbreaking research supports global biodiversity.

With changing displays and events year-round, this garden offers something for every age and interest.

BY VICTORIA SCHMIDT, TNG EDITOR



Down the Garden Path

“

“I have found, through years of practice, that people garden in order to make something grow; to interact with nature; to share, to find sanctuary, to heal, to honor the earth, to leave a mark. Through gardening, we feel whole as we make our personal work of art upon our land.”

JULIE MOIR MESSERVY

”

It's the beginning of a new term and NGC Landscape Design Schools continue to be held in many states. Thank you to the state and local Landscape Design School chairmen for the excellent job providing in-person or virtual courses. We welcome all interested in taking the revised Landscape Design School curriculum. It has received very positive reviews. Students and Consultants: Check the NGC Landscape Design School webpage for information on courses.

Thank you to the two continuing NGC LDS Accrediting Chairmen: Terri Ewers (also Schools Policies and Coordinator for ES, GS, and LDS) continuing as Pacific and South Central Regions AC. Anna O'Kelly continues as Central and South Atlantic Regions AC. Thanks to new NGC Accrediting Chairmen: Margaret Graham (Central Atlantic and New England Regions AC) and Karen Prewitt (Deep South and Rocky Mountain Regions AC). Thank you to new International Affiliates Landscape Schools Chairman Diana Dobbs. Also continuing is Caroline Carbaugh as LDS Consultants Councils Chairman and editor of *Newscape*, the newsletter for ES, GS, and LDS Schools. State School and Council Chairmen: Please send your articles to Caroline by August for the 2025 Fall issue.

The Landscape Design School Directory will be updated soon. In the meantime, contact me if you need to reach the new LDS committee chairmen. Additionally, there are discrepancies between the current ES, GS, LDS Handbook and the way Landscape Design School courses are conducted. The old curriculum ceased use during the prior term. There will likely be other changes coming soon. However, local and state school chairmen and others are encouraged to review the current Handbook and forms to provide suggestions for revision asap. Please let us know if there are any great Landscape Design course resources (especially books) that you would recommend.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

www.gardenclub.org



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An excellent resource is:

- Planning the Home Landscape Delight or Disaster - articles written by Bruce Crawford (NGC Award of Excellence winner 2021 and Manager of Horticulture, Morris County Parks Commission, Morris County, NJ).
- They are available in prior issues of The National Gardener: Part 1 -Fall, 2023, pp. 9-10; Part 2 - Winter, 2024, pp. 11-12; Part 3 - Summer, 2023, pp. 11-12; Part 4 – Spring, 2024, pp. 12-13; Part 5 – Summer, 2024, pp 18-19.

Please contact the chairman with any questions, suggestions, comments or for information in starting a series of Landscape Design Courses. We appreciate your input and help as we look forward to this new term.

Carol Yee, NGC Landscape Design School Chairman



www.gardenclub.org



Growing your own food can be an incredibly fulfilling pursuit.

Growing your own produce is not only rewarding, but it is also a sustainable practice that brings a host of benefits for your health and the environment. By growing your own vegetables, fruits, and herbs in your backyard or even in small containers on a balcony using vertical gardening practices, you gain access to fresh, produce that you can be confident in being free from harmful pesticides and chemicals. This fosters a healthier lifestyle with tasty food, while also helping to reduce your carbon footprint by decreasing the transportation and packaging associated with store-bought goods. Furthermore, gardening is a therapeutic and educational experience, resulting in a sense of accomplishment and a connection to nature. Whether you're starting a modest herb garden or a large veggie patch, growing your own food empowers you to take charge of your diet and promotes sustainable living practices. It also allows you to share the bounty with others!

Innovation
AT WORK





PLANT AMERICA: *Native Plants for Wildlife*

Native plants have just been given another name. Some are now calling them indigenous plants, which uses geographic and not manmade boundaries. These plants have been here for thousands of years before European immigration. As garden club members, we can be land stewards encouraging diversity and conservation of native plants.

There is a symbiotic relationship between indigenous plants and the wildlife they support. One way to help is to cut back on the non-native lawns that thrive in urban and suburban areas.

Low Mow Spring can replace No Mow May which does not stand up to research. When long grass gets cut, it stresses and is susceptible to disease. Some cities are now encouraging Low Mow Spring.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County, New York has been studying mowing and effects on wildlife. After studying cutting once a week, once every two weeks and once every three weeks, it was found that the two-week cut was most advantageous to insects and bees. Blades need to be set high so low growing plants can bloom. Studies have found that mowing once every two weeks (not more often or less often) gives the most benefit.

Many indigenous plants host one species of butterfly or bee. Without that plant, these wildlife suffer and cannot reproduce. Buffalo grass, which is native to the Midwest and Great Plains, is the larval host plant for the green skipper butterfly. Oak trees are host to 532 species of caterpillars according to Doug Tallamy. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center has the most comprehensive database of native plants for gardeners to study.

And above all other practices, do not use pesticides!

Barbara Campbell
Chairman, Plant America, Native Plants for Wildlife



THE HARDINGTON PRESS**Horticulture and humor can 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' event.

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 already enjoyed his talks. **You can catch him at the Central Atlantic Region meeting in Cambridge, MD in October** and, next year, at state meetings in Florida and Pennsylvania. To book him for your club, state, or regional event, 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.



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

Mark Your Calendar**2026 NGC Convention**

The NGC 2026 Convention will be held in St. Louis, Missouri on May 4-6, 2026.

- Registration and Tentative Schedule will be available after December 1..
- Hotel Information and Link will be available after October 1.

**Upcoming Events**

Fall Board Meeting (Virtual):

- Thursday, September 18th at 1:00 PM (CST)



2025 Espoma “Best of the Best” Winner

At the 2025 NGC Convention in Charleston, SC, Bonnie Satterthwaite, from Espoma, announced Tuckaleechee Garden Club of Townsend, Tennessee, as the winner of the Espoma 2025 "Best of the Best" \$500 CASH award.

They were selected from the twenty 2023-24 Espoma Grant winning clubs for submitting the best final report and photos for their Heirloom Kitchen Garden at the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center. Their Heirloom Kitchen Garden is a historically accurate, early 1800s, kitchen garden with heirloom vegetables, medicinal herbs, and flowers. They use the garden for teaching southern Appalachian history through plants for food, medicine, and beauty. Tuckaleechee GC celebrated National Garden Week with daily “Mornings in the Garden” tours and talks. Other events in 2024 included: “Kids Take Over the Museum,” “Taste of the Smokies” with their fresh produce, “Christmas in the Village,” and Plant Sales – just to name a few. Congratulations Tuckaleechee GC!



COOL TOOLS

01 Aug. 2025

Tools for Gardening & Floral Design

FAVORITE GARDENING TOOLS!

Tool Review for Gardening

AMES Tools has generously donated “in-kind” gardening tools to National Garden Clubs since 2014, supporting numerous NGC member clubs in their mission to beautify their communities by providing winning applicants with tools.

In 2024, AMES introduced four new tools that are significantly benefiting NGC adult and youth clubs with their projects. The new Floral Tool line includes tools that are perfectly sized and weighted for women, older adults, and youth gardeners, as they are slightly smaller versions of AMES’ original tools.

I was fortunate to receive three of these tools in 2024. I used them for a few months and then passed them on to a local middle school in my area.

I found the following to be ideal for my smaller flower beds and small raised bed gardens:

- 5-Tine Welded Floral Cultivator
- Round Point Floral Shovel with Forward-Turned Step
- 7-Tine Welded Floral Level Rake



Additionally, there is an 8" Head Floral Rake available. I highly recommend these floral tools, as do some of our 2025 AMES Tools Grant Winners!

Just a reminder - at the 2025 NGC Convention, AMES Tools offered our members Free Shipping on orders over \$200 at [HomeByAMES.com](https://www.homebyames.com)! This offer applies to the order total after product discounts are applied and before tax. It expires on 8/31/25, so there's still time to get with fellow club members to take advantage of this offer.

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COOL TOOLS

01 Aug. 2025

Tools for Gardening & Floral Design

FAVORITE GARDENING TOOLS!



The TRAKE: A Gardener's Essential Tool

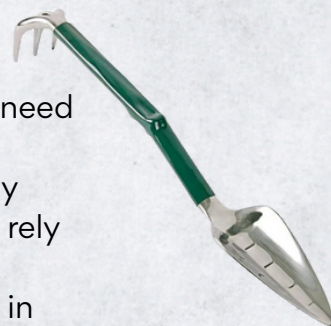
As gardeners, many of us have favorite tools. They may be one of the old-fashioned workhorses of gardening or perhaps one that is a little more modern, unusual, or dedicated to a specific task. Maybe a gardener friend has told you about, or gifted you, a tool that has changed their life—and in turn yours.

An old gardening workhorse for me is **The TRAKE**! The TRAKE was developed and patented by Tad and his mother, from HenFeather's of Pennsylvania.

The TRAKE stands out for its innovative design—one end functions as a trowel while the other serves as a rake. Crafted from hand-cast aluminum, it features a padded, non-slip coating on an ergonomic handle, which also includes a patented wrist leverage mechanism. Its lightweight and ergonomic design make it an excellent choice for adaptive gardening and for those of us getting a little older.

Key Features:

- **Engraved Measurements:** The trowel blade has engraved measurements for precise bulb and seed planting, eliminating the need for an extra ruler.
- **Lengthy Handle:** With a 17-inch handle, it can be used comfortably while kneeling or sitting, reducing bending and back strain. I often rely on it to help me stand when I'm down on my knees.
- **Narrow Rake End:** The rake end is slim enough to work effectively in narrow rows and tight spaces, making it ideal for planting and cultivating in indoor containers.



I own four TRAKES—one for each section of my garden—ensuring there's always one within reach. Over the dozen-plus years I've used them, none have chipped or broken, and my cushioned handles remain intact. This speaks volumes about the tool's quality, especially since I live in the hot, dry climate of the Southwest with rocky decomposed granite soil known as "caliche."

If you choose to buy the remarkable TRAKE tool, be cautious, as some counterfeit versions being sold. Additionally, you may find them at other retailers for higher prices than those listed on the original company's website. If you visit the company's site, there is currently a discount for purchasing three at once. They make excellent gifts, fantastic prizes, and, if you are like me, you may need more than one for yourself!

Debi L. Harrington

A Verified Purchaser's Review

NGC SCHOOLS

NGC Environmental School Courses

Roxanna Champagne

NGC Environmental School Chair

Courses 1-4

<https://gardenclub.org/school/environmental-school-courses>

NGC Gardening School Courses

Sarah McReynolds

Gardening School Chair

Course 1-4

<https://gardenclub.org/school/gardening-school-courses>

NGC Landscape Design School Courses

Carol Yee

Landscape Design School Chair

Course 1-4

<https://gardenclub.org/landscape-design-school>

NGC Flower Show School Courses

Gina Jogan

FS&FSSC Chairman

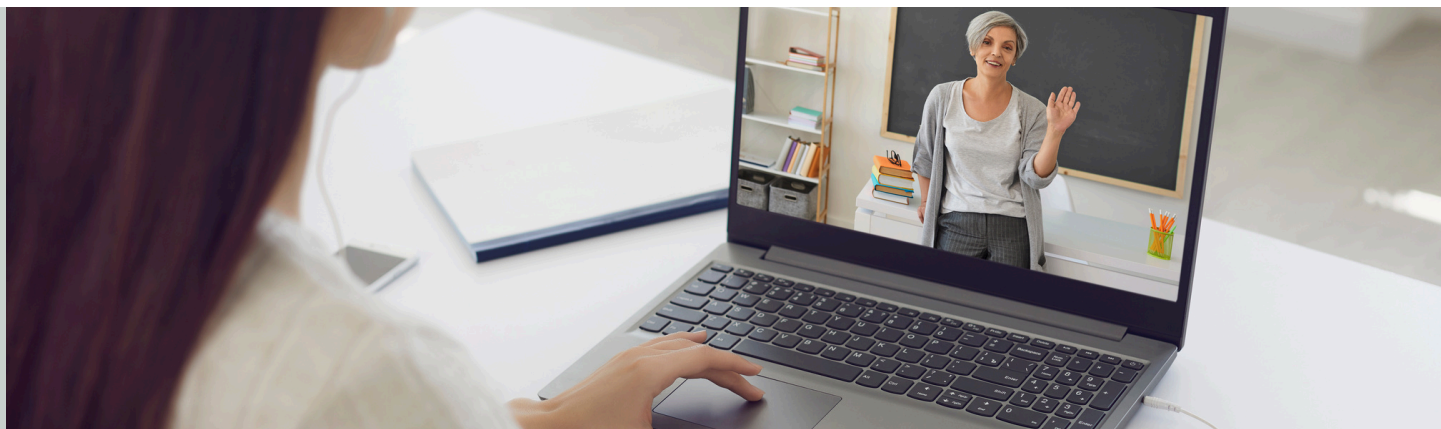
Course 1-4

<https://gardenclub.org/school/flower-show-school-courses>



*NGC School Information and Dates
can be found at*

<https://gardenclub.org/our-schools>



SO, YOU'RE THINKING OF HOSTING NGC SCHOOL CLASSES VIA ZOOM

Where do you start and what do you do differently from a traditional “in the classroom setting”? First and foremost - the education requirements and content of each class are the same whether it's a Zoom or traditional class: 10 hours of education plus breaks (which are not counted in the timing).

DOWNLOAD THE SCHOOLS HANDBOOK FROM
THE NGC SCHOOLS RESOURCE PAGE.
[https://gardenclub.org/school/schools-
resources](https://gardenclub.org/school/schools-resources)

You will need access or ownership of a PRO Zoom (or larger) account. National Garden Club, Inc. does NOT provide this to you. This lets you host 100 people (don't forget to count yourself and all instructors + helpers) for more hours during each day. You need to be trained, practice, and have a partner tech person to help. They watch for tech troubles; you watch and facilitate instructors. It is best if the two of you are in different physical places to be able to maintain the Zoom connection during storms. You will also need to record each class hour for make-up if absentee issues occur.

The tech person should help during instructor and new student informational practice.

Just like always, you should have access to the instructor's PowerPoint, have their list of questions and outline. The outline should be separate from the PowerPoint which can be overwhelming for the attendees. The PowerPoint is the property of the instructor and may not be shared without their authorization. The multiple-choice questions may be transferred to Google Documents quiz; the quiz link is sent at the end of the subject, the day or end of the course. You can also send in an email – have them answer and save, then return to you for correcting. Your choice. Remember, total time allowed adds all those times together. However, the wonderful thing about this type of quiz is final data is obtainable when the quiz is complete. You choose when to release. At the end of testing, you will have access to the students' results. Remember it is pass-fail, and 70 is passing. It is best to take the tests on a laptop or desktop or a highly functional tablet. Old equipment is not as functional. There are additional Zoom informational materials on the resource page.

Embrace and enjoy facilitating education to those who are unable to get to the classroom. You are doing a great service for the membership of National Garden Clubs, Inc. and those in your state.

Pat Rupiper, Past NGC Chairman of Schools Policy and Procedure

Flower Shows and Flower Show Schools Committee

We have a new name: Flower Shows and Flower Show Schools Committee (FS&FSSC)! NGC President Donna Donnelly has charged this committee with encouraging more Flower Shows. So, we have an added mission and, to that end, Debby Cooper and Carol Bullard have taken on Flower Show Promotions. You are going to LOVE working with them!

Because we want to have more Flower Shows, that means we need more design exhibitors. Another addition is the Floral Design Committee, with Shirley Tetreault and Frances Thrash sharing the duties to help, lead, show and encourage hosting basic design classes for those who are interested in learning to design for their home, or their next flower show and perhaps even becoming judges. Too often we have disappointed Flower Show School students who think the Flower Show Schools are going to teach them how to design rather than how to judge designs. We are filling a NEED in our clubs, councils, and districts. This is a semi-resurrection of design courses that NGC offered years ago.

The Handbook for Flower Shows was updated on the NGC website online July 1, 2025; note the changes as they become The Authority for all questions regarding judging, judges, exhibiting, flower shows, schedules, etc. on that date. It has been nearly 10 years since the 2017 Handbook was published. A new Handbook is NOT in the committee's plans going forward! All information pertaining to Flower Shows and Flower Show Schools, Symposia and personnel will be updated on the NGC website on the same date. Please log in, set a password, and browse through what we have to offer. You will find updated forms and lists and dates for schools and Symposia as well as our roster for instructors and state chairmen.

NGC has welcomed four (4) new Horticulture Instructors and two (2) new Design Instructors, but we always welcome more. If you are interested in becoming an instructor, please contact me. If you have questions, comments, suggestions, compliments or even complaints, please do not hesitate to contact me. This committee is dedicated to making a difference.

Gina Jogan
FS&FSSC Chairman 2025-2027

NGC Reports

2025 AMES Tools Grant Winners

In 2025, AMES Tools Grants were awarded to twenty-four NGC Clubs for a total of \$4990.89. Many clubs chose less than the allowed amounts this year, thus enabling the grant committee to award four additional clubs.

The following NGC Clubs received up to \$250 in AMES Tools.



- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Algonquin GC - IL | • Eunice Bulb & Blossom GC - LA | • North Shore GC - MA |
| • Belzoni GC - MS | • Flower GC of Marietta - GA | • Richmond Hill GC - GA |
| • Brandywine GC - DE | • Hull GC - MA | • Ridgewood GC - OH |
| • Cherry Laurel GC - FL | • Lady Banks GC - NC | • Rolling Fork GC - MS |
| • Chug Creek Cultivators GC - WY | • Lake and Hills GC - FL | • Tewkesbury GC - MA |
| • Darien GC/DGC Sprouts Youth - IL | • Lakeside GC - OK | • Uwchlan GC - PA |
| • Duneland GC - IL | • Lawrence Park GC - PA | • Village GC of Andover - MA |
| • Easton GC - MA | • Mountain Laurel GC - TN | • Wildflower GC - PA |

AMES Tools also sent over 100 tools, valued in the thousands, to the recent convention in Charleston. Karen Richwine, AMES Tools Representative to NGC, coordinated this shipment of tools, flyers with a discount coupon and bookmarks for members who visited the AMES Tool Booth. At the close of the 2025 Convention, an additional twenty-one NGC clubs were given several tools to take back for their club projects. Thank you, AMES, for your generosity to NGC clubs since 2014!

Debi Harrington

2023-2027

NGC Sponsors' Grants Chair

grants2023.25ngc@gmail.com



NGC Reports

2025 Espoma “Best of the Best” Winner

At the 2025 NGC Convention in Charleston, SC, Bonnie Satterthwaite, from Espoma, announced **Tuckaleechee Garden Club** of Townsend, Tennessee as the winner of the Espoma 2025 "Best of the Best" \$500 cash award. They were selected from the twenty 2023-24 Espoma Grant winning clubs for submitting the best final report and photos for their Heirloom Kitchen Garden at the Great Smoky Mountains Heritage Center. Their Heirloom Kitchen Garden is a historically accurate, early 1800s, kitchen garden with heirloom vegetables, medicinal herbs, and flowers. They use the garden for teaching southern Appalachian history using plantings for food, medicine, and beauty. Tuckaleechee Garden Club celebrated National Garden Week at their Heirloom Kitchen Garden with daily ‘Mornings in the Garden’ tours and talks. Other events in 2024 included: “Kids Take Over the Museum,” “Taste of the Smokies” with their fresh produce, “Christmas in the Village,” and Plant Sales at the gardens – just to name a few. Congratulations Tuckaleechee Garden Club!

2024-25 Espoma Grant Winners

The Espoma Grant Committee is pleased to announce that twenty one clubs are recipients of \$250 of products from Espoma for the grant period October 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025. The following clubs have been selected:

- Algonquin GC – IL
- Azalea GC – GA
- Burlington GC - MA
- Burrellton GC - PA
- Cache GC – UT
- Chug Creek GC – WY
- Darien GC/DGC Sprouts - IL
- East Orange YMCA GC – CT
- Emerald GC - OH
- Flower GC - GA
- Frisco GC – TX
- Green Thumb GC - CA
- Hobart GC – IN
- Lakeside GC – OK
- Littleton GC - NH
- Marine Hills GC – WA
- Newtown GC - CT
- Richmond Hill GC - GA
- Somerset GC - PA
- Uwchlan GC - PA
- Wildflower GC – PA

These winning NGC clubs can go on to compete for the Espoma “Best of the Best” \$500 cash award to be presented in May of 2026 at the 2026 NGC Convention in St. Louis, Missouri.

Debi Harrington

2023-2027

NGC Sponsors’ Grants Chair

grants2023.25ngc@gmail.com

NGC Reports

NGC Life Member Report

It has been a pleasure serving as the NGC Life Member Chairman during the fiscal year, 2024-2025. To date for this fiscal year, we have 64 new Life Member from 28 States and all 8 Regions. State Chairmen have been doing a wonderful job--- keep up the great work!

The \$200 donation is designated in the following manner: one-half to the NGC Plant America Community Grants Fund and one-half to the Permanent Home and Endowment; both aid our states, clubs and membership.

Two states were recognized and received certificates and \$100 each at the Charleston National Convention in May.

Award #MP-8A and #MP-8B; the state with greatest increase in NGC Life Memberships, was given to Georgia, and the state garden club with the greatest per capita increase in NGC Life Memberships, was the state of Wyoming.

Also, all new fiscal NGC Life Members in attendance at the Charleston Convention were introduced and recognized by our NGC President.

During my tenure as Chairman of the NGC Life Membership, 2021-2025, we have had 199 new Life Members from 40 states and all 8 regions. It has been a great pleasure serving as Life Member Chair for the last 4 years and I thank everyone for your support and remember:

LIFE MEMBERS DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Gail Manna, NGC Life Member Chairman 2021-2025
Phone: 814-932-3231 Email: gcorle1214@gmail.com



NGC Reports

NGC Life Member Fiscal Report (2024-2025)

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Gail Manna, NGC Life Member Chairman 2021-2025
814-932-3231 | gcorle1214@gmail.com

NGC Reports

Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Program

Members of National Garden Clubs across our beautiful country have reached out to their national, state, and local leaders and departments of transportation to place Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers on capital grounds, designating and proclaiming Blue Star or Gold Star Families highways and Blue Star counties, honoring our veterans. Our members are tireless advocates in their communities, often collaborating with local groups such as historical societies, Veteran and civic groups to

establish Memorial Markers in National Cemeteries, local cemeteries, state history centers, military and veterans' parks, botanical gardens, American Legion posts, colleges, and universities.



At each entrance to the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, there are Blue Star or Gold Star Families Memorial Markers. We extend our heartfelt gratitude and recognition to the garden clubs across our nation for their dedication and unwavering commitment to beautifying the Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers' presence. Their hard work, passion, and service have brought vibrant gardens and lush landscapes, accentuating the presence of the Memorial Markers.

The refurbishment and replacement of older Blue Star and Gold Star Memorial Markers is a powerful testament to our nation's enduring respect and gratitude for the sacrifices made by our servicemen and women and their families. It is an essential act of reverence, ensuring that the sacrifices of our nation's brave military are never forgotten. These markers are more than just symbols - they are eternal reminders of the profound courage and selflessness displayed by the men and women who have served. By restoring these memorials, we not only preserve their historical significance, but also renew our national commitment to honoring their memory. As we restore these Memorial Markers, we also strengthen our connection to the principles of freedom and democracy that they fought to protect. By honoring their memory with renewed dedication, we ensure that future generations understand the true cost of liberty and unwavering patriotism that continues to inspire our nation.

The national statistics are:

- Memorial Markers (5/31/24-5/31/25): 75
- Blue Star Memorial Markers: 57
- Gold Star Families Memorial Markers: 18
- Replacements Markers: 50
- A multitude of Blue Star & Gold Star Families refurbishments

Total Memorial Markers across the U.S:

- May 31, 2024 = 3893
- Blue Star Memorial Markers = 3639
- Gold Star Families Memorial Markers = 254

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NGC Reports

Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Program (Continued)

Sewah Studios is the only company that produces Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers. Each marker is carefully made to National Garden Clubs' specifications, which is a painstaking process. Production of the markers requires 20 - 24 weeks from the time the check and order form are delivered by certified mail to Sewah. Sewah Studios will guarantee the marker for 5 years.



Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Pricing January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025

- MARKER W/7' POST: \$2400
- MARKER W/10' POST: \$2515
- BY-WAY: \$765
- REPLACEMENT 7' POST: \$375
- REPLACEMENT 10' POST: \$475
- REFURBISHMENT: \$1200
- REFURBISHMENT/CAP REPAIR: \$1450
- SHIPPING WESTERN STATES: \$300

National Garden Clubs is transitioning to printable Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker tri-fold brochures which can be found on the NGC Blue Star and Gold Star Families website. Moving forward, state Memorial Marker Chairmen will have printable Certificates of Appreciation to print and distribute for their garden club Memorial Marker dedications. "Blue Star and Gold Star Marker by State" on the NGC website has been updated with all of the new Memorial Markers in all of our states.

Inflation has impacted every aspect of our lives. We try to be wise stewards of our resources. Printable Certificates of Appreciation and Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker tri-fold brochures will save time and money. The momentum of American patriotism strengthens across our great nation, as garden clubs continue to establish Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers. These powerful emblems stand boldly, honoring the courageous men and women who defend our freedoms.

Let us never forget.

Candace F. Wells

NGC Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Chairman

TGFC Scholarship Chairman | Deep South Scholarship Chairman

cfw1865@gmail.com | 423-304-3577

NGC Reports



Award of Excellence Report

Congratulations to all the Award of Excellence Recipients! On May 20, at the National Garden Clubs, Inc. Convention in Charleston, SC, NGC announced the 2025 winners of its highest honor - the Award of Excellence. This award recognizes non-members, states, and regions for their exceptional work advancing the goals and purposes of our organization.

– Susan Miner, 2024-2025 AOE Chair

The **Award of Excellence #SR-1** is the highest award National Garden Clubs presents to a non-member that is sponsored by a State Federation. It may be awarded[DP1] to an individual, an organization, or an institution that has made a significant contribution toward the advancement of NGC's mission.

Drew Dumsch from the Ecology School at River Bend Farm, was nominated by the Garden Club Federation of Maine, Inc. Drew is the Co-Founder and CEO of the Ecology School which since 1998 has made the study of ecology accessible and enjoyable for tens of thousands of people. What began as a small overnight program for students on the coast of Maine has expanded to reach groups, families, and individuals of all ages. The school's campus—the first of its kind nationally and globally—enables immersive programs where campers and residents can live, laugh, and study in a unique ecosystem, as well as host community events relating to ecology, sustainability, and food access.



Dr Joseph Novak, nominated by Texas Garden Clubs, is a Faculty Lecturer of Biosciences and Director of The Betty and Joseph Friedman Holistic Garden located on the campus of Rice University, Houston, Texas. He has volunteered his time and efforts in establishing the NGC Gardening School at various locations throughout Texas. At Texas A&M University, Dr Novak developed a program of sociohorticulture – the special social applications of horticulture – with special emphasis on horticultural therapy. Now retired, he consults on special garden programs and has designed and built many holistic gardens in the Houston area.

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NGC Reports



Award of Excellence Report

The Award of Excellence #SR-1 (Continued)

Carrie Tauscher was nominated by The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc. She is the Arboretum Director at the Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis, IN, which holds over 10,700 trees representing 135 species on the 555-acre historic site. Her passion is her volunteer work on the board of Saluting Branches, Arborists United for Veteran Remembrance. She is the chairman of the tree planting committee which helps support and improve tree planting at all the sites the organization serves nationally. She is a leader for Saluting Branches for various sites in Indiana.



The Award of Excellence #SR-2 is the highest award National Garden Clubs presents to recognize distinguished work in a state for a coordinated activity or project in which State Garden Club members from many areas in the state have participated.

Medium membership (1000-2999): The winner is **The Garden Club of Indiana** for their “Plant Trees for Hope” project resulting in the planting of 20,000 trees and increased donations to the NGC Plant-A-Tree program. TGCI also collaborated with Central Indiana Land Trust, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Natural Preserves on the LEAF-a-Legacy, Plant Trees program.



Welcome to Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.

**Where Members Grow,
Share and Connect!**

Large membership (3000-7999): We awarded two states since there were no small sized category applicants. **Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.** is recognized for their “Gardening with Purpose” project which supported NGC President Brenda Moore’s project “Plant America, Feed America” by donating nearly 75,000 pounds of produce to food pantries throughout the state. Resources for clubs were created and posted on the state website including the MGC Food Pantry Directory, script for contacting a food pantry, tips for dropping off fresh produce, and several other related documents.

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www.gardenclub.org

NGC Reports

Award of Excellence Report (Continued)

The Award of Excellence #SR-2(Continued)

Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania won for their program to highlight the four pillars of NGC culminating in a state-wide trip to Southern England with particular focus on visiting Sissinghurst Castle & Garden (Gardening School), Stourhead (Landscape Design School), The Eden Project (Environmental School) and the premier event, England's Chelsea Flower Show (Floral Design).



Membership over 8,000: The winner is the **Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.** FFGC celebrated their 100th anniversary with an Arbor Day project. The goal was to have every club plant a native tree on the same day at the same time, with 82% of the state clubs participating. The co-chairmen planned and created tools for the clubs including a county specific native tree list and county specific resources. Funding was received through two grants totaling \$25,000!



The SR-3 Award of Excellence For Regions is given during the second year of an Administration and recognizes distinguished work in a Region for coordinated activity in which ALL states in the Region have participated. The winning region is **Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs** for their Youth Book Program which created information sheets, suggested activities and referenced related reading materials to complement the NGC Youth Books. States and clubs have access to suggestions on how to work with their local libraries to promote literacy and focus on nature and our environment. The goal was to reach children and their parents on the importance of saving our environment for the future and advancing the Go Green – Plant America goals for a Cleaner, Greener and Healthier World.





Q & A

WHAT IS THIS NEW SECTION?

Email us your gardening or design questions or comments on articles in the previous issue. We will do our best to find someone that knows the answer and then we'll publish the question and answer in the next issue of The National Gardener!

ADDING QUESTIONS

Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that we'll be able to answer every question in the next issue but we'll do our best to include as many as we can. If we find that we are getting too many on a regular basis, we may consider making this section into an online Blog.

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2. Promote sexually explicit or pornographic material, violence or discrimination based on race, sex, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or age.
3. Infringe any patent, trademark, trade secret, copyright or other intellectual property or other rights of any other person.
4. Violate the legal rights (including the rights of publicity and privacy) of others or contain any material that could give rise to any civil or criminal liability under applicable laws or regulations or that otherwise may be in conflict with these Terms of Use and our Privacy Policy.
5. Be likely to deceive any person.
6. Promote any illegal activity, or advocate, promote or assist any unlawful act.
7. Cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety or be likely to upset, embarrass, alarm or annoy any other person.
8. Impersonate any person, or misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any person or organization.
9. Involve commercial activities or sales, such as contests, sweepstakes and other sales promotions, barter or advertising.
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