

THE NATIONAL GARDENER

2025 FALL ISSUE

VOLUME 97, NUMBER 4

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National Garden Clubs, Inc.

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

SCAN ME

02 Fall 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.

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE

The season is changing, and we're experiencing cooler weather and the beautiful fall transition in our gardens. It's a refreshing season, and we recharge and re-energize. I want to share with you a few exciting NGC projects on the horizon!



As you know, the theme for the 2025-2027 term is: PLANT AMERICA for the next 100 years! You may have heard that the PLANT AMERICA and Keep America Beautiful project is gaining momentum. This collaboration will result in an exciting initiative that encourages NGC garden club members to PLANT AMERICA and Keep America Beautiful by planting red, white, and blue at Blue and Gold Star Memorial Markers to celebrate America's 250th birthday! It will be a stunning sight to see red, white, and blue displayed from coast to coast, creating a powerful impact. This collaboration couldn't be more timely for National Garden Clubs to participate in what will be a spectacular July 4, 2026, celebration across the country!

Additionally, National Garden Clubs has a wonderful benefactor! Barbara Baker has generously pledged to sponsor a \$50,000 PLANT AMERICA Matching Grant, which could grow to over \$100,000 with your donations. Details of this generous donation opportunity are available on the website's home page under the PLANT AMERICA section.

I am thrilled to officially announce the launch of TNG en Español! It has made NGC history in the process! TNG en Español now includes all the dialects of our International Affiliates! Many thanks to Victoria Schmidt, Editor, and Pampa Risso Patron, NGC International Editor, who have dedicated many hours to turning this dream into reality! This is a significant achievement for National Garden Clubs and a key milestone for NGC's future, as it strengthens our connection with our International Affiliates. TNG en Español will allow National Garden Clubs to broaden its outreach, enhance its profile, share important issues within its communities, and attract followers worldwide. The online publication will help the organization expand its horizons and support future growth in the social media landscape!

The NGC President's travels have been inspiring as I visit various regions and states across the country. Meeting members face-to-face, listening to their concerns, and socializing in small groups is a wonderful experience. It's rewarding to see NGC traditions being honored in real time and NGC projects underway!

Finally, I want to remind you to sign up for the TNG on the website by creating a free account through the Member Login at the top of the homepage. Once you register your email, you'll receive the TNG Subscription, NGC Blasts, Constant Contact, and all NGC communications. Remember, NGC is here to help you! Enjoy the beautiful fall season!



Donna Donnelly
NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.
PRESIDENT 2025-2027





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Winter Meadow Garden: Thomas J Mrazik

Gardening Tools: Meg Watkins

Book Review: Leigh Ann Henion & Bobbie Schwartz

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Carola Regehr

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



As summer fades into fall, our gardens begin their graceful transition—trading vibrant blooms for rich foliage, and high energy for a quieter kind of beauty. Autumn is one of gardening's most reflective and rewarding seasons. For those in our northern areas, it invites us to slow down, to savor the rustle of leaves underfoot and to take stock of the beauty and bounty we've nurtured all year long. For those of us that are farther south, such as my new home, it's time to start planting our veggies gardens. In either location, it is a time for reflection and planning.

In this fall issue, we celebrate the changing landscape—not just in our gardens, but in our hearts and communities. Whether you're harvesting the last of your tomatoes or planting your veggie garden, this season reminds us that every ending holds the promise of renewal. You'll find inspiration in these pages—from celebrating Rosie the Riveter, to tips on fall garden activities, from celebrating the beauty of a northern winter landscape to stories from fellow club members who are giving back to others through their community projects and integrating art into their gardens.

Thank you for being part of our NGC community that grows not only plants but purpose, connection, and care. Here's to a beautiful fall—rich in color, meaning, and moments worth cultivating! As we grow this publication, we want to hear from you! What topics would you love to read about in future issues? Is there a gardening technique, project, or story you think others would enjoy? We're actively seeking article submissions from members across all levels—you don't need to be a Chair or serve on the NGC Board of Directors to contribute. If you have a passion for plants and a story to tell, we welcome your voice.

We're also excited to launch a new Q&A section, where we'll feature answers to your gardening questions in each issue. Whether it's a pest problem, plant ID, or design dilemma—send it our way!

Thank you to everyone who submitted articles and ideas for this inaugural edition of the new TNG. We look forward to your continued contributions and to growing this magazine together—with purpose, creativity, and a shared love of the garden.

Victoria Schmidt

TNG EDITOR-IN-CHIEF





Rosie the Riveter

Rosie the Riveter



Author: Linda Shomo
Emma Scott Garden Club (ESGC)

My four-year term as president of the Emma Scott Garden Club (ESGC) in Elkins, WV, is just ending. During my term as president, I took on a Rosie the Riveter statue as my presidential project to beautify and educate.

The statue was installed in the Elkins Veterans Memorial Field on June 20, 2025. She is 6'3" and stands tall on a magnificent 3' black marble base with the names of all the Rosie the Riveters we could collect.

This is a historic statue for garden clubs as it is the first Rosie the Riveter statue a garden club has ever done. ESGC unveiled the Rosie statue on July 14, 2025, at 2 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Field, Railroad Ave., Elkins, WV 26241. The statue is next to Scotties restaurant in Elkins. This project's goal was to re-energize garden clubs across America and to remember the Rosies for all they did to support America during WWII.

I was a new president at the time I began this project, and I hope other garden clubs across America will follow suit and add a Rosie to a Veterans Memorial Field with all the Rosies' names in their area. I have a vision of garden clubs working together across America, making sure no Rosie will be forgotten.

I also attended an event at the Netherlands Ambassador's residence in Washington, DC, in 2023 to ask for a grant for the Rosie project. The ambassador had already given out their maximum grants for that year. The ambassador was very impressed that the president of a garden club had traveled so far to attend his tulip celebration. He planned to create a new tulip line and name a tulip in the line "Rosie the Riveter" and give my garden club the first bulbs.



CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

Rosie the Riveter

Author: Linda Shomo
Emma Scott Garden Club (ESGC)
(Continued)



Last month, I was invited back to the Netherlands Ambassador's Residence for another tulip celebration. At this celebration, a colleague and I were given the privilege to baptize the new Rosie the Riveter tulip with champagne. As I left the celebration, I was given a bouquet of Rosie tulips.

Later this fall, ESGC will be presented with enough Rosie tulip bulbs to plant in the garden around the Rosie statue. This new tulip will NOT go on sale for another four to five years. This spring the ESGC Rosie statue will stand in an amazing garden of pink Rosie tulips.

NOTE: There are clues hidden throughout the statue that reveal the history of the Rosies. The founder of my garden club, Emma Scott, was also a Rosie.



POSIES AND PALETTES

Author: Jan Fritz

The Hanover Garden Club of Hanover, Pennsylvania, takes pride in focusing on the goals listed in our Mission Statement. They are more than just words. They guide what we do all year long.

Our Mission Statement begins: "To stimulate civic pride and interest in community beautification..." We have always shared our enthusiasm for gardening as well as encouraged the public we meet at events throughout the community with tips and tricks for a successful garden.



We also maintain several public gardens throughout Hanover for the enjoyment of the community because we know how much these beautification projects make a difference.

Three years ago, member Jan Fritz presented the idea of creating a Community Gardens Recognition Committee to reward the non-members we all meet throughout town who also work hard during their free time to beautify their own corner of the neighborhood.



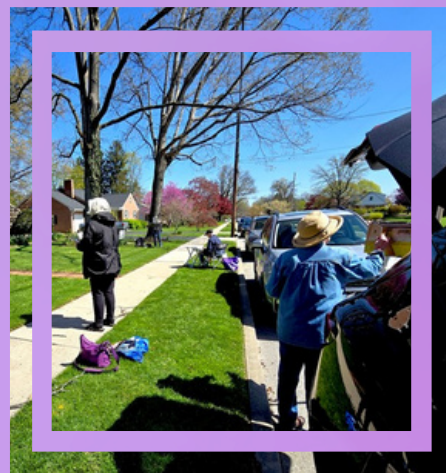
Unknowingly, these homeowners contribute to our Mission Statement goals and should be recognized for it. The committee was formed to great success. Those receiving the "Garden of the Month" award feel honored and proud of the recognition, immediately calling friends and family to share the news of this surprise. Our Facebook posts bring lots of congratulations from family, friends and strangers as well!

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

POSIES AND PALETTES

Author: Jan Fritz
(Continued)

This year brought another way to expand our recognition of our special garden winners. After an impromptu chat with the person in charge of the Plein Air Painters from the Hanover Area Arts Guild and hearing how they like to paint new gardens every week, a lightbulb went off. Wouldn't it be wonderful to give our winners additional recognition by having these artists come to their houses and paint their gardens? A plan was quickly created, and the painters started going to the winning home each month.



They have an expanded source of lovely gardens to choose from, and the owners have a chance to hear from yet another appreciative group how lovely their gardens are as well as admire the finished artwork using many different styles and media. Owners can chat as the artists work, find out about each other, learn about and observe different painting techniques, and sometimes converse about how to purchase the artwork!



Taking it one step further, Jan got permission to have these paintings as a major part of the Plein Air Painters' show in October at the Hanover Area Arts Guild, along with a sign describing the collaboration between the two groups. Winning gardens display a yard sign which provides motivation to the public to create their own beauty. Well-deserved praise makes the gardeners feel appreciated and seen, and our Mission Statement achieves its goals. Now that's a win-win for all involved!

Jan Fritz

Jan Fritz of Hanover, PA, is member of the Hanover Garden Club. She is a past president and chairs several committees. She has also served as an officer and chair for District IV, Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania.



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BE ON THE LOOK OUT THIS AUTUMN...



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announcements
about NGC's 2025
youth contests,
awards, grants
& scholarships!



For additional info contact Bob Markey, NGC Youth Coordinator - ngc.youthcoordinator@gmail.com

Double Your Impact with the PLANT AMERICA Matched Giving Program

Now is the perfect time to give! Thanks to a generous matching donation from Barbara Baker, **every contribution** to the PLANT AMERICA Grant Program **will be matched** dollar-for-dollar—up to \$50,000. That means your gift has *twice the impact* in supporting community gardens, beautification projects, and conservation efforts nationwide.



From providing soil, seeds, and trees to funding tools, pollinator gardens, and large-scale landscaping, your donation directly powers projects that transform neighborhoods into greener, healthier, and more vibrant spaces.

As a special thank-you, donors have the opportunity to be recognized on the **PLANT AMERICA Donor Wall**, celebrating your commitment to growing a better tomorrow. Join us in making a lasting difference. Together we can reach our \$50,000 goal and expand the impact of community gardening efforts across the country.

Give today and double your impact!

Visit www.plantamerica.org/matched-giving
to donate and view our wall of donors.

PLANT AMERICA Donor Wall

Diamond \$500+	Gold \$250-\$499	Silver \$100-\$249	Bronze <\$99
Susan Throneberry	Susan Bennett	Paula Matthews	Karen Arnold
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Valerie Story	Bill Trapp	Connie Gladding	Craig Butterworth
Susan Throneberry	Robin Hammer	Trish Bender	Lauren Jackson
	Charmaine Plante	Tracy Churchill	

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 schedule will be available after January 1, 2026.
- Hotel Information and Link will be available after January 1, 2026.



Upcoming Events

Winter Executive Committee Meeting (WEM) (Virtual):

- Tuesday, January 20th at 12:00 PM CST (Central Time Zone) via Zoom

HQ News & Announcements

Please send in your member email addresses to HQ to update our BOD contact list. We also need the contacts for your State Chairpersons so the NGC Chairs can get them information about their programs and committees.

CURRENT & FUTURE NGC YOUTH CLUB LEADERS!

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FORMATS.**



FUN TIPS!

Make gardens with a mix of fun and hands-on activities.

Themed Gardens

- **Pizza Garden:** Tomatoes, pineapples, mushrooms
- **Fairy Gardens:** Succulents with fairy figurines
- **Native Plant Garden:** Attract native birds
- **Scent-Touch-Sight Garden:** Herbs

(Illustration of a garden fort made of sticks and leaves, with a pair of scissors nearby)

- Collect: leaves, pine cones, rocks to paint on, make a sculpture of
- Create: a nature fort by planting triangle or rectangle.

Technology/Science

- Apps: Use phone garden apps to
- Timeline: Photograph flowers to
- Experiment: Try putting cut white

(Illustration of a garden scene with various plants and flowers)

- Harvest Sharing Day: Invite family
- Pumpkin Patch Sale: Pumpkins for
- Painted Flower Pots: Sell for
- Holiday Events: Themed celebra

Children's & Workbook

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(Illustrations of book covers: 'My Dream is Green', 'The Garden Book', 'The Enchanted Garden') and a 'BUY' button with a star icon.

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Garden Tour

For our members, few experiences rival the joy of walking through a beautiful garden and viewing lovely floral designs. This is where inspiration is found. Countless garden tours offer this experience, but few rival going through one of our own garden club's garden tours where houses, floral designs, and gardens are carefully selected to provide inspiration.

2026 Naples Garden Club House & Garden Tour™: Naples, FL

Naples Garden Club is pleased to announce the date and ticket sale details for our signature event, the 2026 Naples Garden Club House & Garden Tour™ held on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, from 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM.

The House & Garden Tour is Naples Garden Club's major fundraiser. Since 1955 the Tour has been a highlight of the Naples season. This perennially sold-out event showcases four extraordinary private homes with inspiring gardens in Naples' most prestigious residential neighborhoods. Exquisite floral designs created by talented Naples Garden Club members are featured at each of the four homes.



Proceeds support our scholarship/grant programs, Flower Show, and Idea Garden, all which benefit the greater Naples Community.

The Tour will be Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, from 8:00 AM–4:30 PM. Tickets go on sale in October, are time-ticketed with up to 16 departure times throughout the day. Tickets include free parking, round-trip bus transportation from the Naples Botanical Gardens (NBG) Event Plaza to the homes, refreshments, a boxed lunch, entrance to the Naples Botanical Gardens for the day and a 10% discount at the NBG Gift Shop.

Ticket Information:

- **Patron Tickets:** \$400 (Tax deduction \$340) each. Sale starts October 15, 2025.
- **Group Tickets** (10+ guests): \$300 (Tax deduction \$240) each. Sale starts October 30, 2025.
- **Individual Tickets:** \$275 (Tax deduction \$215) each. Sale starts November 15, 2025.

More information on Naples Garden Club,[DPI] the tour, tickets (once on sale), or sponsorship opportunities can be found at: [Naples Garden Club Website](https://www.naplesgardenclub.org).

Questions? [Email Andrea Stewart](mailto:Andrea.Stewart@naplesgardenclub.org).

Submitted by:

Sue Mandry, Communications Elect

Naples Garden Club | Website: www.naplesgardenclub.org



We Are Part of the Repair

When I wrote *Rebuilding Nature: Yard by Yard*, it was not because I believed I had the answers, but because I felt compelled to respond to the ache I see all around us--the ache of vanishing bees and butterflies, the ache of hotter summers and heavier rain, the ache of children who may never know the abundance of wild things I once took for granted. I believe with every fiber of my being that thousands of people--you, me, our neighbors--are quietly working to heal the earth.

This book is my way of joining hands with them. Each chapter is rooted in the conviction that small, steady acts--planting a native shrub, tending a patch of wildflowers, letting leaves rest on the soil--carry a kind of holiness. We may not always think of them as sacred, but they are. They whisper, *"I am part of the repair."*

Adrienne Rich once wrote, *"The connections between and among women are the most problematic, and the most potentially transforming force on the planet."* That line has never left me. So much of the work of mending--whether it is families, communities, or ecosystems--has fallen to women. Not because we are the only ones who care, but because we understand deeply how threads must be rewoven if the fabric is to hold. In gardens, at kitchen tables, in neighborhood groups, I see women creating the conditions for transformation. I wanted my book to honor that force and invite others to feel its momentum.

Writing *Rebuilding Nature Yard by Yard* also became a kind of spiritual practice for me. I kept asking: What does it mean to live in right relationship with the land? What does it mean to belong not as owners but as participants? I believe that the act of planting a tree, of giving sanctuary to pollinators, of letting a yard grow wilder, is more than an environmental gesture--it is a prayer in motion.

I don't claim perfection. My own yard is a patchwork of experiments, missteps, and small victories. But perhaps that is the point. We don't need pristine answers. We need millions of imperfect, heartfelt attempts. We need to say, with our hands in the soil, *we are trying*.

This book is not meant to be a scolding or a lecture. It is an invitation. An invitation to see your yard--no matter how small--as part of a great healing. An invitation to notice how the goldfinch perches on a seed head, how the milkweed cradles monarch eggs, how life rushes back when given the chance. An invitation to join a movement that is quiet yet mighty, growing one yard at a time. My hope is that anyone who feels called to this work will feel less alone, more empowered, and perhaps even more at peace. Because in tending the earth, we are also tending our own souls.



By Edith Anderson. Edith is a Master Gardener with 20+ years of hands-on experience creating wildlife habitats. A retired teacher and author of several children's books and the memoir *Northern Lights to American Dreams*, she's a member of the Stone and Thistle Garden Club in Saline, Michigan, where she's building her own backyard sanctuary.

TEXTILE ART, ECO PRINTING BOTANICAL PRINTING



TEXTILE ART, Eco Printing – Botanical Printing

Author: Carola Regehr

[Link to Presentation](#)

Nature is, indeed, one of the most fascinating miracles that surround us daily, emanating immense wisdom and an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Within each leaf, flower and texture are hidden those secrets that invite us to discover and submerge ourselves in their enchanted world.



In a small town of approximately 20,000 inhabitants in the middle of Uruguay, there is a group of passionate gardeners, members of Young Garden Club. From them we have received countless learning opportunities that led us to discover and profoundly love what today we most appreciate: gardening.

As time went by, we felt we had learned all – or almost all - there is to know, when we came across one of the most extraordinary techniques that captivated us immediately: eco printing. This led to a different way of appreciating our gardens, marveling at every detail and discovering a new language. It is a dyeing technique where leaves, flowers, stalks or bark leave their impressions, transferring their essence onto a cotton fabric.

We wanted to know more about this technique, so at the beginning of the year, we held a workshop to learn the basics of this process. We found it quite fascinating to know we could capture a part of our garden and transfer it onto a piece of cloth, which could later become a household item: a tablecloth, a cushion or a shopping bag. However, far more valuable is that each one of those items was created by our own hands, a unique object, made with dedication and love for nature.

There is no doubt that eco printing, also known as botanical printing, is not a modern discovery, its roots date back many thousands of years. We can trace it to the Middle Ages as a recognized practice; it is a fact that the first botanical impressions are registered in the ancient Greek pharmacological text of Dioscorides.

Much closer in time, around 25 years ago, the Australian artist India Flint perfected and disclosed the process of eco printing as we know it today. Thanks to her a technique was developed that permits transferring the images of leaves and other natural elements onto paper, cloth, clay or stone, creating unique prints of nature.

We encourage you to experiment with this wonderful technique using the products of your own gardens. Each impression is unique and unrepeatable because it depends on the plant, the season and the climate. The process brings together art, nature and sustainability by using natural materials to “draw with leaves and flowers,” transferring a garden or landscape onto an item of clothing, a canvas or a decorative object.



The Inviting Stark Beauty of a Winter Meadow Garden

Author: Thomas J Mrazik



Naturalistic, meadow-style gardens, composed mostly of perennial ornamental grasses and wildflowers, are an increasingly popular garden design option for home gardeners. Meadow-style gardens of this kind are a long lasting, four-season ornamental affair, pulsing with life and death and ever changing at different moments in time, even into winter.

This transformational garden style was first introduced by the Dutch plantsman and designer Piet Oudolf.

PHOTO: Near and into winter, colors transform to white palettes. In front, the typical light pink flowers of *Muhlenbergia capallaris* (muhly hair grass) become white and more finely textured. In back, the usual purple colored flower of *Veronica altissima* (tall ironweed) becomes an array of tan pom-poms.

Over the years, he designed public gardens at Chicago's Lurie Garden, the Highline in New York City, the Garden at Belle Island in Detroit, Delaware Botanic Gardens, and Philadelphia's Calder Gardens. An Oudolf inspired perennial meadow-style garden incorporates the following design principles:

- Artistry: emotion of a natural, wild space
- Character: clear, persistent structure and textural foliage
- Aesthetic strength: mass and layers
- Intermingling: sequences of color petal accents
- Maturing: always changing, long-lasting



PHOTO: Winter-long, ornamental grasses (Poacea) always mature, changing their forms, textures and colors. In front, *Muhlenbergia* leads the way - pink-colored flowers become a muted white; panicle-shaped flowers merge. In background (left), *Schizachyrium scoparium* (little bluestem) foliage matures reddish, while *Calamagrostis brachytricha* (Korean feather reed, back on right) panicles whiten from initial pink.

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The Inviting Stark Beauty of a Winter Meadow Garden

(Continued)

As such, in a perennial ornamental grass and wildflower meadow, the garden renews each new early season with full bursts of foliage displays. During the summer months, cool and warm season grasses expand their foliage and flower, sequencing well with wildflower petal accents that come and go. By fall, one notices the appearance of maturing foliage and muting of colors. With frost and winter's arrival, a meadow's dense plant shapes, crisp textures and colors flow together, accentuated over the day by light.



PHOTO: Who doesn't love the early summer soft lilac colored flower of *Monarda fistulosa* (wild bergamot)? In winter, it re-creates itself into a unique finely defined, upright structure with poms atop.

The winter-time meadow-style garden is most austere; absent are vibrant petal colors and ongoing growth. Such a late season garden phase is not typically familiar to most home gardeners since the garden is stripped down to its most essential components of dying and dead plants. Leaves have lost their color and fallen. Petals disappear. Plant stems shift and tilt. And the predominant color becomes soft palettes of blended brown or black hues. Yet a winter-time meadow garden reveals its most visually striking features, that of its starkly exposed strong structures, muted profiles of seed heads, and various airy forms, all forming swaths of impressions, hazy silhouettes and sentinel skeletons. Even with a layer of snow or frost, uniquely enhanced textural effects appear. All are unavoidably inviting to a curious gardener's eye and interest.



PHOTO: Sentinels guarding the winter garden: *Veronicastrum virginicum* (culvers root) is a tall, white-colored spiked flower during summer. During winter, it stands upright with a deep brown coloring.

Author:

Thomas J Mrazik, Horticulturist, Worcester PA
Norristown Garden Club

Thomas Mrazik is the horticulturist owner of Goodly Gardens and Master Gardener in Worcester, PA. He is a member of Norristown Garden Club and is a past 4-time blue ribbon award winner for Home Garden from the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

Meadow style garden tours of his home garden have been given for last 4-5 years through Hardy Plant Society Mid-Atlantic and local garden clubs. He has published articles on cool and warm season ornamental grasses, peonies, amsonia, and rudbeckias at [Pennsylvania State extension.edu](http://PennsylvaniaStateextension.edu). He is also published on Meadows at FineGardening.com.



Book Review

Book Review: Garden Renovation

by Bobbie Schwartz

Reviewer: Regina Doherty



As a National Garden Clubs suggested reading for Landscape Designers, this book is full of ideas on how to renovate existing softscapes (e.g. gardens/yards) and hardscapes (e.g. patios/sidewalks). The ideas are backed with gorgeous color photos as well, so there's no need for imagination while reading since the examples are right there with the text. Before going into my recap/review, I wanted to mention that not all the links in the back Resources section are still valid. However, the titles they refer to are, so you can search for them by title in your internet browser.



I often look at my yard and imagine how I can make it look more beautiful, attract certain pollinators, help it be even more **Florida-Friendly Landscaping™** (FFL) than it is or just make it easier for me to renovate. This book was not only inspirational in carrying out my thoughts but also gave insightful advice and great photo examples.

I appreciated the way the book was broken up into sections: Landscape Renovation, Landscape Essentials, Outside Lighting, Maintenance, Themes, Hardscapes, Establishing Outdoor Rooms, Features, and Enhancements. It helped my thought process flow in an orderly manner.

- *Landscape Renovation* helps you decide if you should renovate what your landscape has to work with and how to make it more appealing to you.
- Landscape Essentials explains how to assess your landscape's current conditions: soil pH, light, drainage, microclimates, etc. It's important to know what you're working with so you can choose the Right Plants for the Right Places in your yard.
- The chapters on *Outside Lighting and Maintenance* make sure you are up to code and understand what it takes to keep your landscape and hardscapes in good form.

The rest of the chapters give examples how to incorporate other features to enhance your landscape. The photo examples are great and there are even design drawings to help you get started.

Gardening Tips FOR FALL

UNIQUE FALL GARDENING TIPS

Author: Sarah McReynolds, NGC Garden School Chairman

■ Plant for Pollinators Late in the Season

Add late-blooming flowers like asters, goldenrod, and sedum. These give bees, butterflies, and other pollinators a final food source before winter.

■ Use Fallen Leaves as “Garden Gold”

Shred leaves with a mower and use them as mulch for flower beds or veggie patches. Create leaf mold by piling them up in a corner. In 6–12 months, you’ll have rich, crumbly soil conditioner.

■ Try “Winter Sowing”

Plant hardy seeds (like spinach, kale, or poppies) directly into the soil in late fall. Cold stratification helps them germinate naturally in spring.

■ Grow a Cover Crop

Plant rye, clover, or hairy vetch in your veggie beds. These crops prevent erosion, suppress weeds, and enrich the soil when tilled under in spring.

■ Protect Delicate Plants with Creative Covers

Instead of plastic, use burlap, old sheets, or upside-down baskets to shield tender plants from frost. Wrap small shrubs with burlap to protect them from windburn.

■ Divide and Conquer

Fall is perfect for dividing perennials like hostas, daylilies, and peonies. Replant divisions to fill bare spots or share with friends.

■ Plant Garlic for a Head Start

Garlic loves cold weather. Plant in October–November for an early summer harvest.

■ Bring the Garden Indoors

Pot up herbs like rosemary, thyme, and chives before the frost hits. They’ll thrive on a sunny windowsill and keep your kitchen stocked with fresh flavor.

■ Create a “Pollinator Hotel”

Stack hollow stems, bamboo, and drilled logs in a sheltered spot. Solitary bees and beneficial insects will overwinter inside.

■ Decorate with Edibles

Use ornamental kale, rainbow chard, and purple mustard greens in your fall planters. They’re both beautiful and edible — a colorful twist for autumn containers.

■ Bonus Tip:

Plant tulips, daffodils, and crocus now — but add a sprinkle of crushed oystershell or sharp gravel to deter squirrels.



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Grant applications for 2025-2026 will be accepted
October 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026. Twenty
Grant Recipients will receive their choice of \$250 of
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NGC Member Clubs should complete the following
online form: <https://www.espoma.com/garden-clubs/>
Attach a word document that includes a description of
the project, "before" photos of the site, simple sketch
of the master plan, plant list, etc. Be sure to indicate
when your project is scheduled to begin.

Questions about applying? Need help?

Contact Debi Harrington
NGC Sponsors' Grant Chair
grants2025.27ngc@gmail.com



COOL TOOLS

01 Aug. 2025

Tools for Gardening & Floral Design

FAVORITE GARDENING TOOLS!

Tool Review for Gardening

While planting some additional memorial roses at Pickens Technical College's Rose Garden in Colorado this September, we noticed that the students had the coolest lightweight small rakes they used to move mulch. So, of course I asked about them and thought they would make a great tool to review and provide information about since we found them so helpful for moving mulch in our community garden projects.



The rake's are call "TABOR TOOLS Adjustable Metal Rakes". It is collapsible and slides within itself to take up less room in your car and garage. The rake is Ideal for moving mulch but you can also use it for raking leaves. You can find them on Amazon using the link above.



*Meg Watkins
A Verified Users' Review*



What Is an Invasive Species?



Author: Tina Tuttle, NGC Invasive Species Chairman

No matter if you look in a dictionary, online or in a book, the definition of “Invasive” is pretty consistent throughout. An invasive can include plants, animals, insects or diseases. While most non-native species are not harmful and many are highly beneficial, there is a small percentage of non-native plants, animals, insects, algae, parasites or pathogens that have escaped cultivation or domestication, become established, and cause harm. All definitions have the same basic attributes that facilitate an invasives survival:

1. Invasives are non-native organisms found throughout our great country. They are generally classified as “exotic” or “foreign.” The plants and animals were introduced to a new area either purposefully by human introduction or by accident. Many of our invasives were brought to the US by our own government with good intentions, such as providing food for wildlife or domesticated animals. The presence of a similar environment and climate in the new location allows them to thrive at the expense of native species. Invasives are very adaptable.
2. Invasives can reproduce rapidly through abundant seed or gamete production, mature quickly, grow aggressively, and crowd out our native species. These organisms tend to spread prolifically and undesirably or harmfully. Many will displace native organisms completely, even to extinction. They either prey on or outcompete native species for food and resources and can have a negative impact on the overall ecological balance. Generally, invasives are so successful because they are without natural controls, tolerate abiotic factors, and they lack natural predators in their new environment.
3. Invasives disrupt the local ecosystem and harm biodiversity causing serious threat to ecological integrity. They can cause harm to the environment, impact the diversity of native species, reduce or alter wildlife habitat, or disrupt important ecosystem functions. Some invasives actually change soil chemistry and change the frequency and intensity of wildfires. A reduction in biodiversity can make the environment vulnerable to disease and other environmental stresses.

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What Is an Invasive Species?

(Continued)



Author: Tina Tuttle, NGC Invasive Species Chairman

4. They can also cause harm to human health or the economy. Damage and control costs from invasive species in the U.S. amount to an estimated \$138 billion annually. They lower crop yields, harm commercial and recreational fisheries, and damage infrastructure like water intake pipes, and flood control systems. They can spread diseases to humans, pets, and livestock, and sometimes create physical hazards or barriers for recreational activities like hiking and boating.

Now that you know what an invasive is, where can you go to get information about what is invasive in your area? (Be aware that what is deemed invasive in one part of our country may not be invasive in another part.) There are many invasive plant lists out there. (Which list do you use for your Flower Show Schedule?) If you want specific information to your area of your state, first check your state university extension resources. Some states have invasive plant councils that may be available as well. At the national level, the National Wildlife Federation or even NOAA can provide useful information. The North American Native Species Management Association along with the National Park Service, Nature Conservancy, and Department of Natural Resources can help give a closer look at invasives and how they spread. There are many articles written and videos made about invasives, so be on the lookout for those.

To prevent new introductions or eradicate or control invasive species and restore infested environments to a more natural state, your State Garden Club members can support and coordinate state and local efforts to provide resources, education, and funding of research-based efforts to prevent infestation, spread, and reinvasion of non-native species. Individually you can plant or landscape with indigenous plants, remove non-native species from your yard (and dispose of them properly), and participate in 'early detection' programs. Let your state legislature know that the State Garden Clubs support control of invasive species!

In the next article on Invasive Species, we will take a look at Invasive animals!

Tina Tuttle, a retired Naval Officer, is the immediate past president of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, a Five-Star Member and avid horticulturalist belonging to 3 garden clubs.



Book Review

Book Review: Night Magic

by Leigh Ann Henion

Reviewer: Regina Doherty, Lakes & Hills GC of Mount Dora



I picked this book up as part of the Master Gardener summer book club and became instantly intrigued by the author's down-to-earth tone and roots. The gist of this book is to inform the reader how mankind has become too dependent on artificial light and less inclined to seek the dark. Because of all our LEDs and other outside illuminations, we are affecting the nocturnal species that co-exist with us on this planet. We are missing out on the wonders that the night has to offer – plants, animals, and insects. If we can accept darkness into our lives, we can prevent the decline in nocturnal species and nighttime pollination.



Henion grew up in and still resides in the Appalachians, specifically Boone, NC. She grew up with the book series Foxfire that give instructions on how to live off the earth – much like the Appalachia people have been doing for centuries. I admit, I am a little envious of her “darker world” because a few folks who moved into my neighborhood have added a lot of night lighting to our area – making less interaction with the animals and insects we used to see. This disturbs me because the species the author discusses are vital to our ecosystems.

The book is broken into various nocturnal animals, pollinators, and bioluminescent beings. She makes it interesting by explaining how there are creatures all around us in the dark that we've forgotten about. Many have either bioluminescence (a light created through chemical reactions in its own body) like some fungi known as foxfire or biofluorescence (when an animal absorbs then re-emits light) like some reptiles, birds, invertebrates, and a few mammals. To make it intriguing, she relates her travels to various festivals that pay homage to nocturnal creatures – like foxfire glow worms (Grandfather Glows), moths (Mothapalooza), and bats (Bat Blitz). The author also talks about moon gardens that have night-blooming and white plants that reflect moonlight.

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Book Review

Book Review: Night Magic (Continued)

by Leigh Ann Henion

Reviewer: Regina Doherty, Lakes & Hills GC of Mount Dora



My mother-in-law just moved to Florida from New Jersey where there is a massive amount of light pollution. She's been marveling at how much darker it is here and enjoys seeing and hearing different creatures at night. The other night she heard screaming from the wetlands and found out later it was a bobcat. She also heard grunting, thinking it was bullfrogs, until I told her it was gators.



Man's light intrusion upon Mother Nature is definitely causing problems. For example, moths are attracted to light and the color white because they use the moon to navigate to plants they pollinate. If there is artificial light, they become disoriented, which is usually what we witness at night. This confusion prevents them from pollinating. They can't produce bioluminescence, and because they're confused what time of day it is, they die early.

Bats can also become disoriented by a lack of complete darkness. Being fully nocturnal, they are getting ill with white-nose syndrome. This disease disturbs their hibernation and forces them outside where there are no bugs so they freeze.



I encourage everyone to read this book and I'll end this review with a quote from the book, "The light cannot save you. We need reconciliation with darkness to accept darkness as a gift." So, start by going outside in your own yard to see what awaits you...night flowers (like my 10 PM blooming cereus); barred owls calling, "Who? Who? Who cooks for you?"; glowing fungi; or even brown bats drinking from your hummingbird feeder! Then, who knows? Maybe you'll take one of those guided night hikes – like in a Florida state park – or plan a trip to Mothapalooza!



LEADERSHIP

Herding Cats...

AKA how to run a meeting without turning into a control freak

Let's face it—leading a meeting can sometimes feel like trying to herd cats. People want to catch up, vent about things, or take the conversation in a completely different direction. Before you know it, the agenda's out the window and you're wondering how to get things back on track without being the bad guy. Here are a few tips to help you keep things running smoothly—without losing your cool (or your members).

Start with a Plan

People like to know what to expect. If you're doing something different from the usual routine, give everyone a heads-up. Sharing the agenda ahead of time helps set expectations and cuts down on confusion—or resistance.

Check In Beforehand

Avoid surprises by talking to your officers and committee chairs ahead of time. Find out if they need time on the agenda and what they plan to say. A little coaching goes a long way—encourage short, to-the-point updates. The longer and more rambling the report, the more likely someone is to interrupt or steer it off course.

Give People Time to Talk

Members want to connect—it's part of what keeps them coming back. So make space for that! Whether it's a few minutes built into the meeting, a break in the middle, or time set aside before or after, allowing room to chat helps keep everyone engaged and less likely to derail the business part.

Pro tip: If you're introducing something new or big, a short break can also help people process before making decisions.

Wrap It Up Clearly

Your job as Chair is to bring it all together. Before ending the meeting, be sure to clarify what was decided, who's doing what, and what's next. If things feel fuzzy or unresolved, you're more likely to hear about it later—from multiple directions.

Final Thought:

Leading a meeting doesn't mean controlling every word—it means guiding the group with structure, clarity, and a bit of flexibility. Do that, and you'll not only avoid chaos—you'll foster collaboration.

Author: Ginny Cardona
NGC Leadership Chair

Membership Tips

Garden clubs, much like the plants they nurture, need to grow. One challenge that many clubs face is getting new members. Let's look at ways to draw new people to your club and help you to grow.

Be visible – Don't be the tree that falls in the forest with no one around to see. Even if you make lots of noise, it won't matter. If your club takes care of a public garden, let people know. Put up a sign that tells visitors who makes this garden look amazing! When you are going to have a workday, post on Facebook or Instagram, or even put up a flyer at the local grocery store if they will let you. If you're on a local social media site like NextDoor, post about it there. Announce well in advance so people know when to look for you, and that it's your club doing this work, not the garden gnomes that come to life during the night.

Be inviting – During that workday at the public garden, talk to the people who walk by. These people have left the safety and isolation of their home, or their car, and are interested. They aren't there by accident! Something drew them to see what's going on. Not many will be brave enough to interrupt what looks like a closed group of friends to ask questions. Keep an eye out for visitors; be the one to be friendly and inviting! Ask questions, draw them in, and invite them to come to your next meeting.

This almost always works. That new member has already done the hard part. They found you. Now it's up to you to bring them into the amazing, ever-changing world of Garden Club.

Author: Bernadette Sterry
NGC Membership Chair
OSFGC 1st Vice President
Current President of Beaverton Garden Club



REGIONAL NEWS

Deep South Region

It is an honor to represent the Deep South Region as the Director for the next two years. I have a close connection with each of the six states. Living in Tennessee we have picturesque vistas from the Mississippi to the Great Smoky Mountains, but it thrills me to spot my first live oak tree dripping in Spanish moss or spotting my first palm tree when I travel south.



The Garden Club of Georgia hosted a wonderful DSGC convention in Valdosta this spring that represented true Southern hospitality for all our DSGC six states. I was also their guest at the Augusta GCG Convention and had the pleasure of installing their officers. The Garden Club of Alabama held their convention in Guntersville at a state park, and members were surrounded by springtime nature for our enjoyment. The Louisiana Garden Club Federation and New Orleans area will be on my stop in my travels next year to enjoy the spring oleanders and especially the seafood! Spring will also be the site for Florida Federation of Garden Clubs to host the next DSGC Convention with a cruise. I will be returning there for their FFGC spring convention.

Key West is always our family gathering destination every Thanksgiving so I will host a luncheon there for the "Key Clubs." I can't wait to visit and meet them. We have two grandchildren that are University of Mississippi graduates, and I feel like that state is my second home for the last ten years. The Natchez Garden Club will be a garden tour that I can't miss. Traveling and meeting our members, enjoying the botanical gardens and historic sites of the Deep South is a joy and always has been for me. That is why conventions are so important and meaningful.

My theme is "Plant the Deep South with Flowers and Trees, for the Birds and Bees." I have given away 60 plus bluebird houses to our members to promote this theme. PLANT AMERICA and Plant the Deep South are our projects. The Scholarship Program is the benefactor of our Fall Ways and Means Bulb Sale which is going strong. Youth, education programs of birds, bees and pollinators, trees, horticulture and floral design are the topics of new awards and that will be funded by sponsors and donations.

I can't wait to visit and support our members and President Donna Donnelly in the years 2025-2027! We all want to wish Mrs. Deen Day Sanders a Happy 92nd birthday this October!

Author: Denise Thorne, Regional Director 2025-2027
Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc.
Phone: 615-289-2138 Email: denise@tec63.com

REGIONAL NEWS

Rocky Mountain Region's Youngest Gardener

Evy Jean

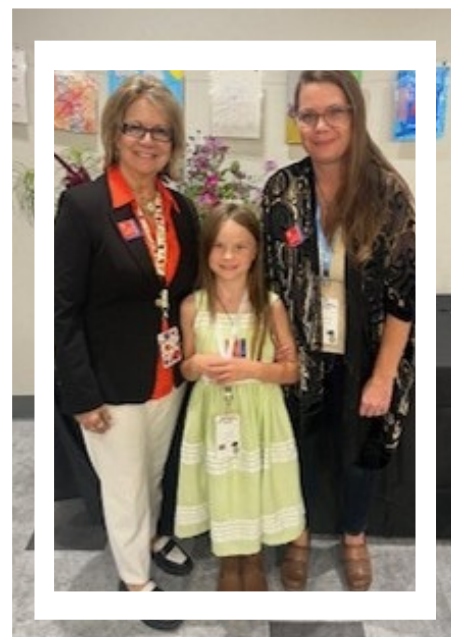
Evy Jean was named after her grandma Nancy Jean (my mom), who passed away two years ago.

Nancy Jean was a ray of sunshine and my best friend, and just being in her presence was like basking in the warmth of the sun, feeling nothing but love. Evy consistently joins me in the garden and sometimes attends the lengthy gardening classes. She is my faithful sidekick!

Evy loves every minute she is in the garden. She is like a sponge, absorbing all the gardening knowledge, including plant identification and spotting a circling root on a native tree. I can trust her to go “pop in” a handful of pepper plants in the raised vegetable garden beds without even needing to check her work.

When I first asked Evy if she wanted to join me at the garden club meeting for the evening, I half expected her to decline, since most kids her age would choose some other activity that seems more glamorous. But I was surprised when she responded, “Sure, what are we gonna talk about?”

I’ve never had to twist Evy’s arm to join me in gardening endeavors. Like my mom, Evy is not afraid to get her hands dirty in the garden, and they both share a love for growing beautiful things. Sometimes we really need a gardening companion in life, and it’s truly refreshing and inspiring to have this new ray of sunshine by my side! ❤️



Author: *Evy Jean’s Mom, Jessica*

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

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NGC Landscape Design School Courses

Carol Yee

Landscape Design School Chair

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<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>*

NGC Reports

NGC Life Member Report

Greetings from your NGC Life Membership Chair for the term of 2025-2027.

I want to encourage you personally to become a valued National Garden Clubs (NGC) Life Member. You can also honor an individual with a gift membership – someone who has shown outstanding leadership and support for your garden club's programs and projects in the community.

A membership could be presented to an individual in your community who shares your passion for horticulture, design, and environmental programs and projects. A Life Member does not have to be a garden club member.

A donation of \$200.00 supports two long-term and continuing NGC funds:

- The PLANT AMERICA Community Fund
- The Permanent Home and Endowment Fund

National Life Membership has been an integral part of our organization for over 50 years. NGC Life Members do make a difference! All new Life Members in attendance at National Garden Clubs Convention are recognized.

Applications are available on the NGC website under Member Resources. Please follow the directions for submission with a check. Questions? Contact [Betty Cookendorfer](#).

Betty Cookendorfer, NGC Life Membership Chair
Phone: 513-616-4492 Email: bcooken@aol.com



NGC Reports



Award of Excellence Report

It is time to start thinking about whom you will nominate for the **NGC Award of Excellence 2026** in your state!

The Award categories are:

1. Award of Excellence for Non-Member (#SR-1)
 - For an Individual, Non-member, Organization, or Institution
2. Award of Excellence for State Garden Club (#SR-2)
 - a. Membership up to 999
 - b. Membership from 1,000-2,999
 - c. Membership from 3,000 – 7,999
 - d. Membership over 8,000
3. Award of Excellence for Region (#SR-3) Note: Not applicable for 2026.

Instructions: Complete the application form, found in the Forms Library, along with your Book of Evidence. All Award of Excellence applications are limited to five single-sided pages plus this cover sheet for six total pages. See the 2025-2027 NGC Awards Handbook for details and scale of points.

All applications are preferably submitted electronically. Send all applications to Susan Miner by **January 1, 2026**. Contact Sue with any questions regarding award submission.

Susan Miner, NGC 3rd Vice President, Award of Excellence Chair
Email: sminer@gardenclub.org

Q & A

Welcome to our Q&A section! Here, we tackle your gardening questions with practical, easy-to-follow advice.

QUESTIONS

Q: When is the best time to plant spring bulbs?

A: Plant spring-flowering bulbs like tulips, daffodils, and hyacinths in the fall—about 6–8 weeks before your first hard frost. This gives them time to establish roots before winter.

Q: How can I improve clay soil in my garden?

A: Mix in plenty of organic matter such as compost, shredded leaves, or aged manure. This improves drainage and makes nutrients more available to plants. Avoid working clay soil when it's wet, as it can compact easily.

Q: Why aren't my tomatoes turning red?

A: Several factors can delay ripening, including high temperatures, lack of sunlight, or too much nitrogen. Try trimming excess foliage to improve air circulation and light exposure. Pick mature green tomatoes before frost and ripen them indoors in a warm spot.

Q: How do I attract more pollinators to my garden?

A: Plant a variety of native flowers that bloom from spring through fall and are pollinator friendly. Avoid pesticides, and provide water sources and shelter like grasses, bee hotels, or brush piles. Even small changes can make a big impact.

Q: Can I compost leaves in the fall?

A: Absolutely! Shredded leaves make excellent compost material. Mix them with green materials like grass clippings or kitchen scraps for a well-balanced compost pile. Turn it regularly to speed up decomposition.

Have a garden question? Email us and you might see your question in the next issue!

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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.
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