

THE NATIONAL GARDENER

2026 SUMMER ISSUE

VOLUME 100, NUMBER 3

4TH
OF JULY

U N I T E D

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.

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Celebrating
250
Years

SCAN ME

03 Summer 2026 | FREE





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THE NATIONAL GARDENER

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THE PRESIDENT'S PAGE



As the first year of the 2025–2027 term comes to a close, I am proud to reflect on what we have accomplished together—and I am excited about what lies ahead!

Our most significant achievement this year was the success of the initiative **PLANT AMERICA** Matching Grant. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Barbara Baker of Texas and the enthusiastic response from our members, the \$50,000 matching grant was met in just nine months. Together, we doubled that impact to \$100,000, strengthening the **PLANT AMERICA** fund for future projects nationwide and demonstrating the power of shared commitment and action.

An inspiring goal made possible by this success is the nationwide **PLANT AMERICA** planting of NGC Blue and Gold Star Memorial Markers in red, white, and blue. This meaningful effort has the potential to become the largest coordinated July 4th planting in the United States, honoring America's 250th birthday in a powerful and visible way. I hope you will be part of this historic and unifying movement.

National Garden Clubs is also experiencing a season of growth and renewal. While remaining firmly rooted in our mission and values, we are strengthening the organization for the future. Our Bylaws and Standing Rules are being thoughtfully streamlined to create clearer, more effective governance—an important step in positioning NGC for long-term success.

Under the leadership of our Executive Director Bill Trapp, momentum continues to build. Initiatives such as the Path of Success at Headquarters allow members and states to demonstrate support by purchasing commemorative pavers, while the upcoming Schools Portal will expand our educational outreach and support for schools. Both represent tangible, mission-driven progress.

The 2026 Convention in St. Louis was a true highlight. The exceptional educational program, developed with the Missouri Botanical Garden, along with the opportunity to tour our NGC Headquarters and the world-class Missouri Botanical Gardens, made the experience unforgettable—especially because it was shared with so many members.

Finally, I have had the honor of visiting many states and regions. The President's Travel reinforces the strength and shared purpose of NGC by meeting members in person and seeing NGC's cherished traditions and projects come to life.

While on vacation with family, I had the privilege of visiting Normandy, France, where I saw NGC's Gold Star Memorial By-Way Marker and located the site of the Blue Star Memorial By-Way Marker—a humbling experience set against profound world history. I invite you to read the full article on the following pages.

Most importantly, your presence at NGC events truly makes a difference. Your involvement, leadership, and passion are the heart of National Garden Clubs—this organization thrives because of you. Thank you for your continued commitment and support, and for all you do to ensure NGC's strong and promising future. Wishing you a wonderful summer!



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

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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 June 1 (Publish first week of July)

About Us

PLANT AMERICA
for the next 100 years

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



FROM THE EDITOR

Celebrating
250
Years

Gardens of Liberty: Service, Stewardship, and the Next 250 Years

As we celebrate another Independence Day and our nation's 250th birthday, I find myself reflecting on the many ways Americans have served our country throughout its history. Service takes many forms. Some answer the call to serve in uniform. Others serve in their communities, schools, churches, and civic organizations. All contribute to the strength and vitality of our nation. Having served in the United States Army and being married to a retired United States Marine, I have witnessed firsthand the dedication and sacrifice required to preserve the freedoms we cherish. Military service is rooted in a commitment to something greater than oneself—a commitment to protecting our nation and ensuring a brighter future for generations to come.

As I talk to members, I am reminded that this same spirit of service thrives within NGC. Every year, our members volunteer countless hours to improve their communities. They plant pollinator gardens, restore public landscapes, mentor young gardeners, support conservation initiatives, maintain Blue and Gold Star Memorials, and advocate for the responsible stewardship of our natural resources. Their work may not make headlines, but its impact is visible in every tree and flower planted, every habitat restored, and every young person inspired to appreciate the natural world.

The founders of our nation understood the importance of stewardship. They were farmers, gardeners, and landowners who recognized that the future of America would depend not only on its ideals but also on the care of its land. They believed in leaving something better for those who would follow. We gardeners understand this principle instinctively. Every seed planted represents faith in tomorrow. Every tree planted is an investment in our future. Every community project reflects a belief that our actions today can improve the lives of others tomorrow.

As our nation celebrates our 250th birthday, we have the opportunity to consider the legacy we are creating. What will future generations inherit? Will they find healthy ecosystems, thriving pollinator populations, beautiful public spaces, and communities connected through an appreciation of nature? Or will they inherit challenges we failed to address?

NGC members have long been leaders in answering that question through action. Throughout our history, our organization has demonstrated that meaningful change often begins at the local level—with neighbors working together to improve the places they call home. The work we do today extends far beyond gardens. Through education, conservation, environmental stewardship, and civic beautification, we are helping shape the next chapter of America's story. We are cultivating not only flowers and landscapes but also stronger communities, greater environmental awareness, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

As we celebrate this summer, I encourage each of us to reflect on the ways we can continue to serve. Perhaps it is planting a tree whose shade future generations will enjoy. Perhaps it is mentoring a young gardener, supporting a community project, or expanding a pollinator habitat. Whatever form it takes, every act of stewardship contributes to a larger legacy. America's first 250 years were built by citizens who believed in service, responsibility, and hope for the future. As gardeners, we share those same values. Together, we are cultivating landscapes that enrich our communities and preserve the beauty of our nation for generations to come.

*May we continue to plant with purpose, serve with dedication,
and grow a legacy worthy of the next 250 years!*



Victoria Schmidt
TNG EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 119th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 172

WASHINGTON, MAY 19, 2026

No. 85

House of Representatives

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL GARDEN CLUB AS IT HONORS MEMORIAL DAY

(EXTENSION OF REMARKS—MAY 19, 2026)

[E467]

HON. JOE WILSON
OF SOUTH CAROLINA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026

--

Mr. Speaker, I rise to include in the Record the following proclamation on behalf of the National Garden Club, and their President Donna Donnelly of South Carolina, in honor of Memorial Day. I especially appreciate the significance of Garden Club as my mother, Wray Wilson, was an active member of the Garden Club of Charleston and was Garden Editor of The News and Courier.

“Whereas, on July 4, 1776, the United States of America was founded upon the enduring principles of liberty, self-governance, and the inherent dignity of all people; and

“Whereas, for 250 years, the American nation has stood as a beacon of hope, inspiring free peoples around the world to pursue democracy, justice, and peace; and

“Whereas the alliance between the United States of America and the French Republic is among the oldest and most cherished in modern history, forged in the cause of independence and strengthened in the shared defense of freedom; and

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“Whereas, during the Second World War, the soil of Normandy became hallowed ground through the courageous sacrifice of American servicemen who crossed an ocean to liberate Europe from tyranny; and

“Whereas, on June 6, 1944, the Allied forces, including brave Americans, embarked upon the largest amphibious invasion in history, forever altering the course of the war and ensuring the restoration of liberty to the continent; and

“Whereas the Normandy American Cemetery stands as a solemn testament to the valor, sacrifice, and enduring legacy of those who gave their lives in service to a cause greater than themselves; and

“Whereas, Memorial Day in the United States is a sacred occasion to remember and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedoms, both at home and abroad; and

“Whereas the year 2026 marks the Semiquincentennial of the United States, a moment to reflect upon our shared history, reaffirm our principles, and honor the enduring bonds of friendship with our allies;

“Now, therefore, I, Joe Wilson, Member of Congress of the United States and a member of the House Armed Services Committee, do hereby offer this proclamation in solemn tribute:

“That on this hallowed ground at Omaha Beach, we honor not only the fallen heroes of June 6, 1944, but all those who have borne the burden of defending liberty across generations;

“That we express, with profound gratitude, the enduring friendship between the people of the United States and the people of France, whose shared sacrifices have secured peace and freedom for countless millions;

“That as we commemorate 250 years of American independence, we recommit ourselves to the ideals for which these brave souls fought and died-- freedom, justice, and the unyielding pursuit of peace;

“And that we pledge to carry forward this sacred legacy, ensuring that the bonds of alliance between our nations remain strong, and that the sacrifices of the past shall never be forgotten.

“In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand on this Memorial Day, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-six.”

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D-Day: June 6, 1944



Author: Donna Donnelly

On June 6, 1944, Allied forces launched Operation Overlord, the largest seaborne invasion in military history, marking a pivotal moment in the liberation of Nazi-occupied Europe. Nearly 156,000 American, British, and Canadian troops landed along five heavily fortified beaches in Normandy, France, in an operation that would turn the tide of World War II and ultimately lead to the defeat of Nazi Germany.



I had the extraordinary opportunity to visit the beaches of Normandy during the season of the June 6th D-Day commemorations. Standing on the sweeping landscapes of Utah and Omaha Beaches, where thousands of American servicemen fought with remarkable courage—and where so many gave their lives in the name of freedom—was an experience that was both breathtaking and deeply emotional, especially as I reflected on family members so long ago.



Before dawn on that historic day in 1944, more than 13,000 Allied paratroopers and glider troops were dropped behind enemy lines. Their mission was to secure vital roads, bridges, and causeways, paving the way for the main amphibious assault. Meanwhile, an immense invasion armada—comprised of more than 5,000 ships and landing craft, escorted by hundreds of warships—crossed the English Channel from southern England.

The invasion spanned five beaches along the Normandy coast. American forces landed at Utah and Omaha Beaches. Utah Beach, the westernmost landing site, encountered lighter resistance and fewer casualties. In stark contrast, Omaha Beach became the site of the bloodiest fighting, where American troops faced intense enemy fire before finally securing the shoreline.



British forces successfully captured Gold Beach, while British and French forces took Sword Beach. Canadian troops, alongside British units, landed at Juno Beach, where approximately 21,000 soldiers faced fierce resistance and suffered significant casualties.



Despite formidable defenses, rough seas, and overwhelming obstacles, the Allied forces held all five beaches. This unprecedented international cooperation and sacrifice ensured the success of Operation Overlord, leading to the liberation of France and the eventual collapse of Adolf Hitler's regime.



D-Day: June 6, 1944



Author: Donna Donnelly (Continued)

Near these historic beaches lies the town of Saint-Mère-Église, renowned as the first town liberated by Allied forces during the invasion. This town is also home to the National Garden Club's Gold Star Memorial By-Way Marker. The marker was placed by the Jefferson Parish Garden Club of Metairie, Louisiana, representing National Garden Clubs, to honor Gold Star Families with Honor, Hope, and Healing.



Garden Club of South Carolina:



Saint-Mère-Église is a small, charming town centered around a lively town square. The NGC Gold Star Memorial By-Way Marker was easily located just outside the square, diagonally across from the historic Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption Church, which stands as a silent witness to the events of D-Day.

There is also an NGC Blue Star Memorial By-Way Marker placed in one of the Normandy American Cemeteries to honor the 82nd Airborne Division, although it proved more difficult to find. After some investigation—including a visit to the solemn and peaceful Normandy American Cemetery at Omaha Beach, where I spoke with the cemetery's Director—it was determined that this marker is located outside the town of Saint-Mère-Église. The cemetery honoring the 82nd Airborne is part of the Normandy American Cemeteries but is situated on the outskirts of Saint-Mère-Église. Unfortunately, I couldn't visit this site in person.

However, we placed flowers at the Omaha Beach American Cemetery, in the Garden of the Missing at the base of the 22-foot bronze memorial statue called "The Spirit of American Youth Rising from the Waves," which symbolizes the youth, indomitable spirit, and heroism of the D-Day troops. An official US Congressional proclamation resolution was presented to the Town Hall of Saint-Mère-Église, honoring the lasting legacy of those who served and sacrificed.



Author: Donna Donnelly, President
National Garden Clubs, Inc.

To explore more about D-Day, visit:
[National WWII Museum](#) or the
[D-Day Memorial Foundation](#).





NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC. 2026 CONVENTION RECAP

“MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS, WHERE THE RIVER BENDS & THE ARCH REACHES THE SKY!”

The 2026 Convention in St. Louis and Missouri was a great success. From the Gateway Arch on the mighty Mississippi next to our hotel, to visiting our next-door neighbor, the Missouri Botanical Garden, and touring our NGC HQ where we explored its collections and strolled the grounds using the Path to Success. At the Convention, we had some exceptional speakers to include the following:



- TOur Kick-Off luncheon Speaker, **Ryan McClure, Executive Director of The Gateway Arch Park Foundation**, could relate to our Convention theme, especially ***“Where The Arch Reaches The Sky!”*** He amazed us with the tale of reinvigorating the Gateway Arch as a National Park and invited us to visit the Arch.
- Our Keynote Speaker, **Carol Davit, Executive Director of the Missouri Prairie Foundation**, showed us her organization’s extraordinary efforts to reclaim the Missouri Prairie and grow native plants. Then, she explained how they can be translated into landscaping our own properties.

A FEW HIGHLIGHT PHOTOS

SEE THIS LINK TO VIEW EVEN MORE CONVENTION PHOTOS



CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE





NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

2026 CONVENTION

(CONTINUED)

We were fortunate enough to have our NGC HQ next-door neighbor, the Missouri Botanical Garden ("MOBOT") and the St. Louis Master Gardeners provide their professionals with decades of experience to lead our seminars. We enjoyed the following topics and speakers for our seminars:

- **Matthew Norman** drew from his decade of working in the MOBOT Lehmann Rose Garden and Gladney Rose Garden to talk about the history of MOBOT.
- **Carol Gravens**, an Advanced St. Louis Master Gardener and 17-year MOBOT Orchid House volunteer, revealed the secrets of coaxing Missouri native orchids to flourish.
- **Pat Scace**, MOBOT's Supervisor of Floral Display, dazzled us with a trip through the Last 100 Years of Flower Shows at the Missouri Botanical Garden.
- **Charling Chen**, MOBOT Senior Manager, Landscape Planning and Design, kept us intrigued with stories on how the MOBOT xerophyte collection was recreated in the new Shoenberg Arid Collection. She described the historic Linnean House, a Victorian plant conservatory with an extraordinary collection of plants.
- MOBOT's team of **Jeanne Carbone**, retired Supervisor of Therapeutic Horticulture, and **Liz Byrde**, current Therapeutic Horticulture Coordinator, explained an entirely different language of flowers embodied in activities designed to stimulate the senses and enhance the physical, mental and social lives of the participants.

A FEW HIGHLIGHT PHOTOS

SEE THIS LINK TO VIEW EVEN MORE CONVENTION PHOTOS



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NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

2026 CONVENTION

(CONTINUED)

Tours

Despite a little rain, Executive Director Bill Trapp, Assistant Executive Director Katie Roth and the entire **NGC Headquarters Building** team welcomed us at the NGC Headquarters. The **NGC Headquarters Building** is an extraordinary example of mid-Century Modern architecture, with stunning landscapes and a path into the Missouri Botanic Gardens. We were dazzled by the donated collections of porcelain, crystal and silver, and were awed by the beautiful gardens and memorials that have been installed throughout the grounds. We also enjoyed walking the **Path to Success**.

We also toured the wonderful **Missouri Botanical Garden** or "MOBOT." This is a **MUST VISIT** if you are in the area! From the stunning Chihuly piece in the Visitors' Center atrium to the rose gardens and Japanese Garden to the collections of orchids and xerophytes to the amazing design of the Victorian Conservatory Linnean House, we found wonders to amaze and plants that piqued our curiosity.

A FEW HIGHLIGHT PHOTOS

SEE THIS LINK TO VIEW EVEN MORE CONVENTION PHOTOS



CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE





NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

2026 CONVENTION

(CONTINUED)

Special Guest Floral Designer

Speaking of a native flower, our **Special Guest Floral Designer** was **Madelyn Hucker** from St. Peters, Missouri! Madelyn is an award-winning floral design industry professional and a talented member of National Garden Clubs, Inc. She is an NGC Master Judge and Design Instructor Emeritus and currently is kept busy as President of the St. Louis Judges Council. Her design career includes displays at the World Association of Floral Artists (WAFA) and the St. Louis Art Museum's annual "Art In Bloom," where in 2019, her design was used in the event's advertising campaign. At our Design Banquet, Madelyn gave us her interpretations of "Meet Me in St. Louis, Where the River Bends & the Arch Reaches the Sky!"



Madelyn Hucker
Special Guest Floral Designer

The 2026 National Flower Show, a Petite Show

We enjoyed a celebration of nature, with delightful displays, and a world of color and creativity while experiencing "**America, the Beautiful!**"



The 2027 National Garden Club, Inc. Convention Invitation

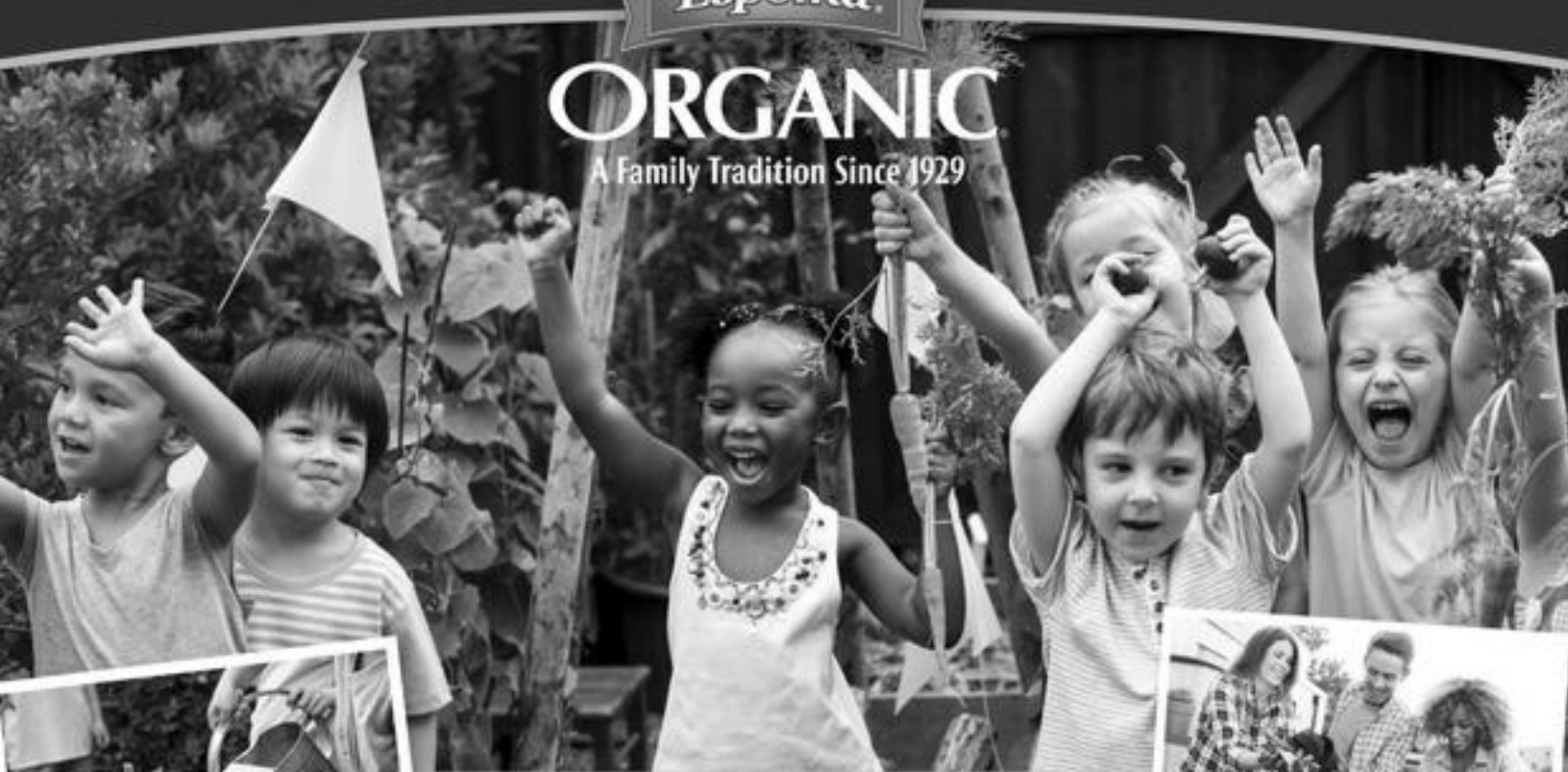
We enjoyed a fun invitation to the next convention in Wisconsin. Join us!





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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. Apply for a \$250 Espoma Product Grant at: www.espoma.com/garden-clubs



Visit us at www.espoma.com and join our gardening community.



Delightful Native Wildflowers for a Naturalistic Home Garden



DELIGHTFUL NATIVE WILDFLOWERS FOR A NATURALISTIC HOME GARDEN

Author: Thomas Mrazik

Native wildflowers are delightfully unmatched! Much more than petals alone, showing seasonal bold petal colors and shapes and striking unique flowerhead forms (i.e., inflorescence). Native plants also help wildlife and pollinators thrive. Native wildflowers are an essential backbone to a visually dynamic naturalistic home garden, especially when intermingled with perennial ornamental grasses, and especially as both mature late into the garden season. Such a long-lasting wild ornamental design evokes a feeling of being in nature.



Beyond a wildflower's showy petals is how they are arranged as a flowerhead form, called inflorescence. Such forms are either a spike/spire or raceme, where petals are held closely to the main stalk or, in distinct contrast, a panicle shape, in which the petals widely spread out beyond the main stalk in various patterns described as corymb, umbel, and cyme. Some, like Monarda and coneflower, are considered a head inflorescence.

Table 1 provides an alphabetical listing of native wildflowers and, for each, its key characteristics, floral petal colors and shape, inflorescence flowerhead form and an image of each wildflower. All are native to the United States.

For additional plant details, consult the following sources:

- Missouri Botanical Garden (missouribotanicalgarden.org)
- Illinois Wildflowers (illinoiswildflowers.info)
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (wildflower.org)



CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



DELIGHTFUL NATIVE WILDFLOWERS FOR A NATURALISTIC HOME GARDEN

Author: Thomas Mrazik (Continued)



Table 1: Flowers and Characteristics of Native Wildflowers

Table 1 Flowers and Characteristics of Native Wildflowers for a Naturalistic Home Garden		
Native Wildflower (common name) Plant ~height with flower	Flower color, shape and form Bloom period	Garden Plant Flowerhead
Agastache foeniculum (anise hyssop) 2.5-4 feet	Color: blue-violet or lavender (varies by cultivar) Shape: erect spike (~3-6 inches long) of dense small tubular flowers, in a cylindrical/whorl pattern Bloom period: mid-late summer	
Amsonia tabernaemontana (Eastern bluestar) 2-4 feet	Color: blue (light/pale) Shape: pyramidal clusters (cyme) of star-shaped, small 5-lobed flowers 0.5-0.75 inch across Bloom period: mid-late spring	
Aruncus dioicus (goat's beard) 3-6 feet	Color: white or creamy-white Shape: erect, arching feathery spikes (~6-20 inches long) of dense tiny flowers Bloom period: late spring-early summer	

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



DELIGHTFUL NATIVE WILDFLOWERS FOR A NATURALISTIC HOME GARDEN

Author: Thomas Mrazik (Continued)

Table 1

Flowers and Characteristics of Native Wildflowers for a Naturalistic Home Garden

Native Wildflower (common name) Plant ~height with flower	Flower color, shape and form Bloom period	Garden Plant Flowerhead
Baptisia australis (blue false indigo) 2-4 feet	Color: blue (pale-dark) Shape: upright spires covered with racemes of dense pea-like shaped flowers (~1.5 inches long) Bloom period: mid-late spring	
Eryngium yuccifolium (rattlesnake master) 3-5 feet	Color: white or white-green Shape: branching clusters (umbels) of prickly globes (0.5-1 inch across) of dense, very small petals and bracts Bloom period: mid-late summer	
Filipendula rubra (queen of the prairie) 4-6 feet	Color: bright pink Shape: billowy, wide (6-9 inches) panicles (corymb) of tiny, fragrant flowers/buds Bloom period: early-mid summer	
Monarda fistulosa (wild bergamot) 2.5-4 feet	Color: lavender or purple-pink Shape: terminal head of dense clusters of narrow tubular flowers (~1 inch long) on a globular head, forming a wreath shape Bloom period: mid-summer	

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



DELIGHTFUL NATIVE WILDFLOWERS FOR A NATURALISTIC HOME GARDEN

Author: Thomas Mrazik (Continued)

Table 1

Flowers and Characteristics of Native Wildflowers for a Naturalistic Home Garden

Native Wildflower (common name) Plant ~height with flower	Flower color, shape and form Bloom period	Garden Plant Flowerhead
Rudbeckia subtomentosa (sweet coneflower) 3-5 feet	Color: bright yellow Shape: a "coneflower" with a central raised dark cone of disk florets and an outer halo of multiple flat ray petals Bloom period: mid-late summer	
Spiraea tomentosa (steeplebush) 2-4 feet	Color: pink (light or deep) Shape: dense panicle of clusters of tiny flowers forming a narrow steeple-shaped spike (~4-8 inches long) Bloom period: mid-late summer	
Veronicastrum virginicum (culver's root) 3-7 feet	Color: white Shape: erect and lateral slender (9-10" long) spike-like racemes of dense clusters of tiny, tube-like, flowers Bloom period: late spring- early summer	

Author: Thomas Mrazik

Thom is a horticulturist and owner of Goodly Gardens in Worcester, PA. Goodly Gardens is an awarded, pleasantly attractive naturalistic, meadow-style garden. Thom's garden articles are published at finegardening.com and extension.psu.edu. He is a member of the Norristown Garden Club in PA.



Experimental Gardener

Author: Vic Larson

I once had an experimental garden. It is no coincidence that it was roughly the shape of one of those dangerous trampolines you see in the yards of many otherwise cautious parents these days. Fortunately, our trampoline did not claim any victims. We were among the lucky ones, and I breathed a long-held sigh of relief the day clanging tubular steel was tossed into the back of a recycling truck and hauled away.



What remained were pleasant memories and a circular burned-out spot twelve feet in diameter on our back lawn. The trampoline bed had the heat-focusing property of a magnifying glass. If Google had timed it right and updated the aerial photographs of our neighborhood in Northern Illinois, it would have appeared like a crop circle or a large letter "O." Well-placed pumpkins and a semicircular row of beans would have created a smiley face worthy of Forrest Gump's t-shirt when viewed from the air.



I decided that half the work of creating a vegetable garden was finished. Grass removal was complete. All I had to do was turn over the topsoil with a shovel and water the earth with the sweat of my brow. Lots of sweat. It turned out that the area was loaded with rocks and crisscrossed with tree roots from nearby pines and oaks.

Only about two inches of rich black topsoil supported the layer of grass we enjoyed pre-trampoline. Beneath that was clay and sand, a testament to the river-bed nature of ground conditions two blocks away from the mighty Des Plaines River. In other words, the soil was junk.

I began to add things, "amend" as gardeners would say. Peat moss, mushroom compost, and manure. I even rented a very fun rototiller and discovered a deeper layer of tree roots that caused the machine to kick and buck like one of the challenging young horses on Yellowstone's Dutton Ranch. I brought out an axe and a wheelbarrow to cut and haul away the network of underworld cartilage. A week later, I planted my crops.

I'll just cut to the chase. It didn't work. My vegetable garden yielded six tomatoes, five beans, and a handful of lettuce. I now have profound admiration for the farmers who grow our food and for the abundance and variety of beautiful items in the produce section of the local grocery store.

So, I decided to try something else.

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Experimental Gardener

Author: Vic Larson (Continued)



I went online and bought a pound of zinnia seeds. I can grow these. Anyone can grow zinnias. They are the hostas of the flower world. Each year for the previous half dozen years, butterflies and neighborhood children stopped to admire the colorful display I cultivated near our streetside mailbox. Zinnias require little care other than periodic watering and pruning, which causes even more zinnias to bloom.

“Can we go see Mr. Vic’s flowers?” asked the kiddies. “Yes you can dear,” said their mothers. “He’s a genius with a green thumb.”

If you’ve ever purchased a packet of zinnia seeds, you know that for about two dollars, you get perhaps two dozen lighter-than-air disc-like seeds in the bottom of a paper packet. A pound of these “California Giants” would have been enough for Vincent Van Gogh to scatter over acres of land if he chose to repeat his legendary giant sunflower experiment with a different flower. I used half a pound in my trampoline garden and braced for impact.

That was during May. I planted the seeds in two waves so as not to overwhelm neighbors or low-flying aircraft with the explosion of color that would burst skyward at ground zero. Google, prepare for something spectacular! This was the time for an update.

By August, you can imagine what I was dealing with after ten weeks of unrestrained growth. I anticipated daily harvests of bouquets for my wife. Requests by artists to set up easels and chairs for the day while they painted. The photojournalists with their annoying clicking shutters and the legal contracts that Ken Burns insists upon before panning and zooming to the droning sounds of a fiddle and a vaguely familiar narrative voice.



Yeah, none of that. For all my planning and dreaming, I never expected that my extreme garden would yield only one bloom. One, pictured below. It was time to move on to my next big idea, because, thanks to our undaunted courage, we gardeners never give up. Maybe a terraced garden surrounded by a flowing water feature and cascading native plants. How hard could that be?

Author: Vic Larson

Vic Larson was a senior writer and manager at Abbott Laboratories near Chicago. His work has appeared in a variety of literary journals and anthologies. He is a member of the Port Charlotte Garden Club and is a contributing writer for **Stroll Park Ridge Magazine**. His fiction anthology **Natural Selections** and two-volume memoir **Park Ridge Memories** are available on Amazon. He won the Gulf Coast Writers Association fiction contest.



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GREELEY MORNING GARDEN CLUB CELEBRATES 70 YEARS

Celebrating 70 Years!

Greeley already had a garden club; however, it allowed only couples to join. To address this, the Morning Garden Club was established in April 1956 by a group of 32 women who wanted the opportunity to belong to a garden club. The club received its charter from the Colorado Federation of Garden Clubs on June 25, 1956. It became active right away, working with the Greeley Garden Club and holding its first flower show in June 1956. In 2003, the club changed its name to the Greeley Morning Garden Club.



Throughout the past 70 years, the club has hosted many flower shows, held workshops on making dried floral arrangements, planted trees throughout the city, and designed and maintained gardens across the community. The club has also worked with many organizations, including the Girl Scouts, Boys' Club, Weld County Extension Service, City of Greeley Forestry Department, Kiwanis Club, Habitat for Humanity, the Parks and Recreation Department, and several local schools. The Greeley Morning Garden Club celebrated its 70th anniversary and shared its history with the community on April 18th of this year.

We'd like to highlight Mary Fagerberg, who was instrumental in forming the club and has been a member for 70 years. Over the years, she has held many different positions. As historian, Mary created many scrapbooks documenting the club's history.



Mary is a dedicated gardener. An example of this is when Mary shared a story about how her neighbor allowed her to plant a vegetable garden in the back portion of their yard. When that neighbor sold the home, the new neighbor also allowed Mary to continue gardening there. Since there was no gate, Mary climbed the chain-link fence to access the garden. She continued climbing that fence until just four or five years ago. At 99 years of age, Mary remains very active in the club and is still one of the first to volunteer. Mary is a true treasure to our club.

Author: Pat Smit

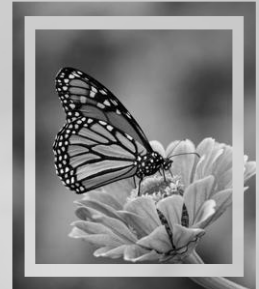
Pat is a member of the Greeley Morning Garden Club and the 2025–2027 President of The Colorado Federation of Garden Clubs.

GROW A POLLINATOR HAVEN

Author: Regina Doherty

HOW A GARDEN CLUB GREW A POLLINATOR HAVEN & KEEPS IT GOING

National Pollinator Week in 2026 started June 22nd. “It is a time to raise awareness for pollinators and spread the word about what we can do to protect them.” This is why the Pollinator Partnership (pollinator.org) began and started this awareness campaign. It is also a reason Lakes & Hills Garden Club in Florida continues to establish and maintain such gardens at five of Mount Dora’s parks at:
<https://www.lakesandhillsgardenclub.com/projects/parks>.



So, what are pollinators? They include a vast array of insects and animals (even humans) that collect pollen and carry it from one plant to the next. Pollinators are responsible for 1/3 of the world’s food supply! That alone is reason to propagate plants for them, and us, to survive.

In Fall 2021, the Lakes and Hills Garden Club’s Monarch Committee secured Mount Dora’s designation as a Monarch City USA, underscoring the city’s commitment to pollinator conservation. By spring, their efforts shifted from planning to planting. On March 23, 2022, the committee set goals for creating public demonstration gardens, and two days later surveyed 23 municipal parks to identify sunny, visible, low-impact sites suitable for monarch habitats. Their findings—along with visits to Monarch Cities Deland and Sanford—shaped a clear approach: gardens should be educational, well labeled, and easy for residents to replicate at home.

On April 6, 2022, Monarch Committee members met with Bob Austin, Mount Dora Horticulture Foreman, at Donnelly Park. He suggested the fountain area as a pilot site—an idea that quickly blossomed into Monarch Hill. Within days, the site was registered as an official Monarch Waystation, and a local landscape company donated 27 milkweed plants.



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GROW A POLLINATOR HAVEN

Author: Regina Doherty (Continued)

HOW A GARDEN CLUB GREW A POLLINATOR HAVEN & KEEPS IT GOING

Since then, we have established and actively maintain a native pollinator demonstration garden in Donnelly Park. This garden serves as a living educational resource, showcasing the ecological value of native plants and their role in supporting pollinators. To sustain and enhance this initiative, we sought funding to replenish native plantings— particularly milkweed—and to replace plants lost to seasonal stress (2 hurricanes, 14” of rain, and 3 freezes).

In August 2024, we hosted Mount Dora’s first Great Southeast Pollinator Count event in Donnelly Park (**The Florida Gardener** Fall 2024 article), engaging the public in citizen science and raising awareness about native species. With continued support, we hope to maintain a vibrant, evolving garden that inspires residents and visitors to incorporate native plants into their own landscapes, fostering a more pollinator-friendly community.



We’ve been promoting the pollinator garden and our recent retaining wall mural dedication (Oct. 2025). With approval from the Mount Dora Public Arts Committee, we wrote an article to promote our efforts towards the garden’s beautification that was published 10/11/25 in the *Triangle Sun*, <https://tinyurl.com/rjwc5m53>.

We also aim to install interpretive signage that explains the benefits of native gardens to the ecosystem and highlights the role of LHGC in community stewardship. Watch our website & Facebook calendars for more events!

Author: Regina Doherty, Lakes & Hills Garden Club

Reggie’s love of gardening began in her family’s backyard, inspired by her father. She is a Master Gardener in New Jersey and Florida and an NGC Landscape Design Consultant. Drawing on her IT, training and teaching background, she creates engaging presentations that help learners grow their gardening skills.

Videos of the wall mural progress and the unveiling ceremony are on our YouTube channel:

- Mural: <https://youtu.be/vMxq3JXc6tO> (Aug-Sept. 2025 photo collage)
- Oct. 17, 2025 Unveiling: <https://youtu.be/sx32gSWvL7g>
- Pollinator Count 2024: <https://youtu.be/69xLedHeyXU> (Aug. 2024 photo collage)

Lakes & Hills Garden Club meets monthly, Oct-May, the second Tuesday of the month. Visit our website: <https://www.lakesandhillsgardenclub.com> for more information!



WHAT'S NEW IN HERBS

Author: Sherie Clarkson



Recently I attended the Herb Society of America's annual convention in San Antonio, Texas, where the theme was "It's Spicier in Texas," highlighting all things peppers. As any good herb enthusiast knows, peppers are high in culinary and medicinal properties. From the mild and meek bell peppers to the hotter than you know what "ghost pepper," the convention covered every aspect of this herb. There were even several peppers I had not heard of and do not know if I am brave enough to try.

One of the newest ones that they spoke of was "Carolina Reaper," a cultivar of the *Capsicum chinense* plant, which has a Scoville rating of 2 million SHUs. A highly potent super-hot pepper created by American breeder Ed Currie, it is known for its gnarled red skin and distinct pointed tail. In fact, it held the Guinness World Record as world's hottest pepper until 2023.



It is surprisingly fruity, floral, and sweet before the intense, lingering heat kicks in. Then look out!

Extreme caution should be taken, wearing gloves when handling and being careful not to touch your face or eyes. It is sold as whole dried pods, crushed flakes or processed powder. It is added to hot sauces, salsa, chilis and spice rubs in tiny amounts.

As I left the convention, I was wondering what else was trending in the World of Herbs. What I found was that the herbal landscape is shifting toward functional wellness, "swicy" (sweet and spicy) culinary profiles, and dual-purpose garden varieties. Here are two emerging trends/products that reflect what's new in the herb world.

1. **Functional Adaptogens:** Demand for botanicals like ashwagandha and medicinal mushrooms remains at historic highs, while "**green powders**" and algae blends are seeing explosive growth.



CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



WHAT'S NEW IN HERBS

Author: Sherie Clarkson (Continued)

2. **Spicy Flavors:** Culinary applications are moving toward sweet-heat fusions such as our pepper friends and elevating underutilized herbs like tarragon and chervil in home kitchens. One of the more interesting herbs that I found is the “**butterfly pea flower**,” which was the Herb Society’s Herb of the Month for September 2025.

Butterfly pea flower or *Clitoria ternatea*, is a plant native to Southeast Asia. Its vibrant blue flowers have been used in traditional medicine for centuries to treat a variety of ailments, including pain, inflammation and anxiety. The flower is also a popular ingredient in many Southeast Asian dishes, where it is used as a natural food coloring. Used mostly as tea, it can be enjoyed either hot or cold. To make the tea, simply steep the dried butterfly pea flowers in hot water for 3-5 minutes until the water turns a bright blue color. The longer you steep the flowers, the darker and richer the blue color will be. You can also add honey or lemon to taste, depending on your preferences.



Butterfly pea flower tea is known for its many health benefits, including promoting healthy hair and skin, providing antioxidant support, and supporting reproductive health. It is generally safe to consume daily as part of a balanced and varied diet. One thing to keep in mind is that butterfly pea flower tea has been known to cause changes in urine color due to the tea’s natural blue pigment. This is harmless and should not be a cause for concern, but it is something to acknowledge.

These are just two of the newest herbs I found on the market. We all like our tried-and-true varieties, but it is always nice to try some new things. The world of herbs is wide and varied so there is something out there that most everyone will find to try. It is just up to you and your imagination.

Author: Sherie Clarkson, NGC Gardening School Accrediting Chair

Sherie Clarkson has been growing herbs for the public for over 40 years. She is the Texas Garden Clubs, Inc., Herb Chairman and the South Central Region Herb Chairman. She has written many articles for TGC as well as for SCR. She also provides fresh herbs for countless programs she gives in the region. She hopes to be the Texas Garden Clubs’ President in about 3 years.



A LIVING LEGACY AT NGC HEADQUARTERS

Author: Mary Warshauer



Visitors to National Garden Clubs, Inc. Headquarters are welcomed by a striking architectural feature: a glass-walled atrium with an open circle to the sky. This serene space honors Mr. and Mrs. Grover Cleveland Spillers, whose influence helped shape NGC's history. Mrs. Spillers served as NCSGC President from 1951–1953, and Mr. Spillers was the first to suggest that NGC establish a permanent headquarters rather than continue renting office space. Their forward-thinking vision is reflected in the garden that bears their name.



Originally designed with Japanese-inspired symbolism, the atrium garden served as a peaceful introduction to the building. By 2019, however, the plantings had aged, and NGC member Jean Ohlmann recognized the need for renewal. Understanding that the atrium is the first impression for all who enter, Jean generously funded a complete redesign. Her support brought together garden designer Jon Carloftis and landscape architect Thomas McKinley, who shared a goal: to create a garden that would be both a visual focal point and a place of quiet retreat.



The renovated garden now features a welcoming bench, a stone path crafted from the original garden stones, and elegant urns modeled after those at Longwood Gardens. The plant palette—Japanese maple, serviceberry, camellia, lilyturf, hostas, ferns, and hellebores—creates a lush, low-maintenance landscape that blends beauty with tranquility. The result is a refreshed space that honors the past while offering a warm, inviting welcome to all who enter the Headquarters.

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A LIVING LEGACY AT NGC HEADQUARTERS

Author: Mary Warshauer (Continued)



The Presidential Tree Collection: History Rooted in Nature

Behind the Headquarters, visitors will find another remarkable feature: **the Presidential Tree Collection**, a grove of cloned trees with deep historical significance. These trees were gifted to NGC by the Michigan-based **Champion Tree Project** and **Bartlett Tree Experts** of Connecticut, organizations dedicated to preserving the genetics of America's oldest and most meaningful trees.



Founded in 1996 by David Milarch and his son Jared, the Champion Tree Project has cloned nearly 100 notable trees, including some of the nation's oldest and largest. Their mission is to safeguard the genetic legacy of these "last great trees of America," many of which are tied to important historical figures and places. Cloning allows the exact genetic material of these remarkable trees to be preserved for future generations.

To honor the four presidents depicted on Mount Rushmore—representing the first 150 years of American history—NGC planted a cloned tree associated with each president's home or daily life:



- George Washington – *Fraxinus americana* (White Ash) from Mount Vernon
- Thomas Jefferson – *Acer saccharum* (Sugar Maple) from Monticello
- Abraham Lincoln – *Quercus alba* (White Oak) from his Kentucky birthplace
- Theodore Roosevelt – *Fagus sylvatica* 'Riversii' (Copper Beech) from Sagamore Hill



Together, the Atrium Garden and the Presidential Tree Collection form a living tribute—celebrating history, honoring leadership, and showcasing the enduring power of plants to connect us to the past.

Author: Mary Warshauer
NGC PH&E Director
National Garden Clubs Inc.
4401 Magnolia Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri



Gardens to Tour

Hidden Garden Gems: Little-Known Gardens Worth Touring in the United States

While renowned destinations such as Longwood Gardens and the New York Botanical Garden attract thousands of visitors each year, some of the country's most enchanting horticultural treasures remain surprisingly under the radar. These lesser-known gardens offer unique plant collections, regional beauty, and peaceful experiences away from the crowds.

COASTAL MAINE BOTANICAL GARDENS: BOOTHBAY, MAINE

Nestled along the rocky coast of Boothbay, Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens showcases nearly 300 acres of gardens, woodlands, and waterfront landscapes. Native plants blend seamlessly with artistic displays and walking trails, creating a garden experience that captures the rugged beauty of New England while highlighting sustainable gardening practices.

GARVAN WOODLAND GARDENS: HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS

Tucked into the Ouachita Mountains near Hot Springs, Garvan Woodland Gardens offers visitors a stunning combination of forest, lake views, and carefully designed plant collections. Spring brings spectacular displays of tulips and azaleas, while the striking Anthony Chapel provides one of the most photographed architectural features in any American garden.

CHANTICLEER GARDEN: PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Often described as a "pleasure garden," Chanticleer is beloved by gardeners in the know but remains relatively unknown to the general public. Located outside Philadelphia, it features imaginative garden rooms, creative plant combinations, and innovative design ideas that inspire both amateur and experienced gardeners alike.

THE RUTH BANCROFT GARDEN: WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA

Located in Walnut Creek, this remarkable garden is dedicated almost entirely to drought-tolerant plants. Visitors can explore a living collection of succulents, cacti, agaves, and other water-wise species that demonstrate how beautiful and sustainable gardening can thrive in arid climates.

LEU GARDENS: ORLANDO, FLORIDA

Hidden within the heart of Orlando, Leu Gardens spans nearly 50 acres and features tropical plants, flowering trees, and one of the largest rose collections in the Southeast. Shaded pathways and year-round blooms make it a delightful retreat from the city's theme parks and attractions.

SUMMARY

These hidden gems may not always appear on the typical garden-tour itinerary, but they offer some of the most memorable and inspiring horticultural experiences in America. For gardeners seeking fresh ideas, unique plants, and quieter paths, these destinations are well worth the journey.

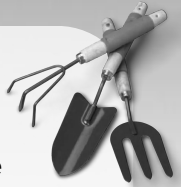
RESEARCHER: VICTORIA SCHMIDT, TNG EDITOR



COOL ONLINE TOOLS

Author: Victoria Schmidt
TNG Editor-in-Chief

The modern gardener's toolkit now includes satellite sun maps, AI design assistants, bird-identifying feeders, and personalized planting coaches. Technology won't replace gardening knowledge—but it can help gardeners make better decisions and spend more time enjoying the garden."



10 Cool New Tools Gardeners Are Talking About

1. **Rhubarb Garden AI:** Think of it as an AI gardening assistant. It provides personalized growing advice, weather-based alerts, garden tracking, and even connects gardeners with local experts and communities. Available at Apple Apps: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/rhubarb-ai-garden-planner/>
2. **Fernly AI:** Upload a photo of your yard and receive AI-generated planting plans, disease diagnoses, watering recommendations, and visualizations of how your garden could look. <https://fernly.ai/>
3. **FlorAI:** A photo-based garden design tool that allows users to experiment with different garden styles before purchasing plants or materials. <https://www.easygarden.ai/>
4. **YardWise:** Combines plant ID with local weather, frost dates, and hardiness zone information to provide location-specific recommendations. <https://www.yardwiseapp.com/>
5. **Seed to Spoon:** This popular planner now includes advanced garden layout tools, vertical garden planning, planting schedules, and AI-assisted growing guidance. <https://www.seedtospoon.net>
6. **Shadowmap:** Still one of the coolest planning tools available today. It creates a visual model of sunlight and shade movement throughout the year so you can place plants more strategically. <https://shadowmap.org/learn/plan-a-smarter-garden-with-shadowmap>
7. **iNaturalist:** More than a plant ID app, it helps gardeners identify beneficial insects, pollinators, birds, weeds, and wildlife while contributing to scientific research. <https://www.inaturalist.org/>
8. **GeoGardenClub:** A community-focused platform that combines garden planning, task management, local gardening data, and collaboration. <https://geogardenclub.com/>
9. **Merlin:** Bird identification by photo or sound from Cornell Lab of Ornithology. <https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>
10. **AI Garden Design Apps:** A growing category of tools allows gardeners to upload a photo of their landscape and instantly receive planting plans and design concepts customized to their climate and growing conditions. Garden designers are increasingly embracing these tools to help homeowners visualize possibilities before they plant. Review the list in the Spring Issue of TNG.



The Biggest Trend for 2026

"Precision Gardening" is emerging as one of the year's most influential trends. By combining AI, climate data, soil analysis, sun mapping, and smart irrigation tools, gardeners can make more informed decisions and create healthier, more sustainable landscapes with less guesswork.



GARDENING FOR NATIVE BIRDS

★ **Author:** Cathy Reed Weber

Summer is coming, and you can help native birds thrive right where you live by making your garden more bird-friendly.



Garden with Native Plants

The plants you select to grow in your garden will also impact visiting birds, both the locals as well as any migrants that may stop in. Studies have shown that native plants provide more food for insects than non-native plants. When insects thrive, birds benefit by having a natural food source. By choosing native instead of nonnative fruiting shrubs, you can offer birds a natural food source without spreading invasive species across the landscape.

Avoid Pesticides

Pesticides which are toxic to birds can harm them directly through contact, but it is important to note birds are also harmed if they eat contaminated seeds or prey. Pesticides can also harm birds indirectly by reducing the number of available insects, which birds need to survive.

Provide a Feeder Station

If you want to see more birds in your garden, set up a feeder station. Make sure your station is over five feet high to keep it out of reach of predators and pets. If you decide to hang it from a sturdy branch, be aware that squirrels, raccoons, and mice may make it their #1 snack stop. Consider using a baffle, seed tray, or tube feeders which make it easy for birds and difficult for local mammals.

If you're going to feed with seed, make sure that the seeds are formulated for wild birds, but consider supplementing bird seed by offering cut fruit. You can hang pieces of fruit on a wire or nail pieces of fruit onto an old board. During the winter provide high-energy suet or lard blocks for non-migrating birds



Remember, keep your feeding station clean to minimize the spread of disease.

Provide Water

When creating a bird-friendly habitat, having a source of clean water is often overlooked. Birds need water year-round (yes, even in the winter). There is an assortment of man-made bird baths for birds to drink and bathe in, but you can also consider providing a simple basin or shallow dish.

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GARDENING FOR NATIVE BIRDS

Author: Cathy Reed Weber (Continued)

Make Windows Safer

At night, lighted windows can attract and kill migrating birds, so make a point of turning off lights or closing the curtains during periods of high migration. During the daytime, windows reflect foliage or sky, encouraging birds to fly into them, so consider options like window tape or Zen wind curtains (aka Acopian BirdSaver) to keep birds in the sky where they belong.

Keep Cats Indoors

Bird enthusiasts are not anti-cat—I have two cherished companions of my own—but keeping them inside, especially during nesting and fledging periods, is good for the local wildlife. Instead, consider setting up cat patios, or catios, which are collapsible and easy to store. A catio provides your feline with all the sights, sounds, and smells of being outdoors without the more troubling interactions with birds.

Plant Trees

When considering the How of bringing birds in your yard or garden, most people overlook the best available option: planting a tree. A long-term commitment to birds of today and in the future is choosing to plant a native tree that works as both a shelter and a food source.

One good choice is *Cornus florida*, the flowering dogwood or American dogwood. It is a species of flowering tree in the family Cornaceae, native to Eastern North America and Northern Mexico.



Another good choice is *Quercus alba*, the white oak, which is one of the preeminent hardwoods of Eastern and Central North America. It is a long-lived oak, native to Eastern and Central North America and perfect for supporting native wildlife.

Links

- **10 Plants for a Bird-Friendly Yard:** <https://www.audubon.org/news/10-plants-bird-friendly-yard>
- **Plants for Birds:** <https://www.audubon.org/plantsforbirds>
- **USDA: Birdscaping 101:** <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/midewin/newsroom/releases/birdscaping-101-choose-prairie-plants-can-attract-favorite-birds-year>

Author: Cathy Reed Weber is a garden enthusiast who loves to share her knowledge with others. A writer since she was old enough to hold a pencil, Cathy is editor of The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc. **Indiana Gardens.** She also serves as TGCI's Birds & Butterfly Chair.



NGC News

- NGC Events list on the NGC Website: <https://gardenclub.org/events>
- [NGC 2027 Convention May 13–17, 2027 in Madison, Wisconsin](#)

EVENTS

- [See the NGC Events Page for more details](#) (Events and Schools)

July

- PLANT AMERICA in red, white, and blue! Plant your gardens, towns, cities, and states in vibrant patriotic colors as we celebrate America's 250th birthday!
- Together, let's create the most breathtaking July 4th display of red, white, and blue our nation has ever seen. Join us in making this the most unforgettable floral celebration in our nation's history!

September

- [2026 NGC Fall Board Meeting](#) (Sep 17 2026) Virtual

EVENTS

GENERAL

- See our [NGC Blog News & Updates](#)
- Check out our latest [Plant-A-Tree](#) Information on the NGC website.
- Membership Mondays: Dates TBD
- AMES Grant Applications accepted from January 1 through March 1 each year
- Espoma Grant Applications accepted from October 1 through May 31 each year
- [Scholarships](#) deadline: 1 February each year

Volunteers Needed

- The TNG en Español is on hold. We need more volunteers to help translate TNG.
- We need volunteers to help get articles into Canva for TNG. We will train you. Contact [Victoria Schmidt](#) for more details.

NGC Flower Show Judges and FSS Handbook Users:

Please note that the 2026 Flower Show School (FSS) Handbook is currently under revision and will not be available by the July 1 deadline. Until the revised handbook is published, please continue using the 2025 FSS Handbook. We will notify you as soon as the 2026 edition becomes available.

HQ News & Announcements

- Please send HQ your member email addresses to update our contact list for TNG and important blast messages.
- We do not sell or give the contact list to anyone else.
- We also need your State Chairpersons' emails so NGC Chairs can send information about programs and committees to include deadlines.



SWING INTO SUMMER: 10 TIPS FOR A THRIVING GARDEN

Author: Victoria Schmidt

Summer is when gardens truly come into their own. Flowers burst into bloom, vegetables race toward harvest, and pollinators fill the landscape with activity. Yet summer's heat, humidity, and occasional drought can also challenge even experienced gardeners. A few simple practices can help keep your garden healthy, productive, and beautiful throughout the season.



1. **Water Deeply, Not Frequently:** Encourage deep root growth by watering deeply as needed rather than providing frequent shallow watering. Early morning is the best time to water, reducing evaporation and allowing foliage to dry before evening.
2. **Mulch for Moisture and Weed Control:** A 2-to 3-inch layer of mulch helps conserve soil moisture, regulate temperature, and suppress weeds. Mulch also improves soil as it breaks down over time.
3. **Deadhead and Groom Regularly:** Removing spent flowers encourages many plants to produce additional blooms. Regular deadheading keeps plants looking their best and reduces opportunities for disease.
4. **Monitor for Pests and Diseases:** Summer conditions can encourage rapid pest and disease development. Inspect plants regularly and address issues early before they become a problem.
5. **Harvest Often:** Vegetables such as beans, cucumbers, and tomatoes produce more when harvested regularly. Frequent harvesting prevents produce from becoming overripe.
6. **Feed Heavy Feeders:** Many flowers, vegetables, and containers benefit from supplemental fertilization during the growing season. Follow product recommendations and avoid over-fertilizing, which can stress plants during hot weather.
7. **Support Pollinators:** Include a variety of flowering plants that provide nectar and pollen throughout the season. Avoid pesticide use whenever possible and provide a shallow water source for bees and butterflies.
8. **Refresh Containers:** Container gardens dry out more quickly during summer. Check them daily, water as needed, and remove spent blooms to keep displays vibrant. A mid-season application of fertilizer can also boost performance.
9. **Plan for Fall While Summer is Still Here:** Many gardeners focus solely on summer tasks, but midsummer is the perfect time to plan fall vegetable gardens. Order seeds early and prepare garden space before temperatures begin to cool.
10. **Take Time to Enjoy Your Garden:** It's easy to become focused on maintenance tasks, but summer is also a time to appreciate the fruits of your labor. Spend time in your garden observing pollinators, enjoying blooms, or just having a cup of coffee.

Author: Victoria Schmidt
TNG Editor-in-Chief

Is it a horticultural lecture disguised as a stand-up comedy routine? Or is the other way around?

Whatever it is, 'Gardening Is Murder' educates audiences as it makes them laugh. It is equal parts humor, psychology, and gardening wisdom; a husband's point of view of what goes on in the garden. State federations, district meetings, and individual clubs across the country have enjoyed his talks. Their feedback? "More people signed up for your talk than any other event" and "Uniformly positive comments – highest praise."

To book Neal for your club, state, or regional event, write Neal02052@Gmail.com.



But he also writes books that will keep you turning pages well past your bedtime. His 17 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. There's frequently a strong horticultural element and more than a dash of humor. *You can order his books in print and Kindle formats on Amazon. Or, to read first chapters, go to www.TheHardingtonPress.com.*

Summer Activities

Summer is the perfect time to get outside, enjoy the garden, and share your love of plants with family, friends, and fellow garden club members. Whether you're looking for personal enjoyment, educational opportunities, or community engagement, these activities can add a little extra fun to the gardening season.

- Create a moon garden featuring white and silver plants that glow in the evening.
- Start a pollinator count and record the bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds visiting your garden.
- Keep a garden journal with photos documenting blooms, harvests, and wildlife sightings.
- Grow a sunflower and measure its growth each week.
- Experiment with a new plant you've never grown before.
- Create a container garden using an unusual theme, such as herbs for cooking or plants with colorful foliage.
- Host a backyard garden picnic.
- Set up a rain gauge and track summer rainfall.
- Take weekly photographs from the same location to create a seasonal garden timeline.
- Press flowers and leaves to create bookmarks or artwork.

"Gardens are not just places to grow plants—they're places to grow memories."

Author Unknown

DID YOU KNOW?

NGC LEGACY GIVING

Author: Bud Qualk

Are you up to date on your Estate Planning Plan? Many of us aren't. If you haven't examined it in a few years, you need to see if it needs updating. For starters, everyone needs a power of attorney, health care surrogate, will, and maybe a trust. If you want to distribute all your assets at the time of your death, then a will might work. On the other hand, a trust will allow you to control how your assets are distributed decades after your passing. Married individuals with just a will should understand that all the assets are in control of the last to die. It may start out as "I give everything to you and you give everything to me," but when one passes, the last to die might want to get remarried, have a close friend, etc. and they can change their will. With being remarried with stepchildren, you definitely might need a simple trust to make sure your assets go to your children or to other specific bequests.



Specific bequests are gifts to children, friends, family members, churches, schools, favorite charities, etc. Most gifting is tax free, not all, but most. Our Legacy Giving Committee will continue to update you on how Estate Planning works until you become Estate Planning savvy.

"Did You Know" there is a federal rule on gifting while you are alive called the Annual Exclusion? Starting in 2025 you can give as many people as you want up to \$19,000. The IRS does not even want to know about it. Remember, gifting to a 501(c)3 is almost always tax free at any amount.

In the future there will be more articles for "Did You Know" discussing power of attorneys, health care surrogates, wills, trusts, taxes, and gifting. Remember that NGC is a tax free 501(c)3 with many gifting categories. **WHY NOT NGC PLANT AMERICA?** More than 250 grants have been awarded to NGC member clubs since 2017 totaling more than \$390,000. Grants are awarded in amounts up to \$2,000.

Why not join our mission to support and enhance public areas and community gardens nationwide? Thanks to generous donor Barbara Baker, your support made through the "Double the Impact" donation form will be matched up to \$50,000!

PLANT AMERICA was established in 2017, guided by former NGC President Nancy Hargroves. If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me.

Author: Bud Qualk

Email: budqualk@gmail.com **Phone:** 270-933-7051

NGC Legacy Giving or Planning Chairman / Retired Bank Trust Officer



REGION NEWS



Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs

I am pleased to report that the Central Atlantic Region a.k.a. 'CAR-SGC' is thriving with more than 22,000 members made up of a tapestry of talent from the 7 geographical areas throughout our Region. Those areas are Delaware, Maryland, National Capital Area, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania. All 7 'states' invited me to attend their Annual Spring Conferences. It was an honor to represent the CAR-SGC as Director visiting state clubs mid-April to June.

During my term, I'm working to strengthen ties to our local garden clubs through my visits, installations of officers, and promotion of my Director's theme ... PLANT AMERICA: Gardening for a healthy mind, body and soul. I am proud to announce that a monetary gift will be awarded to the state garden club project that best embodies this theme. The award will be presented at the 2026 CAR-SGC Conference to be held in Cleveland, Ohio, during the 3rd week of October. Additionally, I strive to develop a closer relationship with the clubs of the Central Atlantic Region by collecting historical data from the 7 states for our CAR-SGC Archives which will be included on the Region's website. Let us not forget those leaders who came before us; thus, I've reached out to our former Regional Directors and State Presidents for assistance with this task.

Lastly, I'm proud of our strong turnout at the National Garden Clubs' 2026 Convention in St. Louis. CAR-SGC celebrated the opportunity to gather as a Region by hosting a cocktail party for our members along with attendance by a couple of NGC officers, too. It was a great time to cultivate the camaraderie of friends (both old and new). Cheers to our fellow garden clubbers!



Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs' President Alva Hutchison, CAR-SGC Director Beverly Kazickas, & 1st Vice President Sandra Fitt @ 2026 DFGC Spring Meeting in Newark, DE. (L to R)



CAR Members held a cocktail party to celebrate gathering in St. Louis at the NGC's Annual Convention.



Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania President Patricia Wolanski & Beverly Kazickas @ 2026 GCFP Convention in Erie, PA.



Beverly Kazickas, Director of CAR-SGC, admires the Tribute Design made in her honor by designer Judy Morley at the 2026 GCFP Convention in Erie, PA.

Beverly Kazickas Director, 2025 - 2027
Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs, Inc.

Photo Credits: Michael Kazickas

www.gardenclub.org

REGION NEWS

SOUTH CENTRAL
REGION

South Central Region



Here are some photos from the recent South Central Region 95th Spring Convention hosted by Texas Garden Clubs, Inc. in San Antonio, TX.

1. SCR Director, Christine Longthorp, aka Longhorn, receiving Presidential Citation from Texas GC President, Linda Jean Brown
2. Donna Donnelly standing by a design created for her
3. Dogwood Garden Club - District III Texas members with NGC President, Donna Donnelly



4. Donna and Harold Donnelly
5. SCR Presidents with NGC President Donna Donnelly
 - Arkansas - Nancy Rana
 - Texas - Linda Jean Brown
 - Donna Donnelly
 - Oklahoma - Melanie Spence
 - New Mexico - Johnese Turri



6. President Donnelly saying fashion changes except for cowboy boots
7. Small group at SCR 95th Spring Convention posing with NGC President Donna Donnelly
8. NGC President Donna Donnelly and SCR Director Christine Longthorp
9. River Cruise on San Antonio's River Walk

Author: LindaJean Brown TX



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*](https://gardenclub.org/our-schools)



NGC Reports

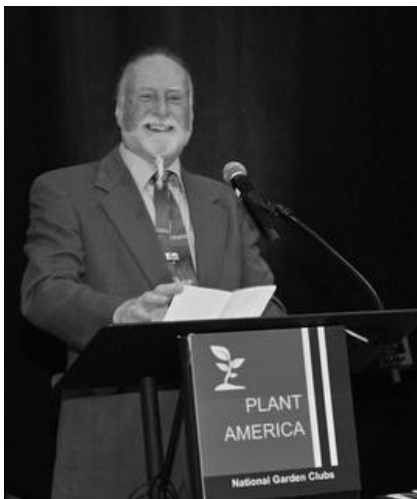
Award of Excellence Report

Congratulations to all the Award of Excellence Recipients! On Wednesday, May 6, at the National Garden Clubs, Inc. Convention in St Louis, MO, NGC announced the 2026 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 to an individual, an organization, or an institution that has made a significant contribution toward the advancement of NGC's mission.

The W. Atlee Burpee Company has been a longstanding supporter of the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania (GCFP), donating thousands of seed packets annually to various districts, clubs, youth programs, and community projects across the state. Their philanthropy, driven by The Burpee Foundation, focuses on promoting gardening education, reducing hunger, and supporting initiatives like "Growing in the Classroom," the White House Kitchen Garden, the National Pollinator Initiative, and aiding Ukrainian families with food insecurity. This collaboration, initiated by GCFP member Marj Sears in 2019, has significantly contributed to the success of GCFP events and the growth of its gardening community.



Joe W. Willis, PhD, nominated by the Louisiana Garden Club Federation, Inc. (LGCF), is a Horticulture Agent for the Louisiana State University AgCenter. He is recognized for his significant contributions to horticulture and community service in the Greater New Orleans area and Louisiana in general. He has played a key role in organizing and promoting LGCF events like the NGC Standard Flower Show (SFS) "what is SFS" at the Annual Spring Garden Show, developing educational resources such as the "Greater New Orleans" GNO Gardening monthly magazine and online gardening courses, and pioneering innovative training models for Louisiana Master Gardeners. His efforts have benefited numerous organizations and have had a lasting impact on gardening education and community engagement.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



NGC Reports

Award of Excellence Report

The Award of Excellence #SR-1 (Continued)

Norman Schilling, nominated by Nevada Garden Clubs, Inc., is a passionate landscape designer in Southern Nevada, dedicated to sustainable landscaping and responsible water use to preserve the urban canopy and environment. He has received numerous awards for his work, including the Southern Nevada Water Authority Landscape Award and the Linn Mills Award, and actively engages in community education through his nursery Mojave Bloom, and programs like NPR's "Desert Bloom." Norm advocates against the excessive use of artificial turf and works with organizations like the Water Fairness Coalition to promote environmentally conscious practices.



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.

Large membership (3000-7999): the winner is the **Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania** for the "GCFP Reads Program," one of President Pat Wolanski's statewide initiatives. This program encourages Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania members to explore books about nature, gardening, landscape design, and the environment. Led by Sharon Richardson, the program launched with a featured book, purchased and distributed copies across districts, and invited members of all ages to read and share their reflections. Early results include increased youth engagement (through youth editions of nature and gardening books), book swaps, guest speakers, and new opportunities for community partnerships.



The SR-3 Award of Excellence For Regions: The SR-3 Award of Excellence For Regions is given during the second year of an Administration, so it is not awarded this year.

Author:

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



NGC Reports

PLANT AMERICA Grants Program

What a banner year the Plant America Grants programs have had this past year. 2025-2026 has seen an array of grants awarded to clubs for the “regular” Plant America Program and also the 250th Anniversary Blue/Gold Star grant program. Both were very successful.

One example of the Blue/Gold Star Memorial Beautification grant is in Issaquah, Washington. This club is working to celebrate many veteran holidays as well as the 250th Anniversary. They plan to have banners, flags, a reception and more. After weeding, planting and mulching, the Blue Star Garden was ready (and this was for Memorial Day). This is one of many gardens that are being prepared for July 4. Congratulations to all these clubs.



An example of the Plant America Grant program is demonstrated by Boone County, Kentucky. In 2025 the club kicked off their animal shelter beautification project. The before and after pictures say everything, and I understand a few animals were adopted. A win-win for sure. Again, the same can be said for all the Plant America recipients...this is one of many. Congratulations to all clubs and councils.



Please know the 2026 Plant America Grant programs are starting again for 2027 projects. The deadline is October 15. Apply now! Remember this year a few “non-NGC” organizations may receive a grant too. What a way to promote NGC. Stayed tuned to the new Blue/Gold Star Grant initiative! Thank you to all the “Double the Impact” donations.

Author: Val Story, Plant America Grant Program Chairman



Membership Mondays



The National Garden Clubs' Membership Committee is pleased to announce the return of regularly scheduled Membership Mondays. The complete calendar for the year will be announced in August, but here is a teaser of things to come.

- In August, the 2025-2027 National Garden Clubs' President Donna Donnelly will welcome members for the 2026-2027 club year and highlight the organization's accomplishments during her first year. She will also share her vision and plans for the remaining year of her term.
- Our international clubs are very active and do an exceptional job with their flower shows and the fabulous designs. We have scheduled one of the international designers for an October session.
- Decorating for the holidays can be stressful and the Membership Committee hopes to reduce some of your stress with a session on "Simple, but Elegant Floral Arrangements for the Holidays." This session is scheduled for November.
- Used correctly, social media can be a great recruitment tool as well as a way to keep current members connected. Garden clubs have learned to effectively use Facebook to share their clubs' meetings, programs and events. Some have reached out and started experimenting with Instagram, Substack, and, yes, even TikTok. To give us practical tips on using the power of social media, Trish Bender will give a presentation on "Effective Use of Social Media" in January 2027.

Each Membership Monday session will be announced via an email from NGC, and the information will be posted later to the NGC website with a Zoom link to join. NGC is no longer offering pre-registration for the Membership Monday sessions. Instead, you access the link from the NGC website under "Events." This is a different process from previous years, so we want to make everyone aware of this change.

If there are topics that you would like to see covered in future Membership Monday sessions, please let the Membership Committee know. Send suggestions to galedfthomas@gmail.com.

Author: Gale Thomas, 2025-2027 Membership Committee Chairman

Email: galedfthomas@gmail.com





Membership Tips

Visibility Matters

When people move to a new area, retire, or start looking for a new hobby, they almost always begin their search online. They're looking for connection, community, and purpose—and that's exactly what garden clubs offer. But if your club isn't visible online, they may never find you. Today's community organizations meet people where they are: on websites, Instagram, TikTok, and even Facebook. That's where your future members are—and where your club needs to be to welcome them.

There was a time when a notice in the local newspaper or church bulletin was enough. While those still have value, they no longer reach the audiences they once did. Facebook may connect you with some newcomers, but most young people have moved to other platforms. Instagram is very popular right now and easy to maintain. Activity is important, though. People notice when accounts are updated regularly or not updated at all. Posting one or two photos a week is enough to show that your club is active and welcoming. A member who enjoys taking and sharing photos can make a big impact.

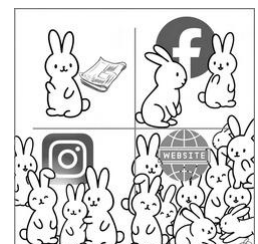
A website, however, remains your most effective tool. It doesn't need to be complicated or expensive. Even a simple one-page site with your mission, meeting time and location, and a few photos can make it easy for someone to find and join you.

Many of you are saying, "I can't do any of that!" You don't have to do this alone. Many middle and high school students need community service hours, and building a basic website can be a great project. There might be members with children or grandchildren who would be thrilled to update your club's Instagram page. You know if a 10-year-old is posting gardening pictures, they're going to be great! It's a simple way to connect generations while strengthening your club's presence. You may even get new members!

One practical tip: Use a shared club email for social media accounts, like YourClubName@gmail.com, and make sure the club president has the password. When responsibilities change, access can be easily passed on, ensuring continuity.

Make visibility a priority this season. Every new member starts with a simple search. By increasing your visibility, you're not just promoting your club - you're opening the door to new ideas, new friendships, and more possibilities. Your next member is already looking - make sure they can find you.

Author: Bernadette Sterry
Pacific Region, Membership, OSFGC (Oregon),
1st Vice President, Membership, Beaverton
Garden Club, President



NGC Reports

DAILY NEWS
**NATURAL
DISASTER!**

Natural Disasters USA Grants

I have received two more final reports from grant recipients. The first report was sent in from the Richmond Hill Garden Club of Georgia. They received their grant in November of 2024. The restoration project was to their native plant garden in Henderson Park, Richmond Hill, Georgia. They were assisted in the planting by a local Girl Scout Troop. A local tree company donated mulch, and The Coastal Bryan Tree Foundation donated a couple of trees to add some color to the garden. The garden club also had received grants from Ames Tools and Espoma which were used in completing this project.



This project was covered in a wonderful article in the **Bryan County Magazine**, including many beautiful pictures, and club members were the cover picture! The community certainly appreciates all the work these club members do and contribute to their area. These members are truly committed to restoring and enhancing local green spaces.



NGC Reports

DAILY NEWS
**NATURAL
DISASTER!**

Natural Disasters USA Grants (Continued)

The second final report was from The Port Charlotte Garden Club of Florida. The garden club members, assisted by the Public Works Department of Charlotte County and the Homestead Favorites Organic Farm, restored the Butterfly/Pollinator Garden in Port Charlotte County Beach Park. The park had been destroyed by Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Hilton in 2024.



Because of the intensive storm damage, the entire park area was fenced off to the public for safety reasons for over a year. The club had a new watering system installed, added over 4 cubic yards of topsoil, planted, fertilized, mulched, and labeled nearly 40 plants within the 15' x 30' garden area. This garden club had created this educational butterfly/pollinator garden in 2019 and has maintained it ever since.



This vibrant, colorful garden will now continue to provide educational information about pollinators and will assist in bringing back much-needed pollinators to their community.

Author: Josephine Goodenow
NGC Natural Disaster USA Grant Chairman



NGC Reports



Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Program

President John F. Kennedy stated, “A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers.”

As the United States approaches the historic milestone of its 250th anniversary, we have a profound opportunity to honor the service and sacrifice of our military in a powerful way. In 2025, National Garden Clubs launched the Plant America Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Beautification Grant. By February 2026, we distributed funds to 91 garden clubs that applied for this grant. Our work enters a historical frame – one that invites reflection, not only on where the nation has been, but how it chooses to remember. This initiative will be a symbolic gesture of unity, gratitude, and national pride that will blossom in every corner of our country.



Let us be mindful that color speaks when words fall short. The red, white, and blue planting scheme transforms a Memorial Marker into a living flag – one that blooms, grows, and endures through the seasons. It invites reflection, sparks conversation, and ensures that the stories of our military heroes and their families are never forgotten. The color red represents valor, sacrifice, and the blood shed for our freedoms. The color white represents purity of purpose, peace, and the unwavering integrity of service. The color blue represents loyalty, perseverance, and the unity of a grateful nation. Together, these colors not only form our flag, but are the heart of the American spirit. We are reminded of freedom earned, lives given, and families forever changed.

The Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Program continues to stand as a visible tribute to the courage, sacrifice, and resilience of America’s military service men and women and their families. These markers serve as educational touch points within our communities, reminding all who pass of the sacrifices made in service to our nation. A grateful nation remembers – and that remembrance, when thoughtfully cultivated, becomes a legacy that will endure beyond a single generation.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude and recognition to the countless garden clubs across our nation for their dedication and 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 preserve the historical significance and also renew our national commitment to honoring their memory. As we restore these Memorial Markers, we are strengthening our connection to the principles of freedom and democracy that our military fought to protect. We are ensuring that future generations understand the true cost of liberty and resolute patriotism that continue to inspire our nation.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



NGC Reports



Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Program

The national statistics are:

- Memorial Markers May 31, 2025 – May 31, 2026 = 98 Markers
- Blue Star Memorial Markers = 61 Markers
- Gold Star Families Memorial Markers = 37 Markers
- A multitude of Blue Star and Gold Star Families
- Refurbishments and Replacements

Total Memorial Markers across the United States of America:

- May 31, 2024 = 3,991 Markers
- Blue Star Memorial Markers = 3,700 Markers
- Gold Star Families Memorial Markers = 291 Markers



Sewah Studios is the only company that produces Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers. Each marker is carefully made to the Garden Club's specifications, which is a painstaking process. Production of the markers requires 24 – 28 weeks minimum from the time the check and order form are delivered by Certified Mail to Sewah. Please do not plan your dedications until you have received your marker. Sewah Studios will guarantee the marker for 5 years once the marker has been received and approved by the garden club.

Below is the pricing for Memorial Markers for 2026. Pricing Effective 1/1/2026-12/31/2206.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| • Marker, 7' post, shipping | \$2,460.00 |
| • Marker, 10' post, shipping | \$2,635.00 |
| • Byway Plaques | \$ 785.00 |
| • Replacement 7' Posts | \$ 375.00 |
| • Replacement 10' Post | \$ 500.00 |
| • Refurbishment | \$1,230.00 |
| • Refurbishment with Cap Repair | \$1,485.00 |
| • Extra Shipping (western states) | \$ 300.00 |

Printable Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker trifold brochures can be found on the NGC Blue Star and Gold Star Families website.

State Memorial Marker Chairmen 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, along with any corrections that needed to be addressed.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



NGC Reports



Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Program

Across highways and byways, in public gardens and quiet memorial spaces, these red, white, and blue plantings create a visual celebration of our nation's history. Over time, they form what may be understood as a national wave of color and meaning – a living ribbon of remembrance that flows through towns, cities, and rural landscapes alike.



NOTE: Photo retouched using AI.

As the United States moves toward its semi-quincentennial, this coordinated effort offers aesthetic unity, tending and sustaining beauty in honor of those who have served. In this way, the red, white, and blue landscape becomes a form of national storytelling.

It affirms that remembrance, when expressed through living landscapes, can move across a nation like a wave – continuous, evolving, and enduring.

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.

President Calvin Coolidge stated, *“A nation which forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten.”*

Let us never forget.

Author: Candace F. Wells, Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Chairman
TGFC Scholarship Chairman / Deep South Scholarship Chairman

Email: cfw1865@gmail.com / **Phone:** 423-304-3577



LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Down the Garden Path

Landscape Design School News

Author: Anna O'Kelly

Down the Garden Path

The schools' forum at the recent NGC convention was a very popular event, and I was honored to represent Landscape Design School (LDS). There was such a large turnout that the room quickly reached maximum capacity and members had to be turned away. The NGC schools continue to be a key benefit for members. Representatives from each of the four schools presented a brief overview of their school before the discussion was opened to questions or comments from the floor.



A few highlights from the LDS commentary: From April 1, 2025, to May 1, 2026, 19 courses were held and over 600 attendees participated in Landscape Design Schools.

- Many schools are in-person, but some states offer hybrid and virtual courses. These are very helpful to members in states that do not offer courses.
- Courses may be taken in any order and are open to both NGC members and non-members. Exams are required if participants are seeking consultant status.
- Landscape Design School teaches consultants to create plans for personal use and is a valuable tool to develop designs for schools, churches, and community gardens.



Participants had many questions, but one of particular interest that pertains to all four schools was raised. Who handles consultant records if a state doesn't have a school's chairman? The somewhat surprising answer is that the responsibility for record keeping defaults to the State President.

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LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Down the Garden Path

Landscape Design School News

Author: Anna O'Kelly (Continued)

Since becoming a regional accrediting chairman in 2023, I think I finally fully understand the complexity of making sure the accrediting process runs smoothly. One very important procedural step that isn't addressed in the 2025 revised Schools Handbook is that before a student or consultant registers for a course (or refresher), they should request their approved Form 6 or Form 7 from their state schools chairman to send along with their registration to the school registrar. This step is particularly critical if the course is out of state. Members are taking courses, but their state school chairman is unaware.



We have several Landscape Design School courses scheduled for the rest of 2026. Please be sure to check your Good Standing Status so that you can refresh your credentials if they lapse on December 31, 2026!



Author: Anna O'Kelly

Anna O'Kelly is the Landscape Design School Regional Accrediting Chairman for the Central and South Atlantic Regions. She is a member of Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland and an NGC Four Star member.

Chair: Carol Yee

Email: mscyee@hotmail.com

Carol Yee, of Illinois, is the NGC Landscape Design School Chair and a 5-Star Member.



NGC Reports



National Garden Clubs (NGC) Environmental School

National Garden Clubs offers four Schools of courses that all support the goal of education and environmental responsibility. These Schools bring together like-minded people who:

- Appreciate plants for their beauty and for the food they produce
- Understand the importance of right-plant, right-place for garden success
- Know that it is VITAL that we do more to understand and protect our environment

Each one of you is among like-minded people. How many of you have completed at least some of the courses in the four schools? Great! If you raised your hand, promise me you will go to your garden club and tell them about what you learned in those courses. Find out when your state or district will be hosting one of the schools and share that at your meeting. Environmental School is for EVERYONE. Each of us makes decisions every day that impact our environment. Every day? Yes, every single day.

I never realized Florida is facing a water shortage. How can a state that's surrounded on three sides by water be facing a water shortage? I attended one of the Environmental School courses and listened to a Florida professor explain the shrinking supply of underground fresh water and the growing demands on water by residents and the need for fresh water by the agriculture industry. Wow – they will run out of fresh water if changes aren't made. What can I do? I can turn off the faucet while I'm brushing my teeth. I can minimize outdoor watering by the plants I choose for my landscape. I don't need to wash my car every week.

I can make a difference in the resources I use, the products I buy and the products I choose NOT to buy, the packaging I recycle, and my choice in transportation. That's what I can do. YOU can do those things too. Now there are TWO of us making better choices for the environment. But we need to do more, so each of us needs to find a friend or an entire garden club and bring them along to courses in the Environmental School. More than 350 Environmental School students completed courses this year, learning more about how we can care for our air, land and water resources.

MISSION STATEMENT

NGC website: Schools Handbook (p26-27):

To teach environmental literacy to cherish, protect and conserve the living earth.

Author: Cathy Waitinas serves on the NGC Board as an Accreditor for the Environmental Schools Deep South and Rock Mountain Regions.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A. Develop a citizenry that is aware of, and concerned about, the total environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, attitude, motivation, skill and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.
- B. Promote the NGC, Inc. Environmental School.
- C. Foster value systems that preserve the biotic community.
- D. Increase awareness of the interdependencies of life on earth.
- E. Prevent pollution to protect public health and heal the planet.
- F. Help citizens become involved with their communities and the natural world.
- G. Network and reach out to all segments of the community to achieve common goals.
- H. Encourage conservation education programs in all levels of garden club activity.
- I. Promote the inclusion of environmental education in classrooms and youth organizations throughout the country.
- J. Establish Environmental Councils to provide opportunity for personal growth and community service for NGC, Inc. Environmental Consultants and Provisionals.

Environmental literacy is a learning process concerned with the interrelationship within and between the components of the natural and human-made world which leads to responsible stewardship of the earth.





COMAAI



NGC, Inc. International Affiliates

Sharing an International Love of Gardening

TNG has the pleasure to introduce a new exciting section in our publication dedicated to The National Garden Clubs, Inc. outreach into Latin America.

The committee is known as COMAAL – Comité de Actividades de Afiliadas Internacionales. It represents the three international NGC, Inc. regions of Mexico, Central America and Caribbean, and South America.

COMAAL is very active in Flower Shows and Educational activities. Because of the vast region and diverse countries it covers, COMAAI members have developed a finetuned virtual outreach, in addition to presential activities, to its entire community conformed of 14 countries and over 300 affiliated clubs.

Herewith, we wish to share with our readership the beauties these regions wish to offer you.



REGION I

REGION II

REGION III





COMAAI



Afiliados Internacionales de NGC, Inc.

Compartiendo la pasión internacional por la jardinería

TNG tiene el placer de presentar una nueva y vibrante sección en nuestra publicación, dedicada a la presentación de artículos proporcionados por el programa internacional de The National Garden Clubs, Inc. en América Latina.

El comité es conocido como COMAAI – Comité de Actividades de Afiliadas Internacionales, el cual representa a las tres regiones internacionales de NGC, Inc.: México, Centroamérica y el Caribe, y Sudamérica.

COMAAI es una organización muy dinámica en exposiciones florales y actividades educativas. Debido a la vasta región y a la diversidad de países que abarca, sus miembros han desarrollado una excelente extensión virtual —además de sus actividades presenciales— para toda su comunidad, compuesta por 14 países y más de 300 clubes afiliados.

Por ello, queremos compartir con nuestros lectores las bellezas que estas regiones desean brindarles.



REGION I

REGION II

REGION III

International Affiliates at the 2026 NGC, Inc. Convention

Celebrating 25 Years of International Friendship: NGC's International Affiliates

The 97th National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) Convention marked a historic milestone: the 25th anniversary of NGC's international outreach into Latin America, known as our International Affiliates (IA). For those curious to learn more about our vibrant community of foreign members, here is a look at the incredible impact they make.

A quarter of a century ago, the IAs formed an organization called COMAAI. Today, COMAAI spans 14 countries south of the Rio Grande and boasts over 300 affiliated garden clubs, all strictly adhering to NGC Bylaws.

COMAAI is organized into three distinct regions:

- **Region I (Mexico):** The only single-country region, boasting 65 affiliated clubs
- **Region II (Central America & The Caribbean):** Comprising Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama, with 36 affiliated clubs
- **Region III (South America):** Spanning Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, Peru, and Venezuela, with an impressive 200 affiliated clubs

This year, the convention had the absolute pleasure of welcoming 27 members representing nine countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay.



Susan Miner, Teresa Colunga, Lupita Villareal, Aida Palau and President Donna Donnelly.
(L to R)



Honor Table #2
Renata Canepa and Suzy Andrego.



Lois Schuster's yearly Welcome Cocktail Reception:
Sandy Mangels, Maria Julia Lindley, Barbara May, Gloria Remedi, Nancy Caipo & Pampa Risso Patron.
(L to R)



welcome help from the experts...Pampa with Bill Trapp and Katie Roth.
(L to R)

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International Affiliates at the 2026 NGC, Inc. Convention (Continued)

The annual NGC Convention provides a vital opportunity for these international members to travel—often across great distances—to conduct their annual meetings, collaborate, and catch up with the lifelong American friends they have made over the years. Though their journey is long, it is always incredibly productive.

A special highlight of this year's event was extended by former NGC President Gay Austin, who currently serves as Chairman of the NGC Patriotic Petite Flower Show Judges Committee. She graciously invited our visiting international judges to participate in the show—and as you can see, the pictures speak for themselves!

In very exciting news, presidential travel to Mexico, Central America, and South America has officially been reinstated. Local international clubs are now permitted to extend invitations to NGC leadership to visit their home countries and participate in their exhibitions, provided the U.S. State Department deems travel to the region safe.

This year's convention was filled with joy, connection, and shared passion. Friends old and new laughed, collaborated, and reluctantly said their goodbyes—until we meet again next year in Madison, Wisconsin!

Author: Pampa Risso-Patrón
NGC, Inc. International Co-Liaison
TNG International Editor



Happy International Affiliates at the Awards dinner banquet.



Proudly showing off COMAAI's achievements: Pampa, Silvia Yañez, Renata Canepa, Blanca Niño, María Otero, Yoly Pardo and Sabina Arrieta. (L to R)



A visit to NGC Headquarters - great shopping!

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



International Affiliates at the 2026 NGC, Inc. Convention (Continued)



Work and Play

COMAAI General Assembly meeting



Petite Flower Show Judges
getting ready for the event!



Awards Night



International Judges busy at work



Afiliadas Internacionales en la Convención del NGC, Inc. 2026

Celebrando 25 años de amistad internacional: Las Afiliadas Internacionales del NGC, Inc.

La 97ª Convención del National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) marcó un hito histórico: el 25º aniversario de la proyección internacional de NGC en América Latina, conocidas como nuestras Afiliadas Internacionales. Para quienes tengan curiosidad por conocer más sobre nuestra vibrante comunidad de miembros extranjeros, presentamos un vistazo al increíble impacto que generan.

Hace un cuarto de siglo, las Afiliadas Internacionales formaron una organización llamada COMAAI. Hoy en día, COMAAI se extiende por 14 países al sur del Río Grande y cuenta con más de 300 clubes de jardinería afiliados, todos ellos cumpliendo estrictamente los estatutos del NGC, Inc.

COMAAI se organiza en tres regiones distintas:

- **Región I (México):** La única región conformada por un solo país, la cual se enorgullece de contar con 65 clubes afiliados.
- **Región II (Centroamérica y el Caribe):** Integrada por Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras y Panamá, con 36 clubes afiliados.
- **Región III (Sudamérica):** Abarca Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Uruguay, Perú y Venezuela, con la impresionante cifra de 200 clubes afiliados.

Este año, la Convención tuvo el enorme placer de dar la bienvenida a 27 miembros en representación de nueve países: Argentina, Brasil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Perú y Uruguay.



Susan Miner, Ieresa Colunga, Lupita Villareal, Aida Palau y Presidente Donna Donnelly.
(L to R)



Mesa de Honor #2
Renata Canepa y Suzy Andrego.



Cóctel Anual de Bienvenida de Lois Schuster: Sandy Mangels, María Julia Lindley, Barbara May, Gloria Remedi, Nancy Caipo & Pampa Risso Patrón.
(L to R)



Bienvenida ayuda de los expertos...Pampa Risso-Patrón junto a Bill Trapp y Katie Roth.
(L to R)

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA SIGUIENTE

Afiliadas Internacionales en la Convención del NGC, Inc. 2026

(Continuado)

La Convención anual del NGC ofrece una oportunidad vital para que miembros internacionales viajen —a menudo recorriendo grandes distancias— para llevar a cabo sus reuniones anuales, colaborar y ponerse al día con amistades estadounidenses de toda la vida, que han hecho a lo largo de los años. Aunque su viaje es largo, siempre resulta increíblemente productivo.

Un momento destacado de este año fue el que propició la expresidenta de la NGC, Gay Austin, quien actualmente se desempeña como Presidenta del Comité de Jueces de la Exposición de Flores Patriotic Petite del NGC. Ella invitó amablemente a nuestras juezas internacionales presentes a participar en la exposición y, como pueden ver, ¡las imágenes hablan por sí solas!

Como primicia de excelente noticia, informamos que se ha restablecido oficialmente el viaje presidencial a México, Centroamérica y Sudamérica. Ahora se permite a los clubes internacionales locales extender invitaciones a la Presidenta del NGC para que visite sus países de origen y participe en sus exposiciones, siempre y cuando el Departamento de Estado de los EE.UU. considere que viajar a la región es seguro.

La convención de este año manifestó mucha alegría, conexión y pasión compartida. Viejas y nuevas amigas disfrutaron, colaboraron y se despidieron con nostalgia... ¡hasta que nos volvamos a encontrar el próximo año en Madison, Wisconsin!

Author: Pampa Risso-Patrón
Co-Consejera Internacional de NGC, Inc.
Editora Internacional de TNG



Grupo de Afiliadas Internacionales felices en el Banquete de Premios.



Mostrando los logros con orgullo:
Pampa, Silvia Yañez, Renata Canepa,
Blanca Niño, María Otero, Yoly Pardo
and Sabina Arrieta.
(L to R)



Visita a la sede central de NGC...
buenas compras!

CONTINÚA EN LA PÁGINA SIGUIENTE



Afiliadas Internacionales en la Convención del NGC, Inc. 2026

(Continuado)



Trabajo y Diversión
Asamblea General de COMAAI



Juezas del Petite Flower Show
preparándose para el evento.



Noche de Premios junto con
Presidenta Donna Donnelly



Judges internacionales trabajando

International Affiliates

25th Anniversary

NGC, Inc. International Affiliates Celebrate a Silver Anniversary



Twenty-five years ago, a group of visionary women created an international outreach program that would reshape the global gardening community: the NGC, Inc. International Affiliates (IA). Known as COMAAI –Comité de Actividades de Afiliadas Internacionales–, this network was co-founded by then-NGC, Inc. President Lois Schuster (2001–2003), Esther Salinas, and Hilda García.

A Legacy of Leadership and Growth

Over the last quarter-century, NGC, Inc. presidents have traveled extensively throughout Mexico, Central America, and South America to strengthen these global bonds:

- Deen Day Sanders – NGC President 1999-2001
- Lois Dupre Shuster – NGC President 2001-2003
- June P. Wood – NGC President 2003-2005
- Kitty Larkin – NGC President 2005-2007
- Barbara D. May – NGC President 2007-2009
- Renee Blaschke – NGC President 2009-2011
- Shirley Nicolai – NGC President 2011-2013
- Linda Nelson – NGC President 2013-2015
- Sandy Robinson – NGC President 2015-2017
- Nancy Hargroves – NGC President 2017-2019
- Gay Austin – NGC President 2019-2021
- Mary Warshauer – NGC President 2021-2023



There are two important highlights to mention. One is that President Renée Blaschke, who visited ten countries, appointed Idalia Aguilar as International Liaison, championed NGC, Inc. Schools, and approved the IA protocols needed to implement formal bylaws.

And second, President Sandra Robinson, who visited five IA countries, laid the foundation for three distinct administrative regions, instituted Regional Delegates, and established the permanent IA Directory and administrative framework.

Today, COMAAI thrives as a vibrant international virtual organization—cultivating education, fostering lifelong friendships, and promoting strong alliances across the American continent.

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



International Affiliates

25th Anniversary (Continued)

Adapting to a Modern, Virtual Era

Subsequent NGC, Inc. Presidents—including Shirley Nicolai, Linda Nelson, Nancy Hargroves, Gay Austin, Mary Warshauer, and Brenda Moore—alongside current President Donna Donnelly, have continually championed the IA's evolution.

Their support has been instrumental in transitioning to the digital era by:

- Enabling all educational schools to transition online
- Approving the official Educational Schools Handbook
- Allowing virtual flower shows
- Awarding virtual events that promote continuing education while ensuring strict adherence to NGC, Inc. Bylaws

Celebrating at the 97th NGC, Inc. Annual Convention

COMAAI's milestone Silver Anniversary was celebrated in style at the 97th Annual Convention in St. Louis. The celebration featured a beautiful display of IA history, highlighted by two spectacular commemorative gifts presented to NGC, Inc. as a token of gratitude for decades of support:



A Hand-Crafted Masterpiece: A custom-assembled history book created by COMAAI Historian Nancy Caipo.
(photo courtesy of Yoly Pardo)



A Commemorative Ceramic Vase: Artfully designed by International Liaison Idalia Aguilar and crafted in the studio of Renata Canepa, the current General Director of COMAAI.
(photo courtesy of Renata Canepa)

A very special thank you goes to Founding NGC, Inc. President Lois Schuster, who has so graciously hosted our international entourage for delightful, delicious, and entertaining cocktail receptions over the years. We deeply missed having Lois and Idalia with us at this Convention, and we look forward to seeing them in Madison next year!

We wish the NGC, Inc. International Affiliates a very Happy Silver Anniversary...and many more successful years to come!

Author: Pampa Risso-Patrón
NGC, Inc. International Co-Liaison
TNG International Editor

25° Aniversario de las Afiliadas Internacionales

Las Afiliadas Internacionales del NGC, Inc. Celebran su Aniversario de Plata



Hace veinticinco años, un grupo de mujeres visionarias creó un programa de alcance internacional que transformaría la comunidad global de jardinería: NGC, Inc. International Affiliates (IA). Conocida como COMAAI –Comité de Actividades de Afiliadas Internacionales–, esta red fue co-fundada por la entonces Presidenta Lois Schuster (2001–2003), Esther Salinas e Hilda García.

Un Legado de Liderazgo y Crecimiento

Durante el último cuarto de siglo, las presidentas de NGC, Inc. han viajado extensamente por México, Centroamérica y Sudamérica para fortalecer estos lazos globales:

- Deen Day Sanders – Presidencia NGC 1999-2001
- Lois Dupre Shuster – Presidencia NGC 2001-2003
- June P. Wood – Presidencia NGC 2003-2005
- Kitty Larkin – Presidencia NGC 2005-2007
- Barbara D. May – Presidencia NGC 2007-2009
- Renee Blaschke – Presidencia NGC 2009-2011
- Shirley Nicolai – Presidencia NGC 2011-2013
- Linda Nelson – Presidencia NGC 2013-2015
- Sandy Robinson – Presidencia NGC 2015-2017
- Nancy Hargroves – Presidencia NGC 2017-2019
- Gay Austin – Presidencia NGC 2019-2021
- Mary Warshauer – Presidencia NGC 2021-2023



Hay dos aspectos importantes a destacar. Uno es que la Presidenta Renée Blaschke visitó diez países, nombró a Idalia Aguilar como Consejera Internacional, impulsó las Escuelas de NGC, Inc. y aprobó los protocolos de las Afiliadas Internacionales necesarios para implementar los estatutos formales.

Y el segundo, que la Presidenta Sandra Robinson visitó cinco países, sentó las bases de tres regiones administrativas, instituyó las figuras de Delegadas Regionales y estableció el Directorio permanente y el marco administrativo de la Afiliadas Internacionales.

Hoy en día, COMAAI prospera como una vibrante organización virtual internacional que impulsa la educación, fomenta amistades para toda la vida y promueve alianzas sólidas en todo el continente americano.

25° Aniversario de las Afiliadas Internacionales

(Continuado)

Adaptándose a una Era Moderna y Virtual

Las presidentas posteriores del NGC, Inc. —incluyendo a Shirley Nicolai, Linda Nelson, Nancy Hargroves, Gay Austin, Mary Warshauer y Brenda Moore— junto con la actual Presidenta Donna Donnelly, han defendido continuamente la evolución de las Afiliadas Internacionales.

Su apoyo ha sido fundamental para la transición a la era digital mediante:

- La virtualización de todas las escuelas educativas (online)
- La aprobación del Manual Oficial de Escuelas Educativas
- La autorización para realizar Exposiciones Florales virtuales
- El reconocimiento a eventos virtuales que promuevan la educación continua, asegurando siempre el estricto cumplimiento de los Estatutos de NGC, Inc.

Celebrando en la 97ª Convención Anual de NGC, Inc.

El histórico Aniversario de Plata de COMAAI se celebró por todo lo alto durante la 97ª Convención Anual en St. Louis. El festejo contó con una hermosa exhibición de la historia de las Afiliadas Internacionales, destacando dos espectaculares obsequios conmemorativos entregados a NGC, Inc. como muestra de gratitud por décadas de apoyo:



Historiadora Nancy Caipo junto a su magnífica obra artesanal en conmemoración del 25º Aniversario de COMAAI.

(foto cortesía de Yoly Pardo)



Diseño: Renata Canepa;

Jarrón Conmemorativo:
Diseñado por Idalia Aguilar,
Consejera Internacional de
NGC, Inc., y elaborado en el
taller de Renata Canepa

(foto cortesía de Renata
Canepa)

Expresamos nuestro más sincero agradecimiento a la Presidenta Fundadora de NGC, Inc., Lois Schuster, por su constante y generosa hospitalidad al ofrecer, año tras año, tan magníficas recepciones en honor a nuestra delegación internacional.

Lamentamos mucho la ausencia de Lois y de Idalia Aguilar en esta Convención, y anhelamos reencontrarnos con ellas en Madison el próximo año.

Deseamos a las Afiliadas Internacionales de NGC, Inc. un muy feliz Aniversario de Plata...¡Y muchos más años de éxitos por delante!

Autor: Pampa Risso-Patrón
Co-Consejera Internacional NGC, Inc.
Editora Internacional de TNG

Q & A

As temperatures rise and gardens reach their peak, gardeners often encounter new challenges.

QUESTIONS

Q: How often should I water my garden during the summer?

A: Most gardens benefit from about one inch of water per week, either from rainfall or irrigation. During extended heat waves, sandy soils and containers may require more frequent watering. Water deeply and less often to encourage strong root systems.

Q: Why are my tomato flowers dropping without producing fruit?

A: High temperatures are often the culprit. When daytime temperatures exceed 90°F and nighttime temperatures remain above 75°F, tomatoes may struggle to pollinate successfully. Keep plants well-watered and mulched, and be patient—fruit production often resumes when temperatures moderate.

Q: Should I fertilize during the hottest part of summer?

A: Light feeding can benefit actively growing plants, but avoid heavy fertilization during periods of extreme heat. Excess fertilizer can stress plants and encourage tender growth that is more susceptible to damage.

Q: Why are my hydrangeas wilting even though the soil is moist?

A: Large-leafed plants such as hydrangeas often wilt temporarily during hot afternoons to reduce water loss. If the soil remains moist and the plant recovers by evening, this is usually a normal response rather than a sign of drought stress.

Q: Is it too late to plant anything in midsummer?

A: Not at all. Many vegetables, annual flowers, herbs, and perennials can still be planted. Midsummer is also an excellent time to start planning and planting for a fall harvest of crops such as broccoli, carrots, lettuce, spinach, and kale.

Q: How can I keep weeds under control during summer?

A: Mulch remains one of the most effective tools. A two- to three-inch layer of organic mulch suppresses weed growth and conserves moisture. Hand-pulling weeds when they are young prevents them from setting seed and creating future problems.

Q: Why are the leaves on my plants turning yellow?

A: Yellowing leaves can result from several factors, including overwatering, underwatering, nutrient deficiencies, poor drainage, or disease. Examine the plant carefully and consider recent weather and watering practices before taking corrective action.

Q: Should I continue deadheading flowers during summer?

A: Yes. Removing spent blooms encourages many annuals and perennials to produce additional flowers. It also keeps plants looking tidy and prevents some species from diverting energy into seed production.

Q: How can I help pollinators during hot weather?

A: Provide a continuous supply of flowering plants, avoid pesticides whenever possible, and offer a shallow water source with stones or pebbles where insects can safely land and drink.

Q: What is the most important thing I can do for my garden during a heat wave?

A: Focus on moisture conservation. Water deeply in the morning, maintain mulch, postpone major pruning or fertilizing, and provide temporary shade for sensitive plants if necessary. Healthy, well-hydrated plants are much better equipped to withstand extreme temperatures.





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Celebrating
250
Years

