



Greensburg Garden Center

Jan., Feb. 2024 Newsletter

“Where Gardeners Grow”



A Look Back at 2023



GGC members are a busy and resourceful group of gardeners. With dedicated volunteers and committed board members we make a difference in Greensburg and beyond into Western Pennsylvania. The Garden Center continues to provide the community with events and resources toward environmental education and natural beauty not to mention FUN.

As we look forward to another fabulous fun year in 2024. Let's first take a moment to savor the events and our accomplishments from 2023.

DAY BUS TRIPS — GGC hosted TWO bus trips this year. The first, to Longwood Gardens. always an amazing destination for nature lovers, and our journey to the Brandywine location in eastern Pennsylvania was a fabulous day enjoying the breathtakingly beautiful gardens at Longwood.

Our Second trip was to the Deep Creek Lavender Farm in Maryland. Our group enjoyed an educational talk on the differences between French and English Lavender while being treated to lavender tea and shortbread cookies. A gourmet lunch was delivered by Firefly Farms featuring their own-made artisan cheeses and French bread. Both events made for a wonderful experience for everyone.

BACK AT HOME – THE GGC SPRING TEA. Held in March, our group was delighted to return the event location back to our 'home base' in the Greensburg Civic & Garden Center. Spearheaded by committee chair Tiffany Horvat, this sold out event was pack with patrons – selling the most tickets ever for the luncheon. Our volunteers created gorgeous tablescapes while others provided an abundance of delicate sandwiches and delicious desserts. The GGC Spring Tea has gained quite a reputation in the area as being the absolute BEST and tickets are quite coveted and sell out quickly. We plan on continuing this streak in 2024 thanks to our creative and committed members.



MAY MART PLANT SALE – GGC May Mart is a gardener's favorite. Offering a wide array of plants to add color and beauty to your yard and garden. The 2023 sale was another success. Pre-orders are available as well as donations by our members for unusual and special shared plants and seeds as well as a fun flea market. Plan to attend our May Mart event in 2024.

BUTTERFLY RELEASE - Held in August the 2023 Butterfly Release is one of the communities favorites. Offering free Monarch Butterflies to release into the GGC LeFevre Butterfly Garden it also features a short presentation on the beauty and environmental needs for Monarchs to multiply and prosper in our community. Milkweed plants are offered for sale along with: face painting, tattoos, a butterfly theme gift shop, Lemonade donated by Turner's Dairy as well as McFeely's ice cream truck, all contributing to create an event fun for kids of all ages. Be sure to attend this magical event in 2024.

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FALL HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR - Our Fall House and Garden Party was a fun autumn event held at the home of a local Garden Center supporter. Featuring manicured gardens on 2.75 park-like acres the tour also included a waterfall and fire pit. Visitors enjoyed a light lunch and sipped hot mulled cider while enjoying entertainment by Gary Pratt, a local Country Music singer/songwriter and owner of Le Jardin Florals in Greensburg. The house and grounds were festively decorated with hay bales, mums and pumpkins by Silvis Landscaping and Country Farms Garden Nursery that offered ideas for our own fall decorating!! This September event was enjoyed by everyone!



CHRISTMAS GIFT BOXES FOR THE HOMELESS— Life can get tough and our neighbors occasionally need a helping hand. What better way to get in the holiday spirit than to help those less fortunate?! Led by the Garden Center Board our members prepared gift boxes for the local homeless shelter: **WELCOME HOME**. Located in downtown Greensburg, the facility can accommodate 4 families and 10 single women providing a temporary home for neighbors in crisis. GGC Members were very generous, dropping off an array of wonderful items. We packed up the boxes at the December 5th Members Christmas Meeting and they were overflowing with socks, hats, jewelry, toothbrushes, body soaps, creams, notebooks, Busy-books and so MUCH MORE! Clothing and toys were also purchased with donations from our members.

Calendar of Events

Jan. 9	Membership Mtg.—11:00 AM Installation of Officers
Feb . 6	Membership Mtg.—11:00 AM Program by Mary Bach

Membership Meetings...

Our January 9 Membership Meeting will be the installation of new officers. They are 2 year directors Mary Ann Curley and Angie Raitano and 1 year directors, Donna Lee and Becky McGee. Current officers will also be re-installed by our Parliamentarian, Angie Raitano.

Lunch will be provided by the Board Members.

...On February 6 we welcome Mary Bach, PA Consumer Advocate speaking on "Are you Getting What You Pay For". Sounds like an interesting program!

As always, meetings are free and open to the public so bring a friend.

*"Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the whole year; for gardening begins in January with the dream."
~Josephine Nuese*

Volunteers

Let's take a moment to acknowledge the fun and educational monthly meeting held the first Tuesday of each month at 11 am. Our program chair, Joan Stairs, works all year bringing our members knowledgeable speakers on a wide variety of gardening and environmental topics; from bulbs to bee-keeping. Each informative meeting is followed by a delicious – and free – luncheon organized by Maryann Artman. Welcoming members and non-members alike, this event is the highlight of every gardener's month. Mark your calendar and be sure to attend!

Let's give a shout-out to ALL of our members who work behind the scenes on our many events. It takes a LOT to organize fundraisers such as the Butterfly Release, May Mart, Spring Tea, Bus Trips, Fall Raffle, and work that is done to keep the Butterfly Garden in tip-top shape!

Looking ahead to 2024, we have at least two new fundraisers that will be a lot of fun to work on, we'll keep you informed on the progress.

THANKS TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS!

Tropical Milkweed



Every year I start some tropical milkweed seeds for the monarch butterflies to lay their eggs on. As most of you know milkweed plants are the only plant monarch caterpillars will eat. And since their habitat has decreased we need to do what we can to help them succeed. So back to the tropical milkweed. It is more easily started from seed than either swamp milkweed, common milkweed, or butterfly weed as it needs no stratification (chilling the seed for a given period).

This spring it wasn't long before I had two or three six packs filled with growing tropical milkweed plants needing a home. I put in a six-pack worth in the 'herb' garden and a few in another garden but then ran out of room. So in desperation I planted the remaining six-pack in a 10 or 12" pot. Sitting on gravel with some other pots the plants took off and grew well in partial sunlight. So much so that when they achieved some size lady monarchs chose them to lay eggs on. The caterpillars flourished, eventually I had to transfer some to those tropical milkweed in the herb garden and swamp milkweed elsewhere, and even gave two away. One chose to transform into a chrysalis right there in the pot. Another I put in a jug to form his chrysalis and mature, and another one in a see through foldable laundry bag.

Over the years it has appeared to me that monarch butterflies prefer to lay their eggs on the tropical milkweed most of all, and common milkweed least of all. So I'm suggesting a large pot of tropical milkweed could help attract a monarch to lay eggs in your garden and is within reach of anyone. And if you get too many caterpillars you can transfer some of them to other nearby milkweed plants. One year when my common milkweed was not doing well we took several caterpillars to a patch of milkweed growing along the road.

I also discovered this year that they also preferred to lay eggs on 4" pots of swamp milkweed and butterfly weed. Was it because the pots were on gravel instead of in a sea of other plants? Easy to find? Warmer? Or was it because the leaves were more tender? I don't have the answer to this question but I know the results were lots of caterpillars!

Is Tropical Milkweed safe to feed to monarchs? Yes, according to the Xerces Society when planted in an area where it dies back to the ground every year. It actually dies completely and needs re-started with fresh seed every spring when grown in our zones.

I wrote the above article in September but have to add an end-of-season unfortunate observation. We had a really cold spell while the later chrysalis were developing and they eventually turned black and didn't produce any butterflies. It was probably the cold weather. So no matter how hard you try, Mother Nature can always upset your plans. ~Sandy Truckner

P. S.—Tropical Milkweed will be available at May Mart!

Keep this date...

We have set the date for our Spring Tea on March 16. We need lots of help! Carol Ross will be calling for volunteers to do tables so if you receive a call from her, please consider it. We have lots of things you can borrow if needed. We need help with food, serving, kitchen duty and clean-up. There is something for everybody!

Happy
New Year!

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Co-Vice President:s Judy Geary, Nadine Mason
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GREENSBURG GARDEN CENTER 2024
ASSOCIATE MEMBER - NEW MEMBER RENEWAL FORM

Date: _____ Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: Home _____ Cell _____ Email _____

Type of Membership: New \$20 _____ Renewal \$20 _____ Student \$3 _____

Annual dues run from January 1 to January 1. Please make checks payable to:
Greensburg Garden Center, 951 Old Salem Rd., Greensburg, PA 15601

My interests are: _____ Gardening _____ Floral Design _____ Butterfly Garden _____ Workshops
_____ Grounds _____ Social Media

Our Mission Statement

The Greensburg Garden Center is a non-profit educational organization whose goals are to support and educate our members and the community in horticulture, conservation, and related areas and provide an annual scholarship. GGC serves Westmoreland County and surrounding communities.