



GCFP District VI Newsletter

2nd Quarter, 2024



Seedlings



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Director's Corner

Deb Stumpf, District VI Director

"Always Growing Together"

Spring has sprung! The groundhog told us it was going to be early and boy was he right. I have never seen such beautiful daffodils, tulips and hyacinths. After a brief walk in the garden, I noticed that just about everything is coming back to life. Sure, there have been some failures, but as things go, we had a light winter and most of our plants survived.

As the garden grows, so do our garden clubs. I had a nice surprise when I opened my copy of Penn Lines Magazine. This is a publication put out by the rural electric co-ops in the area. The cover was a beautiful display of flowers in brightly colored garden boots. I couldn't wait to open it and read the article about saving money in the garden. What a surprise I received when I saw a picture of our former GCFP President and current President of the Somerset Garden Club, Sheila Croushore on the page. She did not write the article, but was asked to provide tips on saving money on plants. In true garden club fashion, she suggested garden club plant sales as a way to get healthy plants at bargain prices. And she was right! This is a great way to save money in the garden. Shopping the plants sales, held by almost every garden club, before you head to a greenhouse or nursery is a wonderful way to support the clubs, get healthy plants, and enjoy some unusual varieties. It's a win-win for everyone.

So, as you advertise your various spring plant sales and May Marts, be sure to let everyone know that a great way to beat inflation is to shop your local garden club plant show. Wishing you success at your sales and in your garden.

2024 District Calendar

May 5-- Ligonier May Day "Basket" Contest
 June 10-11 GCFP Board Meeting
 June 25 LHJC & PAJC annual Flower Show at the Greensburg Garden Center. Public -- 12-1:30 pm
 August 5-6 FS Symposium Cranberry, PA
 August 14 District VI Meeting Perkins 10 am
 August 30 Annual District Meeting Indiana CC

Articles, events and happenings concerning District VI may be submitted to:

Mary Lou Colussy at
lalou46@aol.com
 Next Seedlings by
 August 1, 2024

A special thank you to Nerita Brant, *Seedlings* Proofreader

**Proposed
Slate of District VI Officers
2024-2026**

Director
Mary Lou Colussy

Assistant Director
Wilma Light

Secretary
Mary Davis

Assistant Secretary
Karlice Makuchan

Treasurer
Judy Jackson

Assistant Treasurer
Sherry Lowery

**CITIZENS SCIENTISTS' BIRD
COUNT**

The Citizens Scientists bird count. Held the 2nd Saturday of May-usually the weekend of Mother's Day. 24-hour count 12:00 midnight to 12:00 midnight.

Last year, over 159 thousand checklists were submitted on #GlobalBigDay with more than 3.2 million bird observations gathered by eBirders! This year, join this annual celebration of birds and see how many checklists the world's birding community contributes on 11 May 2024. What are your #GlobalBigDay plans?

Use the link below to learn how you can participate in Global Big Day 2024!

<https://buff.ly/3U4INHL>



**PLEASE SAVE
CLEAN TOMATO PASTE CANS (6 OZ)
FOR EVERGREEN GC
ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING
CONTACT MARCY FOR MORE INFO**

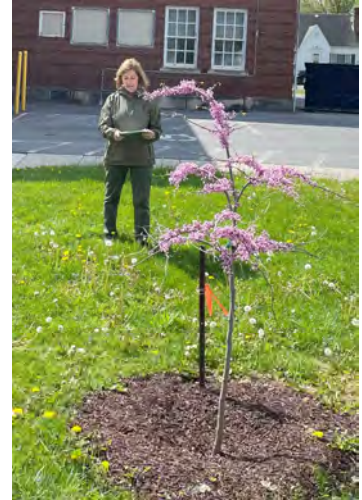
814-459-7729

CLUB ACTIVITIES

**Bedford County Garden Club
Standard Flower Show
July 31, 2024
“SUNDAY IN THE PARK”
Free and open to the public
from 11:30-3:30 at the
First Presbyterian Church Hall,
115 E Penn St
Bedford, PA**

**Bedford
County
Garden Club**

Bedford County Garden Club members celebrated Arbor Day today with a dedication of a beautiful Eastern Redbud to our Bedford County Library!



Several Master Gardeners had a tree planting demonstration before our dedication.



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Blair GC Trip to the Philadelphia Flower Show



“United in Flowers”.
An outstanding show! A spark of spring! Photos by Linda Renney



Blair Garden Club



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Blair Garden Club



**BLAIR GARDEN
CLUB
PLANT SALE**

Plants and garden-related items

Friday, May 17th 8a-5p
Saturday, May 18th 8a-10a

Jaggard First Methodist Church
1801 Pleasant Valley Blvd
Altoona

Proceeds benefit Blair Garden Club area projects
FOR INFO CALL: 814-502-0095 or 814-695-5212

Blair Garden Club
JoAnn Propcheck
President

January had the public enjoying Baker Mansion Christmas for a bit. Trees were decorated by Blair Garden Club, along with other holiday decor.

In February 2024, the Blair Garden Club Initiative was placed on social media and in the Altoona Mirror. The BGC is offering a grant for a Garden Project.

See below:

Blair Garden Club Initiative A Grant for A Garden Project

Blair Garden Club is once again pleased to announce our "Garden Club Initiative Program" for 2024. We are now accepting worthy proposals from 501(c) (3) and volunteer organizations located within Blair Country. Your project must support Blair Garden endeavors and objectives.

We are looking to expand our impact throughout the community and will distribute up to \$1500.00 on sustainable gardening projects. THE PROJECT MUST BE PLANTED AND MAINTAINED BY YOUR ORGANIZATION.

Applications must be completed and returned by Friday, May 2, 2024.

If your organization was a recipient in the past you must wait **two years** to reapply for the grant. If your organization is interested contact us at renhres@gmail.com or phone [814-241-2962](tel:814-241-2962)

Happy Planting and look for news on our upcoming Plant Sale in May.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Fairy gardens, fairy bingo and a packet of seeds. Job well done by the members who volunteered from the Evergreen Garden Club. Pictures were taken prior to all the droves of families who came for the Children's Fun Fest. Fun was had by all!



**Evergreen
Garden Club**



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Newly installed 2024-5 Officers

President -- Sue Konvolinka

1st VP – Janet Renner

2nd VP – Andy Fedore

GARDEN CLUB OF JOHNSTOWN

STANDARD FLOWER SHOW

AUGUST 23-24, 2024

“Ode to Summer”

Westmont

Presbyterian

Church

601 Luzerne St,

Johnstown PA

**Garden
Club of
Johnstown**

The YMCA’s Tribute to Women, on Thursday May 23rd will honor Karlice Makuchan for her many years of service. She is the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) recipient

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Indiana Garden Club is at Family Fun Fest!

Brought to you by the good folks at the
Children's Advisory Commission of Indiana County

FAMILY FUN FEST
GAME SHOW
- EDITION -

11am to 3pm, Saturday, March 2, at the Indiana Mall

**Indiana
Garden
Club**



CLUB ACTIVITIES

**Indiana
Garden
Club**

**Indiana Garden Club
May Mart
Garden and Vendor Expo**

S&T Bank Arena & White Township
Sports Complex 497 E. Pike Road
\$1 General admission

Friday May 17th 10 am-6 pm
Saturday May 18th 10 am-4 pm

Vendors, Plants, Food
Trucks, Kid's Corner,
Scholarship Raffle

igcinformation@gmail.com
for questions



Indiana Garden Club donated an almond tree for the Indiana County Conservation District to plant in their food forest in honor of Earth Day. Pictured are Karen Addleman, Doug Beri, Executive Director of ICCD, Pat Prushnok IGC President, Judy Bouton, and Margie Bucci

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Patton Garden Club

Presents

“Autumn Memories”



A NGC Standard Flower Show

September 9, 2024

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC—from 6-8 PM -- FREE ADMISSION

La Ferme Rouge

246 Marina Road

Patton, PA 16668

**Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc, Central Atlantic Region of
State Garden Clubs, Inc, and The Garden Club Federation of
Pennsylvania District VI**

**Schedule reviewed by the Laurel Highlands Judges Council
Schedule Advisor**

**Patton
Garden
Club**

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Container Gardening

PGC Co-President Mona Weakland critiqued Diane Winters, one of the presenters at the 2024 Convention this year, at our monthly April Meeting. Mona brought an idea back to the club for use in their own Container Gardening. Mona stated that you need to remove the plant from its container and get rid of a lot of the soil around the plant and loosen up the root system before placement in the larger container. This way it will not only grow better, it won't be root bound, and you can place an abundance of plants in your container.

From the registration page:

Creating Fun Planters Diane will present examples of unique containers and how to design them for that "wow" factor. An empty pot is her canvas, and she loves curating plants for that special look. She will show her own basics for potting. Her love of gardening came from her grandmother and mother. She operates a gift and garden shop, Tansy Meadow, seasonally. The containers she will design will be available for purchase.

**Patton
Garden
Club**

Master Judge, Mary Lou Colussy, filled in because of a previous commitment. for April's PGC presenter. The topic was "**How to Create a Design for a Flower Show**"

Topics included: selecting the correct container, tips on placement, and a reminder to prepare the flowers ahead of placement. The members of PGC in attendance "helped" with the design and gave their own critique on proper use of flowers and greenery. The most important remark when competing in a NGC Flower Show is **Follow the Schedule!!**



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Garden Meetings



President, Sheila Croushore introduced Renea Eash and Judy McGarw, the presenters for the March 11th meeting; the ladies spoke to the club about gourds.

Somerset Garden Club



In April the Somerset, Garden Club had Andrea Falchek do a program on Fairy Gardens



CLUB ACTIVITIES

The 2024 year started off with a zoom planning meeting on January 16th with all garden club members invited to join in the brainstorming session for program, event, field trips, and fundraiser ideas for the 2024 year!

Kate Nuernberger, Co-president of Weeders and Seeders, a Penn State Extension Master Gardener with many years of gardening experience, and a retired Physical Therapist, presented *Safety in the Garden* on March 19, preceding the first meeting of the new year. The program, open to the public, included information, tips and techniques related to safety while gardening. Her teaching covered all parts of the body from the head (eye protection, wearing a sun hat); to the muscles of the neck, back, knees, legs, and feet; to using both sunscreen, tick protection, AND the proper tools that are HERgonomic (made for female gardeners!). It was a great presentation that was very timely for starting off the gardening season.



**Weeders
and
Seeders**



23 members and 2 visitors attended the meeting that followed. A highlight of the meeting was the installation of the newly elected Weeders and Seeders officers. Deb Stumpf, GCFP District VI Director installed the new officers Kate Nuernberger, Co-president; Lori Fitzgibbon, Co-president; Paula Heming, Vice-president; Mary Niezelski, Secretary; and Wilma Light- Treasurer and provided each with a unique “key” symbolizing important work to be completed by each of them. Thank you, Deb, for honoring our new officers with this beautiful installation theme. (Continues)

CLUB ACTIVITIES

**Weeders
and
Seeders**

(Continued from previous page)

The Penny Pines goal of \$68 was exceeded during the meeting so it was decided that the awarded 200 tree seedlings would be planted in memory of Mary Furlong-Leppold in Forbes State Forest. Mary was an active officer in the club before passing in September of 2022. The club members agreed to keep collecting for Penny Pines.

The meeting continued with plans for garden clean up days, the scholarship committee’s news regarding the four applicants that will be reviewed in the following weeks, and a proposal for a new Tea Party fundraiser for the club.

The 2024 Weeders and Seeders program agenda was unveiled and is as follows:

- Vegetable Gardening Tips 101 (by select garden club members);
- Progressive Weeders and Seeders Garden Tours;
- Falling Waters Horticultural Presentation;
- Weeders and Seeders Summer Picnic at the home of Patti Flowers Jacobina;
- All About Moths;
- Growing Herbs by Mandy Smith, Penn State;
- Holiday Pumpkins with Glenda Gebert;
- Having a Greener (No Plastic) Holiday;

and ending with our Christmas Party. It will be an exciting year!



WEEDERS AND SEEDERS GARDEN CLUB OF LIGONIER 2ND ANNUAL

LIGONIER MAY DAY "BASKET" CONTEST

SUNDAY, MAY 5, 12 NOON ~ 3 PM
LIGONIER BANDSTAND

Kids, Adults, Merchants/Businesses...Create a fresh-cut flower "basket"/display to win a prize!
Visit participating shops for free long-stem flowers.

WATCH THE MAY POLE DANCE BY PERFORMERS OF BRIDGET DAWN'S DANCE STUDIO
12 NOON AT THE BANDSTAND

Contest is open to Ligonier Borough merchants, businesses and Ligonier Borough and Township residents including all Ligonier School District students.

CATEGORIES .Kids ages 3-9 .Kids ages 10-16 .Adults ages 17 and up .Ligonier Borough Merchants/Businesses
Choose from the following THEMES:

.Vintage Elegance .Wild & Crazy, or .Woodland Whimsy

No entry is too small. Please, no entries larger than 2 square feet.

Limit of 25 entries per category. Registration forms must be received by April 28. NO last-minute entries.

Entry fees: Adults \$10, Kids \$5, Merchants/Businesses \$20 (free to gift basket donors).

Open the link for this event notice to see more details and how to register.

Questions? Contact Judy Ridgway at judyridgway@gmail.com or text 410-533-6465

*Our Blue Ribbon Winners
2023*



District VI Outing April 20, 2024

Gary Ball Farm

By Deb Stumpf

The members of the District VI Garden Club traveled to the farm of Gary Ball in Indiana County to enjoy a wonderful garden display of over 150 different types of Daffodils in bloom. Gary's garden is a nationally certified daffodil display garden and it did not disappoint. Our members were treated to a wonderful display of the 13 different types of daffodils with a description and cut examples of each, along with a "rescue" garden of over 100 varieties that Gary dug up from a garden that was being discontinued. All the varieties were named so members could jot down their favorites. Gary also had several varieties of Redbud trees in bloom, which were spectacular.

Gary invited all our District VI members to his Day Lilly Open on July 21, 2024. This is also a spectacular display and well worth the trip.

Afterward the group traveled to Eat n Park in Indiana to enjoy lunch.



Photos by Sheila Croushore



Photos by Deb Stumpf

10 Houseplants That Thrive in Low-Light

Source: <https://www.gardenloversclub.com/garden-blooms/houseplants-low-light/>



Adding a touch of green to your living space can instantly brighten up your home, and low-light houseplants are perfect for those who may not have the sunniest of rooms.

As you might know, some plants require less sunlight than others to thrive, making them ideal for areas with limited natural light, such as apartments, shaded corners, or rooms with north-facing windows.

In this article, we'll explore ten fantastic low-light houseplants that can effortlessly adapt to your indoor environment.

We understand that taking care of plants might feel overwhelming, especially if you're new to the world of gardening. Don't worry, we've got you covered!

The plants we will discuss are not only remarkable for their ability to grow in less-than-ideal lighting conditions, but they are also generally low-maintenance and easy to care for.

So, let's dive in and discover the perfect low-light houseplants for your home! With a little TLC and some patience, you'll soon be enjoying an indoor garden that's lush, calming, and full of life, even in those dimly lit corners.

Understanding Low-Light Conditions

When it comes to **low-light houseplants**, it's essential to understand the conditions they thrive in. In this section, we'll discuss light quantity and light quality to help you create the perfect environment for your plants.

Light Quantity

The amount of light your plants receive plays a significant role in their growth. In general, low-light conditions are found in areas with limited natural light, such as a room with smaller windows or a space far from a light source.

To determine the light quantity in your space, observe how the sun strikes it throughout the day. If you notice that your room doesn't receive direct sunlight for most of the day, you're likely dealing with low-light conditions.

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Here are some general guidelines for light levels:

- **Low light:** A space where you can read comfortably without turning on any artificial light.
- **Medium-light:** A well-lit room with some direct sunlight through windows.
- **Bright light:** A room filled with bright, direct sunlight for most of the day.

Light Quality

Apart from the quantity, the quality of light that your plants receive is also critical. Light quality refers to the balance of colors or wavelengths that plants use for different functions such as photosynthesis and flowering.

There are two primary types of artificial lights you can use to enhance the light quality in your space:

1. **Fluorescent lights:** These provide a balanced spectrum of light, making them suitable for plants that require low to medium levels of light. Place them 6-12 inches away from your plants for optimum results.
2. **LED lights:** They're more energy-efficient and have adjustable wavelengths, allowing you to tailor the light quality to your plants' needs.

Remember, low-light plants can adapt well to less-than-ideal conditions, but adjusting the light quality can help your plants grow strong, healthy, and vibrant.

Top 10 Low-Light Houseplants

As a plant lover, you may want to explore the **top 10 low-light houseplants** for your space. These are perfect if your home receives limited sunlight or if you prefer plants that can thrive in a lower-light environment.

The **Snake Plant** (*Sansevieria*) is a striking plant with tall, upright leaves. It's highly adaptable and can tolerate low light, drought, and fluctuating temperatures. The Snake Plant is also known for purifying the air.

ZZ Plant (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*), with its glossy green leaves, is a popular choice due to its impressive tolerance for infrequent watering and low light conditions. It's an excellent option for busy people or those looking to start their houseplant journey.

Heartleaf Philodendron (*Philodendron scandens*) is a beautiful trailing plant with heart-shaped leaves. It thrives in low light and is a good choice for hanging or placing on shelves. Regular pruning will encourage bushy growth.

The elegant **Peace Lily** (*Spathiphyllum*) is not only great in low light conditions but also helps keep the air clean. It produces beautiful white spathes that contrast strikingly with its dark green leaves.

The **Spider Plant** (*Chlorophytum comosum*) is a versatile option for any room. It grows well in low light, and its arching leaves can add a nice touch of greenery. Spider Plant also purifies the air, making it an ideal houseplant choice.

As its name suggests, the **Cast-Iron Plant** (*Aspidistra elatior*) is a hardy, low-maintenance option. It tolerates low light and infrequent watering. Its broad, dark green leaves can provide a lush, tropical feel to any space.

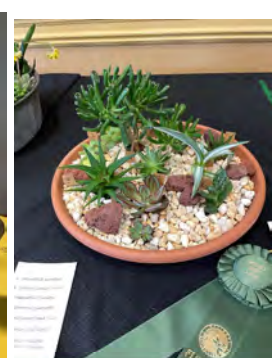
Golden Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*) is a fast-growing trailing plant perfect for hanging baskets or a high shelf. It can adapt to various light conditions and is an excellent air purifier.

For an attractive, upright option, consider **Dracaena** (*Dracaena spp.*). It has a variety of leaf shapes and colors, and though it prefers indirect light, it can also adjust to low light levels.

The striking foliage of **Calathea** (*Calathea spp.*) adds color and texture to any space. It prefers low light and medium humidity, making it an ideal plant for a bathroom or kitchen.

Dieffenbachia (*Dieffenbachia spp.*), with its intricately patterned leaves, is an interesting low-light houseplant. It grows well in varying light conditions but does require consistent moisture.

Petals & Patchwork
**An NGC Standard Flower Show
2024 GCFP Convention**



Here are photos of some of the entries in The Flower Show at the Convention of GCFP—Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania—that took place at Double Tree by Hilton, south of Lancaster, on this April 7 and 8, 2024.

Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania
 District VI Annual Meeting
 Friday, August 30, 2024
 Hosted by the Evergreen Garden Club
 Indiana Country Club
 495 Country Club Road, Indiana, PA 15701

Registration 8:30am - 9:40am - Ways and means raffle items
 Continental Breakfast until 9:30am
 Coffee, Hot Tea, and Assorted Warm Pastries
 Business Meeting at 9:45am
 Debbie Stumpf, District VI Director

Lunch 12:00 Noon - BUFFET
 Tossed Garden Salad (GF), Broccoli Cheddar or a GF choice of soup
 Chicken Salad Croissant, Italian Wrap or Turkey, Bacon, Ranch Wrap
 Beverages include Coffee, Hot and Iced Tea
 Desserts courtesy of Evergreen Garden Club members

Please indicate any special dietary requirements on your reservation
 Cost : \$30.00 includes Continental Breakfast, Lunch, taxes and gratuity

Business Meeting continues if necessary 1:00pm

Program - 1:30pm

Second Time Around - Recycling in the Garden

3:00pm - Centerpieces and raffle ticket winners announced

+++++

Detach and send \$30 check (payable to EVERGREEN GARDEN CLUB) to:
 Marcy Cunkelman, Registrar, 292 Swisco Road, Clarksburg, PA 15725-8727
 Any questions call Marcy C at 724-459-7229 or email: plant4nature@gmail.com

DEADLINE: Friday, August 9, 2024

NAME _____

PHONE# _____ EMAIL _____

GARDEN CLUB _____

TITLE/CURRENT POSITION: _____

State Board member, Garden Club member, or guest (please circle one)

SPECIAL DIETARY REQUIREMENT? _____

of Reservations _____ @\$30.00 each = \$ _____ CHECK # _____

NGC History-The Origin of the Blue Star Marker Memorial Program

Do you know who came up with the original idea of the Blue Star Marker Memorial Program? Here is your answer from "The Blue Star Memorial Marker Program-An Extended History of The National Garden Clubs' Nationwide Tribute to America's Veterans" edited by Rosita A. Aristoff, Garden Club of Stuart (Florida). This booklet may be viewed online at <https://ffgc.org>> Blue-Star-Markers and is an excellent and comprehensive history.

During the spring of 1944, while General Eisenhower was preparing to launch the D-Day invasion in Normandy, the president of the Garden Club of New Jersey, Mrs. Helen Hull, (left photo), along with the state's roadside chairman, Mrs. Elizabeth Hood (right photo) met with the New Jersey Highway Commissioner to discuss ideas for creating a living memorial to honor New Jersey's World War II veterans. A plan was made for a five-and-a-half-mile-long planting strip of flowering dogwoods, along a New Jersey highway. The goal was to plant one tree on the designated highway to honor each and every man and woman serving in the military during the Second World War. Mrs. Hull suggested the highway be named 'Blue Star Drive', after the banners hanging in the windows of homes where a family member was serving on active duty.

In the NGC tradition, funds were raised, 8,000 trees were planted, and a sign was placed marking the road, becoming the original 'marker'. Two ardent supporters of the original project were Mrs. Thomas Edison and her son, Charles Edison, a past governor of New Jersey.

The program evolved into a marker program that now spans the country, and includes Gold Star memorials to honor those who gave their lives in service to the United States.

What a wonderful, continuing project, just as relevant and important today as it was in the 1940's.

"Gardening is the art
that uses flowers & plants
as paint, and the soil and
sky as canvas" ~ Elizabeth Murray



BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES

Marcy Cunkelman

Spring sure was mixed up this year. Seems this is going to be a common occurrence. Who says there's no global warming? Zones are changing, even though I still go by the old zones. It's the heat zones we need to pay attention to. Hot and then it snowed, and back to the heat. My yard was blooming like it was mid-April in early March. Daffodils, forsythia, Scilla and other bulbs, my cherry tree and Hellebores are fading and almost done. The early pollinators were happy to find a food source, even though not native. Most of the green and color you were seeing are the non-native plants. I am slowly getting rid of the non-natives, but I will keep a few for the early pollinators. Sadly, the weather has been so warm, the mason bees and even bumblebees were out on the blossoms. Flies and beetles, spiders and even butterflies have been out flying around. Butterflies' sightings include Yellow Tiger Swallowtail, Painted Lady, Cabbage Whites, Sulphurs, Spring Azures, different Moths and the many Red Admirals that are migrating from the South clear to Canada.

Large swarms of gnats were by my water features and I even saw mosquito larvae in a barrel. Need to add a mosquito dunker in it. Something we all need to pay attention with standing water.

My native ephemerals are blooming early with the warm weather — wild ginger, blood root, Virginia bluebells (blown over by the gusty winds), wild purple phlox, trout lilies and many colors of violets, Cut-leaf toothwort, green and gold and wild sedum ground covers, Golden ragwort, even spring beauties. The Serviceberry is in full bloom and the pollinators have been busy making fruit. Instead of June berries, I think it will be May berries. Again, ahead of normal time, but I'm sure the Catbirds and Cedar Waxwings will beat me to a few tasty bites.

Birds are already starting to pair up and looking for nesting sites. **Please check for nests in anything you are trimming — trees, shrubs and even grasses.** A few years ago, I found a song sparrow nest in the grasses I was cutting back. I left what I could around the nest, but it wasn't enough for the mama to feel safe to stay on the nest. Was not expecting to see the nest that early. Cardinals found a new nesting sight and have an egg already. I found a Carolina wren nest almost finished in the flower pot laying on its side on a shelf. Bluebirds (nest done and ready for eggs), Chickadees, Tufted Titmice are also looking for nesting places in hollow trees and nest boxes. Clean them out, if you haven't done it yet. Save natural fibers like grasses, leaves and even small twigs for nesting material instead of man-made fibers like yarn and strings. NO dryer lint. I put piles of fine and medium fine grasses in and under shrubs for the birds. If you have milkweed stems, the orioles and robins will pull the fibers for nesting material.

A few of the winter birds are still here like the juncos and white-throated sparrows. Most seemed to have taken off a few weeks ago when the weather started hitting the 70s. The summer residents came back with a Chipping Sparrows, Eastern Towhees and Brown Thrashers. A Phoebe was back near its nesting site in the barn. Turkey Vultures are back cleaning up the dead critters. Time is moving on and the circle of life is waking.

Conservation/ Water Report

Karlice Makuchan

Mushroom Potential and Mycoremediation

Our 2-4 million species of fungi in the world offer us endless possibilities from creating alternative building materials and textiles, providing new sources of plant-based proteins, and cleaning up environmental toxins.



Mycoremediation is a form of bioremediation--- the introduction of microorganisms (like bacteria) to break down environmental pollutants in contaminated areas, near oil spills, industrial sites, brownfields and even Superfund sites. Mycoremediation uses fungi instead of bacteria. The threadlike root system of fungi that grow underneath the mushroom—consume food externally, using their enzymes to break down molecules in pollutants and toxins. Basically, they digest the surface they're growing on and convert it into nutrients.

This remarkable method has been used to clean up industrial and agricultural waste and sometimes convert them into edible high-protein mushrooms. They've been used to clean up oil spills, contaminated soil and heavy metals in abandoned areas called brownfields. Oyster mushrooms are capable of removing *E. coli* and fecal coliforms, absorb toxins, and restore the usefulness of polluted streams passively. Diana Baca, owner of Oak Haven Mushrooms, a small, gourmet and functional mushroom farm near Blairsville, is developing ecologically sound practices for her waste and is looking for projects. Her mushrooms are still viable after she's used them, and the spent blocks could be used in riparian stream buffers in AMD (Abandoned Mine Drainage), *E. coli*, manure, or hydrocarbon remediation on our local streams. Some strains of blue oysters even "eat" black plastic bags!

Fungi Mutarium might be the solution in home or community recycling centers. Created by Katharina Unger in the Netherlands, the recycling system contains pods made of agar and plastics treated with UV. Oyster and split gill mushrooms fed on these pods for a few months. While some bioaccumulate too many toxins when degrading environmental pollutants, some mushrooms are even edible.

<https://www.dezeen.com/2014/12/10/livin-studio-katharina-unger-fungi-mutarium-recycle-plastic-food/>