

Westmoreland Garden Council

Jan., Feb., Mar. 2025 Newsletter

“Where Gardeners Grow”



A LOOK BACK AT 2024

A monumental and much discussed decision was enacted to step back to our roots and once again become Westmoreland Garden Council.

- ◆ 2024 began with a new roof and remodeling of the **Garden House**. The bathroom was enlarged and is now handicapped accessible. A new combined A/C and heat system was installed. A Katherine Mabis McKenna Foundation grant enabled the remodeling plus a wonderful new fence with butterfly flourishes.
- ◆ In March we hosted our ever-popular **Spring Tea** “Go For the Gold” for a record number of 128 guests with 12 “To Go” boxes. As always, the decorated tables were varied in theme and breathtakingly beautiful.
- ◆ The Lefevre Butterfly Garden opened May 1, just in time for the popular **May Plant Sale**. Elizabeth Pesci and her garden helpers planted a colorful flower rainbow at the entrance to greet visitors.
- ◆ A bus trip to Penn State Arboretum was organized by Mary Ann Artman and was a wonderful day!
- ◆ Our Bi-annual **Flower show** “Gardens Perform in Summer” was held at Redstone Highlands. Best of show was awarded to Marilyn Backus, GCFP President.
- ◆ August is always **Monarch Butterfly Release** month. The community responded by reserving 250 Monarchs, provided free by the generosity of several donors. Greensburg Salem seniors manned the hot dog booth to raise money for charity. A short educational program, face painting and McFeeleys Ice Cream Truck rounded out a fun filled day.
- ◆ We took a **bus trip** in September to the Flight 93 Memorial and nearby “Remember Me Rose Garden”.
- ◆ New this year was a **Card and Game Party**. Nadine Mason and Judy Geary followed a Halloween theme and chaired this major success!
- ◆ The October **Annual Meeting** was held at Greensburg Country Club. Joan Stairs is always on target with her pumpkin table decorations and festive fall decorations. The entertainment was “Floral Rhythms” led by Angie Raitano. The designs were **amazing and inspirational!**
- ◆ **June through October** found us participating in the **Old Salem Farmers Market every Sunday**.
- ◆ **Wreaths and special designs** decorate the halls the month of November in prelude to the Christmas Sale. Live greens and permanent designs filled the Iris and Laurel rooms.

2024 ended with the task of updating of the *Westmoreland Garden Council* bylaws. A monumental undertaking!



We are excited to get started established and new projects for your pleasure and entertainment for 2025. We welcome your ideas and help!

“The new year is what you make of it. Start now.”

Calendar of Events

Jan. 7	Membership Mtg. 11:00 AM
Jan. 12	Wedding Expo
Feb. 2	Old Salem Market
Feb. 4	Membership Mtg. 11:00 AM Program to be announced
Mar. 15	Annual Spring Tea

Membership Meetings

Our January Membership Meeting will be held on January 7 at 11:00 AM. An installation ceremony to install new officers will be presented by Angie Rataino.

Also at this meeting, we will pull the lucky winning ticket for the trip to Williamsburg, VA that was donated by Donna Lee. Winner need not be present but it sure will be exciting! Good luck to all who purchased tickets.

Lunch will be provided by the Westmoreland Garden Council Board members.

The Old Salem Farmers Market is now on the first Sunday of the month for the winter and inside, of course. Join us for a fun day to chase away the winter doldrums! Also, we will be participating in the "Wedding Expo" on January 12. Come and see what's new in the world of weddings. Check out the GGCC website for more information.

Katherine M. McKenna Annual College Scholarship!



Scholarship applications for this \$1,500 award will soon be available on our NEW website. Applicants must reside in Westmoreland or its bordering counties and have completed at least one year at an accredited college or university before the application deadline. Students pursuing a two, four, or graduate degree in botany, forestry, landscape architecture, horticulture, or a related field such as environmental science should take this opportunity to apply. Past winners can also apply.

Don't delay in sharing this announcement with friends and family. The deadline to apply is May 31st 2025. An application form and additional information will be posted on our website westmorelandgardencouncil.org.

Response to last year's scholarship was very encouraging. Our organization's name has changed, but this scholarship is still funded thru generous support of our community and hard work of our membership previously known as the Greensburg Garden Center.

Thank you.
Deneise Snyder, Scholarship Chair

Westmoreland Garden Council Annual Spring Tea March 15, 2025 "Spring Blooms"

Crocuses, daffodils and tulips are ready to burst! It's time for the Annual Spring Tea at the Westmoreland Garden Council. This year's event will be held Saturday, March 15 in the Laurel and Iris rooms at the Greensburg Garden and Civic Center.

Doors will open at 11:00 AM for our guests to view 16 beautifully decorated tea tables designed by our talented members. Tea will be served at high noon. Cost of the tea is \$40.00. Call the office at 724-837-0245 to make your reservation.

We will offer a large assortment of raffle baskets in the main hallway. Lots of room to admire and make your selections!

Paula Kramer is chairing the tea this year. She encourages all members to consider donating time and energy to this lovely event. New members are especially welcomed to host a table, or there are many other jobs to fill. Paula may be reached at 724-331-3750 with questions or suggestions.



"Bloom where you're planted"

Free Chrysanthemums by Sandy Truckner



Who doesn't enjoy colorful pots of chrysanthemums in the fall? On the deck, the front porch, the patio, filling a bare spot in the flower bed, anywhere really. But the cost can quickly add up, even if you find them at a really good price. Bill and I like to drive up to Smicksburg and buy them from the Amish. And we usually pick up one or two on the drive back from the Springs Folk Festival in Springs, Pa, again from either Amish or Mennonite growers. Their prices are always lower than garden centers as their costs are much lower. Even so, it does add up.

But there is another way to have all the chrysanthemums you want practically free. How, you might ask? Well it does take a bit of work on your part but if you enjoy gardening, it can seem like no work at all. One of my favorite gardening books, *The New Garden Encyclopedia* published 1955 by Wise & co has clear directions on growing mums. Instead of going to the garden center you start in the spring with cuttings. Well last spring I did just that from one of two mums Elizabeth had given me the previous fall. When only one survived the winter I worried I might lose it too and decided to take four cuttings from that remaining plant. Those cuttings took off and by summer they were going great. By fall I had two good sized plants in containers, a smaller one in a four inch pot, and one previously sold at an earlier Farmers Market. The pot size certainly affected the plant size. Moving them up to a larger pot about mid summer was the right thing to do.

Besides either sand or soilless mix and the appropriate containers the other thing you need is a parent/donor plant. You need one mum to take cuttings from. This can be one you already have or one belonging to a friend or neighbor. Here is some detailed information on how to achieve good sized plants by fall from just 4" cuttings taken in the spring or early summer.

When the parent plant comes up in the spring and there are shoots long enough to take for cuttings, using a sharp knife, cut off a sprig. Strip the lower leaves and insert the cutting into the growing medium (preferably one without fertilizer). Be sure the medium is moist but not soggy. You might have luck without covering it but best practice is to enclose the cutting in a plastic bag or other clear cover, opening it each day to change the air. Be sure the cutting gets bright light but no direct sun. Under a shop light works well.

After the cutting has enough roots to support itself without the cover, remove it. Move into brighter light as the days progress. When the cutting has developed a good root system move into a larger pot. Continue doing so as the growing season progresses. Keep the soil moist but not soggy, ie, don't let it dry out. When the cutting has developed a good number of leaves, remove the terminal bud so it branches out. Continue to remove the terminal buds on the side shoots and top-most shoot to make the plant bushy. Stop this practice by the end of July so the plant can form flower buds for fall blooming. Full or partial sun is the preferred growing spot. Afternoon shade worked well for me, full sun caused the soil to dry out quickly. I didn't pinch mine back enough so they were a bit leggy but still beautiful.

When the cutting has filled a 4" pot with roots you may choose to plant it in your flower bed instead of into a larger pot. Keep it well watered and shaded for a few days if necessary. Since they were in pots I wondered what the best way to overwinter them would be. I planted one in the garden and put the 4" pot and one larger pot in the garage where the temperature is in the 40s. I'll keep the soil damp enough to sustain life but not so damp to encourage growth except for the one in the window; I'll give it a bit more water. One pot is still outside on gravel. Outdoors it is good to cover the plants lightly with pine/spruce boughs after the ground freezes. A spot with good drainage is to be preferred; overly wet soil is not a good place to overwinter chrysanthemums. And it is suggested that they be protected from harsh winds.

You might think this is a bit early to be reading about taking cuttings in the spring but this gives you time to scout out a parent/donor plant. Plus if the newsletter is full come spring, you will already have the necessary information to increase your chrysanthemum collection. And practically for free

Happy, Happy New Year 2025



*A bright, shiny new year,
Empty, neat, pristine, waiting ready for us to get it right.
Another chance to make a real effort to give more than we get.
Another chance to make a difference.
A good New Year!
A Happy New Year!!*

Westmoreland Garden Council
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GREENSBURG GARDEN CENTER 2025
ASSOCIATE MEMBER - NEW MEMBER RENEWAL FORM

Date: _____ Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: Home _____ Cell _____ Email _____
New \$20 _____ Renewal \$20 _____

Annual dues run from January 1 to January 1. Please make checks payable to:
Westmoreland Garden Council, 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.