

Member Spotlight: Marla C.

Wolfeboro Garden Club



Marla's love of gardening began not with a green thumb, but with a desire to remember someone she loved.

Growing up in Bergen County, New Jersey, gardening wasn't a family pastime. Her father maintained shrubs and climbing roses, but more for curb appeal than a passion for gardening. It wasn't until 1997, following the passing of her mother, that Marla discovered her own love of gardening. Wanting to create something beautiful in her mother's memory, she planted a 100-foot garden. What began as a tribute became a lifelong passion.

Following her graduation from Ithaca College, Marla married and settled in Westfield, New Jersey, where she made her home for 34 years. Those years brought the joys of family life, including raising twin sons, now in their late thirties. These days, she enjoys another cherished role as grandmother of three.

Her journey to New Hampshire comes with quite a love story. Gene was her high school sweetheart. When he joined the Marines, their young romance ended, leaving Marla heartbroken. Life took them in different directions, and both eventually married and divorced other people. But 34 years later, they found their way back to each other and eloped to Las Vegas in 2009! With Gene's family having longtime ties to Silver Lake, New Hampshire was already a familiar place. In 2019, the couple decided to make NH their home.

When asked to describe her gardening style, Marla favors the wild, English-inspired look over anything too manicured. She loves a garden with height, movement, and drifts of flowers, especially coneflowers, sunflowers, lilies, wild asters, and plants with interesting shapes. Gene lends a hand with the trees, while Marla enjoys creating the colorful, informal landscape around them.

After years of involvement with the Westfield Garden Club, she wasted no time finding her gardening community in New Hampshire. Having moved here in August 2019, she was a Wolfeboro Garden Club member by October! One of the first members she met was Martie Lincoln, now the club's Beautification Chair, who wasted no time asking, "How are your knees? Can you bend?" It was a humorous introduction to the club's garden teams, where willing hands (and good knees) are always appreciated.

And lend a hand she has! Marla has served as Programs Chair and Scholarship Chair, worked on the Bean Garden team, and coordinates the annual luncheon. But her favorite Garden Club memory was driving a John Deere Gator in the 2021 parade, waving to the crowds as the club's entry went on to win first place. So proud of the victory, she requested extra time with the trophy and proceeded to take it around town! Clearly, she wasn't quite ready to surrender the bragging rights.



Beyond the activities, she values the friendships, guest speakers, and opportunities to learn from fellow members. Gardening, she believes, is a lifelong education. She's especially inspired by older gardeners who continue tending beautiful gardens, proving that enthusiasm for gardening doesn't have an expiration date.

Marla is also well known for her cooking, particularly her spaghetti and meatballs. But her personal favorite to prepare is a stuffed roasted chicken, seasoned with fresh herbs from her garden and served with all the trimmings. For someone who loves both gardening and entertaining, it's a natural combination.

Perhaps the most meaningful part of her gardening journey is how it has shaped her outlook on life. She says gardening gave her a renewed sense of God and taught her to have faith. After all, planting a perennial means believing it will return year after year.

"Gardeners are hopeful people," she says.

And maybe that's what keeps Marla, and so many of us, gardening. There's always something new to learn, something unexpected to discover, and the anticipation of seeing what shows up next spring.