

January 2026 EDITION OF THE VFGC, INC. NEWSLETTER



ROOTED

Don't forget!

January 1, 2026, New Years Day
February 1, ODG Deadline
February 8, VFGC Finance Committee (Virtual)
February 23, VFGC Board of Directors (Virtual)

Dear VFGC members,

Happy New Year! The Holidays are over and decorations are packed away again. It has even been raining in Richmond. Like the rest of Virginia, we need the rain! I hope it has been raining near you too.

Last week, three panels of judges reviewed top District Award winning applications eligible for VFGC Awards. The VFGC Award winners will be revealed in April at the State Convention in Williamsburg. I was just one of nine judges. But what I saw was truly amazing. Since this is the time of year that we all make New Year's resolutions, I hope each VFGC club will resolve to apply for at least one Award by December 1, 2026. (Just look on our website <https://viriniagardenclubs.org> under the Awards heading for a complete list). I hope each VFGC club will also resolve to submit an article to Rooted and/or to ODG about something your club has enjoyed doing. We are inspired by and learn so much from each other.

A preview of exciting events planned for the VFGC Convention follows. Also included is information about Flower show School II and Landscape Design School. See you there!

Sally

Sally Harrison, VFGC President, 2025-2027



92ND ANNUAL VIRGINIA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS CONVENTION

Our 92nd Convention promises to be a “ONE OF A KIND”!!! To begin with we’ll be staying in the historic Williamsburg Lodge, which has an 18th-century style which blends harmoniously with modern amenities. It is located within walking distance from historic Colonial Williamsburg and minutes from Jamestown, Yorktown and Merchants Square.



Your time will be enhanced with an entrance ticket to Historic Colonial Williamsburg working experiences such as the gunsmith shop and the forge, just to mention a few. This ticket is for your entire stay, not just one day entrance, at the fantastic cost of \$27.00! There will be ample time to enjoy the Historic area during our two-day convention – or you can extend your stay at the same rate of \$189.00 (plus tax, parking), either before or after the convention. The \$27.00 ticket will be made available on the registration form that will be coming out in the Spring edition of the ODG and on the VFGC website.

TOUR OF HISTORIC GARDENS

Bring your best walking shoes for a fantastic, guided walking tour of three different social levels of historic Colonial Williamsburg Gardens!!! On April 20th beginning at 10:00 AM, we will meet at Palace Green to join the Colonial Williamsburg Horticulture department on a very interesting and informative tour of the gardens, including the Governors Palace Garden.



OR

Have you worn out your best walking shoes? Do you like the scent of Lavender? Would you like to learn about the history and uses of Lavender during the colonial times up to the present? Would you like to learn the best way to grow Lavender, and enjoy making your own Lavender wreath to take home? Then, you are in luck!!!! We have “Two Bees Lavender” a local business born from a passion for lavender and love of community coming from “Clifton”, their historic farm in Kilmarnock, Virginia for this event. This presentation and workshop will take place in the Lodge on April 20th, beginning at 10:00AM.

THEN, the Garden Tour group and the Lavender workshop group will join together and experience a delicious lunch at the historic Shields Tavern. The cost for either the garden tour or Lavender presentation/workshop and lunch will be on the registration form which will come out in the Spring ODG and on the VFGC website.



**NEW ZEALAND’S 2025 DESIGNER OF THE YEAR
FRANCINE THOMAS**

WILL BE THE FEATURED FLORAL DESIGNER



What a treat we will have during our 92nd Annual Convention – Francine Thomas has travelled throughout New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Wales and up and down the East Coast of the USA demonstrating, teaching and judging.

Mrs. Thomas has a very energetic sense of humor which can be contagious and is evident in her floral presentations. She is inspired by what she sees and feels, and it comes through in her ideas for floral theatres as well as in her teaching floral art. Francine loves sharing ideas to inspire other people to do the same and flowers are from the heart and as are her designs. We will experience something new to our convention this year; Francine will be LIVE FROM NEW ZEALAND. This design program will be interactive; with input from the audience as well as having your questions answered about New Zealand and her designs and techniques; with surprises!!! Francine says:

“THE FINEST PLEASURES IN LIFE ARE THE UNEXPECTED ONES!”

**COME AND EXPERIENCE THE UNEXPECTED AT
THE 2026 VFGC CONVENTION!!**

**BE SURE TO MAKE YOUR HOTEL RESERVATIONS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
SO YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED!!**

With the 250th Anniversary of the USA, Williamsburg will be very popular and busy, especially in the beautiful Springtime of April 20-21, 2026. The Lodge has offered additional nightly rooms at the same cost before and after the convention dates. The nightly rate at Williamsburg Lodge will be \$189.00 USD plus City and State Taxes of 12.00 % per night; Occupancy Tax of \$2.00 per night. A self-parking Fee of \$10.00 per night will be charged when making your reservation. Non-registered Lodge guests will need to use the Hotel app, directions for using the app are displayed throughout the parking areas, this will be a larger fee, if not a registered guest. The deadline for reservations, if there are still rooms available, will be March 25, 2026.

Please use this link to make your Lodge reservation for the 2026 Convention:

Copy and paste into your browser: <https://book.passkey.com/e/51019193>

Or there is a link in the Winter edition of the ODG

(If you have trouble booking pre-and post-event date reservations, this can be done by calling the group reservations office 800-261-9530 Monday-Friday 9:00 AM -5:00 PM)

In addition to the Board and Convention Business meetings; as well as honoring our garden club members who have passed; there will be much more to do, learn and enjoy during this two-day convention. We have set aside a special “meet and greet” time before dinner and the design program, on Monday night, April 20th. Plan to come and enjoy getting to know, and spending time with, fellow garden club members discussing the VFGC’s “Bright Future”! Use your convention discounted \$27 Colonial Williamsburg admission ticket to tour the historic area. There will also be an opportunity to tour homes open in Williamsburg for Historic Garden Week, post-convention, after the morning session, on April 21st

We will have vendors too! For example, the Native Plant Society of Williamsburg – John Clayton Chapter, will be available to answer questions and give you the opportunity to purchase native plants. Two Bees Lavender will also have products for sale. Come see and shop! Attendees to the convention will be the first to view our special presentation of the 3D “Virginia Landscape Mural” – highlighting the unique attributes of each district. It introduces a new concept for “showing off” our entire state of Virginia, along with honoring district presidents. Leading this project is Kathy Ward, an exceptionally talented floral designer and imaginative “out of the box” orchestrator.

Submitted by:
VFGC Convention Chairman
Genny Chase

LEARNING IS FUN!

Flower Show School and Landscape Design School are open to any garden club member! Whether or not you are considering becoming a Flower Show Judge or certified Landscape Design Consultant, consider signing up for one or both schools. The details follow:

Flower Show School
Course II

A National Garden Clubs, Inc. School

March 23-26, 2026

Freemason St. Baptist Church

400 E. Freemason Street

Norfolk, VA 23510

757-625-7579

Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs



VFGC President – Sally Harrison

For more information contact:

Flower Show School Chairman – Frances Thrash
2109 Cocoa Circle, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-2213

francesthresh@cox.net

757-481-3484 or 757-478-5791

Flower Show School – Course II

Date: March 23-26, 2026

Location: Freemason Street Baptist Church, 400 E. Freemason St., Norfolk, VA 23510

Design & Flower Show Procedure: Cathy Waitinas

Cathy will teach tables, petites, & flower show procedure.

Horticulture: Jan Griffin

Jan will teach dracaenas with emphasis on sanseverias and daffodils.

Attendance at all Sessions is Required for Credit

Schedule:		
Monday, Mar 23	3:45 – 6 pm	Flower Show Procedure
Tuesday, Mar 24	8:00 – 9:00 am	FSP Exam
	9:15 am – 3:30 pm	Horticulture/Lunch
	3:45 – 5:45 pm	Point Scoring Test
Wed., Mar 25	8:00 – 9:00 am	Horticulture Exam
	9:15 am – 3:30 pm	Design
	3:45 – 5:45 pm	Point Scoring Test
Thursday, Mar 26	9:00 – 10:00 am	Design Examination

Hotel Information: Hotel is on your own, suggest Sleep Inn at Lake Wright, 1521 premium Outlets Blvd, Norfolk, VA 23502, 757-462-6251. (This is near the outlets and Ikea, just off the interstate – 10 minutes at most to the church.)

Required Books to have:

Handbook for Flower Shows, 2017 Edition, NGC Exhibiting & Judging, both available on the NGC Website for purchase or download.

Flower Show Procedure will cover review of Standard & Specialty Flower Show requirements, standard system of awarding, duties of flower show chairman & committee, writing a flower show schedule, and an explanation of Botanical Arts Photography Section & Botanical Arts Photography Award.

Horticulture will cover staging horticulture innovatively, petite horticulture, general requirements for horticulture Top Exhibitor Awards, judging qualities on the point scoring form, and commenting vocabulary,

Design will include table designs with the role of balance, color and texture emphasized, creative staging of tables, petite design and Top Exhibitor Awards for tables and petites, judging qualities on the Point Scoring form, and commenting vocabulary and procedures.

Cathy Waitinas

Flower Show Procedure & Design

Cathy Waitinas is an NGC Master Accredited Flower Show Judge and FSS Design and Flower Show Procedure Instructor. She is a member of Arissa and Garden Guild Garden Clubs, CFAA and the Society of American Florists. Cathy is an NGC Board Member Chairman of the TN Federation of Garden Clubs' State Headquarters. She has taught school and served 30+ years in the nuclear industry in safety and technical writing. Cathy and Jerry have 3 daughters and live out in the county near Oliver Springs where she has a woodworking shop in her basement. Cathy's carpentry projects show up in many of her design structures

Jan Griffin Horticulture

After moving from the Seattle area to Florida all the plants I knew about would not thrive in Florida's climate. I joined a Garden Club and started my quest for learning about other varied and interesting plants. I became Flower Show Judge. Now

I teach Floral Design classes as well as horticulture for Flower Show Schools and have developed several horticulture and design programs for clubs, judges, and civic groups.
 Being actively involved in The Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and Florida Flower Show Judges keeps me busy. It has been my honor to serve as horticulture chairman for six state flower shows and several District shows.
 My interests other than Garden Club are my family, golf, and working in my friend's florist shop. My comment to all my wonderful design friends is that you need great horticulture to create great designs

REGISTRATION FORM: Flower Show School-Course II

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone _____

Club _____ District _____

Credit _____ Non-Credit _____

Full Course with/without exam (Includes tuition, two lunches, and reserved seating on Front rows.)	\$150 _____
Flower Show Procedure (Mon.)	\$40 _____
Horticulture & Lunch (Tues.)	\$75 _____
Design & Lunch (Wed.)	\$75 _____
Manual will be e-mailed (free of charge)	
Printed Manual available at Registration if preordered.	\$10 _____
TOTAL	_____

Dietary Restrictions _____

****No refunds after Feb 23, 2026**

Make check payable to **Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.** with **Flower Show Schools** in the memo line and mail to:
 Registrar Val Story, 2122 Whithorn Hill, Jeffersonton, VA 22724-1873, 540-272-0975, valstory@aol.com

This course is available to all those having an interest in the beauty and care of our environment through landscaping



LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL

Course 2, Series 30

Monday and Tuesday

April 13, 14, 2026

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

Education Classroom

1800 Lakeside Drive

Richmond, VA 23228-4700

Phone (804) 693-9393

Sponsored by

VIRGINIA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

SCHEDULE

Monday, April 13, 2026		
Time	Activity	Instructor

Currently, area hotels cannot offer us a block of rooms.

Suggestion is to call to make your own reservation at the hotel of your choice - they offer discounts if you are a AAA member, as well as other promotional discounts.

8:00 – 8:20am – 8:20am	Registration Welcome		
8:30am – 9:30am	Overused, Often Invasive and Native Alternatives in Your Area		Laurie Fox
9:40am – 10:40am	Designing for Pollinators and Wildlife		David Pippin
10:50am – 11:50am	Accessible, Enabling and Therapeutic Gardens		Laurie Fox
11:50am – 1:10pm	LUNCH (The Café is convenient)		
1:20pm - 2:20pm	Plants in the Landscape		Laurie Fox
2:30pm – 3:30pm	Supplemental Subject -Art and Nature Appreciation		David Pippin
6:00pm Group Dinner – place to be announced – pay on your own			
Tuesday, April 14, 2026			
8:30am - 9:30am	Landscape Design Process		Neal Beasley
9:40am - 10:40am	Development of North American Landscape Design		Peggy Singlemann
10:50am - 11:50am	Redesign of Areas		Neal Beasley
11:50am - 1:00pm	LUNCH (The Café is convenient)		
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Preservation of Historic Sites and Structures		Peggy Singlemann
2:10pm - 3:10pm	Structures in the Landscape		Neal Beasley
3:15pm	Review – consultants not taking the exam may leave.		
3:30pm	Exam		

INSTRUCTORS

Neal Beasley, ASLA, ISA Certified Arborist

Neal is a Landscape Architect and Certified Arborist with over 25 years of experience in the fields of Horticulture, Arboriculture, Irrigation, Landscape Construction and Public Gardening. Neal studied horticulture at N. C. State University and was formerly the Manager of Horticulture at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. As an Arborist, he assesses trees during the site analysis to best determine protection strategies or removal. Neal is also on the team of the Timmons Group in Richmond. Neal is the co-author of “Recycling Urban Stormwater: 1050K Street, NW Washington, DC” 2007.

Laurie Fox, Ph.D.

Laurie Fox is a faculty member in the Horticulture department at Virginia Tech and is based at the Hampton Roads Agricultural Research & Extension Center in Virginia Beach, VA where she has extension and research responsibilities. She received her BS & MS degrees in Horticulture from North Carolina State University, with an emphasis on landscape design, ornamental plant production, and weed science, and her Ph.D. from Wageningen University, The Netherlands. Laurie is an author and the publisher of *Best Plants for Hampton Roads - A Landscape and Garden Companion*.

Peggy Singlemann

Peggy Singlemann is nationally known as one of the foremost gardening experts. Her experience in the field is exceeded only by her infectious enthusiasm in sharing knowledge of best practices. She is a familiar figure as the longtime host and co-producer of Virginia’s only TV show, *Virginia Home Grown*, on Virginia Public Media/PBS. Peggy is also prominent in this field for her transformative role renewing and overseeing the garden and grounds of the historic estate Maymont in Richmond.

She holds professional certifications as an arborist, horticulturist, and landscape designer and has greatly expanded knowledge in the gardening/landscape design fields through her national and regional speaking engagements, contributions to publications, and consulting work via her business, RVA Gardener LLC. In 2022, the Virginia General Assembly presented a commendation to Peggy for her outstanding guidance, restoration, and preservation of Maymont’s gardens, grounds, and arboretum over 38 years of service.

David Pippin

David graduated from Virginia Tech in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education. Prior to founding David Pippin, Inc. in 2000, he became known for his knowledge and creative talents in a variety of horticultural and education venues in the Richmond area. In addition to running David Pippin, Inc. he is an adjunct professor in the Hort. Dept, at Reynolds Community College as well as a facilitator and consultant for Virginia Agriculture in the classroom. He is a sought-after designer of inspired floral arrangements, a provider of garden-themed hands-on programs as well as an educator with a wide range of horticultural knowledge and experience.

COURSE REGISTRATION

LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL

Course 2 Series 30 April 13, 14, 2026

Registration Deadline: March 15, 2026

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ VA _____

Zip: _____ + 4 _____ Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Garden Club: _____ District: _____

Check if Refreshing _____ Are you a Master Gardener? yes / no

Is your garden club a member of VFGC? ___Yes ___No

PLEASE CHECK CORRECT BOX

- [] EXAM STUDENT \$100.00
- [] NON-EXAM STUDENT 100.00
- [] SINGLE DAY STUDENT – Monday ___ or Tuesday ___ 50.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Refunds can be given only for medical emergencies.

LDS will refund all but \$20 if cancellation (other than medical) is within five days of the first class.

Make check payable: **VFGC Landscape Design School**

Mail to: LDS Registrar
Claudia Cosby Phone: 804 794-7798
3015 Mount Hill Drive
Midlothian, VA 23113-3923 E-mail: cosbych1205@gmail.com

LDS Chairman, Glenda Knowles
Email: ggknowles6@gmail.com Phone: 757 651-0401

FLOWER SHOWS, TOURS and EVENTS ARE PLANNED:

For future editions of **ROOTED**, please email your club's announcements to rootedvfgc@gmail.com. There is one announcement in this edition!

"CHORUS FOR THE COUNTRY"
Celebrating Early Patriotic Songs

An NGC Patriotic Standard Flower Show

Presented by
Rock Spring Garden Club

Member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc.,
Central Atlantic Region,
National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc.,
District III, and
South Atlantic Region,
Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.,
Piedmont District

**Friendship Hall (Lower Level)
Little Falls Presbyterian Church
6025 Little Falls Road
Arlington, VA 22207**

Thursday, May 21, 2026

**Free and Open to the Public
2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

From the VFGC Corresponding Secretary –

Please let me know if you have an address, phone number and/or email address change.

Also, if you are not the current Garden Club President, please ask your replacement to provide his or her contact and email information and Club name to me with a copy to Claudia Cosby Email:cosbych1205@gmail.com for the VFGC Yearbook 2025 - 2027

Thank you,

Dianna Busch
VFGC Corresponding Secretary
Email: diannabusch@comcast.net

THE IDEA EXCHANGE:

While the Old Dominion Gardener (ODG) is published quarterly, **ROOTED** can be sent **monthly when ODG is not**. So please submit articles or information you want to share in **ROOTED** by the 8th of each month to rootedvfgc@gmail.com. **Every club has some news they can share at least once in 2026!**

ODG deadlines are: August 1, November 1, February 1 and May 1. Refer to the back page of ODG for submission instructions.

For either publication, please submit photos as a pdf or in jpeg format. Please submit text in Word format.

Happy New Year to All!

Email: [rootedvfgc@gmail](mailto:rootedvfgc@gmail.com)

