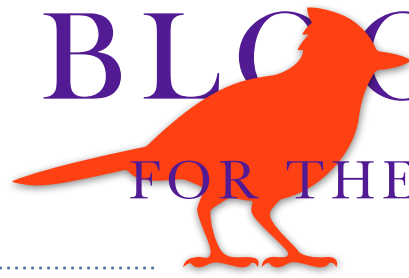


# BUDS AND BLOOMS

## FOR THE BIRDS!



### From our Director's Desk

Dear Friends,

Winter has hit us hard this year and while the snow is beautiful, I can hardly wait for spring. I'm sure many of you feel the same way and are biding your time and keeping your spirits up by flipping through your gardening catalogs. With the thaw of winter, I will begin visitation. So if you are hosting a meeting for our District II/III I will visit you there, otherwise I will be coming to see you at a meeting or other activity that you are holding. I hope to see a club a month.

I want you to know how much I enjoy meeting all of you. All of you have been so welcoming. I am floored by the talent in our clubs. Going forward I hope to share some of the stories and talent from our members I am meeting. Therefore, I am asking you to help me by identifying someone in your club who has a special talent that can be shared with our club members. Don't be overly modest. I would like to have some of this talent shared via a Zoom meeting, so if you know how to create a great design or paint a beautiful picture of flowers or take nature photographs or any other talent that lends itself to be shared via Zoom, please let me know.

Thank you again for everything you do. I am looking forward to talking with you soon.

Regards,

**Claire Kukielka, Director, District II/III**

### Save the Dates:

RSVP to Helen Papathanasiou  
[parklandgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:parklandgardenclub@gmail.com) if you are attending to any of these District II/III meetings.

#### March 10, 2025 Bethlehem GC Host

District II/II Meeting (no cost)  
 Advent Moravian Church, Bethlehem  
 President's meeting 9:00 am  
 Light breakfast at 9:30 am  
 Business Meeting 10:00 am -12 noon  
 Lunch 12:00 -12:30 pm  
 Speaker Lori Metz- Dirty Gardening  
 12:30 pm -1:30 pm

#### June 05, 2025 GC of Reading Host

District II/II Meeting (no cost)  
 Kutztown Public Library, Kutztown  
 President's meeting 9:00 am  
 Light breakfast at 9:30 am  
 Business Meeting 10:00 am -12 noon  
 Lunch 12:00 -12:30 pm  
 Speaker TBD 12:30 pm -1:30 pm

#### September 09, 2025

District II/III Annual Meeting (cost \$50.00+/-)  
 More information to follow

#### April 6 -8, 2025

#### GCFP Annual Convention

"The Gardening Revolution"  
 King of Prussia Double Tree by Hilton  
 If you did not receive a Keystone Gardener mailing regarding the convention as a member and are interested in attending, please let me know. Remember you don't have to stay all 3 days; you can come for even one day. The classes are really informative and it is lots of fun.

## District Meeting Invitation, March 10, 2025

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Mark your calendars! You're invited to the  
**GCFP DISTRICT II/III MEETING**  
**Hosted by Bethlehem Garden Club**

**Monday, March 10, 2025**  
Advent Moravian Church  
3730 Jacksonville Road, Bethlehem, PA 18017



### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

<b>Arrival of Participants</b>	<b>8:30-10:00 am</b>
<b>Hospitality &amp; Refreshments</b>	
Light breakfast is served (Coffee, tea, juice, water, & pastries)	<b>8:30-9:45 am</b>
<b>President's Meeting</b>	<b>9:00 -10:00 am</b>
<b>General Business Meeting</b>	<b>10-12:00 pm</b>
<b>Welcome</b> , Jayne Shinko, President, Bethlehem Garden Club	
<b>Meeting</b> , Claire Kukielka, District II/III Director	
<b>Light Lunch</b>	<b>12:00-12:30 pm</b>
(Sandwiches, salad, dessert, beverages)	
<b>Program</b>	<b>12:30- 1:30 pm</b>
<b>Introduction of Program &amp; Speaker by Keith Lentz</b>	
<b>"Dirty Gardening" Presented by Lori Metz</b>	
Lori Metz is a horticulturist, landscape designer, owner of Carriage House Landscape Design and a Penn State Master Gardener since 1999.	
<b>Closing Remarks</b> -District Director, Claire Kukielka	



## RSVP!

Please let me know how many from your club will be attending so that I can plan on having the correct amount of food and drink. I would appreciate you getting your numbers to me by **February 28**.

Please send all information, registrations or questions to:

**Liz Lorenz**  
**Bethlehem Garden Club**  
**484-894-1800 (text)**  
[lizlor3040@gmail.com](mailto:lizlor3040@gmail.com)

We would like to know how many clubs will be competing in the Trash to Treasure. (I would like to know this as well as Liz.) It helps us to have the correct number of tables set up in advance for display that day. It also lets me know which groups need to see pictures in advance. Thank you for everything you do!

**Claire Kukielka, DII/III Director**  
[ddirector24.25@gmail.com](mailto:ddirector24.25@gmail.com)

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## Parkland GC Upcoming Events

Greetings Presidents,  
Parkland Garden Club is celebrating its 70th year anniversary in 2025. We are planning a luncheon tea at 2 pm on Sunday, May 18, 2025 at the Aster Center of the Hyatt Place Allentown/Lehigh Valley, 621 Grange Road, Allentown. Please save the date! This will be a by invitation only event. Your invitations will be sent out soon.

Helen Papathanasiou, President  
Parkland Garden Club  
[parklandgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:parklandgardenclub@gmail.com)

## SAVE THE DATE!

**The Parkland Garden Club's 26th Annual Garden Tour " Nature's Journey" will be on July 12, 9 am - 4 pm, rain or shine.**



## District II/III Feeder Watch Project: January's Bird Report

**It is interesting to see how the number of birds and number of species increased as the winter weather became harsh.** I used my count from the weekend of the snowstorm to show what can happen when snow covers the ground. We had reports of robins at two locations. At my house they were flocking to the heated bird baths. Typically, they are not feeder birds but will come to your feeding area if you have shrubs with fruit or water. They hang around the area in the winter if the snow is not too deep and if there is adequate food, such as Eastern Red Cedar fruit, Sumac seeds or other berries. If you have hollies or winterberries, I expect you have seen a flock land on the bushes and devour every berry.

**Not surprisingly, Juncos, often referred to as Snow Birds, and White-throated Sparrows lead the list of individuals counted.** Both are here only in the winter and tend to eat seed on the ground or flat feeders, versus tube or hopper feeders. I put cracked corn on the ground so I get large numbers of them. Unfortunately, the corn can also attract flocks of Starlings, Cowbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds that can go through a lot of corn and crowd out the others. I try to tuck the corn under trees and shrubs where the other birds are not as comfortable foraging.

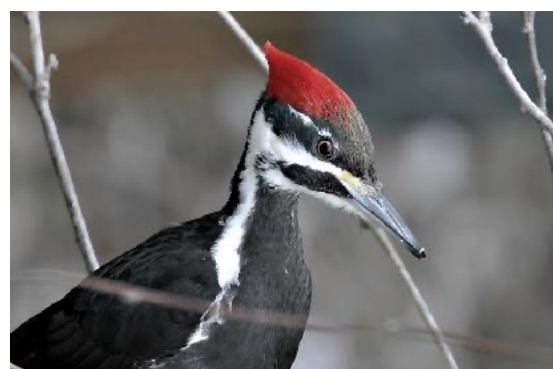
**A few of us are noticing an increased number of Cardinals this winter.** Is anyone else noticing this. While not during the count I reported for this project I have had as many as 24 at one time at my feeders. By the way, Cardinals enjoy the cracked corn on the ground as well as sunflower seed in feeders.

**I am attaching a photo and including a link to a video taken by my son.** He has been fortunate to have both Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers visit suet feeders close to his house this winter. I've read that Pileated will visit feeders regularly once they find them, though I have never had that experience despite their occasional landing and flying through my yard. According to *Birds of the Lehigh Valley*, published by the Lehigh Valley Audubon Society and authored by Peter Saenger, Barbare Malt and Kevin Crilley, the Red-headed Woodpecker is considered rare. However, in acorn mast years there are increased sightings. Additionally, they have been sighted somewhat regularly, though not in big numbers, in our area during this past year. I think that is because of all the dead ash trees. My son lives along Green Lane Park and has been seeing a pair in a patch of dead ash trees behind his house on GL park land since the fall. My only sightings living in this area for 40 years occurred for a few days in 2023 when I had one visiting my feeders in the fall and then this year seeing the pair at my son's house. The following link shows a Red-headed Woodpecker feeding at Rob's suet feeder.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/H854iUH2wTsVET2f9>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/J2coJRFbA1w?feature=share>

<https://youtube.com/shorts/LfaBNv0XO4A?feature=share>



**Submitted by Diana Rudloff, Upper Perkiomen Valley GC**





### **H5N1 Avian Bird Flu Update: What Backyard Bird Lovers Need to Know**

The avian influenza virus has been making headlines recently, a fact you may have noticed when picking up eggs at the grocery store for nearly \$8 a dozen. Additionally, local news has reported the tragic loss of hundreds of snow geese during their migration through the Lehigh Valley. Chicken farmers are also on high alert, closely monitoring their flocks for any signs of bird flu.

This virus poses a serious threat to both birds and mammals, spreading through the saliva, mucus, and feces of infected wild birds. Species at risk include hawks, eagles, falcons, owls, crows, vultures, shorebirds, game birds, seabirds, and waterfowl such as Canada Geese and Mallards.

### **Should You Take Down Your Bird Feeders?**

According to experts, there is currently no significant risk of an outbreak among wild songbirds. As a result, there is no official recommendation to remove backyard bird feeders—unless you also raise domestic poultry. To minimize disease transmission, regularly clean your bird feeders and birdbaths.

### **Precautions for Pet Owners**

If you have pet birds, it's wise to wash your hands and change your clothes after tending to backyard feeders. Outdoor pets, particularly cats that hunt birds, should be kept away from feeders and wild birds. If your cat catches a bird, monitor them for flu-like symptoms. While rare, transmission from pets to humans can occur.

### **What to Do If You Find a Dead or Sick Bird**

Avoid handling sick or deceased birds and steer clear of surfaces contaminated with bird feces. If you must dispose of a dead bird, wear gloves and a face mask, place the bird in a double-bagged trash bag, and discard your gloves and mask immediately. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water afterward.

### **Public Health Risk & Safe Practices**

Fortunately, avian flu transmission to humans is rare, and the overall public health risk remains low. However, it's always best to take precautions. This spring, if handling nest boxes or discarded bird nests, wear gloves and a mask, wash your hands and clothing afterward, and change your footwear.

This information is not meant to deter you from enjoying backyard bird feeding but rather to provide guidance on responsible practices. Wild birds should be observed from a distance to minimize direct contact. Additionally, eggs and poultry remain safe to eat as long as they are properly cooked to an internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

By following these simple precautions, you can continue to enjoy and support your backyard birds while keeping yourself and your pets safe.

***Submitted by Janet Hurlbrink, GC of Reading***

You should  
report  
any dead birds  
you find in PA  
to the  
**Pennsylvania  
Game  
Commission.**

You can report by  
calling  
**1-833-PGC-WILD**  
**(742-9453)**  
or using the  
online Wildlife  
Health Survey.



## District II/III Annual Fund Raiser

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Dear Garden Club Members,

Time has come for our Annual GCFP District II/III Luncheon meeting to be held on September 9, 2025 which will be hosted by the Monroe Garden Club. The destination, time and theme will be determined at a later date.

It is time for our Annual Fundraiser. Here is how you can help. Each club is asked to provide a raffle item for an accessory to enhance the beauty of a garden. **The raffle items can be garden items such as tools, supplies, statues, pots, flowers (seeds/bulbs) plants etc. Use your imagination. Your contribution is your choice, but the accessory should have a value from \$40.00 to \$50.00. THIS IS OUR ONLY 2025 FUNDRAISER.** Profits from the raffle will support the Garden Clubs of District II/III.

Each club will receive an initial 150 Raffle tickets to sell in March 2025. Additional raffle tickets are available. The ticket cost is \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. For additional tickets call or e-mail:

Cynthia Dunton:  
(610)905-5647 (cell)  
(610)432-8318 (home)  
E-mail: [allco@ptd.net](mailto:allco@ptd.net)  
Home address: 4008 Liberty Street, Allentown, Pa. 18104.

A photo of your contribution will help us to sell more Raffle Tickets. We look forward to receiving your garden accessory photographs. Ticket stubs, payment for the tickets, and any unsold tickets should be sent to Cynthia by the September 2, 2025. **RAFFLE TICKET STUBS AND PAYMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ENTER THE DRAWING.** If paying by check, make check payable to GCFP District II/III and send to Cynthia's home address (listed above).

We appreciate your support and look forward to viewing your creations.

**Cynthia Dunton, District II/III Fundraiser Chairman**



**Eastern Hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*)**

## NGC Membership Mondays

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Newly reformatted **Membership Mondays**  
Presented by the National Garden Clubs, Inc.,  
Membership/Leadership Committee ZOOM meetings  
**1:00 pm EDT first Monday/month**  
**Look for your invite to join in via email!**

## Some Interesting News

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### Congratulations Pennsylvania!

National Garden Club President Brenda Moore has moved to Glenshaw, PA. That means Pennsylvania now is home to the NGC President. Moving from West Virginia, Brenda Moore and her husband have relocated near Pittsburgh. What a distinction, what a privilege, if only for a few remaining months.

**A New Year greeting from NGC officer, Historian Susan wrote, "This year it is my hope that you will always think outside...no box required."**

## Conservation Report

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March 22 is World Water Day as designated by the United Nations in 1993. Though water is abundant, 2.2 billion people globally lack access to safe drinking water.

While 94% of citizens in the United States and Europe have access to safe drinking water, in Latin America and the Caribbean, that number drops to 65% of people. This is particularly prevalent in poorer and marginalized regions (Water.org). Though water is abundant in Latin and South America, it is unequally distributed geographically. As an example, most rain falls in southern Mexico, yet most economic activity lies in the arid, northern part (World Bank Group).

Mission work by Sisters of Notre Dame in South America has developed Global Partners: Running Waters, Inc. to help fund projects to bring assessable clean water to indigenous communities in South America. Living high in the mountains, water flows downhill, requiring women to spend several hours porting water to their homes. Communities lack infrastructure for a sustainable access to **safe water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)**. Water alone is not sufficient; it requires a behavioral change in proper sanitation and hygienic practices (One Drop Foundation).

As safe water becomes more of a volatile and pressing need, consider supporting one of the national programs improving water access. The National Garden Club (NGC) offers an avenue to support lack of safe water through Global Partners: Running Waters based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



***Submitted by Jane Kruse, South Schuylkill GC***

## Horticulture Therapy Report

### How garden trends of 2025 can be applied to horticulture therapy with the older adult population:

**Prior to being admitted** into a nursing home or assisted living facility, many older adults were active gardeners or enjoyed visiting gardens. Working with plants and flowers is a very restorative experience and that is really why horticulture therapy in these places is very popular among the residents. Garden club members who visit these healthcare facilities know that being around plants and working in the garden is very healing to the body.

**Being in a nursing home** because of a health decline has to be one of the most depressing and lonely places to be. One of the garden trends of 2025 is to focus on mental well-being in the garden. Bringing that idea into a nursing home might mean planting native pollinator plants in containers around the patio that they may have. When they go outside they can experience a little piece of nature by looking at how the plants attract bees, butterflies and birds. This also helps to reduce stress which helps your mental state.

**A second garden trend** is a 'nod to nostalgia' and that might mean bringing plants into the nursing home that have special meaning especially from a long time ago. Flower/plant ideas could be: peony, roses, geranium, hollyhocks, carnations, dianthus, lilacs for example. Some of these plants may bring back memories from their own gardens.

**The last garden trend** is the rise of portable gardening or container gardening. With many people renting or not having a lot of space, a container garden can be quite practical and lovely at the same time. Maybe that would mean planting up herbs or compact vegetables with flowers too. Growing things to eat for the nursing home could be really rewarding for all of the residents. Honestly, with a container you could combine many trends into one: native plants, pollinator plants, drought tolerant plants, small crops, nostalgic plants as there is no limit to a gardener's imagination.

**Bouquet making** in these older adult facilities continues to be a very rewarding experience for both the volunteers and the residents. Flowers make people happy, could bring back memories, and encourages them to work with their hands. Most of all they really look forward to the bouquets as it is one of the few activities where there isn't anything negative about it. Sometimes there's a sense of awe at the beauty and scent of the flowers. When the bouquets are completed, they see how everyone's bouquet is a little different with the same flower choices. Bringing their vase of flowers back to their room where they can enjoy what they have made is also very positive. Working with flowers or plants doesn't make a problem go away but it's an intervention that can bring about positive change. **Residents smile and they are uplifted through the power of flowers.**



#### **I realized the power of flowers.**

I am a Registered Dietitian, a Master Gardener, living in Bethlehem Township, I am a member of the Bethlehem Garden Club. I currently do not work as a dietitian but rather volunteer in many gardening or community projects. I currently co-chair the horticulture therapy at Cedarbrook nursing homes with Cathy Bannon and chair the horticulture therapy at Moravian King's Daughters Home which is an assisted living type of home in downtown Bethlehem. Prior to staying home to raise my son, I worked as a dietitian in a couple of nursing homes and would often bring cut flowers from my garden for the residents.

**Sincerely,**

**Kristen**

**[klissy2117@gmail.com](mailto:klissy2117@gmail.com)**



***Submitted by Kristen Lissy, Bethlehem GC***



## Importance of Early Childhood Environmental Education

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For young children, the world is a place of curiosity and wonder. They constantly explore, discover, and build connections with everything around them. Children's natural affinity for the environment is the foundation of environmental education in early childhood. As the condition of our planet faces many challenges, it becomes essential to instill sustainable practices and values starting in early childhood (infant through age 8). Teaching environmental education to this age group provides a unique opportunity to shape children's attitudes and behaviors toward the environment from a young age. There are several benefits of Learning Sustainability in Early Childhood. <sup>(1)</sup>

- **Early Habits Last a Lifetime** - Children develop habits and values during their formative years. Introducing sustainable practices early can lead to lifelong eco-friendly behaviors. When children learn to appreciate and care for the environment, they are more likely to carry these values into adulthood. Integrating sustainable practices into the daily routines of toddlers and preschoolers develops eco-friendly habits early on. Even less involved environmental education programs can take simple steps like saving water, recycling, and using recycled play materials, setting the stage for an earth-conscious lifestyle.
- **Boosts Confidence** - Environmental education builds confidence in toddlers and preschoolers to tackle real-world problems. By engaging young kids in real-world efforts, they gain a sense of self-efficacy and belief in their ability to make meaningful changes.
- **Foster a Sense of Responsibility** - Teaching environmental sustainability helps children understand their role in preserving the planet. It instills a sense of responsibility and empowers them to make positive changes, no matter how small. By facilitating a deeper understanding of the environment and the implications of human actions on it, environmental education builds a sense of responsibility and ownership in students, fostering a generation of environmental stewards.
- **Enhance Social and Emotional Development** - Engaging with nature and learning about the environment can enhance each type of a child's cognitive development. Activities like gardening, recycling, and nature walks stimulate empathy by connecting children to the greater world.
- **Encourage Critical Thinking** - Environmental education encourages children to think critically about the world around them. They learn to ask questions, solve problems, and make informed decisions that benefit the environment. Environmental education prepares students for the complexities of the real world by promoting critical thinking. Children learn to make predictions, analyze observations, interpret findings, and solve problems—skills that are extremely valuable in today's world.



- **Language and Literacy Development** - Successful sustainability education programs work toward emphasizing environmental literacy development. Environmental education makes traditional subjects like science, mathematics, English, social studies, art, and music more relevant when directly linked to curricular content. When young children see the relevance of their learning, they tend to grasp concepts more easily, resulting in improved academic performance.

- **Boosts Creativity** - Environmental education encourages kids to think outside the box. Children are often tasked with finding innovative solutions to environmental problems, leading to enhanced creativity.
- **Supports Well-being** - Spending time in nature is known to have numerous health benefits for young children, including improved cognitive, cardiovascular, and immune functioning. By drawing learners outdoors, environmental education can significantly enhance wellbeing.

**Unsure where to begin with early childhood environmental education? Start by sparking children's natural curiosity to initiate their journey towards environmental awareness with simple activities:**

- **Colorful Explorations:** Start basic with color identifications. Have your children identify the vibrant hues of the natural world, from the verdant greens to the fiery reds and yellows of wildlife.
- **Seasonal Observations:** Track how the surroundings change with the seasons. Teach children about the chilly winters, the snowy landscapes, the leafless trees, as well as the revitalized flora and fauna in spring.
- **Auditory Adventures:** Use the symphony of nature to teach your kids about nature sounds. The chirping of birds, buzzing insects, and the soothing sound of a running creek could offer them a great learning experience.
- **Microscopic Marvels:** Children love mud. Use this element to get their hands dirty and spark their interest in the microcosmos of soil and its inhabitants. You can use repurposed kitchen gadgets for them to use to explore ecologically-critical creepy crawlies that inhabit it.
- **Lifecycle Lessons:** Bring classroom science to life with the observation of life cycles. Get a small setup to observe and learn about the life cycles of butterflies, ladybugs, and frogs. You can reuse old chalkboards or whiteboards to help make handy diagrams.
- **Sensory Safaris:** Collect fallen leaves, twigs, and other objects to teach the kids about native trees and plants. This will familiarize them with different tree types and instill a respect for nature by leaving it undisturbed. Place the children's findings in repurposed bowls for a closer peek.
- **Energy and Water Conservation:** It's never too early to teach kids simple ways to conserve energy and water. This can include turning off lights when they leave the room and using a lower water flow at the sink. Explain the importance of conserving these resources and the impact they have on the environment.
- **Eco-Friendly Crafts and Activities:** Incorporate eco-friendly crafts and activities into the curriculum. Use natural or recycled materials for art projects. Activities like making bird feeders, creating nature journals, and building insect hotels can be both educational and fun.
- **Storytelling and Books:** Books and stories are powerful tools for teaching environmental sustainability. Choose age-appropriate books that focus on nature, conservation, and the environment. Discuss the stories with children and relate them to real-life practices.

**"The world is not left to us by our parents,  
it is lent to us by our children"**  
(African proverb) <sup>(2)</sup>

***Submitted by Naser & Marsha Chowdhury,  
District II/III Environmental/Recycle Committee***



References:

- (1) The Importance of Early Childhood Environmental Education, Nature of Early Play, Sommerset, KY. 2025
- (2) Why is Environmental Education so Important to Children. Naturpac for a Better Earth, Australia, 2025

Time is running out for Trash to Treasure Entries:

GCFP CONVENTION, April 6-8, 2025, King of Prussia, PA  
Trash to Treasure Contest Theme/Rules

Convention Theme: "Gardening Revolution"

Trash to Treasure Theme: "Revolution Bird House"

Valley Forge is historically significant for winter encampment (1777-1778) where General George Washington's Continental Army camped for essential training and transforming the army into an effective fighting force. The soldiers endured extreme cold, hunger, and disease. They had to overcome such challenges that made Valley Forge a symbol of American perseverance and resilience.

Recognizing the sacrifices and determination of the revolutionary war generation, GCFP 2025 Trash to Treasure contest will showcase the design and construction of a functional **Revolution Bird House** for the garden utilizing recycled materials as described below. A patriotic bird house design may also be used to celebrate the upcoming semi quincentennial anniversary (250 yrs) of America.

Specifications:

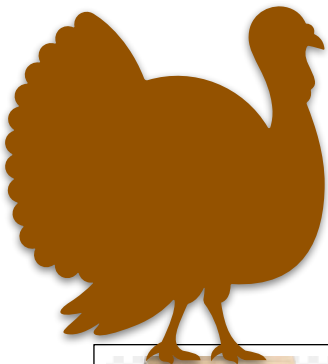
- 1. Bird house design theme will acknowledge the revolutionary period setting at Valley Forge including Log and stone house architecture and other creative revolutionary theme. Construction materials will primarily include recyclables.
- 2. Dimensions: No larger than 15"X15" mounting surface. Height limited to 18".
- 3. Weight: No more than 20 lbs including mounting surface.
- 4. Materials: All type of repurposed materials including wood, stone, limited metal (for bird safety), glass, other recyclables. Approximately 20% of the design may include functional materials such as glue and paint.
- 5. Entry must include a 3 x 5 card: Front: Title and material list. Back: District, Garden Club, Designer(s) name and mailing address. Entry may be work of more than one.

ONLY ONE ENTRY FROM EACH DISTRICT

Selection method is determined by the district. District entries selected for Convention competition must be submitted on Sunday, April 6 from 1-5 PM at the designated area of the Alloy Hotel. Judging will be at 5:15 PM. Entries are not to be judged under the same standards as a flower show. Questions? Please call Trash to Treasure Co-Chairs - Naser Chowdhury and Marsha Chowdhury. Email: [chowdhnm@gmail.com](mailto:chowdhnm@gmail.com); Ph: 484-432-6386

SCALE OF POINTS FOR JUDGING

Conformance (fits within stated dimensions, wt...) .....	20 pts
Artistic Concept (creative use of recycled materials) .....	40 pts
Expression (interpretation of theme) .....	20 pts
Execution (workmanship) .....	20 pts
TOTAL .....	100 pt

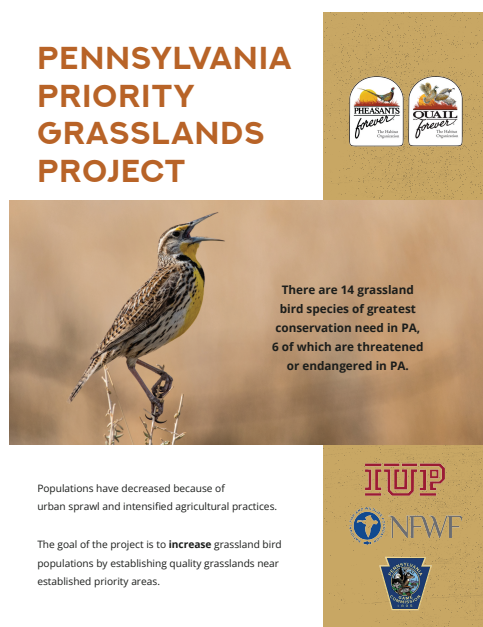


Harold!  
There's something  
on the roof!





## A PA Grasslands Project ... share with anyone who might be interested!



### What is the purpose of the Pennsylvania Priority Grasslands Project?

To establish or restore native grasslands to the landscape on private property (e.g., family-owned farms, sportsman's clubs, land trusts, watershed associations) to support grassland dependent wildlife.

Our goal is to create high-quality habitat for pollinators (e.g., flies, wasps, bees, moths, and butterflies), birds, and other wildlife. Our 14 focal bird species are: American Kestrel, Barn Owl, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Harrier, Savannah Sparrow, Sedge Wren, Short-eared Owl, Upland Sandpiper, and Vesper Sparrow.

We pay contractors to do the initial "heavy lifting" to enhance or restore an area to a high-quality native grassland. After we pay to do the initial work, we require the landowner/manager to maintain this area for 10 years.

The Pennsylvania Priority Grasslands Project is a new funding and technical assistance opportunity for private landowners who would like to conserve grassland birds or pollinators on their property. This financial opportunity provides complete funding for grassland establishment and maintenance projects on private and public lands (private lands will be prioritized and this includes family-owned lands, sportsman's clubs, and land trusts). This project is unique because it provides complete funding instead of cost-share or rental payments. Partners of the project are the PA Game Commission, Pheasants Forever, and IUP Research Institute. This project is funded through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation America the Beautiful grant.

The purpose of this project is to establish and/or restore native grasslands to the landscape to support grasslands dependent wildlife. Free technical assistance is provided by the three wildlife biologists (see below). Project proposals are reviewed every three months to determine if they are accepted for funding.

**Eastern Counties:** Berks, Lancaster, Lehigh, Lebanon.

Contact Alexa Kennel at [akennel@pheasantsforever.org](mailto:akennel@pheasantsforever.org) or call 717-913-2281.

All work must be done to establish upland grasslands – not wetland projects.

The project will fund native grassland site preparation, purchasing and planting native grass and forb seeds.

Invasive tree and shrub removal

Prescribed fire, mowing, or disking

Herbicide application

Pennsylvania Priority Grasslands Project

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers Contact:

**Emma Keele (Western Landscape Coordinating Wildlife Biologist) updated 01/22/2025**

**Email: [gsncc@iup.edu](mailto:gsncc@iup.edu), phone: 402-469-1063**

**2025 NGC Convention  
is being held in Charleston, SC.  
Sign up early if you want to attend!**

**<https://gardenclub.org/2025-ngc-convention-details>**

## District II/III Meetings Schedule Updated

With the change of District II/III moving from 13 Garden Clubs to 12 Clubs, the dates assigned to Clubs hosting District meetings needed to be modified.

The changes will not be felt until year 2028 and they only impact the southern tier clubs of South Schuylkill, Reading, Pottstown and Upper Perkiomen Valley. The southern tier is now on the same four year cycle as the northern and central tier grouping.

Clubs up to host in the year 2025 are **Bethlehem** for the March meeting, **Reading** for the June meeting and **Monroe** for the annual September meeting.

Year	March Mtg.	June Mtg.	Sept Annual Mtg/Luncheon
2022	Allentown	Pottstown	Milford
2023	Hazleton	Parkland	Wyomissing
2024	Upper Perkiomen	Montrose	Emmaus
2025	Bethlehem	Reading	Monroe
2026	Milford	Allentown	South Schuylkill
2027	Pottstown	Hazleton	Parkland
2028	Emmaus	Upper Perkiomen	Montrose
2029	Monroe	Bethlehem	Reading
2030	South Schuylkill	Milford	Allentown
2031	Parkland	Pottstown	Hazleton
2032	Montrose	Emmaus	Upper Perkiomen
2033	Reading	Monroe	Bethlehem
2034	Allentown	South Schuylkill	Milford
2035	Hazleton	Parkland	Pottstown
2036	Upper Perkiomen	Montrose	Emmaus
2037	Bethlehem	Reading	Monroe

## Updates

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"PLANT AMERICA for the next 100 Years"

Central Atlantic Region/State Garden Clubs (CAR/SGC)

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Theme to be decided

Please use this information in your 2025-2026 Yearbooks. Information for Pat Wolanski, GCFPPresident-Elect will be forthcoming.

## GCFP Flower Show School Schedule

Not sure everyone is aware that Course I of Flower Show School is scheduled in April 2025. If you have already signed up or you are considering signing up, great! But, if you haven't decided yet, here are some reasons why you should consider attending:

1. It's a fun way to spend time together with your friends
2. You meet new garden club friends from across the State or maybe another State
3. You develop brain resources for long-lasting brain health
2. It provides social interactions
3. It creates a sense of achievement and reward
4. It takes care of self-discovery, happiness and boredom
5. You learn a new skill
6. It helps to increase the number of Flower Show judges in our State

### Take a look:

#### **28, 29, 30 April 2025 - Flower Show School Course I**

Gettysburg Fire Department Social Hall  
Gettysburg, PA

Course I is an introductory course - an introduction to the Handbook for Flower Shows, flower show basics, discussions of growing and showing two Horticulture types with emphasis on exhibiting and judging using point-scoring. The Design Instructor uses designs to illustrate the Principles and Elements of Design and includes Traditional designs: Line, Line-Mass and Mass.

#### **20, 21, 22 October 2025 - Flower Show School Course II**

Gettysburg Fire Department Social Hall  
Gettysburg, PA

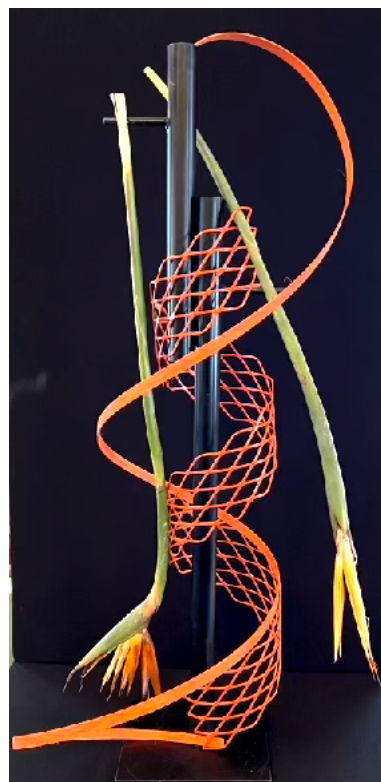
Course II continues exploring the Handbook for Flower Shows, Horticulture delves into writing/filling out entry cards and judging qualities found on the Horticulture Point Scoring Form. Design continues exploring the Principles and Elements of Design, general requirements for NGC Design Top Exhibitor Awards, explanations of judging qualities found on the Design Point Scoring Form, Design commenting vocabulary and judging practices.

Each course has NGC certified instructors who deliver high-quality content in both Design and Horticulture.

Look over the course brochures at the website and I hope many GCFP garden club members consider attending. I look forward to seeing YOU in April!

**Joanne Baylis**

**GCFP Flower Show School Chair**



**Thank you for all the great work created for this newsletter! Keep it coming!**  
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