



GCFP District VI Newsletter

1st Quarter, 2025

Seedlings



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

• District Calendar	1
• Director's Corner	
• Trash to Treasure Contest	2
• Club Happenings	3-16
• Germinate Seeds 5X Faster with this Simple Trick!	17
• 2024-2026 District VI Board of Directors	18

Director's Corner

Mary Lou Colussy, District Director

Most of you are probably aware that I decided to get a knee replacement in March. After much wear and tear I need relief from the constant pain. Most of it has been brought on by arthritis, however all the time climbing steps and working on my knees probably didn't help.

The District Meeting needed to be changed to accommodate my surgery, so the date of the Meeting is now a week before on Thursday, March 6th. Same time, same place and big thank you to Perkins in Richland to make the change for us.

We are indeed fortunate that we have a centrally located meeting venue at no additional cost for rental fees. I have been attending monthly District Director's meetings and have been told that most of the clubs, especially in the eastern part of the state, spend a sizable amount for rental fees.

The GCFP Convention will be held in King of Prussia, PA at the Double Tree Hotel on April 6th through April 8th. Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend due to my recuperation, however I hope that many of you all will consider taking part. The registration form and a summary of the events are included in the latest edition of the Keystone Gardener. You can download a copy by going to the GCFP website and you will see the tab for the "2025 Convention Issue"

Spring is just around the corner (I hope). May you all have fabulous gardens, interesting meetings and the possibility of making new friends in 2025.

District 2025 Calendar

Mar 6 – District VI Board Meeting 10 am Perkins, Richland

Apr 6-8—95th Annual GCFP Convention, King of Prussia, PA

Jun 9-10--GCFP Board Meeting Boalsburg, PA

July 8—LHJC Flower Show Greensburg, PA

Aug. 13--District VI Board Meeting 10 am Perkins, Richland

Aug. 27 – District VI Annual Meeting, hosted by Bedford GC Venue TBA

Oct 14-15--GCFP Board Meeting Boalsburg, PA

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

Mary Lou Colussy at
lalou46@aol.com

Next Seedlings by
May 1, 2025

A special thank you to Nerita Brant. Seedlings Proofreader

Trash to Treasure Contest

Trying to find a project this winter? Why not make a bird house for the Trash to Treasure Contest. Maybe yours will be selected to represent our District at the Convention in April? Entries will be judged at the District Meeting on March 19th

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.

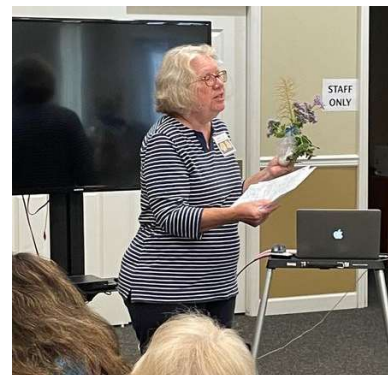
Email: chowdhnm@gmail.com; Ph: 484-432-6386

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

CLUB ACTIVITIES

October brought a great meeting. Laura Jackson talked to us about bedding our gardens down for winter. Lots of good info! Member Marilyn Gash shared the natives that are still blooming and Kay Kring reminded us of the garden cleanup we need to do to prevent destructive insects and diseases from overwintering.

**Bedford
County
Garden Club****Winter Sowing**

Start seeds outdoors this winter with the Master Gardeners of Bedford County. Learn easy techniques, plant native seeds, and take home jugs and extras for your garden!

When: February 17, 2025 (6:00 PM-7:30 PM)

Where: 4-H Bldg. - Bedford County Fairgrounds

729 W Pitt St., Bedford, Pennsylvania 15522

Click the link below for more details and to register:

<https://extension.psu.edu/winter-sowing>

CLUB ACTIVITIES

What a wonderful time of celebrating friendship during BCGC annual Christmas gathering

**Bedford
County
Garden Club**

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Scholarship Available

The Blair Garden Club of Altoona is offering a \$1,000 scholarship to high school seniors who plan to pursue a career that aligns with the club's mission.

Applicants must be residents of Blair County who plan to major in one of the following fields of study: agricultural education, botany, city planning, ecology, environmental engineering, environmental science, floriculture/floral design, forestry, horticulture, landscape architecture/design, nursery production/management, plant pathology/science, soil science/conservation, turf management or wildlife science.

Graduating high school seniors who meet the qualifications should contact their high school counselor to obtain an application or contact Julie Fleck at jafleck@yahoo.com. Completed applications must be postmarked by Monday, April 14, 2025.

**Blair
Garden
Club**

BLAIR GARDEN CLUB Bus Trip - 3/5/2025



*leave Lowe's at 8:00am
(park along the back/highway side of lot)
*depart from Flower Show at 6:00pm
*approx, return time is 10:30/11:00pm
*no dinner stops, either way
*if bringing food - no chocolate or orange
cracker snacks. Make sure drinks have sealed lid
COST - \$110
Includes transportation, show ticket and tip for driver

CONTACT: EMMA KOWALSKI
814-932-0375
MAKE CHECKS TO: BLAIR GARDEN CLUB
EMMA KOWALSKI
1722 32ND AVENUE
ALTOONA, PA 16601

CLUB ACTIVITIES**Baker Mansion**

Members of the Blair Garden Club, decorated the double parlor at Baker Mansion, for Christmas
The theme for the tree is Victorian Santa's!
Marcy Hatch, Chairman

**Blair
Garden
Club**

CLUB ACTIVITIES**Annual Tinsel Time Luncheon**

Evergreen Garden Club sponsored their Annual Tinsel Time Luncheon at the Ramada by Wyndham on December 5, 2024. Many vendors including boutique shopping and baked goods, and fresh greens were available. Along with Santa surprise, raffle, lunch, entertainment, holiday design program (photos below) and door prizes were available for the day's enjoyment.

**Evergreen
Garden
Club**

CLUB ACTIVITIES

Meetings

Regular meetings are usually held 2nd Monday of the month at 10 am at Westmont Presbyterian Church, 601 Luzerne St., Johnstown, PA 15905.

Exceptions are: joint meeting with Somerset Garden Club in July and at the December meeting, a luncheon at noon.

No regular meetings in November and January.



Upcoming Programs:

Monday, February 10—Program: Nighttime Bloomers

Melissa Reckner, Program Manager of Penguin Court, a Preserve of Brandywine Conservancy in Laughlintown, PA encourages us to discover nightlife in the garden. She will introduce us to host and nectar plants that attract active moths to plantings.

Monday, March 10—Program: Garden Voices That Go Hum

and Tweet by Marcy Cunkelman of Evergreen Garden Club, Indiana, PA will discuss native trees and shrubs that provide habitat and food sources for our Pennsylvania birds.

Monday, April 14—Program: British Afternoon Tea

Program: Installation of 2025-2026 Officers by GCFP District VI Director, Mary Lou Colussy

As a new Garden Club year is about to begin, we thank those members who have volunteered to lead us into our next season.



Program: British Afternoon Tea

Enjoy afternoon tea and refreshments prepared by GCJ member, **Lisa Wagerer** and **Joshua Way**, Lisa's son-in-law and partner in teas. Please invite a friend to celebrate with us!

**Garden
Club of
Johnstown**

CLUB ACTIVITIES**Gardens of the Month****Congratulations to Christine Mitchell
IGC October Garden of the Month!****Indiana
Garden
Club**

CLUB ACTIVITIES

CAMBRIA HEIGHTS MS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Chris Westover, PGC youth gardening chairperson

A huge shout out to all involved in making this possible for the students. Jan Davis, Katie Lechene, Roe Eckenrode, Alissa Valentine Bruce, Cheryl Vescovi, Mrs. Jen Terza, and Ms. Melissa Kinney. Thank you all so very much for taking the time to help these students design their own centerpieces for their Mom, Dad, or other family members. The students were really excited about the project as were the adults. This was the biggest turn out with 15 students. Unfortunately, Mr. Blake could not join. We are already looking forward to next year's program.



**Patton
Garden
Club**



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Kokedama Demonstration

At the October 28th club meeting, member Jan Davis gave an instructional demonstration on the making of Kokedama balls. Kokedama is the Japanese art of growing plants in a moss-covered ball of soil wrapped with string or mono-filament fishing line, covered with moss, on which an ornamental plant grows. The idea has its origins in Japan, where it is a combination of the nearai bonsai and kusamono planting styles. Today, Kokedama is very popular in Japanese gardens.



Jan informed those present that these balls can be constructed with minimal effort, the proper elements including Sphagnum moss or peat moss (if long fiber, cut into small pieces), Sheet moss, store bought or natural from the woods, cat litter – clay only kind or Bonsai soil, potting mix, fishing line, and a plant of your choice. Tutorials are available on line if you need one.

Patton Garden Club

PGC Garden of Distinction Peg Rogal ~ Hastings ~ October 2024



CLUB ACTIVITIES**“VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TEA”**

PGC's presented their annual Christmas Tea with a Victorian theme this year on December 8th chaired by Ashley Hayes and assisted by her committee. It was a beautiful afternoon with wonderful people, music and festivities at LaFerne Rouge. Fr. Bob Reese provided violin music to add to the ambience. Alissa Bruce won best Victorian costume (First photo).

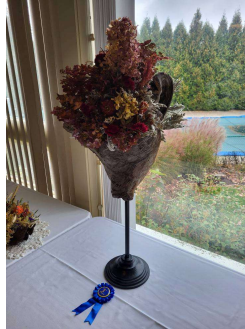


**Patton
Garden
Club**

CLUB ACTIVITIES

The October meeting and annual Fall Luncheon of the Somerset Garden Club was held at the Somerset Country Club. During the meeting, SGC members Linda Troll, Jean Ogburn and Georgiann Sekela were presented with District VI Laurel Awards for organizing and/or working to make the Somerset Garden Club's Annual Plant Sale a success, and Jan Szych also received a Laurel Award for her work in organizing the recent Gold Star Memorial Marker Dedication at Patriot Park.

There were some absolutely outstanding entries this year for the Amanda E. Dowie Dried Flower Memorial Award, which was won by Judy McGraw with her beautiful driftwood arrangement.



Becky from Shadowwood Gardens in Latrobe gave a most interesting and informative presentation with lots of useful tips about getting your garden ready for winter.

**Somerset
Garden
Club**

CLUB ACTIVITIES**Christmas Wreath Fund-raiser**

What a great turnout for the SGC November meeting where attendees were hard at work preparing the bows and pine cone decorations that will be attached to our Christmas wreaths.

Thank you to the Club officers who brought a delicious array of soups and chili for lunch.

**Somerset
Garden
Club**

CLUB ACTIVITIES

October Activities

At our meeting on Tuesday, October 15th, Glenda Gebert, owner of Garden in the Woods in Acme, Pennsylvania demonstrated the creation of pumpkin centerpieces using succulents, moss and miscellaneous craft items. Glenda's presentation provided inspiration for creating our own centerpieces. Glenda says, if the pumpkins (and plants) are regularly misted, they will last well into spring. Glenda also makes centerpieces for Christmas using the same approach. Inspired by Glenda's presentation, Kate Nuernberger invited everyone to her home on Saturday, October 26th for a day of pumpkin decorating. Multiple members joined the festivities, creating some beautiful succulent-decorated pumpkins of their own.



Weeders and Seeders



November Activities

Master Gardeners Patti Flowers Jacobina and Deb Christopher educated us at our November meeting on celebrating more "sustainable" holidays. Emphasized was the need to reduce our impact on natural resources as we aim to enjoy the holidays and improve our overall quality of life. Patti continued with the presentation even after injuring her foot that very day. As seen in the picture, Patti is standing with the help of crutches. Although she must have been in agony, Patti delivered her presentation beautifully, offering lots of ideas for effecting "consumptive change."

Patti noted that we should view nature as an ally and add beauty to the season. Instead of simply buying items neither wanted or needed, it is important to consider giving shared experiences such as musical events, flower displays, sporting events, or cooking lessons. Another idea may be creating a handmade gift. Lastly, Patti warned against the use of glitter; glitter is **microplastic**! Chemical processes used in making glitter adversely affect human health; glitter can damage the immune system, the reproductive system, and can cause developmental delays and cancer. Say **NO** to glitter!



**Weeders
and
Seeders****CLUB ACTIVITIES**

In November, we elected officers for the upcoming year. Pictured left to right is Lynn Beck (Treasurer), Sue Wolfe (President), Judy Ridgway (Vice President) and Andrea Kautz (Secretary). We also thanked Kate Nuernberger for her work as Co-President over the past two years and Lori Fitzgibbon for her hard work as Co-President over the past year.

**December Activities**

Weeders and Seeders celebrated with a holiday party and potluck held December 3rd at the Loyalhanna Watershed Nimick Family Education Center in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Consistent with the theme of "Painted Christmas," hand-painted glasses, pine cones, and magnets decorated the Christmas tree and tables. Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal, sang Christmas carols and played Christmas-themed games. It was a magical evening enjoyed by all.



Germinate Seeds 5X Faster with this Simple Trick!

Source: <https://www.gardenloversclub.com/garden-blooms/seed-clipping-trick>



The process of preparing seeds before planting, known as seed scarification, has been a practice in gardening and agriculture for centuries.

One of the commonly employed methods is **seed clipping**, which involves making a small cut or nick in the seed coat.

This method can offer multiple benefits for improving the germination rate and overall vigor of certain types of seeds.

Here's a closer look at some of the advantages of clipping plant seeds:

1. **Accelerated Water Uptake:** The primary function of clipping or nicking the seed is to break the outer seed coat. This makes it easier for water to penetrate the inner embryo, which is vital for the initiation of the germination process. Soaked seeds can absorb moisture quickly, leading to a faster start in the germination phase.
2. **Overcome Seed Dormancy:** Many seeds possess an inherent dormancy mechanism to ensure they don't germinate under unfavorable conditions. A hard seed coat can be a physical barrier that prevents the seed from germinating. By clipping the seed, you assist in breaking this dormancy, allowing the seed to sprout in conditions it might not have otherwise.
3. **Uniform Germination:** Clipped seeds tend to germinate more uniformly. This uniformity can be especially beneficial for gardeners and farmers who need to plan for space or want to ensure an even growth pattern among their plants.
4. **Reduces the Need for Extended Soaking:** Some seeds require extended soaking periods to soften their hard coat. Clipping can reduce the need for prolonged soaking, saving time and reducing the risk of seeds rotting due to excessive water exposure.
5. **Increased Germination Rate:** In many cases, especially for hard-coated seeds, the germination percentage can be significantly improved with seed clipping. This ensures that a higher proportion of the seeds planted will successfully sprout, making for a more efficient use of seeds and reducing wastage.
6. **Improved Seedling Vigor:** Seeds that germinate quickly often lead to seedlings that are more vigorous and robust. This can mean a better start for young plants, leading to improved growth rates and overall health.

However, it's important to approach seed clipping with caution. Not all seeds benefit from this process. Over-clipping or incorrectly clipping a seed can damage the embryo inside, making it non-viable.

Before embarking on seed clipping, gardeners should research the specific needs and recommendations for the species they intend to plant.

Proper technique and understanding will ensure that the benefits of seed clipping are realized without causing harm to the precious seeds.

2024-2026 DISTRICT VI BOARD OF DIRECTORS**OFFICERS**

POSITION	CONTACT
Director	Mary Lou Colussy
Asst. Director	Wilma Light
Treasurer	Judy Jackson
Asst. Treasurer	Sheri Lowery
Secretary	Mary Davis
Asst. Secretary	Karlice Machuchen
Parliamentarian	Nerita Brant

PRESIDENTS

CLUB	CONTACT
Blair	Emma Kowalski
Bedford	Judy Custer
	Lu Ann Risser (4/15/25)
Evergreen	Mariann Mcgee
Johnstown	Sue Konvolinka
Indiana	Pat Prushnok
Patton	Mary Davis
	Mona Weakland
Somerset	Sheila Croushore
Weeders & Seeders	Sue Wolfe

All former District VI Directors are members of the board

CHAIRMEN

CHAIR	CONTACT
Awards	Monique Ridet
Birds / Butterflies / Pollinators	Marcy Cunkelman
Blue Star Memorial Marker	Angela McDonnell &
	Kate Nuernberger
Book Report	Lisa Merschiltz
Chaplain	Mary Jo Gardill
Civic Development	Rene Hrescak
Club Programming	Claire Lechlitter
Environment / Conservation / Water	Karlice Makuchan
Email Address List & Mailing	Mary Lou Colussy
Flower Show Schedule Advisor	Margie Bucci
Habitat for Humanity	Mary Cramer
Horticulture	Fran Lansberry
Horticulture Therapy	Margie Bucci
Hospitality/Ways & Means	TBD
LH Judges Council	Charlotte Crissey
Member Services	Vonnie Baldiswieler
Membership	Rene Hreshak
GCFP Nominating Delegate	Deb Stumpf
GCFP Nominating Alternate	Marcy Cunkelman
PA Resource Council	Mary Lou Colussy
Parliamentarian	Nerita Brant
Peace Garden Laurel / Highlands Landscape Design	Sheila Croushore & Sue Konvolinka
Scholarships	Jan Davis
Schools / Symposiums	Gail Corle Manna
Seedlings Newsletter	Mary Lou Colussy
State / Life Membership	Rene Hrescak
Youth	Deb Stumpf