CAR Review

Beverly Kazickas, Director

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Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs: Alva Hutchison www.delawaregardenclubs.org

Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc.: Donna Miller www.fgcofmd.org

National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc.: Danielle Brabazon www.ncagardenclubs.org

The Garden Club of New Jersey, Inc.: Sue Berdahl www.gardenclubofnewjersey.com

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Garden Club of Ohio, Inc.: Debra Turner www.gardenclubofohio.org

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Caroline Carbaugh, Editor
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From Our Director:

Theme: Gardening for a Healthy Mind, Body and Soul

I hope this newsletter finds you well, as the cooler weather, colorful leaves, bountiful harvest and Day Light Savings prepares us for the upcoming holidays. As I reflect on Thanksgiving, I'll start by expressing my gratitude for all who made the 2025 CAR Conference with Tri-Refresher the huge success that it was!

A very special thank you to our host The Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland and their volunteers, along with Susie Middleton, the Conference Chairman, Diana Bonner, Vice-Chairman, Linda Harris, Tri-Refresher Chairman, Susan Palmer, the Registrar, Donna Miller, FGCMD President, and our CAR-SGC Board Members, for all their hard work. This fabulous team put together a FANTASTIC event and I couldn't be prouder of their dedication and support. Also, thank you to all who traveled to Cambridge, Maryland to attend the conference. The enthusiasm of 196 registrants made the time and effort worth it.

The conference theme, Maryland: "America in Miniature" offered us a variety of inspiring speakers, informative round table discussions, educational seminars, business meetings, awards, scholarships, tours, beautiful landscapes, insight into cultural heritage and delicious meals harvested from the surrounding farmland and waters of the Chesapeake Bay. (I'm longing for another bowl of crab soup!) The venue was exceptional with the Hyatt Regency, a stunning resort, overlooking the impressive Choptank River which delighted visitors with beautiful sunrises and sunsets during our stay October 19 - 22.

A highlight of the conference was having our National Garden Clubs (NGC) President Donna Donnelly attending the event and her rousing speech at Monday's Dinner praising our region for its long history of leadership and activism while encouraging participation in the PLANT AMERICA project celebrating America's 250th anniversary. Lastly, and

perhaps, best of all are the many friendships that were made and renewed. The camaraderie of our members is a wonderful bonus of being part of the seven states that make up the garden clubs in CAR-SGC.

Beverly Kazickas admires the Floral Tribute created in her honor by Ann Street of FGCMD.
Photo credit: Bob Howatt

Please mark your calendars for next year's 2026 CAR Conference scheduled for October 18 – 21, 2026 in Cleveland, Ohio. Event Chairman Elaine George and Garden Club of Ohio President Debra Turner are busy organizing committees and planning a wonderful conference … among the many things that will be offered, I'm looking forward to checking out the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (a personal Bucket List item).

Beverly with Susie and Diana

For now, wishing you a very Happy Holiday Season!

Beverly

Beverly Kazickas,
CAR-SGC Region Director 2025-2027

Our *CAR-SGC State Presidents and Director: Danielle Brabazon, Sue Berdahl, Donna Miller, Beverly Kazickas, Alva Hutchison, Debra Turner, Elizabeth Walker*

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Please use the CAR-SGC Email Address and Website Password. Password has been updated on the website for 2025-2027. Please contact your State Presidents for more information.
No Personal Email Address is Available
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Cecelia Millea, Alternate Director, 2025-2027
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From Our States:

Delaware

Alva Hutchison

Celebrating Milestones and Continuing Acts of Service

Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs was formed in 1958. Three years earlier, **Spade and Trowel Garden Club** began. In September, The Spade & Trowel Garden Club of Seaford, Delaware celebrated 70 years since its founding with a luncheon for 70 featuring renown floral designer Julia Clevett. Members made centerpieces representing activities of the club. The picture is of a crowd-favorite which simulates baskets of flowers planted each spring on the railroad bridge in town.

Delaware was well represented at the **2025 CAR-SGC Conference**. We continued our tradition of *Loveliness* - a swarm of ladybugs at the Tuesday evening dinner. DFGC was recognized for Highest Membership Increase. Among the many Club Award recipients, Coastal Gardeners received the Jean Ladson Outstanding Achievement Award and Spade and Trowel was recognized with the American Horticulture Society Regional Perennial Award.

In other news, six Sussex County garden clubs have joined together to embark on an exciting new beautification project at the **Biden Environmental Training Center**, located within Cape Henlopen State Park. The project is in collaboration with DNREC (Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control). The Clubs are Salt Air, Sussex, Barefoot, Plantation Lakes, Coastal, and Gardeners by the Sea. This joint initiative will involve creating and maintaining new garden beds, enhancing the landscape, and providing educational opportunities for visitors. The project launched with pots filled with fall foliage at the entrance and planting around the sign. The next phase is to plant wildflowers and native plants around this expansive building.

Terry Czerwinski, Mary Marcum, Crystal Selway, Mary Branagan, Dianne Shawley and Sue Giusto. Not pictured, Ann Bendersky

Sussex Gardener President Dianne Shawley and VP Crystal Selway on left.

From celebrating a proud 70-year legacy to nurturing projects that honor service and protect the environment, Delaware's garden clubs remain steadfast to our Mission and the 2025-2027 theme: **PLANT AMERICA: CULTIVATE *Loveliness.***

Alva Hutchison,
Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs

Maryland

Donna Miller

What an honor it was to have been the recent host of the CAR-SGC Conference in Cambridge, MD! From the inspirational words of NGC President Donna Donnelly to the flash mob of worker "bees" swarming around their queen, it was quite a phenomenal event. It takes a village to create such an amazing experience, so my thanks to the Conference Co-Chairs Susie Middleton and Diana Bonner, Tri-Refresher chair Linda Harris and the multitude of volunteers (70+) from FGCMD that made it successful.

While it would be nice to just sit and rest on our laurels, we continue to forge ahead with our mission to provide support, leadership and education. A new initiative in education was developed by our Photography Chair, Sharyn Rhodes. We are offering three workshops in garden photography via Zoom throughout the next few months. They are titled "Learn to Use Your Tools", "Prune Your Photos", and "Harvest Your Best Shots." (The flyer for the workshops is attached to this mailing.)

Our clubs recently held flower shows. One offered by St. Mary's Garden Club, titled "Growing up with Robert Louis Stevenson" offered these amazing floral designs:

From FGCMD Flower Show ***Photos by Beth Bonifant***

Talbot County Garden Club hosted a flower show titled "Holidays". Here is the winning table design:

Talbot County Winning Table Design
Photo by Trish Reynolds

On Veteran's Day, Worcester County Garden Club dedicated a Gold Star Family By-Way marker and replaced a Blue Star By-Way marker.

From FGCMD

Gold Star
Photo by C. MacGlashan

Continuing a tradition started by her predecessor, Dawn Moore, our State's First Lady has invited garden clubs to decorate trees for the Rotunda of the State House. Each display will have a theme highlighting the county it represents. A wreath decorated last year by Mountain Laurel Garden Club celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Deep Creek Lake.

Photo by D. Miller

Donna Miller, President,
Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland

National Capital Area

Danielle Brabazon

Twenty-five members of National Capital Area Garden Clubs enjoyed a wonderful CAR conference hosted by Maryland Federation! NCA has been busy implementing *PLANT AMERICA: Seeding Our Future.* Our current Judges Council President, Arlene Stewart (also a former NCA President), has spread many seeds between hosting a Symposium in September, collaborating with Pennsylvania Judges Councils, and providing floral arrangements for the DC Youth Orchestra Program's 65th Gala. Judges Council collaborated with District III for the annual Morning of Design program which is always a wonderful event!

The State offered Landscape Design School Course 3 as a hybrid model with attendees in-person or on Zoom. Coming up is our hybrid model Gardening School Course 1. We are looking forward to Landscape Design School Course 4 in April 2026 and continued planning for Gardening School Course 2, 3 and 4 over 2026 and 2027. Our councils support the schools with proctors and hospitality.

District IV, representing Montgomery County, is looking forward to working along with Maryland Federated Garden Clubs to decorate the Maryland State House. This is a fabulous event and if anyone is visiting Annapolis between Thanksgiving and New Years, please stop by and see the wonderful displays. Every year is different!

I have been honored to attend many club meetings and events ranging from Blue Star Memorial rededications to the opening of new gardens to flower shows and monthly club meetings. Every moment spent with members is an opportunity to remember why garden clubs are important not only for our personal needs but the needs of our communities and finding the avenues to share these opportunities with the public is crucial. Our volunteers are amazing!

We invite you to follow National Capital Area Garden Clubs on Facebook www.facebook.com/NCAGC/) or Instagram (www.instagram.com/nationalcapitalarea/) to see the latest and greatest in our area!

Danielle Brabazon, President, National Capital Area Garden Clubs

New Jersey

Sue Berdahl

The Garden Club of New Jersey is coming to the close of their 100th year. A lot of exciting things have taken place. After many months of hard work, we have the 100th Year Garden Book ready to be distributed. Some clubs also celebrated milestones of 100 years and 50 years, and Governor Phil Murphy sent us a proclamation and a letter recognizing the Garden Club of New Jersey's work throughout the 100 years in New Jersey.

Clubs are getting ready to decorate the Governor's mansion, *Drumthwacket.* The individual clubs take a room and show off their floral expertise, the theme this year is *Red, White and Blue.*

CAR- SGC Conference was held in Cambridge, Maryland . The state of Maryland was so inspiring.

The location on the Chesapeake Bay was outstanding with sunrise over the water each morning. Several of our New Jersey members took the Tri Refresher. I want to acknowledge Cecelia Millea who did a wonderful tribute design for me "*Hive Heaven".* a delight! (*See Tribute design on page 18*.) The Garden Club of New Jersey won 7 CAR-SGC awards this year and especially the Perennial Bloom Award to Shirley Robinson.

Floral arrangements

Ladies in costume

Sue Berdahl, President, Garden Club of New Jersey

New York

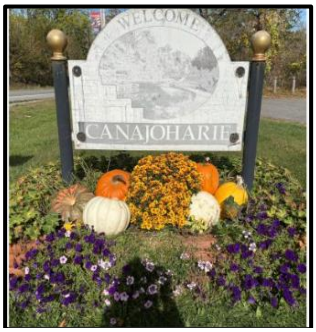
Hard to believe that cold weather and the holidays are upon us! Just as we are winding down our individual gardens for the winter and starting to plan next year's gardens, our clubs are doing much the same thing.

Beth Walker

October saw the cleaning out of gardens but also the readying of gardens for the holidays. One of our mid-New York clubs maintains the formal gardens at an historic house and enjoyed preparing those gardens for Halloween. Witches, ghosts, and lots of fantastical gourds. Another changed out the plantings to the signs welcoming people to their city.

Historic House Gardens are ready for Halloween!

Other clubs are moving straight into Christmas with the decoration of historic houses. Clubs in the Buffalo area will be decorating the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural Site for their annual Victorian



Christmas. Six hours to the east the Germantown Garden Club will host a Christmas market and the Guilderland Club will decorate the Mynderse-Frederick House in Altamont for a Christmas open house. Numerous clubs throughout the rest of the state will be hosting similar events.

Clubs have held their annual fall luncheons and meetings and are now looking forward to their annual holiday luncheons. But during these fun and celebratory events, many of our clubs paused to spruce up their Blue Star Memorial markers and to ready them for Veteran's Day observances as we honored those who gave their lives in the service of our country.

District 1 – The Blue Star marker, site of Veteran's Day ceremonies on Staten Island.

In the midst of these more social events, clubs are also putting the final touches on their programs for next year and publishing their yearbooks. They have begun designing gardens that will celebrate the country's 250th anniversary next year. At the state level, we are planning the 2026 Annual Convention as well as a Symposium and continuing to work on the Planting NYS – Pollinators, Wildlife, and the Seeds of Growth.

Beth Walker, President,
Federated Garden Clubs of New York State

Ohio

Debra Turner

Several Ohio clubs have sponsored native tree plantings in public spaces and continue to do so. Members of the Monfort Heights Garden Club of Cincinnati pass a 'tree box" around during the meeting for members to throw their loose change or singles in for the purpose of planting a tree somewhere in the community in memory of all the members who have passed," Kathy Ross wrote in the Fall 2025 Garden Greetings, official publication of the Garden Club of Ohio. By this spring, they had collected more than $700. They began researching trees and locations. They chose to have a 12-foot tulip poplar planted in front of the new Green Township Police Department.

Northview Buckeye Garden Club has used money from NGC's Plant America Grant, from a Garden Club of Ohio President's Project Award, and from its own fundraising to plant first one tree, then two, and soon 12 more native red oaks to improve the tree canopy in urban Columbus. Other community support came from Oakland Nursery, Kurtz Brothers, the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department and Green Columbus. The club selected native red oaks for their spread, rapid growth rate, wildlife benefits, pollution resistance and beauty, according to a report also in the Fall 2025 Garden Greetings.

Maloney Park in Columbus, Ohio

The Northview Buckeye Garden Club was founded in 1978 and its members maintain the perennial and native plant beds at the Columbus Park of Roses.

One of Ohio's most rapidly growing clubs in terms of membership is the Worthington Hills Garden Club. One of its most popular activities is going on field trips, both nearby and farther afield. Its most recent field trip was to Ohio's first nature preserve, the Cedar Bog, Brenda Fitch and Sheila Santiago wrote in the Fall 2025 Garden Greetings. "Our next adventure will be traveling to Michigan to visit a botanical garden in Ann Arbor and the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids," they reported.

Debra Turner, President,
Garden Club of Ohio

Pennsylvania

Patricia Wolanski

September welcomed fall with our Annual District Meetings, always a highlight of the year for my vice presidents and me. Our "Tour de PA", as we officers affectionately call our travels to these meetings, offers unique venues, themes, and programs, that provide valuable insight into the activities of our clubs and presidents.

This September also marked GCFP's trip to Italy's Lake Cuomo Region, following in the footsteps of Pierre DuPont, whose visits to many of these gardens inspired his designs for Longwood Gardens. The visit coincided perfectly with the Orticolario, an annual garden festival, where the group met the president of the Italian Federation of Garden Clubs

Our October Board Meeting featured a Horticulture Specialty Flower Show, "Celebrating Nature", which drew the attention of WTAJ-TV's Studio 814 morning show with Morgan Koziar, in Altoona, where I was invited to appear and highlight both our organization and the Horticulture Show. Promoting GCFP to a wider audience remains my mission -- to make the GCFP a household name.

Photo by Wendy Fox

Flower Show Photos by Karen Wychock

The evening's highlight was a presentation on "Masculine Design" by Tracy Sabocheck. It was whimsical, educational, inspiring, and simply a lot of fun - always an important part of our Board Meetings.

GCFP was proudly represented among the award recipients at the CAR-SGC Conference:

Kay John, D- VIII, Garden Club of Clarion County – CAR-SGC Perennial Bloom Award,

Penn-Cumberland Garden Club, D- IV, Second Place Publicity Press Book

Elizabeth Hope Bruner received the Monica Hansen Scholarship Award.

Our Sprouts and Seedlings Youth Program continues to climb in membership, and our Healing Art and Theme Garden Program is gaining momentum as interest grows statewide.

We now look forward to our State Convention in Erie entitled: MystERIE by the Bay", April 26-28, 2026 --and our first Statewide Garden Tour, "Pennsylvania Garden Party", June 20 and 26, 2026 – two weekend days, one ticket, one price!

We are making our Keystone a Gemstone!

Patricia Wolanski, President
Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania

Our 2025 CAR-SGC Conference

By any measure the conference was a success – we hit our attendance goal with participants from every state. Our speakers were informative and engaging, and the vendors offered a tremendous variety of wares. Additionally, we filled our bus tour and had 70 consultants complete the tri-refresher. While final numbers are still being tabulated, we also think we also made a modest profit.

We were fortunate to have Donna Donnelly, our National President, attend and she gave an inspiring talk on Leadership.

L to R: Diana Bonner, Conference Co-Chair; Beverly Kazickas CAR-SGC Region Director; Donna Donnelly, NGC President; Susie Middleton Conference Chair.

Our State Leaders got a chance to meet and get to know one another. See picture of State Presidents on Page 2. Caption below.

L to R – Danielle Brabazon – President, National Capitol Area Garden Clubs, Inc., Sue Berdahl – President, The Garden Club of New Jersey, Inc., Donna Miller – President, The Federation Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc. , Beverly Kazickas, Director CAR-SGC, Alva Hutchison – President, Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc., Debra Turner – President, Garden Club of Ohio, Inc., and Elizabeth Walker - President, Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, Inc.

The agenda gave participants multiple opportunities to meet one another and interact, including two cocktail receptions and a breakfast roundtable. They will tell you, "If you missed coming you really missed a lot." So don't miss next year's conference in Ohio!

We could not have done this without the support of the many volunteers who showed up to help with registration, set up, serve as hostesses, create floral designs for each of the lunches and dinners, vendors, hospitality and the bus trip. Thank you to everyone for their hard work in making this happen.

Centerpieces

Susie Middleton and Diana Bonner,
Conference Chair and Co-Chair

What To Do With All These Leaves?

With the latest coastal storm, most of the leaves have landed on our lawns and garden beds. Where did all that beautiful green go? If you are angry at your neighbors, get out the leaf blower. If you want to be environmentally conscientious, get out the rake.

The good, the bad and the ugly:

Our beautiful Pollinators, butterflies, moth larva and native bees, as well as snails, rodents, and snakes, over-winter in leaves. Many early spring pollinators such as the native Leaf Cutter Bees, the Luna Moth, Swallowtail butterflies and lady bugs set their larva, eggs or pupate in the leaves waiting for the thaw. Salamander and millipedes, small mammals and birds all find shelter here.

Interesting fact! Luna moths make a sleeping bag by curling a leaf from the leaf litter around themselves to overwinter.

I can't forget the adorable forecaster of winter weather-the Wooly Bear Caterpillar, Pyrrharctia Isabella (Isabella tiger moth). They are not native pollinators, but you will be happy to hear that Dandelions are a favorite food! Curled up for a winter nap in the leaf litter dormant in self-made antifreeze, they provide a meal when they emerge in the spring to early pollinators.

Let's leave it at this.

Leaves make a natural mulch used around the base of plants. If you are worried about the look of a pile of leaves place them in an unobtrusive area of your property. You can add them to your compost pile in the spring. Whole leaves provide better mulch than shredded leaves. Leaves decomposing over winter enrich the soil texture, improve soil aeration and water retention, which conserves soil moisture.

Jane Madis,
Sustainable Gardening and Xeriscaping

Growing Heritage Plants

Heritage plants, also called Heirloom plants, are varieties that have been passed down through generations, typically grown in gardens or farms for at least 50 years. They are valued for their unique flavors, aesthetic qualities, and historical or cultural significance, and their seeds can be saved and replanted. These plants are important for preserving genetic diversity, which can help with future crop resilience and breeding.

Key characteristics of heritage plants

- Age: They have a history, with a common definition requiring them to have been cultivated for at least 50 years.
- Genetic integrity: Unlike hybrid seeds, heirloom seeds are open-pollinated, meaning they breed true to type, so the plants grown from saved seeds will have the same characteristics as the parent plant.
- Traits: They are often prized for superior flavors, regional adaptation, and unique visual traits that may be lost in commercially bred varieties.
- Seed saving: Because their seeds are open-pollinated, they are ideal for saving and replanting in subsequent seasons, which helps preserve the variety.

Importance of heritage plants

- Genetic diversity: They represent a valuable reservoir of genetic material that can be used to breed new, more resilient crop varieties in the future.
- Cultural preservation: Growing heritage plants connects people to their history and the cultural practices of their ancestors.
- Food security: By providing genetic diversity, heritage plants are a vital component of a sustainable and secure food system.
- Environmental resilience: Varieties that have been grown in a region for a long time are often well-adapted to the local climate and may be more resistant to local pests and diseases.
- There are now a few Heritage Apple Tree businesses across the country growing and selling the Trees for you to grow. More are in the works. Look them up and start growing an apple tree! (check that they work for your zone).
- There are many Heirloom plants - Iris, Peony, Roses, Tulips, and many more!
  - Check out who sells for your zone and give a few a try. Specialty sellers are across the nation - Bakers Creek, SeedSavers Exchange, Rare Roots, Peaceful Valley Organics
  - Maybe there is something you remember seeing growing by your parents or grandparents that you wish to try.
- By the way - *Heritage vs. Native: A heritage plant is an older, cultivated variety, whereas a native plant is a species that has existed in a specific region historically, prior to human introduction. A plant can be both a heritage and a native variety, but the terms refer to different attributes: a plant's lineage versus its natural origin.*

Pat Rupiper,
Chair, New Cultivars / Heirloom Plants

Try Container-Grown Gerbera Daisies

Gerbera jamesonii or Gerbera Daisy, also known as the Transvaal or African Daisy, is a familiar favorite to floral designers desiring big, colorful flowers that resist wilting, and to horticulturists who want to attract pollinators.

The daisies' hot colored, velvety heads, that are at least two inches across, require direct sunlight but prefer moderate temperatures (65-70°F), nutrient rich soil, and removal of fading flowers' stem at its base at the leaf crown to stimulate new blooms from spring to fall. They can withstand hot, sunny dry spells in morning sun and partial afternoon shade. Gerbera daisy flowers have different petal profiles: single, double, crested double and spider and a wide range of colors. A recommendation is to cut fully open flowering stems at a 45° angle and keep the flowers upright (do not lay them down) to prevent the flower heads from drooping and the stems bending in water.

A full-grown gerbera daisy can be grown outdoors year-round in the south, but in the Central Atlantic Region below zone 8, is probably best grown and watered weekly in patio containers outdoors and over wintered indoors as houseplants that are watered only monthly. My friend from Indiana, PA, cuts her container gerberas off at the ground and moves the container to the garage. She waters them only when they start to grow again in the spring. She doses them with fertilizer when she puts them outside. It does not like damp soil that can cause root rot and powdery mildew. Its roots are about 8 inches deep, and a crown division may be replanted 12-18 inches apart in early spring. For more details: *"How to Grow and Care for Gerbera Daisies"* by Caroline Biggs and Blythe Copeland.

Marilyn Backus, Chair,
Container and Indoor Gardening

Vision of Beauty Calendar

The designs/gardens selected to be in the VOB calendar may inspire, motivate you to be creative with a design or your garden. You may be assembling decorative designs for the upcoming seasons for yourself, a friend or for a Flower Show. Look outside at your garden. Any Fall/winter interest in your garden this season to photograph now?

Challenge yourself! Take a photograph or have a photograph taken of your design(s) or your garden. The digital picture **must** be high resolution. Your entry could be chosen for inclusion in the next (2027) Vision of Beauty Calendar.

Your design could be traditional, creative, abstract, botanical, artistic craft, seasonal ++. Photographs of a design must be taken in front of a blank seamless background. If the design was a Flower Show entry do not include any flower show ribbons or entry cards. Look at the picture taken. Make sure the image is centered, nothing is cut out in the picture, and the staging panel/underlay are smooth with no wrinkles.

The 2026 Vision of Beauty Calendars are available for $10 each (+ shipping) in the National Garden Club store on *www.gardenclub.org*. If you didn't get the 2024 or 2025 VOB calendar, they are also available at the NGC store and are only $3 each (+ shipping). The pictures of the designs and gardens in the calendars are inspirational!

For more information respective to VOB picture submissions, please log into the members area of the NGC Website and go to the Forms Library. Scroll down the Forms Library to Vision Of Beauty Calendars for the submission requirements and an entry form. Details of entry requirements can also be found on the last pages of the Vision of Beauty Calendar. A completed entry form and a 5x7 print must be provided with each submission mailed. A 5x7 high resolution digital JPEG image must also be provided to the Chair via email. All submissions are sent and emailed to the **National Garden Club Vision of Beauty Calendar Chair Nancy Voyles.**

Barbara DeRue,
CAR-SGC VOB Calendar

Membership Growth: It Starts with a Plan

"How do we get new members?" It's the question every club asks. Membership growth doesn't happen by chance. What *does* work is intention, consistency, and a clear plan.

Start With a Written Plan

A real, step-by-step membership plan is the foundation of effective recruitment. Putting the plan in writing ensures everyone in the club understands the goals, the strategy, and their roles in bringing it to life. Every club is unique, but a strong recruitment plan should answer a few key questions:

1. What Are You Trying to Accomplish?

Define your goals and your audience.

- Who are you trying to reach?
- How many new members do you hope to welcome?
- What does your ideal "finished" club look like?

Clarity creates focus — and accountability.

2. How Will You Bring Potential Members to Your Events?

Visibility is essential. Today's outreach doesn't require a large budget; social media can amplify your message quickly and effectively. Whether it's promoting events, highlighting community projects, or showcasing member stories, consistent posting helps attract the people you want to reach.

3. What Is Your Club's Identity?

Your club has a brand, whether you've defined it or not. Ask yourselves:

- How does the community see us?
- What do we want to be known for?

- Are we offering what potential members are actually looking for?

Make sure your messaging highlights the value, purpose, and community your club provides.

4. How Will You Keep New Members Engaged?

Recruitment is only the beginning. Retention requires connection.

Consider:

- Small-group gatherings
- Orientation sessions
- A mentor or buddy system
- Hands-on projects that encourage participation from day one

The goal is to integrate new members into the fabric of the club — not leave them on the sidelines.

Growth Takes Time

Above all, be realistic. Sustainable membership growth is not a quick fix; it's a long-term commitment. But with a thoughtful plan, consistent effort, and a welcoming culture, your club can grow stronger year after year.

Ginny Cardona,
Membership Chair

2026 NGC Youth Sculpture Contest

Recycle, recycle, recycle! This contest encourages students to keep our plant green and get involved with saving the environment.

We thank Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Ohio for submitting sculpture entries during the 2025 year. Our region had an NGC First Place Winner in the 5th grade from the State of Maryland. We are looking for entries again this year from ALL states in the CAR-SGC Region. **(State Presidents please cover with your State Awards Chairs to encourage members to ask student(s) to participate.)**

The contest rules are simple:

* Children in 4th through 8th grade are eligible
* Sculptures must consist of recyclable, reused and reduced materials
* Width of the sculpture can be no more than 8 ½ X 11 inches and height should be in proportion to width
* Entries may include as many photographs as can be printed on the back of the entry form, but two 4x6 photographs are recommended. THE SCULPTURE ITSELF IS NOT SUBMITTED.
* Entries must be sent to your State Youth Chairman observing State Deadlines.
* The State Youth Chairman sends the state first place winner to me, CAR-SGC NGC Youth Sculture Contest Chair after the selection has been made.

4th Grade Winner

7th Grade Winner

8th Grade Winner

The Entry Form is on the NGC website and is easy to complete i.e. In addition to name and contact information, list of materials used, describe sculpture in 3-5 sentences, send photographs and that's it.

Certificates of Appreciation from CAR-SGC will be given to all those creative students who participate in the sculpture contest.

Diana Bonner,
CAR-SGC NGC Youth Sculpture Contest Chair

Youth Excellence Award is Expanded and Simplified

The Youth Excellence Award has been updated to allow more clubs to participate. Previously limited to a club with a formally registered sponsored youth club, now any of our CAR-SGC member clubs performing quality work with Youth through the award year may apply! Also, the application no longer requires submission of a scrapbook. A new format consists of the CAR-SGC application cover page and up to three additional pages of information with supporting photos. We expect applications may now come from various state level awards to feed into this level. More information is found on the CAR-SGC website in the Members Only section: click on Awards Rules 2025-2027.

Joann Predina, Chair,
CAR Youth Excellence

Schools Committee

The School Committee thanks Linda Harris, our Tri-refresher Chairman, for an outstanding tri-refresher program in Maryland! Consultants from each state garden club attended. In addition, the Schools Committee led an informative roundtable discussion. Club members expressed interest in forming committees to sponsor schools in all areas of NGC programs.

If your state or district has sponsored a school in the past few years, we want to know who your interesting instructors were. Please send their name, topic(s) and contact information to Sue Trager, suzy.trager@gmail.com. She will be compiling a list of LDS, ES, and GS school instructors to use as a potential resource for our states. Good resources include State Cooperative Extensions, Park Service, DEC offices in each state as well as previous state and district scholarship winners. Flower Show School instructor lists are available through NGC.

Our committee chairmen will help to answer questions about the NGC Schools program. If a district or state is planning to hold a school in the next year, our committee is a resource for you. We have experience with planning schools and are familiar with the forms needed to register and complete the classes.

The NGC Schools program is a great benefit of garden club membership. We encourage members in our region to get involved and stay connected to the latest information concerning our gardens, flower shows, landscapes, and natural environment. The NGC website regularly updates the course listings with both Zoom and in-person courses. Below are some of the CAR-SGC contacts for the NGC schools and more.

Schools Coordinator - Vikki Bellias
vikkibellias@gmail.com
Environmental School - Linda Harris
lindaharris355@aol.com
Flower Show School- Tonya Young
tonyay614@aol.com
Gardening School - Jane Bersch
janebersch@aol.com
Landscape School - Sue Trager
suzy.trager@gmail.com
Judges Council - Florence Leyssene
florenceleyssene@gmail.com
4/5 Star Liaison - Robin Hammer
rjlhammer@gmail.com

CAR Youth Horticulture

Thank you to everyone who attended my round table about Youth Horticulture and Fun Projects. We had a lot of great suggestions.

If you are interested in receiving emails on these projects, I would be delighted to add you to my email list! If you have any suggestions about what worked for you, please let me know so I can share your ideas.

Barb Kiker, Chair,
CAR Youth Horticulture

In DuPont's Footsteps: GCFP Members Explore the Gardens of Italy

The GCFP's Garden Tour of Italy was a wonderful success! We were blessed with perfect weather, exceptional meals, and inspiring sights every single day. Best of all, we followed in Pierre S. du Pont's footsteps, visiting many of the gardens that sparked his imagination and helped shape his vision for Longwood Gardens.

Mr. du Pont traveled to Italy in 1910 and again in 1913 to see some of the most celebrated gardens and fountains in Europe. It was there that he learned about the ingenious use of hydraulics and water recycling that later became hallmarks of Longwood's design. Time after time, we turned a corner and gasped—there it was again, a view that felt just like Longwood!

We timed our visit to coincide with *Ortocolario*, Italy's famous garden festival held each year on Lake Como. While there, we were delighted to meet the President of the Italian Federation of Garden Clubs, who graciously presented us with a beautiful book about her historic hometown of La Spezia.

One traveler summed up the trip perfectly:
"I especially appreciate that Mr. du Pont visited all these beautiful places and brought the ideas back to Longwood Gardens—and chose **flat ground** for us to enjoy!" (Yes, it really was *very* hilly!)

Another member shared, "This tour had such a unique itinerary—visits to villas, palaces, and gardens around Lake Como, even grottos tucked into a park in the middle of Genoa! One villa began at the top of a hill and cascaded down in terraces all the way to the lakeshore. Simply unforgettable."

Each of us came home with hundreds of photos, tired feet, and full hearts—overflowing with memories, inspiration, and a new appreciation for the gardens that helped shape one of America's treasures.

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Sharon Richardson, Pennsylvania

Symbiosis

In nature, several animal species have learned to partner in mutually beneficial relationships, in which both species derive some sort of benefit, living an easier life than they would if they went their separate ways, This is called a symbiotic relationship, and there are several notable examples throughout the world, the oxpeckers, clownfish and anemones and badgers and coyotes to name a few. An African Cape buffalo or rhino is plagued with ticks, flies and other small parasites and they can also be killed by predators such as lions, leopards, cheetahs or African wild dogs. However, these problems are mitigated by an 8-inch bird called the oxpecker, a species that hitch a ride on the mammals' backs as they walk, eating their fill of parasites. The oxpeckers also have a hissing alarm call which serves to alert the mammal of any predators.

Sea anemone and clownfish

Since the sea anemone is permanently fixed in one spot, it can often be mistaken for a plant. What looks like petals are venomous tentacles that sting and paralyze prey, including fish and plankton. However, a certain orange species of fish called a clownfish can survive the sting of the anemone, meaning that they can form a symbiotic relationship in which the clownfish lives within the tentacles of the anemone. In return, the clownfish often provides food , removes parasites and even defends it from any predators that may eat the anemone.

Food can be hard to come by for a lone badger. When it digs for its prairie dog prey, the rodents can just escape out the other end of the burrow and flee above ground, where they are faster than badgers. Badgers and coyotes have discovered that if they hunt together, the prairie dogs are almost completely trapped, greatly increasing the likelihood that one comes up with a meal. So they hunt together, with the badger focusing on the burrows and the coyote focusing on the prairie dogs above ground. Scientists have even observed the pair playing or sleeping together and it appears that their partnership can extend for a longer time.

-taken from The Epoch Times, Oct. 2025

Iris Cisarik, Chair,
Birds, Bugs, Butterflies and
Other Endangered Species.

Schools Being Held by NGC

Environmental School:

Jan. 13 – 15, 2026. St. Augustine, FL. Zoom. Course 1.
Contact: Beverly Williams,
bevthepatriot@gmail.com

March 16 – 19, 2026. St. Louis, MO. Virtual. Course 3.
Contact: Jan Conant, *djconant@msn.com*

April 6 – 7, 2026. Augusta, MI. In-Person. Course 3.
Contact: Beth Markowski,
bmarkowski@ migardenlubs.org

Nov. 2 -3, 2026. Augusta, MI. In-Person. Course 4.
Contact: : Beth Markowski,
bmarkowski@ migardenlubs.org

Flower Show School:

January 13 – 16, 2026. Boca Raton, FL. Course 1.
Contact: Maggie Dunn, *Mwdunn333@gmail.com*

March 23 – 26, 2026. Fort Payne, AL. Course 1.
Contact: David Tuttle, *dktuttle@gmail.com*

March 2 – 5, 2025. Little Rock, AR. Course 2.
Contact: Rose Knight, *jkknight@suddenlink.net*

March 8 – 10, 2026. Memphis, TN. Course 2.
Contact: Mary Heim, *Maryheim52@gmail.com*

February 13 – 21, 2026. Poway, CA. Course 3.
Contact: Laura Crenshaw

April 13 – 15, 2026. Gettysburg, PA. Course 3.
Contact: Evie Matzke, *eviemat52@aol.com*

April 11 – 16, 2026. East Brunswick, NJ. Course 4.
Contact: Gail Bassolino, *cbassolino@aol.com*

April 23 – 25, 2026. Milford, MA. Course 4.
Contact: Kathy Hawes, *kmh4383@gmail.com*

Oct. 26 - 28, 2026. Gettysburg, PA. Course 4.
Contact: Evie Matzke, *eviemat52@aol.com*

Flower Show Symposium:

November 18 – 19, 2025. Stuart, FL.
Contact: Nancy Binger, *nancybinger6@gmail.com*

Gardening School:

February 7 – 8, 2026. Los Osos, CA. In-Person. Course 1.
Contact: Ashley Smith

Feb. 2 – 3, 2026. San Antonio, TX. In-Person. Course 2.
Contact: Karen Taylor,
Feb. 21 – 22, 2026. Los Osos, CA. In-Person. Course 2.
Contact*:* Ashley Smith
March 7 - 8, 2026. Los Osos, CA. In-Person. Course 3.
Contact*:* Ashley Smith
April 17 – 18, 2026. Sawyer, MI. In-Person - Course 3.
Contact: Michelle Armstrong, *marmstrong@migardenclubs.org*
Feb. 9 – 11, 2026. New Smyrna Beach, FL. In-Person.
Course 4. Contact: Sally Flanagan, *sfflan@aol.com*
March 21 - 22, 2026. Los Osos, CA. In-Person. Course 4.
Contact*:* Ashley Smith
April 9 – 11, 2026. Chelmsford, MA. Course 4.
Contact: Linda Jean Smith*, lindajean.smith@comcast.net*
Sept. 18 – 19, 2026. Sawyer, MI. In-Person. Course 4.
Contact: Michelle Armstrong*, marmstrong@migardenclubs.org*

Landscape Design School:

April 23 – 24, 2026. Traverse, City, MI. Course 1.
Contact: Ronalee Polad**,** *rpolad@migardenclubs.org*
Mar. 25 – 26, 2026. Columbia, MD. In-Person. Course 2.
Contact: Linda Harris, *ggknowles6@gmail.com*
August 25 – 26, 2026. Elizabethtown, KY. Course 2.
Contact: Debbie Skaggs
December 11 – 12, 2025. Starkville, MS – In-Person.
Course 3. Contact: Mary Lynn Powers,
mlpowers43@gmail.com
September 28 - 29, 2026. College Station, TX. Course 3.
Contact: Michele Wehrheim
January 23 – 25, 2026. Louisville, OH. Virtual. Course 4.
Contact: Bert Nero

Tri-Refreshers:

January 22 – 23, 2026. Wellington, FL. Zoom.
Tri-Refresher in Environmental, Landscape Design, and Gardening Schools.

Arlene Stewart, Chair of Memorials for CAR. The flowers and candle were to recognize garden club members who have passed away.

Conference Chair Susie Middleton and CO-Chair Diana Bonner

"Plant Killer"

Danielle Brabazon, Shirley Nicolai, Donna Donnelly

Barb DeRue, Delaware

Queen Bee Connie Taylor

Bees from National Capital Area

Designs In Tribute

In tribute to Donna Donnelly

In tribute to Beverly Kazickas

Delaware

National Capital Area

Maryland

New Jersey

New York

Ohio

Pennsylvania