

OPEN GATE GARDEN CLUB OF MICHIGAN

February 2026 Newsletter

NEXT MEETING: February 18, 2026, 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Father Harvey Activity Center

PROGRAM: The Best Garden is Next Year's Garden

SPEAKER: Jean Persely, Master Gardener, Master Composter, Conservation Steward

Winter Photo by Ray Barth



Hospitality List

2/18/2026

Dan Czmer
Norm Kilgour
Nancy Kilgour
Ann Barth*
Carmi Murray
Deanna McCrate
Becky Eberhard
Deb Scribner
Patti O'Keefe

3/18/2026

Karen Hall*
Linda Van Camp
Debbie Tegard-Harroun
Nicolette Ellinghausen
Karen Poloski
Judy Lytle
Kim Church
Mike Dietz

4/15/2026

Pat Manion*
MK Schmelzer
Pat Laycock
Kay Baxter
Judy Lytle
Joan Runyan
Betty Sheehy
Amy Doyle
Melody Miller

5/20/2026

Lisa Rolls
Nicolette Ellinghausen
Patti O'Keefe *
Greta Gatzko Evo
Betty Sheehy
Deb Scribner
Jeanne Martin
Nati Horton
Lisa Rolls

6/17/2026

Julie Buttigieg
Dave Buttigieg
Patti O'Keefe
Jeanne Martin
Betty Sheehy
Janice Cooley

HOSPITALITY: Note where your name is on this list and put it in your calendar. If you do not see your name on one of these lists, please choose a month or two to contribute a dish to pass.

BYLAWS AMENDMENT: At the January board meeting, the board agreed to propose to the general membership to make the following to the bylaws. Please review and we will discuss the changes at the February meeting. Current bylaws can be found by clicking <https://opengategardenclub.com/garden-club-documents>

Proposed changes to the OGGC Bylaws

Current Article III Section 2: New members will be accepted at the beginning of each program year in September if openings are available.

Recommendation: New members will be accepted throughout the year if openings are available. Membership for all members ends on August 31 each year.

Reason for change: To update the bylaws to reflect we are currently accepting members throughout the year. Adding the language that the year ends on a specific date, confirms membership year or partial year is over at that point.

Current Article IV Section I: Annual membership dues shall be assessed in an amount to be determined by the Board.

Recommendation: *Membership dues shall be assessed in an amount to be determined by the Board.*

Reason for the change: Removal of the word **Annual** because we may have partial year members.

Current Article IV Section 2: Renewal of dues for current members begin at the April meeting and continues at the May meeting with payment in full by May 31. Effective June 1, those who have not submitted their dues will be removed from the membership roll for the new program year beginning in September.

Recommendation: *Collection of dues for the new program year for current members will begin at the April meeting and continues at the May and June meetings. Effective July 1 for those who have not submitted their dues, their names may not be included in the yearbook for the upcoming year. Membership will continue in the new program year when payment is received.*

Reason for the change: Changes to reflect that we have a June meeting and we will continue to collect dues.

DONATIONS: Do you volunteer for another organization that shares a love of gardening? Club Members who are actively involved with a non profit organization may solicit funds from Open Gate Garden Club to support/encourage all phases of home gardening, promote community projects that utilize environmentally responsible gardening methods, and inspire a love of nature and beauty. Please complete the attached Donation request form and send to Kim Alexander at kimzalexander@gmail.com for consideration by the Donation Committee. Due date for submissions is March 30, 2026. Please plan to attend the April 15 Donations Committee meeting to provide support for your request. Form can be found at <https://opengategardenclub.com/garden-club-documents> Form can also be downloaded from the attachment to this email.

MEMBERSHIP: A big thank you to all the mentors who made our new members feel welcome. Kim Alexander, Lynn Behr, Patsy and Geno Essenmacher, Kim Fischer, Nancy and Norm Kilgour, Pat Laycock, Judy Lytle, Pat Manion, Martha Romanowski, Deb Scribner and Debbie Wasyshylun.

PHOTO CONTEST: Once again, our February meeting will be the time and place, of our yearly photo contest. The more of us that participate, the more fun and excitement. Whether it's your first time entering, or you are a repeat participant, everyone has the same chance to win. One thing for sure, there is no opportunity for winning, if you don't participate.

Rules and guidelines include;

-- Each member may submit up to four photos, one for each season; Spring, Summer, Fall & Winter.

--It is necessary to provide a print out, of each of your submitted photos, which may be smaller than, but not larger than 5" x 7". If your photo is selected, you will be required to submit a digital copy, via email. Please, no borders, or frames.

--Please restrain from providing pictures that include people, or domesticated animals. All of nature is welcome.

--On the back side of each photo, please write down your name, and the season your photo represents.

The top two winning photos will receive a gift certificate and will be displayed on the front, and back cover, of our next year's membership book. The top three photos of each season will be featured throughout the year in newsletters, Facebook & our garden club website.

For those of you who may not be attending our February meeting, you may submit photos via postal mail, or drop off to Debbie Tegard-Harroun, for inclusion in this year's contest.

REMINDER: Bring any wine bottle corks and/or screw on lids for plastic pop bottles to the meeting. They will be used to help market our club at the Expo.

FOLLOW-UP INFO ON GARDENING FOR BEES. This is a link to an excellent article sent by new member Mike Dietz. <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/better-habitat-for-bees>. This article contains lists of annuals and perennials that provide good habitat for these precious pollinators. It is a great resource as we dream about and plan our 2026 plantings.

Meeting Minutes Open Gate Garden Club January 21, 2026

Holiday Gather: Great success! Many hands involved in putting this event together. Many thanks! Lynn Behr addressed membership for ideas regarding entertainment and possible craft. The committee would love someone with ideas to assume this role. Suggestion was made to do a White Elephant gift exchange. If anyone is interested in assuming the role for entertainment or craft/activity, please contact Tina Imeson or Lynn Behr.

St. John's Gardens: Karen Poloski discussed the gardens at St. Johns. Work date scheduled for April 25th at 10:00. Big focus on mulch in April. Participants should bring gloves, trowel, nippers, bucket and knee pads. Any questions, please contact Karen.

Nominations Committee: Kathy Gergen is to head up this important committee. Self-nominations begin in February.

Summer Picnic: Seeking a host for this year end event. Tables and chairs are provided by the club as well as a budget. If anyone is interested in hosting, please let Ann Barth know. There are several members who have hosted in the past and they can provide insight. Put out a sign up sheet and others members will help you host/plan/put on this event.

Expo: March 7 and 8 at Fenton High School. 10 volunteers needed. Hard copy sign up sheets on tables at out January and February meeting. Link in Sign Up Genius will also be available. Great opportunity to share information about our wonderful organization, our Garden Tour and promote membership. Kim Church will Chair this event.

Michigan Gardeners Group: Philly Flower Show March 7th. Check out their website to see opportunities to attend as well as other great features of this organization that YOU belong to through OGGC. January 28th there is a Healing Gardens Lecture.

Presentation: Bee Rex Apiary in Hartland Michigan. Great presentation! Even if you are not interested in becoming a beekeeper, this presentation was incredibly interesting! A few OGGC members visited Dave and Karen Rex at the Milford Winter Farmer's Market located at the River's Edge Brewing Company in Milford, Michigan. They are happy to take phone calls and answer any bee keeping questions you may have.

Minutes submitted by Lynn Behr

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION, VOLUNTEERING, AND PLEASURE

2026 MGC Annual Meeting and Flower Show = Combined Event

- **Host District and Clubs**
 - District 2A
 - Co-Chairs are Deb Emmons and Mary Moore
- Double Tree Hotel by Hilton in **Ann Arbor**
- **June 7 and 8, 2026**
- Theme: **Together We Grow**
- Standard Flower Show



For more information click the link to open the details

<https://migardenclubs.org/its-time-to-enter-the-2026-flower-show/>

If you are interested in possible entering an exhibit for our club, there are examples of different displays in the PowerPoint link.



2026 Annual Flower Shoe MGC.pptx

TRIP TO PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW:

To all District 6 members!

You will want to see this exciting news about the 2026 Philadelphia Flower Show Trip.

Our trip will be March 3-7.

The trip will include visits to gardens, flower show, transportation, 8 meals and lodging.

Please see detailed brochure attached.

For questions, please contact Deb Decker 989-429-9639.

To make your reservation, please contact JAG Motorcoach 989-423-0524 ext. 1

PHILADELPHIA FLOWER SHOW & GARDENS GETAWAY
5 Days / 4 Nights / 8 Meals
Just in on a colorful journey celebrating architecture & nature's finest displays!

Experience the world-famous **Philadelphia Flower Show**, with the 2026 theme, "ROOTED: Origins of American Gardening," stroll through the breathtaking landscapes of **Longwood Gardens**, named the "best botanical garden in the US" by *USA TODAY's 10 Best Reader Choice*.

Explore vibrant collections at the **Cleveland Botanical Garden**, & be inspired by the stunning glasshouse & grounds of **Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Gardens**.

From dazzling floral exhibits to serene garden walks, this is a feast for the senses, perfect for garden lovers & travelers seeking inspiration.

Many 2025 Michigan Garden Club Members have enjoyed the trip, and expressed another year!

Dates: March 3-7
Rates: S: \$1278 D: \$956
T: \$864 C: \$815

Schedule:
Tues: Tour through the **Cleveland Botanical Garden**, dine & stay at the **Drury Inn, Pimmsburg, PA**.
Wed: Tour the largest botanical garden in PA that consists of 1,500+ acres of Gardens, woodlands, & meadows. Hotel in **Kensett Square, PA**.
Thurs: See the **Liberty Bell & Independence Hall**, free time at **Philadelphia Flower Show & sightseeing in town!** Stay 2nd night at hotel in **K-Square**.
Fri: Explore the **Victorian Era greenhouse** at **Phipps Conservatory & Botanical Garden** in **Pittsburg, PA**, dine & stay at the **Drury Inn**.
Sat: Enjoy lunch included at the **Real Seafood Co.** in **Towans, OH**, then return home.
Pickups: **Cleveland, Mt. St. U, Cleve, Alma, & Dundee**

HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST DEADLINE OF MARCH 15:

The Essay Contest challenges high school juniors and seniors to submit a 600-750 word essay on a chosen topic This year they address one of the following questions:

- HOW CAN FARMS BECOME MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE?
- HOW CAN URBAN AREAS BECOME MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE?

If you have someone in your club that would like to organize a contest with your club locally, click this link, <https://migardenclubs.org/high-school-essay-contest/>

NGC GRANT OPPORTUNITY:

Application Deadline 2/17/26

Nationwide Project Celebration - July 4, 2026

The PLANT AMERICA:Blue & Gold Star Memorial Beautification Program is a joint initiative of National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) and Keep America Beautiful (KAB). The program supports projects that remove litter, plant flowers and greenery, and beautify Blue Star and Gold Star Memorials nationwide, with a special emphasis on

planting red, white, and blue flowers in celebration of America's 250th Anniversary on July 4, 2026. Click link for more information. <https://www.plantamerica.org/>

SEVEN PONDS NATURE CENTER: Offers some wonderful educational programs over the next few months. Click this link for more information. <https://www.sevenponds.org/2024-winter-series>

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES:

Here at Seven Ponds, we are planning for and dreaming about the 2026 gardening season. As you may already know, we have three major gardens that are focal points of our property. They are used for teaching but also just for the enjoyment and beauty they add to our grounds and offer to our visitors: the Herb Garden, the Butterfly Garden and the Demonstration Garden. Each of these gardens requires volunteers to keep them looking their best. That is why I am reaching out to you today.

We would like to invite members of the Open Gate Garden Club to consider investing some volunteer time in one or more of these gardens this year. Please allow me to give you some information about each of our wonderful gardens:

The Butterfly Garden - This pollinator garden has existed for decades but was moved to its current location in 2002. We are looking for garden enthusiasts to join the small but dedicated team of volunteers who make this garden the showcase that it is. Volunteers gather Wednesdays, 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, from May through September to maintain the garden for butterflies and other pollinators. Learn about attracting pollinators to your own garden while you work!

The Herb Garden - This garden was planted by the Charette / Rogalski family in memory of their mother, Pauline Rogalski, in the spring of 1978. It originally featured aromatics, medicinal, and culinary plants. It was moved to its current location in 2002. The garden is maintained by a small club of herb-loving volunteers called The Friends of Herbs. This club meets at 10:00 AM on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, May through September, and the second Wednesday of the month, October through April. There are no meetings in December. The usual schedule is to work in the Herb Garden, eat lunch, and enjoy a short program or prepare herbs for sale. During months when there is no work to be done in the garden, the meetings typically consist of informational programs about a selected herb or other topic. It is free to participate in this club.

The Demonstration Garden - This garden was planted in 2010. It is located along the front of our interpretive building and is filled with native plants and trees to demonstrate how beautiful a garden can be using only native plants. Our Land Steward maintains this garden with the help of staff and volunteers. The schedule for working in this garden can be flexible but must be done during our business hours, Tuesday - Sunday 9 AM to 5 PM. Unsupervised work on weekends is possible once our Land Steward gains a comfortable understanding of the volunteer's knowledge of native plants. Learn about gardening with native plants while you work!

Should any of your members decide to take us up on our invitation to invest their time and gardening talents in any of these gardens at Seven Ponds, we would love to have them as volunteers. Please direct them to fill out our [Volunteer Interest Form](#) online, contact me by email at asadler@sevenponds.org or at the nature center by calling 810-796-3200. I will put them in touch with the proper manager(s) of the garden(s). Please note, this volunteer opportunity is for adults or high school aged teens only.