

THE NATIONAL GARDENER



Fall 2023
gardenclub.org



The National Gardener

Fall 2023, Volume 93, Number 4
GO GREEN - PLANT AMERICA



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Cover Photo • Alex Rath, This Page • Solarseven, Page 4 Columbine • Klickblich

Coming in TNG

Winter 2024 - January

- ❖ Floral Design
- ❖ Landscape Design
- ❖ 2024 NGC Convention

Submissions Welcome and Encouraged! See The [National Gardener](#) page for guidelines.

About Us

National Garden Clubs, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization that aims to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility. We help coordinate the interests and activities of state and local garden clubs in the U.S. and abroad.

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Write for TNG:

We welcome ALL NGC members, garden writers, designers and outdoor enthusiasts to share their club, community or personal story. You do NOT have to be a professional author to submit an article. See the [TNG page](#) for submission information.

Deadline/Publication Dates:

- Fall Issue Sept. 1/Oct. 1
- Winter Issue Dec. 1/Jan. 2
- Spring Issue Mar. 1/Apr. 1
- Summer Issue Jun. 1/Jul. 1

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- Full Page \$650
- Half Page \$350
- Quarter Page \$175

See the [TNG page](#) for more information on advertising.

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3. Infringe any patent, trademark, trade secret, copyright or other intellectual property or other rights of any other person.
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8. Impersonate any person, or misrepresent your identity or affiliation with any person or organization.
9. Involve commercial activities or sales, such as contests, sweepstakes and other sales promotions, barter or advertising.
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BRENDA'S JOURNAL

I'm so glad I live in a world where there are Octobers.
L. M. Montgomery, *Anne of Green Gables*

I certainly agree with "Anne with an e." I love October and the fall. I live in a state with four distinct seasons, and we, like so many other states, have beautiful fall foliage. In October "leaf peepers" crowd our forests looking for fall color. I love everything associated with fall: changing colors of the foliage, fragrances, cooler temperatures, fall activities such as bonfires and football games. I love pumpkins in any form.

As your NGC President, I am enjoying visiting our members. From Nevada, Oregon, and Washington to North Dakota, I appreciate the hospitality each of these states' members shows. I enjoyed seeing their areas of our country and learning about their garden clubs' projects. These visits widen my circle of NGC friends. I look forward to visiting Massachusetts, Iowa, and New York in the near future.

Fall is the time to start planning our gardens for next year. One of the 2023-2025 President's projects is **PLANT AMERICA – Feed America**: a program to encourage feeding those with food insecurities with our gardening excess. We are recording these donations for bragging rights via the [PLANT AMERICA-Feed America Donation Form](#). We are also introducing **PLANT AMERICA – Plant for Pollinators** and **PLANT AMERICA – Landscape for Wildlife** certification programs. There are articles in this issue of *TNG* about these new programs. My garden is now an official *NGC-Certified Pollinator Garden* and *Wildlife Habitat*, complete with signs purchased after application acceptance.

Fall is when our youth are back in school and an excellent time to think about working with young people. Please encourage them to enter the [Smokey Bear Poster Contest](#) or the [NGC Youth Poetry Contest](#). The youth poem title for 2024 is "I spy with my little eye,

something Green outside – celebrating our Green World." Prepare cold weather activities for the children in your life by downloading the youth activity book: [Do Something Green](#). Work with a young person to create a recycled material sculpture for the [Youth Sculpture Contest](#). Encourage children to read. Purchase the latest youth book, *My Green is Gone* from the [NGC Store](#). Do not forget our older youth. Encourage those majoring in horticulture, environmental, forestry and gardening-related fields to apply for our scholarships through their states.

Remember, the [PLANT AMERICA Community Grant](#) application deadline is coming up quickly. Apply now! Check out the [NGC Awards](#) offerings. Take advantage of the schools offered by our states. NGC is hosting a Zoom Environmental School on October 30-31. As stated in my President's speech, "Attending NGC schools shaped how I view our natural world." NGC will continue to offer webinars to its members, too.

As we prepare for the holidays and winter, let us enjoy every season's magnificence. As you prepare to hang the holiday greens, think of our theme - Go Green and PLANT AMERICA.



Feed America • Shangarey

Happy Gardener

Barrel Me In Charlotte Swanson

A good while ago, there was whiskey in my barrels. Growing up in the South, I am familiar with distillers aging whiskey in oak barrels. While whiskey is not my choice of drink, I do favor whiskey barrels for container gardening. They are generous in size, sturdy, long-lasting, and age gracefully. Rabbits tend to ignore lettuces planted in them. They offer good resistance to all but wind-borne weeds. Keeping them watered can be a task, but not an unpleasant one. One gallon from a watering can tends to be enough. While pausing to water the barrel, one can also view the rest of the garden. Another watering tactic is using liter bottles outfitted with a cone-shaped nozzle that slowly delivers water. Optionally, drip systems have elevated tubing that can adapt to these containers.

Over the years, my barrels have hosted a variety of plants. For a few seasons, they held my dwarf apple trees until they found a permanent in-ground spot. The barrels are not insulated against frigid winters. A few straw bales around them can safeguard against freezing to a reasonable degree (minus 15 to 20 in my zone).

Most of the time, we chose annuals for whiskey barrels. What is especially helpful is that barrels are early to warm up and are available in the spring for cool-season crops like leaf lettuce, kale, and spinach. It is a small and easy task to till them and add fresh amendments to the potting soil left over from previous summers. While waiting for the frost-free days, one is rewarded with the knowledge that the cool crops are getting a head start.

(Continued on page 6)

Lettuce Barrel • Charlotte Swanson



Artichoke & Petunias • Charlotte Swanson

Beets and carrots prefer a friable, loose potting soil enriched with vegetable fertilizers. Container-sized tomatoes adapt quickly also. Last summer, even my sizable artichoke found the barrel a cozy and productive place to be!

Of course, all sorts of flowering cultivars grow in barrels. Petunias do not complain; shorter versions of zinnias, salvia, and nasturtiums thrive in them. Plus, they offer a convenient spot to experiment on a small scale before deciding on a bigger stage for the “new kid on the block.”

Plenty of container choices exist, but few stack up well against the reliable whiskey barrel. It boasts of being recycled, repurposed, long-lived, generous in size, friendly to flowers and veggies, and ready for the gardener’s hankering to experiment.

I leave the whiskey to others, just give me the barrel!

Charlotte Swanson is a NGC Gardening Consultant and a long time writer for *The National Gardener*.



His books are page-turners. His talk is horticulture at its funniest.

Neal Sanders’ 15 fast-paced, intricately plotted mysteries draw rave reviews from readers. They all feature strong, independent women – some of whom solve crimes, and others who commit them. Many of his books use garden club settings and ‘women of a certain age’.

But don’t mistake these for ‘cozies’: his plots involve everything from romance scams to ‘protect your assets’ schemes and fraudulent reverse mortgages. There’s frequently a strong horticultural element. You can **order his books in print and Kindle formats on Amazon**. Or, you can go to www.TheHardingtonPress.com to explore his titles and read first chapters. You can also purchase books directly from the author at www.the-hardington-press.square.site.

Neal is also one of the most entertaining speakers you’ll ever hear. ‘Gardening Is Murder’ is equal parts humor, psychology, and gardening wisdom; a husband’s point of view of what goes on in the garden. This year he has addressed the **NGC Deep South Convention** as well as state conventions in **South Carolina, Connecticut, and Michigan**. To book him for your 2024 or 2025 event, write Neal02052@Gmail.com.





Keep Gardeners **Safe** Melinda Myers

Call Before You Dig • melindamyers.com

As you share your expertise with gardeners throughout the year, remind them to call 811 (the national call-before-you-dig phone number) at least three business days before putting the first digging tool in the ground. It may be old news for you and some gardeners, but it is a message worth repeating. Many new and even experienced gardeners are unaware or feel it is unnecessary when working in their landscape.

The 2021 Common Ground Alliance Public Awareness Research Study found that 74% of people doing digging projects were aware of this free service. Almost 50% of them contacted 811 or their local underground utility locating service before placing the first shovel in the ground. This statistic is an improvement but still leaves more opportunities for us to make people aware of the service and encourage them to take this critical step when their projects involve digging.

Many assume this step is only needed for major construction projects involving large equipment and deep holes. This assumption is not the case. A call to 811 should be made anytime someone is digging with a shovel, posthole digger, hand tools, or anything disturbing the soil.

This free service helps reduce the risk of injury and repair costs if gardeners or homeowners strike or damage a buried utility line. All it takes is a call to 811, or they can click to find their [local underground utility locating service](#).

As you chat with fellow gardeners about this free service, questions will undoubtedly arise. Here are a few I often receive, and you are likely to encounter:

- ✓ Yes, they must call 811 no matter how deep they must dig. This is not just for projects that involve large equipment and deep holes. It is essential because the depth of utility lines can vary. Erosion, soil settling, previous projects, and uneven surfaces are a few of the reasons the utility depth can vary. In other words, striking an underground utility is still risky, even when digging just a few inches deep.
- ✓ Use hand tools when digging within 18" on either side of any marked underground utility. This mandate keeps utilities safe since utility locating is not an exact science. The 18" buffer zone reduces the risk of damage that is more likely to occur when using mechanized equipment close to the marks.
- ✓ Remind gardeners that the utility company will not mark private lines from things like propane lines, sewer laterals, landscape lighting, underground pet fencing, or irrigation contained within their property. Homeowners can hire a locating company to mark private lines.

(Continued on page 8)



Cut Cable • JJ Gouin

✓ When working with professionals, it is always best to ask who will contact 811 before the start of the project. The law requires the professional to contact 811, and it is best to confirm they will before they begin work.

✓ A three working day advance notice is required to give utility company representatives time to arrive at the digging location so that they can mark the location of their underground lines. They will use paint or flags to indicate the approximate location of those lines. Your locate request will have your project's start date and time. Do not begin digging until that start date and time.

Thanks for your help in increasing awareness of this critical step in keeping gardeners safe.

Melinda Myers authored more than 20 gardening books, including *The Midwest Gardener's Handbook* and *Small Space Gardening*. Her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Down the Garden Path Landscape Design School News Carol Yee

Japanese Garden • Pete Saloutos

NGC Bylaws ARTICLE II – OBJECT...*The objects and purposes for which the Corporation is organized...are: 5. To study and advance the fine arts of gardening, landscape design, floral design, and horticulture.*

On October 7, 1958, NGC established the first Landscape Design School as a series of four courses. The school has now evolved to help students create their home garden landscaping plan. By going through the process, the individual will appreciate and understand even more the underlying decisions for creating a space of “beauty, utility, convenience, sound ecological practice, and ease of maintenance.” *NGC Schools Handbook*.

Completing all four Landscape Design School courses is easier to accomplish today more than ever. Students and refreshers can select in-person, Zoom, or hybrid courses. The NGC website currently lists all four [Landscape Design School Courses](#) offered this fall with many Zoom or hybrid options.

NGC updates its schools' consultant database after a course is completed and approved by the NGC School Accrediting Chair. The database records only consultant records (those who have successfully taken and passed 4 courses) and is a backup to state records. State chairs: Please help keep the NGC database updated by ensuring the Accrediting Chair for the course (after completion) receives **all** forms needed to certify the course, students, and consultants. These include Form 5 (Course Roster and Summary), Form 6 (Application for Consultant Accreditation), and Form 7 (Application for Refresher).

Thanks to all who have been helping organize local school courses. We appreciate all your work to help NGC achieve its educational objectives.

[Carol Yee](#) is the NGC Landscape Design School Chair. She lives in Illinois and is a Five-Star member. Contact Carol for your LDS questions or visit the [LDS webpage](#).

PLANT AMERICA: Plant for Pollinators

Virginia Schmidt

National Garden Clubs' President Brenda Moore encourages NGC members to make our gardens more than just beautiful. She created the National Garden Clubs Pollinator Garden Certification program. Our gardens can support birds, bees, and other insects, and this program incentivizes us to take additional steps to ensure we provide all the components to help pollinators thrive.

We created a checklist to confirm you have everything you need to support pollinators: food and water sources plus areas to raise young. You probably already have several plants that provide pollen and nectar. But could you add a few native plants that are perhaps a better food source? Could you add a shrub that has berries for wintertime nutrition? You do not have to install a pond, but what about a birdbath? Consider adding a heater for fresh water in the winter. Many of us have birdhouses in our gardens. A small, inconspicuous log or brush pile can provide a safe place for insects to nest.

In addition to providing food, water, and shelter, think about your gardening practices and what you can do better to support pollinators. Naturalists encourage us to "leave the leaves" in the fall for insects that overwinter there. Wait until spring for garden cleanup since some insect larvae stay in hollow stems until spring.

We all want to do what we can to support pollinators. Their lives depend on us. By making a few tweaks to our gardens, we can make them feel right at home. Check out the [Plant for Pollinators](#) page and [APPLY HERE](#) to have your yard recognized as a National Garden Clubs Certified Pollinator Garden! Once approved, you will have the option to order an NGC Certified Pollinator Garden yard sign as seen in the image.

[Virginia Schmidt](#) is the PLANT AMERICA - Plant for Pollinators Chair. She resides in Ohio where she serves her local and state clubs.





“... a ribbon of living memorial plantings traversing every state”

Memorial Marker Restoration

Candace Wells

At the close of World War II, National Garden Clubs - called National Council of State Garden Clubs at the time - sought a suitable means of honoring our service men and women. In 1945, members approved the Blue Star Memorial Marker Program as a "ribbon of living memorial plantings traversing every state" to honor the men and women serving in the armed forces during World War II. The name was chosen for the star on the flags displayed in homes and businesses denoting a family member serving. The Blue Star Program was the first program taken as a national project by National Garden Clubs, Inc.

At the National Garden Clubs, Inc. annual convention in Louisville, Kentucky, in May 2015, the NGC Board of Directors and delegates approved the Gold Star Memorial Marker Program. Gold Star Families is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization created "to provide support to those who have lost a loved one in service to our country through the United States Armed Forces." While heroes paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom, survivors live daily with the pain of the sacrifice. Living service men and women are honored by the Blue Star, and the Gold Star represents those who lost their lives.

Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers extend thousands of miles across the United States. Over time, a vast

majority of the Memorial Markers have been subject to weathering and damage. Garden clubs across America have recognized the importance of these old Memorial Markers. From the state of Washington to Florida, garden clubs are honoring the Memorial Marker program and its purpose by refurbishing these old markers. Markers are scrubbed and cleaned, removing decades of dirt, grime, pollutants, hazards, pests, and damage from harsh winds, rain, hail, and snow. The restoration process clearly revives the historically detailed features of the Memorial Markers.

Historic preservation provides a powerful connection to our past and the opportunity to bring that connection to future generations of Americans. Honoring and memorializing our Armed Forces can also unify and strengthen communities. National Garden Clubs, Inc. encourages garden clubs to preserve Memorial Markers' history and heritage through restoration efforts whenever possible.

The Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers are commemorative memorials erected as visible remembrances of those who have served, are serving, will serve, and died while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

Candace Wells is the NGC Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Marker Chair. She lives in Tennessee.

*Left: Before & After Tahoma National Cemetery, WA
Right: Before & After Melia Hills Rest Stop, NE • Candace Wells*

Scholarships

Lisa Robinson

At the National Council of State Garden Clubs (now National Garden Clubs) 1944 Annual Meeting, \$600.00 was presented to start a Scholarship Fund to train students in horticulture. Our Scholarship program has certainly grown and is a crucial NGC tool that assists deserving college students to receive the funding they need to reach their educational goals. What better way to support the mission of National Garden Clubs? We help the future stewards of our environment, food production, maintenance, and beautification of our lands, and educators to our future horticulturists and environmentalists. Scholarship recipients now major in various fields, including horticulture, agriculture, landscape architecture and design, floriculture, forestry, wildlife science, environmental science, environmental law and business, and many more related fields.

A plethora of online information can make it difficult for students to find the opportunities best suited to them. Please help them by assisting your state scholarship chair identify applicants in your area. Over the years, the NGC Scholarship Program has awarded over \$4 million. Be proud of these accomplishments and use them to bring awareness to our program.

The NGC application forms and guidelines are available on our website, including an optional online application. Your state scholarship chair can answer questions and assist potential applicants. For a complete list of scholarship chairs by state, qualifying criteria, and a list of acceptable majors, visit the [NGC Scholarship](#) page. Send your questions and requests for more information to your Region Director or NGC Scholarship Chair, [Lisa Robinson](#).

The next deadline for NGC Scholarship applications is February 1, 2024. This deadline applies to mail-in, emailed, or online applications. Mail and Email applications go directly to the Scholarship Chair of the student's state of residence. In 2023, we awarded 44 NGC Scholarships at \$3,800.00 each! **See the complete list of [2023 Scholarship Recipients](#).**

Lisa Robinson is the NGC Scholarship Chair. Lisa resides in Michigan. She has served on scholarship committees in Georgia and Virginia.



Why Are Gardeners So Nice?

Paul Plotkin

In support of my new book, *Wisdom Grows in My Garden*, a narrative memoir about my experience in the garden and the 25 life lessons it taught me, I learned another lesson I was unaware of: Gardeners are really nice people!

I had lurked in the shadows of anonymity on Facebook for a few years using my Hebrew name that only my family knew. I was only there to keep up with what my children and grandchildren were doing. If you are a grandparent, you probably know the drill. You call them up one day a week and ask what is going on in their lives, and you get the usual “nothing special” before they run off to their friends or their devices. While lurking, I could see what they were doing and whom they were hanging out with. Now, I had to come out of the shadows and let the world know I had a new book.

I rejoined Facebook with my full name and a photo that featured me and the book. I researched and found a plethora of gardening websites that all had one thing in common. You could not advertise your product or conduct commercial activity on the site. So much for that excellent marketing idea, but as long as I was a group member, I thought I should at least read what was happening.

It was late March, and most of North America was minimally involved in active gardening. But in my state of Florida, we were humming. People had questions ranging from what was eating their tomatoes just before they picked them to what to do about the iguanas that were destroying their gardens. I found myself compelled to answer when I had a relevant experience. Still, I also saw so many people respond with kindness and knowledge but mostly compassion, as in, “Stay with it. I have been there,” and “Here are some ways to solve it, so do not lose hope; you will succeed.”

I had also joined some other groups of personal interest to me, but I soon tired of the nastiness, the sarcasm, and put-downs by people who thought their barbs were cute or funny. They could not see the pain they were putting out there. And these were not even political sites. We engage in binary thinking. We compete for everything, and everything is a zero-sum game. If you win, it is because I lost, and vice versa. But gardeners are not like that.

(Continued on page 13)

When someone posts a picture of a perfect ear of just-picked corn and says it is the first time they have tried to grow corn, 50 comments tell that person how beautiful it is and how proud they should be of their accomplishment. We are like proud parents whose child has just come home with an A in algebra or a gold ribbon in the 100-yard dash.

When someone posts a decimated strawberry that some bird ate, 50 people write, "I know. It happened to me, so here is how I solved the problem." No one yells at them for not covering the fruit to keep the birds away. No one calls them dumb. No one is a smart aleck at their expense because we have all been there before.

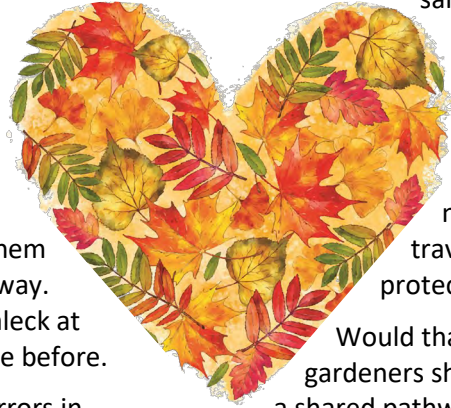
We were beginners, and we have all made errors in judgment. We have all done everything correctly and still failed to harvest successfully. To be a gardener is to have been humbled by nature not once but often. In that humbling, we learn humility and empathy that we share willingly. We check our ego at the door. Whatever wisdom we

have learned is not ours alone but an obligation to share with everyone. Gardening is not a zero-sum game.

We have all experienced joy and frustration - often in the same season. We have had plentiful harvests we did not deserve. We have lost crops we had every reason to enjoy until a devastating storm hit and left us nothing. Our shared experience establishes a bond with strangers, reminding us that we are not really strangers at all. We are but co-travelers on a shared planet that we need to protect for all our sakes.

Would that we could all learn the lessons of life that gardeners share? Can we see each other as sojourners on a shared pathway of life? Let us all grow together in a world of love, kindness, respect, and support.

Rabbi Paul Plotkin was a pulpit Rabbi for 40 years. He is the author of *The Lord Is My Shepherd, Why Do I Still Want?* and [Wisdom Grows in My Garden](#). He is a fan of the Florida Panthers and the Miami Dolphins. He delivered three invocations and they won two out of those games.



Heart • Pikisuperstar



Snail on Hosta • Susan Loughran



PLANT AMERICA - Wildlife Habitat Barbara Campbell

NGC President Brenda Moore's project to register your garden as an NGC Wildlife Habitat is now available. After my last article, I received some feedback from members who do not want to encourage certain types of wildlife such as: deer, alligators, venomous snakes, bears, or coyotes. It is your garden, and it is up to you as to what members of the animal kingdom you are encouraging to visit your garden. This may be affected by the size, location, and local restrictions. It is YOUR choice to name the wildlife you are encouraging. As we know, the habitats for wildlife are diminishing as our population increases and moves into once wild areas. Whether or not wildlife survives will impact the human population as well. We can provide for many types of birds, insects, reptiles, fish, and amphibians. This does not mean we FEED them. Providing a habitat for them to thrive is different from dispensing bags of food. As garden club members, part of our mission is "civic and environmental responsibility." Good management is important, as is control of sprays that do more harm than good. Check out the [Wildlife Habitat](#) page and [APPLY HERE](#) to join Brenda and me with an NGC Registered Wildlife Habitat and proudly display the beautiful sign. Hopefully, people will see your sign, ask questions, and want to join a garden club.

Barbara Campbell, of New York, is the NGC PLANT AMERICA - Landscape for Wildlife Chair.



Flower Show School

A Fresh Look at Flower Shows

Judy Binns

Why have a Flower Show?

Flower Shows are an opportunity for garden club members to:

- ◆ Educate club members and the public
- ◆ Stimulate interest in growing and showing horticulture
- ◆ Express creativity with floral designs
- ◆ Communicate National Garden Clubs' goals and objectives

Why enter a Flower Show?

By entering a Flower Show, you can:

- ◆ Get to know other garden club members
- ◆ Show what you grow
- ◆ Let your creativity shine

Whether it is your first flower show in years or an annual major one, the Flower Show School Committee is here to help. The NGC website has numerous resources to support a garden club to plan and stage a successful large or small flower show. Visit the [NGC Flower Shows](#) page for descriptions and photos of the five possible divisions of an NGC Flower Show. Look for sample schedules to download, both for NGC Standard and NGC Small-Standard Flower Shows. Also available are TIPS on *Having a Flower Show*, *Flower Show Basics*, *How to Enter Horticulture*, and more.

States host NGC Flower Show Schools across the country. Check out the [Flower Show School](#) course listing to find a school in your area. Many states have just completed the series of all four courses and are beginning a new series. That means new student exhibitors and new student judges are looking for flower shows to earn exhibiting and judging credits to advance their studies even further.

Take a “fresh look” at flower shows. Plan one today and see how NGC Flower Shows unite members to learn, grow, and show.

Judy Binns, of Virginia, is the NGC Flower Show School Chair.



PLANT AMERICA Grants

David Robson

For the 7th year NGC is sponsoring PLANT AMERICA Community Project Grants, **DUE OCTOBER 15, 2023.**

PLANT AMERICA grants are an excellent opportunity to apply for funding for a specific project that benefits the community. Projects can range from school gardens to community beautification to interpretive signs for a wildlife area.

Member clubs or near-clubs (several clubs in a close geographic area/city, sometimes called councils) can apply for up to \$2,000 for a community project promoting the PLANT AMERICA theme. Additionally, clubs that received grants in 2017-2018 are again eligible. You do not have to apply for the total amount. The keywords are "up to." Many clubs have asked for smaller

amounts. The average grant has been between \$400-600. The committee looks at the impact of the total grant dollars.

The grant application is a fillable two-page PDF form that is only two pages, no more, no less! If a club has a problem with the fillable form, local libraries should be able to provide some assistance, though your kids and grandkids may also be able to help!

We posted past winners and projects on the PLANT AMERICA Grants and NGC Facebook pages. Think creatively. Think about that unused community space. Think about a legacy for the future. Remember, the deadline is October 15. To apply:

- ✓ Click for [PLANT AMERICA Grant information](#)
- ✓ Download the PLANT AMERICA Community Grants Application Form in the [Forms Library](#). Scroll to Grants; download the form to your device, and open it in your PDF program.
- ✓ Do NOT complete the form using your web browser; the information will not be saved.
- ✓ Check out the new step-by-step [Application Information](#) to help you complete the application form.
- ✓ Complete and save the form, and email it to [PLANT AMERICA Grants](#).



We offered an [NGC PLANT AMERICA Community Grants Webinar](#) during the previous administration. It highlights three great projects and may give you and your club some ideas. If you have any questions, contact [David Robson](#), Chair.

David Robson, of Illinois, is the NGC PLANT AMERICA Community Projects Grants Chair

Images of Past PLANT AMERICA Grants Recipients • David Robson



Cyber Space • Natalya Burova, Cactus • Taylan Ibrahim

The National Gardener/Fall 2023

Flower Show Achievement Awards Vera Bowen

This year, we are seeing changes to all NGC Awards. We are going all electronic! To be current, environmentally responsible, and fiscally prudent, President Brenda Moore has asked that we adopt this new policy.

We realize that this is a significant change. The conversion may bring much extra work for your state awards chairs. Please work with us. Together we will make the awards process more effortless in the long run, more efficient, and cost-effective for all concerned.

We set up a Dropbox account specifically for the Flower Show Achievement Awards. We will send the link to your state awards chair. The application form is available in the [NGC Forms Library](#).

Vera Bowen, of Rhode Island, is the NGC Flower Show Achievement Award Chair. Contact her for any questions.

Schools Policy and Procedure Pat Rupiper

State Schools' Chairs have had some confusion about completing Schools' Forms 6 and 7, which are required to receive class credit. **Remember, these forms are our means of guaranteeing a consultant's credit for attending courses.** Your state schools' chair sends each form to your appropriate NGC Schools' Accrediting Chair. Students and consultants **MUST TELL THEIR STATE CHAIR** where they are taking a class and whom to send the forms to **before the class.**

The state chair then checks their records to verify the information and sends the forms to the state's schools' chair where the student or consultant takes the course. In most cases the state chair should already have the complete form and can send it electronically.

After the class, the local school chair updates the form with the date and course attended. They send the form to the

student or consultants' state chair to sign and email to the appropriate NGC Accrediting Chair. This chair signs the forms and returns them to the student or consultant's state chair for their records. That state chair sends the newly accredited or refreshing consultant a copy of your updated form and an official Letter of Good Standing for consultants.

In the long and short of this process, the person taking the course is responsible for their records. **They must keep their records electronically.** Paper forms are no longer acceptable. Student and consultant's credit for their school course may be denied if their state schools' chair does not receive the forms before class. Look for the NGC Accrediting Chair on the NGC School Resources webpage. They will help you through the process if you have no state chair.

Pat Rupiper, of Ohio, is the NGC Schools' Policy Coordinator and Environmental School Chair.

Classroom • Geerati

SHOP NGC

Karen Blackmore

Have you added the newest children's book in the series President Brenda Moore authored, *My Green is Gone*, to your holiday gift list? It fits so well with her theme and is a great book to talk about the environment with kindergarten through fourth-grade children. All four of Brenda's books are available in the [NGC Store](#). The first three books, *The Frightened Frog*, *The Saved Seed*, and *Network with Nature*, are on sale as a bundle for \$15. Consider purchasing them as a gift to a library or school.

Show your NGC and PLANT AMERICA pride with garden aprons, pins, flags, mugs and even a license plate cover.

Have you ordered your *2024 Vision of Beauty*? Flower Show instructor Julia Clevett has a beautiful design on the front cover, and the rest of the calendar is filled with unique designs. Combine orders with friends to save shipping costs.

Are you planning a flower show? Does your club have a *Handbook for Flower Shows*? There are paper copies in the store for \$25. You can download the updated digital [Handbook](#) from the Flower Show School Resources webpage for free. *Horticulture Exhibiting and Judging* is a book that supplements the Handbook and is available for \$30.00. It lists how to prepare many horticulture varieties for exhibiting. Your club will be all set for a flower show in the spring!

Karen Blackmore, of Missouri, is the NGC Member Services Chair

A Journey Towards Knowledge/Un viaje hacia la sabiduría Sabina Arrieta

Our COMAAI journey towards knowledge began twenty-three years ago when former NGC President Renee Blaschke asked her International Liaison to promote the three Educational Schools in Latin America. After the Handbooks of the three Schools were translated and some requirements adapted to international needs, the liaison invited Mila Coquis from Lima, Peru, to establish a committee for promoting the schools.

Mila and her Committee promised to “give a hand.” When their first Gardening School Consultants graduated, they joined the newly founded Peruvian Council of NGC, Inc. Consultants. The Council is an active academic organization that elects a president every two years, presently having Olga Nesta from Lima serving as president.

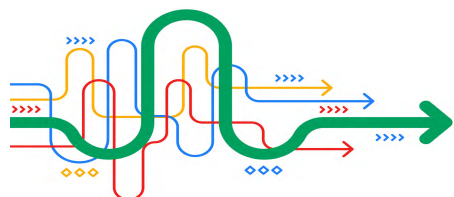
When the COVID-19 pandemic stopped our regular activities, the Council established a Virtual Schools’ Committee, which Mila Coquis was requested to lead. Though initially challenged, local members soon enthusiastically learned to use the digital teaching tools available. With the help of the COMAAI Technical Committee, the Council transformed the pandemic into a “journey or time for online learning.”

Currently, the Council and the Virtual School Committee continue to offer and sponsor online or hybrid Schools and Refreshers. Now, these events also include members of the three Affiliated International Regions. All this success exceeded the Council’s growth expectations. Since 2020, they offered ten virtual Schools and eight Refresher events, which provided Peru with 97 Consultants: 33 GS, 32 LDS, and 32 ES).

The journey towards knowledge has also promoted teamwork and fellowship among local Garden Clubs in Lima and other parts of Peru. Most of all, it encouraged an extraordinary camaraderie among the NGC, Inc. members of the three affiliated Regions, who regularly attend academic events for accreditation.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge all the support NGC, Inc. and COMAAI have provided. The journey continues, offering the International Affiliates a virtual window where we can meet, learn, share personal goals, and feel a unique sense of pride because we belong to a team that is part of the largest gardening organization in the world!

Sabina Arrieta is the COMAAI Multiple Refresher Chair and the Digital Chair of the Virtual Committee.



Nuestro viaje hacia la sabiduría comenzó hace veintitrés años cuando la ex presidente de NGC, Inc., Renee Blaschke, le pidió a su Consejera Internacional que promoviera las tres Escuelas Educativas en América Latina. Luego de traducirse los Manuales de las tres Escuelas y adaptados con algunos requisitos para las necesidades internacionales, la Consejera invitó a Mila Coquis de Lima, Perú, a establecer un Comité para la promoción de las escuelas.

Mila y su Comité prometieron “dar una mano” y cuando sus primeros Consultores de la Escuela de Jardinería se graduaron, fueron invitados a unirse al recién fundado Consejo Peruano de Consultores de NGC, Inc. El Consejo es, al día de hoy, una activa organización académica que elige un presidente cada dos años, teniendo actualmente como presidente a la limeña Olga Nesta.

No obstante, cuando la pandemia de Covid-19 detuvo nuestras actividades regulares, el Consejo decidió establecer un Comité de Escuela Virtual, que solicitó a Mila Coquis que lo dirigiera. Los miembros locales enfrentaron el desafío, y pronto aprendieron con entusiasmo a utilizar las herramientas de enseñanza digitales disponibles que, con la ayuda del Comité Técnico de COMAAI, el Consejo logró transformar la pandemia en un “viaje o momento para el aprendizaje virtual”.

Actualmente el Consejo y el Comité de Escuela Virtual continúan ofreciendo y patrocinando Escuelas y Actualizaciones virtuales o híbridas. Ahora estos eventos también incluyen a miembros de las tres Regiones Internacionales Afiliadas. Todo este éxito superó las expectativas de crecimiento del Consejo, habiendo ofrecido desde 2020, diez Escuelas Virtuales y ocho eventos de Actualización, que han proporcionado al Perú 97 Consultores (33 GS, 32 LDS y 32 ES).

El viaje hacia la sabiduría ha servido adicionalmente para promover el trabajo en equipo y el compañerismo entre los Garden Clubs locales en Lima, en otras partes del país y, sobre todo, ha fomentado un extraordinario compañerismo entre los miembros de las tres Regiones Afiliadas al NGC, Inc. que participan regularmente de los eventos académicos para su acreditación.

Asimismo, es imprescindible agradecer todo el apoyo que NGC, Inc. y COMAAI nos han brindado, porque el camino continúa ofreciendo a los Afiliados Internacionales una ventana virtual donde podemos encontrarnos, aprender, compartir metas personales y sentir un especial orgullo, porque pertenecemos ¡a un equipo que forma parte de la organización de jardinería más grande del mundo!

Forward Image • Natrot

DÍA DE MUERTOS: Path of Light Pilar Medellín de Miñarro



A Must: Cut Papers, Candles & Skulls • Pilar de Miñarro

Traditions within the native communities are identified; they remain, are transmitted, and travel. They repeat themselves and change, just as customs and ways of life change. They evolve in our generations, and only through them are they recreated to withstand time and remain.

Mexico has a wide variety of traditions and festivities, always full of color, history, and culture. The Day of the Dead is undoubtedly one of them. Today I will emphasize the importance of a flower of Latin American origin, *Tagetes* (Marigold), called *Cempohualxochitl*, in the native Nahuatl language, and the meaning it takes on during this festivity. Nature is always in our lives, bringing awareness to its powerful presence.

During the Day of the Dead celebration (November 1 and 2 and in pre-Hispanic cultures over 3000 years ago during autumn), people chose this species for its origin, bloom time, brilliance, and color to show and brighten the path to each altar. Even today it is the most important emblem, according to the symbols of the syncretism of our religious and diverse beliefs. *Tagetes* make it possible for our loved ones who are no longer with us to find their way home where those who remember them wait for them. With great joy, hope, nostalgia, and love, the living creates a special yearly altar to show the dead that they are not forgotten.

UNESCO declared this festivity as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Today it is one of the most representative traditions in Mexican culture. Day of the Dead attracts worldwide travelers who want to know and live this significant experience.

As a country, we live it not to lose the essence of all those dear ones who lived before us. Those who sowed, plowed, and forged our destinies with their presence and example leave us their history with a path of light. This generosity we return to them every year, showing them that same path with bright flowers to keep their eternal presence with joy. "The only antidote for death is memory, so don't forget them, celebrate them, help them live forever."

Pilar Medellín de Miñarro, is a TNG international feature writer and NGC Instructor. She lives in Mexico. **Click to view more images of [Day of The Dead: Path of Light](#).**

Las tradiciones de los pueblos los identifican, permanecen, se transmiten y viajan. Se repiten y cambian, así como cambian también costumbres y formas de vida, evolucionan en nuestras generaciones y solo contadas a través de ellas se recrean y permanecen en el tiempo.

México tiene una gran variedad de tradiciones y festividades, siempre llenas de color, historia y cultura. Sin duda el Día de Muertos es una de ellas. Hoy quiero hacer énfasis en la importancia de unas flores de origen latinoamericano, *Tagetes* llamadas *Cempohualxochitl*, en idioma Náhuatl, y su importante significado en esta fiesta. La naturaleza esta siempre en nuestras vidas señalando su poderosa presencia.

En la celebración de Día de Muertos, los días 1 y 2 de noviembre, y en las culturas prehispánicas hace más de 3000 años durante el otoño, fue elegida esta especie por su origen, su época de floración, su brillantez y color para marcar e iluminar el camino a cada altar. Aún hoy es el emblema más importante, según los símbolos del sincretismo de nuestra religión y creencias diversas, que hace posible que todos los seres queridos que ya no están con nosotros, encuentren cada año el camino a casa donde quienes los recuerdan y esperan con gran júbilo, esperanza, nostalgia y amor diseñan un altar especial para mostrarles que no los olvidan.

La UNESCO declaró esta festividad como Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de la Humanidad. Hoy en día es una tradición muy representativa de la cultura mexicana, además de convertirse en un referente para viajeros de todo el mundo que quieren conocer y vivir esta significativa experiencia.

Y nosotros como país la vivimos, para no perder la esencia de todos aquellos seres que vivieron antes que nosotros. Aquellos que sembraron, trabajaron, forjaron nuestros destinos con su presencia, su ejemplo y nos dejaron su historia marcando un camino de luz, que les devolvemos cada año marcando ese mismo camino con brillantes flores para sentir siempre con júbilo su presencia. "El único antidoto para la muerte, es la memoria, por eso no los olvides, celébralos, ayúdalos a vivir eternamente."

Pilar Medellín de Miñarro, es escritora internacional de artículos especiales para TNG e Instructora NGC. Ella vive en México. **Haga clic para ver más imágenes [de Día De Muertos: El camino de la luz](#).**

Planning the Home Landscape, Part 2

Delight or Disaster

Bruce Crawford



Front Door • Bruce Crawford

As we were last reviewing, providing spaces or outdoor rooms of the proper size and location is vital to the success of the home landscape. Looking further, we can divide these rooms into three types:

- Public Area – typically the front yard, what the public sees.
- Private Area – normally the backyard, what the homeowner sees.
- Service Area – typically hidden, what no one sees!

The Public Area or front yard is usually open to the road for most homes. It should say "welcome" to the owners and guests. Simply because this is a public area does not mean that it is one large space. On the contrary, one can divide it into several smaller spaces, some of which can be hidden from the street and unveiled via views through windows or traveling along the walkway. In many towns, the public space must legally be neat and organized. The lawn is cut, the plants properly tended, and often, there is no vegetable patch!

The focal point for the front yard is the front door; the biggest challenge is detracting the eye from the garage doors or other distractive elements. Detraction happens through incorporating the concept of focalization from the Principles of Design. In other words, develop the design such that the front door is highlighted by plants, enhanced architecture, or paint colors, as seen in the two accompanying images. As an aside, the plants should not grow taller than the window sills; otherwise, they appear to "eat" the house! When developing

the spatial diagram, ensure the sight lines to the front door are laid out at 45°-degree angles from the road. This arrangement allows people to see the front door clearly while keeping their eyes on the road as they approach it! Highlight the driveway entrance if the house is set back from the road.

As you develop the entrance to the front door spatially, allow it to be open and gracious. How often do we see the front walk reduced to a narrow passage that only allows visitors to march single file to the front door? The challenge is transitioning from a "scale" appropriate for inside the home to that of outside. For example, a four-foot-wide walkway may sound adequate, but five or six feet provides a far more comfortable entry experience. When we think in terms of interior scale, five or six feet is the size of a couch, seemingly far too large for a walkway! The walkway can lead the visitor directly to the front door, like a straight walk from the curb, or take the visitor through a series of smaller yet delightful arrival spaces. The walk configuration depends on how much public space we can dedicate to the walkway experience. The guest should not see unflattering views of neighboring houses or other vistas on the way to the house. In such cases, make sure those sight lines terminate on your property through some form of screening.

Thinking spatially and focusing on sight lines also helps to improve the planting design. All too often, people will subconsciously highlight a window rather than the front door

(Continued on page 20)



Deck Before • Bruce Crawford



Deck After • Bruce Crawford

by locating two plants on either side of a window. Essentially, we add ears to the window by transferring what we see daily in the mirror into our designs. Thinking spatially prevents us from being distracted by such details and allows us to focus on and evaluate the overall design. In addition, many homes have an attractive brick or stone façade that extends to the ground. There is certainly no reason to hide these beautiful materials, as seen in the home and path image below.

We usually hide the Service Area from view. The dog run, compost pile, solar clothes dryer, or garbage cans may be essential to residential life, but they should not be focal points. Vegetable gardens can be Service Areas if you are a sloppy gardener or a featured garden space if kept neat with an attractive design. Service areas can be along the side of a house or a small space carved out of the front or back yard hidden from view.



Wide Walkway • Bruce Crawford

The Private Area belongs to the family. It has the highest outdoor living potential and simply relaxing after a long day or week of work. Depending upon the family, divide it into Active Zones, including lawn sports, swimming pool, tot lot, or vegetable garden. Include Passive Zones where a person could simply relax or dine outdoors. One of the areas to always consider is the outdoor patio or deck, as it is surprising how many homes omit the outdoor dining room!

Dining areas should be a minimum of 14 feet in diameter to comfortably accommodate a five-foot round table, chairs, and room to circulate. Consider locating the dining space in areas other than immediately outside the kitchen/playroom doors since the view from inside would be of empty chairs and tables for much of the year. Instead, locate the dining area to one side of the door sight axis so the garden or a distant view is the year-round focus. In the "before" image of the deck, although the corner is perfect for a table and is not part of the view from the door, it still lacks a defining space. Simply bumping out the deck by two feet provides the dining area with its own space, as seen in the "after" image!

Although it may initially appear abstract and a waste of time, beginning the design process by thinking in terms of spaces and sight lines will craft a far better garden. Furthermore, considering the areas as public, private, or service helps to articulate how to use them. This concept will become more

apparent as we develop those spaces in part three of these articles, coming in the winter issue of *TNG*.

Bruce Crawford, of New Jersey, is the Manager of Horticulture, Morris County Parks Commission, Morris Township, NJ. He received an NGC Award of Excellence in 2021. [Printable Article](#)





Flores Island/La Isla de Flores

Blanca Niño and Juan Carlos Perez

The Island of Flores is in Lake Petén Itzá, in the Department of El Petén, Guatemala. El Petén is located in the country's northern region and reaches up to 2,000 feet above sea level. The City of Flores and Santa Elena de la Cruz form the departmental capital. It is in Santa Elena, where the Mundo Maya International Airport is located. This airport receives a continuous flow of tourism because it is the gateway to the heart of the Mayan World: Tikal, Yaxhá, Topoxté, Tayasal, El Perú, Piedras Negras, Nakum, Naranjo, and many other archaeological sites encircled by the humid tropical forest of El Petén.

One of the most fantastic attractions of the Island of Flores is the color of its architecture, both Colonial and Vernacular. They are integrated through their shapes and vibrant colors. Natural light has a most attractive, almost magical, effect on these buildings that change shades with sunrise and sunset. Both tourists and locals enjoy this colorful landscape in cafes and restaurants that offer them another rhythm of life and peacefulness due to the tropical environment and the tranquility of the lake.

In ancient times, the island was called "Noj Petén," which means great island. The Spanish invaded this island in 1697, making it the last Mayan stronghold to fall during the Spanish Conquest. It is, without a doubt, a captivating tourist destination to delve into the charm of the Mayan World.

On its travel news site, *Street Trotter* announced that the Isla de Flores, located in the department of Petén, Guatemala, is one of the 25 most picturesque towns in the world.

Blanca Niño Norton, of Guatemala, is our *The National Gardener* International Affiliates Conservation writer. Juan Carlos Perez is an archaeologist in Carimos, Guatemala. **Click here to see more images of [Flores Island](#).**

La Isla de Flores está ubicada en el Lago Petén Itzá, en el Departamento de El Petén, Guatemala. El Petén se encuentra localizado en la región norte del país y alcanza hasta los 600 metros sobre el nivel del mar. La Ciudad de Flores, junto con Santa Elena de la Cruz forman la cabecera departamental. Es en Santa Elena, donde se encuentra el Aeropuerto Internacional Mundo Maya. Turismo constante llega a este aeropuerto por ser la entrada al corazón del Mundo Maya: Tikal, Yaxhá, Topoxté, Tayasal, El Perú, Piedras Negras, Nakum, Naranjo y tantos otros sitios arqueológicos abrazados por el bosque tropical húmedo de El Petén.

De la Isla de Flores podemos decir que uno de sus mayores atractivos es el colorido de su arquitectura, tanto la arquitectura Colonial como la Vernácula que se integran por medio de formas y del color. La luz natural tiene un efecto atrayente, casi mágico, que cambia sus tonalidades con los amaneceres y atardeceres. Tanto los turistas como los habitantes locales disfrutan de este paisaje de colores en cafés y restaurantes que les provocan otro ritmo de vida y paz gracias al entorno tropical y la tranquilidad del lago.

En la antigüedad la isla fue llamada "Noj Petén" que significa gran isla. Esa isla fue invadida por los españoles en 1697, siendo el último bastión Maya en caer durante la Conquista Española. Es, sin duda, un destino turístico cautivador para adentrarnos en el encanto del Mundo Maya.

Street Trotter, en su sitio de noticias de viajes, dio a conocer que la Isla de Flores, ubicada en el departamento de Petén, Guatemala es uno de los 25 pueblos más pintorescos del mundo.

Blanca Niño Norton, de Guatemala, es nuestra escritora de *The National Gardener* International Affiliates (COMAAI) sobre temas de medio ambiente. Carlos Pérez es arqueólogo en Carimos, Guatemala. **Haz click aquí para ver más imágenes de [La Isla de Flores](#).**

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CEMPASÚCHIL (MARIGOLD)

Ana Calegari

Tagetes • Aliya Halfina

This Cempasúchil (Marigold) flower is an icon of Mexico, especially where the indigenous communities settled. It is considered a symbol of life and death.

Due to its intense orange-yellow color and strong aroma, it is the most representative element of the offerings made on the Day of the Dead. It is a flower native to Mexico, whose name in Nahuatl means several flowers or 20 flowers. They officiate as the connection between this world and the afterlife because of their color and aroma. The color illuminates the path, and the scent guides the souls toward the altars where relatives place food and drink offerings.

From the botanical perspective, they are flowers of the genus *Tagetes*, with 55 species distributed from the Southeast of the United States to South America. There are thirty species native to Mexico.

The most widely used and cultivated species today is *Tagete erecta*, an herbaceous plant measuring anywhere from 4 to 50 inches in height with erect, slightly branched stems, glabrous, dark green leaves, opposite at the bottom and alternate at the top with glands from which their characteristic aroma emanates. The leaves are pinnately compound, 1 to 8 inches long, with pointed apices and toothed margins. They present terminal inflorescences, generally single, two to five inches in diameter, typical of the Asteraceae family. Their color ranges from yellow-orange to red and purple. The seeds are achenes containing one single, 1/3 inch long, thin black seed. These seeds germinate in a week when between 64.5°F and 71.5°F. The flowers appear after three months and continue to bloom until late autumn. They can be sown in spring in soil or pots, adapting to all soil

types, with direct full (or at least six hours) of sun. Well-drained soil is best because in summer it requires abundant watering without flooding. They are also disease-resistant plants. Dwarf varieties are more suitable for pots.

Cempasúchils were introduced to Spain in the 16th century and from there to Asia, Africa, and the rest of Europe. They have adapted to so many places that most people are unaware they originated in America. In India, people use them in their offerings to the gods. Other countries call *Tagetes* Chinese Carnation, Moro Carnation, Copetes, Indian Carnation, and in English, they are called marigold.

Aside from their traditional use, *Tagetes* are important for being a medicinal plant. People use it for digestive disorders, such as diarrhea and vomiting, as well as anti-rheumatic, anti-parasitic, and respiratory problems, such as cough and asthma, plus eye problems. They are also used in the food industry as dyes, in pharmaceuticals, and cosmetology.

Another important use is its property as a trap plant. For this purpose, *Tagetes* are placed in organic gardens, as their roots exude a compound that repels harmful nematodes, ants, and other unwanted insects. In addition, its flowers are attractive to pollinators.

We can say that the Cempasúchil, aka marigold, aka *Tagetes*, is a fascinating plant. Like few others, it combines ancestral wisdom, tradition, and strong symbology to various uses in different areas.

Dr. Ana Calegari is an international writer/editor of feature articles for *TNG*. Ana lives in Uruguay. [Click to view more on Cempasúchil \(Marigold\).](#)



FLOR DEL CEMPASÚCHIL

Ana Calegari

Tagetes • Hartona Subagio

Flor del Cempasúchil es un ícono de México, sobre todo donde se asientan las comunidades originarias, es considerada como un símbolo de vida y muerte.

Por su color amarillo naranja intenso y su fuerte aroma es el elemento más representativo de las ofrendas que se realizan en el Día de los Muertos. Es una flor nativa de México, cuyo nombre en Náhuatl significa varias flores o 20 flores. Ofician por su color y aroma como la conexión entre este mundo y el más allá. El color ilumina el camino y el aroma guía a las almas hacia los altares que colocan sus familiares con ofrendas de alimentos y bebidas.

Desde el punto de vista botánico, son flores del Género *Tagetes*, con 55 especies que se distribuyen desde el Sureste de Estados Unidos hasta Sudamérica, de éstas 30 son nativas de México.

La especie más utilizada y hoy cultivada es *Tagete erecta*, una herbácea de 10 a 120 cms de altura con tallos erectos poco ramificados, glabros, hojas de color verde oscuro, opuestas en la parte inferior y alternas en la superior con glándulas de las cuales emana su olor característico. Las hojas son pinnadas compuestas de 3 a 20 cms de largo, con ápices acuminados y márgenes dentados. Presentan inflorescencias terminales, generalmente únicas de 2 a 12 cm de diámetro, típico de la familia de las Asteraceae. La coloración de estas flores van del amarillo anaranjado al rojo y morado. Las semillas son achenios que contienen 1 sola semilla delgada y larga de 1 cm de color negro. Estas semillas germinan fácilmente en 1 semana entre los 18 y 22 grados C. A los 3 meses ya pueden aparecer las flores que siguen dando hasta entrado el otoño. Se siembran en primavera en suelo o macetas, adaptándose a

todo tipo de suelo, con sol directo o al menos 6 horas de sol. Suelos bien drenados. En verano requieren riego abundante sin encharcar. Las variedades enanas son más adecuadas para macetas. Son plantas resistentes a las enfermedades. Fueron introducidas en España en el siglo XVI y de allí a Asia, África y el resto de Europa, en muchos lugares naturalizada por lo que muchos ignoran que es originaria de América. En la India también la utilizan en ofrendas a los dioses. En otros países se le llama Clavel Chino, Clavel Moro, Copetes, Clavel de la India y en inglés Marigold.

Los *Tagetes* tienen importancia no solo por su uso tradicional, sino por ser una planta medicinal que se suele usar para trastornos digestivos como diarreas, vómitos, antirreumático, antiparasitario, para problemas respiratorios como tos y asma y también problemas oculares. Se usan en la industria alimentaria como colorantes, en la farmacéutica y la cosmetología.

Otro uso, no menos importante, es por sus propiedades de planta trampa. Los *Tagetes* se colocan en las huertas orgánicas ya que sus raíces exudan un compuesto que repele los nemátodos dañinos, así como a las hormigas y otros insectos no deseados. Además, sus flores son atractivas para los polinizadores.

Podemos decir que el Cempasúchil es una planta muy interesante ya que como pocas conjuga sabiduría ancestral, tradición, una fuerte simbología y variados usos en diferentes áreas.

La Dra. Ana Calegari es escritora/editora internacional de artículos destacados para *TNG*. Ana vive en Uruguay. [Haga clic para ver información adicional sobre Flor del Cempasúchil.](#)

Invite Butterflies to Your Garden

Karen Bowen

Watching butterflies flitting from flower to flower in a garden is always a joy. Though their lives are short, butterflies play an essential role in our ecosystem. Like honeybees, their search for nectar pollinates plants. About one-third of our food supply comes from plants which require pollination. More than 100 species of insects are pollinators.

With over 20,000 species of butterflies worldwide and 725 species in North America, there are many opportunities to watch these beautiful insects busily pollinate flowers while searching for nectar.

Pollinating insects are at risk because of pesticide use and loss of habitat. Dedicate a portion of your backyard to a butterfly garden to increase butterfly habitat. Grow various nectar-producing plants to feed adult butterflies and host plants to feed their caterpillars.

Native plants that attract butterflies in your region are recommended to grow in your butterfly garden. Check with a local native plant society for a list of these plants. Annuals to plant for nectar include sweet alyssum, sunflowers, marigolds, and zinnias. Perennials include verbena, lantana, Queen Anne's Lace, nasturtium, milkweed, Joe Pye weed, Shasta daisy, yarrow, and coneflower. Shrubs include butterfly bush, orange and yellow bells, and honeysuckle. Even flowering herbs attract butterflies. Plant oregano, basil, mint, dill, fennel, and lavender, and allow them to bloom. If you have space, throw wildflower seeds in one garden area. Once your butterfly garden has begun flowering, sit back and watch all the butterflies come to feast.

Many butterflies are attracted to soft, overripe fruit. If you place a piece of over-ripe pear, banana, or melon on a plate or in a suet feeder, a myriad of hungry butterflies will land and feed. Fill a saucer with gravel or sand, add water, and place it in your butterfly garden for butterflies to land and drink water. They also like a mud puddle to sip salts and other necessary minerals. Add a large, flat rock in your garden for butterflies to bask in the sun, and your butterfly garden is

ready for visitors. If you live in an apartment, you can plant a butterfly garden in a large container on your patio. Fill it with your flowering plants, such as salvia, verbena, and marigolds.

While moths are active at night, butterflies spend their days on the move. Their average life span is about one month, although a few butterflies, such as the monarch, live up to nine months and migrate from Mexico in winter to our northern states in summer. During winter, most butterflies spend their time as pupa or caterpillars. A few species, such as tortoiseshells and monarchs, spend their winters as adults and hibernate in trees or rock crevices.



Yellow Swallowtail on Tagetes • Karen Bowen

Both moths and butterflies belong to the insect order Lepidoptera. Lepidoptera is the only group of insects with scales covering their wings. "Lepido" is Greek for "scale," and "ptera" means "wings."

Check the antennae to determine if you are looking at a butterfly or moth. Butterflies have thin antennae with tiny balls at their tips, while moths have thick, feathery antennae. Butterflies have slender, smooth bodies, while moths have larger bodies covered with hair-like scales. Butterflies rest with their wings folded upright, while moths rest with their wings flat against their bodies.

A butterfly garden will add splashes of color to your yard and provide needed food for local butterflies that play an essential role in our food chain.

Host Plants for Butterfly Caterpillars

- Giant Swallowtail: citrus blooms, dill, fennel, parsley, prickly ash
- Monarch: milkweed
- Painted Lady: hollyhock, daisy, thistle, globe mallow
- Viceroy: apple, willow, poplar, cottonwood
- Common Sulphur: senna, legumes, clover
- Mourning Cloak: willow, elm, aspen, paper birch, cottonwood, hackberry

Karen Bowen is a master gardener and member of Arizona Moody Garden Club.



2023-2024 YOUTH POETRY CONTEST GUIDELINES

"I Spy With My Little Eye, Something Green Outside Celebrating Our Green World"



Eligibility

- Special Education: Kindergarten through Ninth Grade.
- English as a second language: Kindergarten through Ninth Grade.
- General Education: Kindergarten through Ninth Grade.

Date of Submission

- Club entries must be sent to YOUR State's Youth Chairperson; observe your State Deadline. State Winners must be sent to the Region Chairperson by **February 1, 2024**. Regional Winners must be sent to the National Chairperson by **March 1, 2024**.

Guidelines

- Poems should be no more than 24 lines (including title) with a max of 42 letters/spaces per line to fit on a single page of the booklet.
- Include the name, address, age, grade, and school of the participant on the back of the entry.
- Sponsoring garden club and state garden club name must also be identified.
- Garden club contact person is the mailing address for any winning entries.
- Sponsoring garden club may be that of a parent or grandparent.
- All entries become the property of National Garden Clubs, Inc.
- Poems do not have to rhyme. They may be traditional verse, acrostics, blank verse, cinquains, diamond poems, limerick, or haiku.
- The theme should not be used as the title to any poetry. When judging, the title is worth 10 points.
- When choosing poem title, please be creative and incorporate the theme: "I Spy With My Little Eye, Something Green Outside".
- All Regional winning entries must be typed, titled, and sent to National Chairperson in word format via email, and the original hard copy mailed for judging.

Contact Information: Poetry Contest Chair, [James Pavelka](#) or [NGC Poetry Contest](#) page.

High School Distinguished Service Award

Lynne Ehnert

This award is given to a high school individual who has completed a service project. Although the individual does not have to be a garden club member, the individual must be sponsored by an NGC garden club and support NGC's mission and goals. The projects submitted in the past have served members, individuals, or a community. Service Projects can be for a variety of reasons; they need to support NGC's mission and goals. Scouts, church members, and grandchildren have been some of the winners in the past. Look for someone you know doing good around you!

Send the application to your State Awards Chairman by the requested due date. Only awards submitted through State Chairmen will be accepted. You can find application information on the [NGC Awards](#) page; look for the YW 7 High School Distinguished Service Award under the Youth Awards Section for the application details. All applications must be submitted electronically unless otherwise noted in the award description.

Lynne Ehnert, of Wisconsin, is the NGC High School Distinguished Service Award Chair and the Central Region Director.



Pond Clean-up • Hero Images



Let's COOK!

Perfect Pickled Peppers

Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich

The pepper harvest is at its peak in our gardens, and I hope you have planted some this year. Peppers grow easily for most of us, with few diseases, and only cutworms in the early part of the season present a threat. Peppers grow well in containers, and their foliage and fruit look ornamental. They are also widely available in farm markets. Generally, I do not recommend using grocery store peppers if they have been waxed. Any peppers are good for pickling, though you may prefer ones with thicker walls, long, slender shapes, etc. They can be sweet or hot, depending on your taste. Do not use green peppers because they tend to turn an ugly color. Red, orange, and yellow show beautifully in a jar. No canning equipment is needed because you make a jar just for the refrigerator. You can use small canning jars or one large quart jar for this recipe. Slice the peppers into rings, cut lengthwise, or even pickle whole if small. If pickling whole, poke the peppers with a toothpick to aid in liquid absorption. Refrigerate after preparation, and they will last for at least a month. (Though they might not last long when you taste them.) Try a pepper sandwich on crusty Italian bread, the best summer eating!

4 cups of peppers, sliced into ¼" rings or lengthwise to fit the jar (Small ones can be left whole.)

1 ½ cups distilled white vinegar (I prefer cider vinegar.)

3 or 4 garlic cloves or 2 – 3 per jar

2 tablespoons kosher, sea, or pickling salt

2 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons coriander seeds

1 ½ cups water

Pack the peppers into a clean jar or jars. Bring vinegar and all the remaining ingredients to boil in a medium saucepan. Reduce heat to medium and simmer for five minutes. Pour hot brine over peppers and seal jar. Let cool, then refrigerate. Serve within one month. (These can be water bath canned for long-term storage, though you will lose some crispness.)

[Mary Ann Ferguson-Rich](#) is the NGC Food to Table Chair. She cooks and gardens in Ohio. [Click here for printable Pickled Pepper Recipe.](#)



Seed Saving • Svehlik

Seed Saving Secrets

Pat Neasbitt

Collecting seeds to grow plants and share with others is part of the enjoyment of being a gardener. You can save seeds to ensure you have the plants you want next year. The price of seeds, like everything else, has risen dramatically, and saving seeds can save you lots of money. Besides being frugal, it is fun to keep your seeds.

What to Save: Only save seeds from heirloom or open-pollinated varieties so they will be true to type when grown in your garden. If you try to keep seeds from hybrid varieties, you have no idea what the seedlings will produce. Flowers will probably be puny, faded blooms that are nothing like the plant you saved the seeds from, and vegetables may be inedible. Finding seeds from many older varieties of vegetables and flowers is difficult or impossible, so saving seeds will ensure you always have your favorites. Heirloom tomatoes are some of the best-tasting tomatoes, and that is why many people like to grow them. You will never eat a store-bought tomato again after growing and harvesting vine-ripe tomatoes that you have grown from seeds you saved and grew yourself.

Selecting and Cleaning Seeds: When choosing the plants for seed saving, pick the healthiest, most vigorous plants with the largest fruits or the prettiest flowers. Judging the correct time for harvest may require some watching to get fully ripened fruits, vegetables, or flowers. You may also have to outwit the birds and wildlife because they know when things are precisely ready to pick.

Most seeds just need to be spread on an absorbent material to dry for several days before storing. I usually borrow part of my husband's workbench in the garage because it is warm and dry. Then, I lay down a layer of newspaper to spread the seeds. It is easy to fold the newspaper into a funnel to put the seeds into their final storage container when ready. The smaller the seeds, the less time they take to dry thoroughly.

Cleaning seeds like tomatoes and cucumbers from their fleshy parts is easier if you let them ferment for 3 or 4 days.

Use a spoon to scoop out the seeds, put them in a glass container (do not use metal containers) and fill with enough water to cover them. A layer of fungus will form in a couple of days to digest most of the flesh left around the seeds. Stir a couple of times during the fermentation period to speed up the process, and at the end of the fermentation period, add warm water and stir. Continue stirring and adding water so the good seeds will settle to the bottom of the container while the pulp and hollow seeds will float and can be skimmed off. When the water is clear, collect the seeds through a tea strainer. Spread the wet seeds on paper towels or newspapers and allow them to dry before bagging.

Package seeds in plastic or paper envelopes when the seeds are clean. The key is ensuring the seeds are as dry as possible before storing them. Keeping a label with each seed lot throughout the cleaning process is a good idea, especially if you are working with several varieties of the same plant. Be sure to date each container.

Seed Storage: Most seeds can be held for up to two years under normal room temperature conditions, provided their moisture content was below 10 percent when stored. Seal them in airtight containers and keep them in a dark place, like a kitchen cabinet. A large-mouth fruit jar makes an excellent container for many small seed packets. If you wish to store the seeds for up to five years, store them in the refrigerator in a sealed container. To further extend the storage life, store seeds in the freezer in freezer bags or canning jars. Most will remain viable for ten years or longer. I have a seed-saving shelf in a freezer in the garage where I keep all my seeds in freezer bags (not storage bags) organized in plastic containers and labeled so I can find them easily.

Now is the perfect time of year to start harvesting and saving seeds for next year's vegetable or flower garden. It is fun and frugal. You will have exactly what you want when you get ready to plant.

Pat Neasbitt is a master gardener who often contributes to the [NGC Blog](#) where this article originally appeared.



Let's Help Feed America

Suzanne Bushnell and Sarah McReynolds

Despite this year's challenging growing conditions – everything from late spring frost to flooding rainfall to heat domes resulting in record-breaking heat waves – our members are persevering and still finding ways to grow vegetables. They are also donating what they can to help others! Through the third week of September, members from 18 different states from all eight regions have submitted 46 donation forms reporting their contributions towards the *PLANT AMERICA, Feed America* President's Project. Members have three different ways to report a donation: by the estimated value of all they are donating, the estimated weight of the contribution, or the estimated servings the food donation might cover.

Through the third week of September, more than seven tons of food have been donated = 14,797.5 pounds! Where donors have decided to estimate the value of their donation, the total stands at \$2,955. As you can see, this number does not include all that has been donated compared to the weight reported. NGC members register donations of 1,007 servings of food. Some groups that have benefited from our efforts include Meals on Wheels, veteran groups, schools, food banks, food pantries, and homeless shelters. Some of our donations were by members donating from their gardens. Another of our member clubs came up with a very clever idea. The Springfield Civic Garden Club of Illinois and the University of Illinois Master Gardeners worked with the Illinois State Fair superintendent to collect leftover produce from the fair. In the past, this produce would have gone into dumpsters. This collected food included exhibits that were in refrigerated coolers. This year, the produce filled the back of three pick-up trucks!

To help get the word out, as your *PLANT AMERICA, Feed America* project chair, Suzanne worked with a club member to create a flyer to pass on to others. The handout includes an image of a heart filled with vegetables. We sent it to all State Presidents and the Region Directors. (Click here to download the [PLANT AMERICA, Feed America Flyer](#).) Click here to complete the online donation form [PLANT AMERICA, Feed America](#).

[Suzanne Bushnell](#) is the *PLANT AMERICA, Feed America* President's Project and NGC's Community Gardens Chairs. Suzanne gardens in Maine. Sarah McReynolds, of Texas, is the NGC Gardening School Chair. [Sarah McReynolds](#) is the NGC Gardening School Chair. We combined their articles on the same topic.

Feed America • Romariolen



We want you
Apply now

Officer Applications Open

Betty Cookendorfer

The 2023-2025 National Garden Clubs' Nominating Committee is accepting applications for consideration to serve in the following NGC positions: First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Third Vice-President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer. Access the Officer Candidate Resume and Official Endorsement Forms in the Board Members' section of the [NGC website](#). Please consult the [NGC By-Laws Article VIII, Officers-Eligibility](#) for guidelines.

[Betty Cookendorfer](#), of Ohio, is the 2023-2025 NGC Nominating Committee Chair. Contact Betty for more information.



Celebrate National Garden Week: Beauty Spots

Barbara Downing

Since 2011 the Civic Improvements Committee of the Cape Fear Garden Club of Wilmington, NC, has celebrated National Garden Week, during the first week of June, by selecting three locations to represent examples of "outstanding street front landscaping." Club members nominate locations in New Hanover County to represent three categories: Neighborhood Entrance, Residential, and Business. Each year, the winners receive a "Beauty Spot" sign to display for one calendar year. These winners exemplify the beautification of public and private spaces in New Hanover County.

The 2023 Beauty Spot Award for a residential location belongs to June and Chuck Sweeney. Both June and Chuck work in their garden and enjoy the peaceful setting they have created. There are many flowering plants, shrubs, and trees during each season. Their inviting front porch gives them a perfect view of their lovely landscape. June has been a member of the Cape Fear Garden Club since 2006.

The 2023 Beauty Spot Award for a Neighborhood Entrance belongs to Trinity Landing, a senior living development. The entire property has beautiful mature trees maintained during the building process. Their front entrance is very inviting with new plantings of shrubs, trees, and flowers. Golf carts take you through this large property that borders the Intracoastal Waterway. You can admire the many flowering plants and shrubs along the various routes.

The 2023 Beauty Spot Award for a Business belongs to Kipos Hellenic Cuisine. Since Kipos means "garden" in Greek, this business has created a beautiful outdoor space with many features, including a pergola, stonework throughout, and water features. There are inviting places to sit and eat, plus swings for children to use. The many colorful flowers, plants, and shrubs are visually stunning. Also, the mature trees provide a beautiful canopy over the garden area.

Barbara Downing is a long-time member of the Cape Fear Garden Club and resides in North Carolina.



Clockwise: Four Freedoms Monument, President Stephanie and Billy, Madison GC Members Planting the Memorial Garden
• Lisa Packard



Can Y'all Help?

Lisa Packard

When *The Florida Gardener* heard about this story from Madison, FL, we first thought about George Bailey. As the story unfolded, we saw a reimagining of the Christmas classic *It's a Wonderful Life*. The only thing missing was snow and the old mean banker, Mr. Potter, though it does have angels. In the heart of downtown Madison is a city block called Four Freedoms Park with a monument to veterans and a classic gazebo that makes you think of flag bunting, the town band playing, and Ann-Margret about to meet Conrad Birdie. It is exactly the kind of place where the mayor would have awarded Elvis the keys to the city if he had ever visited. This is a story that Frank Capra would have turned into a movie.

This story starts with a regular guy, new in town, named Billy Margraves, owner of Muddy Dog Rock & Crystals. He looked at the Four Freedoms Park with perhaps fresher eyes and saw the potential lost to weeds and neglect. Billy went to a meeting of the Madison Garden Club to ask if they could do something about the park. "Can y'all help?" he said. The club, led by President Stephanie Ruff, loved the idea, so they approached the town government and offered to fix the park's garden beds. The town said, "Sure, but we cannot give you any money or assistance."

Like any good group, they created a committee of mostly club members, Billy, and a few residents. As the club went to work pulling weeds in the park, one by one, people showed up to help or stop and say thank you. Businesses began to donate supplies like straw, soil, and mulch or cash.

While the club was weeding and planting, Billy went to the city manager to ask about the condition of the sprinkler system in the park and learned it had not worked for ten years, and the town did not have the money to fix it. They decided to look at it and walked to the park. When the city manager saw the progress of the gardeners, he returned to city hall deciding that the city should fix the sprinkler system.

The Four Freedoms monument in the park, built in 1944 in Madison, was commissioned by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and commemorates the four fundamental freedoms: *freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear*. He spoke of these in his January 1941 State of the Union address. On the monument, an angel represents each freedom. The monument was designed by Walter Russell, given by the Women's National Institute, and dedicated in memory of the veterans of World War II, specifically Captain Colin P. Kelly. A former resident, he is recognized as the first U.S. hero of the War who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery and valor in combat.

Currently the club has finished the beds and is maintaining them while running a fundraising campaign of selling legacy bricks in the park for \$100 each with the money earmarked for long-term maintenance. Before this considerable effort the club was not very active, but the experience of tackling this massive project has renewed energy for the club and the town. Even Billy cannot believe the response he got, and did not expect, to his one question - *can y'all help?*

Lisa Packard serves as editor of FFGC's magazine *The Florida Gardener*. She is a member of the Melbourne Garden Club in Florida which is about to celebrate its 100th anniversary.



Mushroom Hunting • Intst

Team Up with
Youth Groups
Emily Shirey

There are many organized groups with whom a garden club, garden club member, or any experienced gardener can share their knowledge and expertise, for example: Cub Scouts/Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, or Junior Master Gardeners. Each group involves working with children ranging in age from kindergarteners to college students. Each group has activities: badge programs or program booklets that involve outdoor activities, including nature, birds, gardening, flowers, and trees, to mention a few. Your club might assist the children with earning those badges and completing the project books. Your expertise in an area might be of value to the group leader and the children. Plus, working with children and seeing the joy in their eyes as they learn/experience new things is always rewarding.

Click to find a [Cub Scout or Boy Scout](#) council in your state. Look for “Contact your local council and get involved today.” Enter your zip code to find nearby council contact information. Tell them that you belong to a garden club and wish to help local groups work on badges related to gardening, nature, birds, trees, etc. They can get you in touch with a troop leader who would appreciate your expertise.

The same goes for the [Girl Scouts](#) and [4-H programs](#). The site will direct you to the council or state headquarters’ contact information. Please introduce yourself and explain that you are willing to assist the children with earning badges or completing their project books. Both groups have many outdoor and gardening activities where your expertise would be valuable.

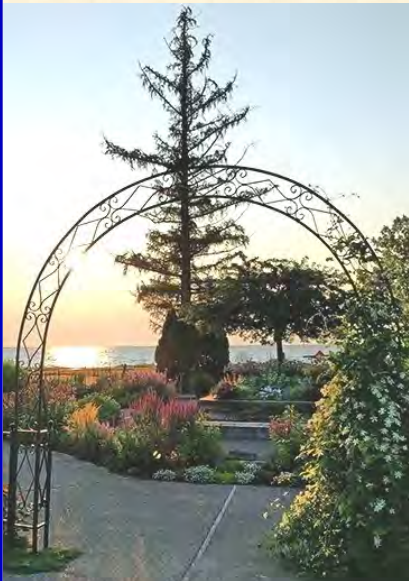
The Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program is an international youth gardening program of the university cooperative extension network. JMG engages children in novel, hands-on group and individual learning experiences that stimulate a love of gardening, develop an appreciation for the environment, and cultivate the mind. To find the closest group to you, go to [Junior Master Gardeners](#). The JMG program also offers many already-made curriculum programs that your club could use with a youth garden club. I have enjoyed sharing the “Learn, Grow, Eat, Go” curriculum with my local elementary after-school program. Why reinvent the wheel when someone else has a curriculum guide already tested and proven?

Any of these groups would jump at the offer of assistance with their groups. Find a group that fits you and the time you have available. You will get as much out of the involvement with the children as they get from your knowledge, keeping you young at heart.

Emily Shirey is the NGC Youth Organizations Chair. She lives in West Virginia where she is an elementary school librarian.

ESPOMA ORGANIC AND NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS
WANT TO HELP YOUR CLUB

Plant America!



★
Four Seasons
Garden Club



★
Lake & Hills
Garden Club



★
Pinelands
Garden Club



★
A&M
Garden Club

The **Espoma Grant Committee** received 66 grant applications from NGC clubs from October 1, 2022 - May 31, 2023. The following clubs are the 2023 Espoma Grant recipients and received \$250 of Espoma products. Congratulations to each of these garden clubs for their dedication to NGC's PLANT AMERICA initiative!

- ★ A&M Garden Club - College Station, TX
- ★ Boone Country Garden Club - Defiance, MO
- ★ Edelweiss Garden Club - Gaylord, MI
- ★ Four Seasons Garden Club - Kenosha, WI
- ★ Gardeners by the Sea Garden Club - Ocean View, DE
- ★ Gray Garden Club - Gordon, GA
- ★ Great Meadows Garden Club - Chalk Hill, PA
- ★ Greens Farms Garden Club - Greens Farms, CT
- ★ Harpeth Garden Club - Brentwood, TN
- ★ Lafayette Garden Club - Lafayette, LA
- ★ Lake and Hills Garden Club - Salem, SC
- ★ Marine Hills Garden Club - Des Moines, WA
- ★ Murrysville Garden Club - Murrysville, PA
- ★ Point Pleasant Garden Club - Point Pleasant, NJ
- ★ PS 24 PTA Garden Club - Brooklyn, NY (Youth Club)
- ★ Rock Spring Garden Club - Arlington, VA
- ★ The Pinelands Garden Club - Medford, NJ
- ★ Waukegan Garden Club - Waukegan, IL
- ★ Wellington Garden Club - West Palm Beach, FL
- ★ West Newbury Garden Club - West Newbury, MA
- ★ Winona Garden Club - Winona, MS

Thank You, Espoma Organic, for being a generous sponsor of NGC Garden Clubs, Inc. and our PLANT AMERICA Program. Since 2017, Espoma has awarded grants to 118 NGC Clubs. This generosity resulted in Espoma donating \$29,500 in products to those clubs. Additionally, Espoma presented thousands of sample-size product bags at numerous NGC National, Regional, and State Conventions. They provided excellent workshop presenters and speakers when requested.

At the 2023 NGC Convention, Bonnie Satterthwaite, from Espoma, announced that all 2022-23 grant winners will be eligible to receive a "Best of the Best" \$500 CASH award from Espoma. To qualify for this "BOB" \$500 award, clubs must submit the required items to Debi Harrington by April 15, 2024. **No late submissions will be accepted.** We will announce the "Best of the Best" winner at the 2024 Convention in Denver, Colorado.

Beginning October 1, 2023, clubs may submit new Espoma Grant Applications. All applying clubs **MUST be NGC member clubs.** Espoma accepts applications through May 31, 2024. The 2023-24 winners are notified by July 15, 2024. Contact Debi Harrington with questions or for help with the application process.

[Debi Harrington](#) is the NGC Sponsors' Grants Chair. She lives in New Mexico. *(Images provided by respective clubs.)*



ORGANIC

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ESPOMA ORGANIC AND NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS
WANT TO HELP YOUR CLUB

Plant America!



Your local garden projects and programs provide inspiring opportunities that bring neighbors, cultures and generations together to share the experience and joy of gardening. As recognition of the valuable resource that your club contributes to your community, up to 20 local garden clubs across America will be awarded grants. Recipients will earn up to \$250 of Espoma Organic Plant Foods & Potting Soils. So be inspired America! Join our effort to Plant America Together. Register your garden club today! Sign up at: www.espoma.com/garden-clubs.



Visit us at www.espoma.com and join our gardening community.



NGC NEWS



KEEP INFORMED

To be the first to know about future NGC virtual events, [subscribe](#) to *The National Gardener* to join our mailing list. You can subscribe all the members of your club (with their permission) by sending an Excel spreadsheet with their first and last names and email addresses to [Emily Kiske](#) at NGC Headquarters.



[GARDENCLUB.ORG](#)

The NGC website contains a plethora of information for garden club members and others. Use the tabs on the homepage to find the topic of your choice, or use the handy search feature to explore many options. If you get lost, just click on the NGC logo, on the top left of every page, to return directly to the homepage.



CONGRATULATIONS

The Fargo Garden Society of North Dakota recently celebrated their 100th Anniversary. Congratulations and thanks for keeping Fargo blooming.



SAVE THE DATE

National Garden Clubs Annual Meeting, June 2 - 5, 2024 in Denver, Colorado.



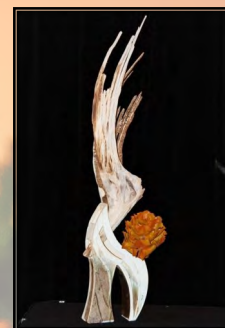
NGC HELPS

Are you concerned about the wildfires that ravished Hawaii or the hurricanes hitting the Coasts? Consider donating to the [NGC Natural Disaster Fund](#). State or local garden clubs may apply for grants up to \$5000 to restore, replant, or beautify a public area destroyed by a natural disaster. Visit the [Natural Disasters USA](#) page for details.



TNG SUMMER 2023 CORRECTION

This design in Pilar's *Abstract Design* presentation should have been credited to Penny Decker of Florida. - *Editor*





NGC Headquarters • Gerianne Holzman

Happening at HQ

Mary Warshauer

In St. Louis, adjacent to the Missouri Botanical Garden and directly across from Tower Grove Park on six acres of spacious, lush grounds, sits the classic mid-century modern building known as National Garden Clubs, Inc. Symbolizing the first garden club formed in Athens, the building is constructed of granite from Georgia and brick symbolizing the first twenty years of NGC's Headquarters (HQ) in New York City.

The Permanent Home and Endowment Trustees (PH&E) ensure that our Headquarters is properly maintained and are responsible for improvements of the grounds and buildings. We recently welcomed back Michelle Smith as Project Manager. We are

fortunate to have such dedicated staff who work well together for the greater good of NGC.

The Trustees are currently exploring the concept of incorporating a walking path around the perimeter of the grounds. This "Path of Success" could highlight our member State Garden Clubs and NGC. It will be open to the public. NGC Headquarters boasts a beautiful Butterfly Garden, the 9/11 Memorial, an Atrium, and the Presidential Tree Collection. This grove is the site of four trees selected to commemorate and preserve the legacy of old-growth trees from U.S. Presidential properties. Our HQ grounds are now available as an event venue! Headquarters staff hosted the first of what we anticipate will be many weddings in September. It was a glorious day.

NGC treasures our special place on 4401 Magnolia Ave, known to us as Headquarters. When you are in St. Louis, please take time to visit and enjoy the grounds.

Mary Warshauer, of New Jersey, is the PH&E Trustees Director.

**NGC
Headquarters**

Six Acres of Lush Gardens
to Host YOUR Event!

What to Expect:

- Intimate Settings
- Timeline Creation
- Venue Setup

Contact Us :
headquarters@gardenclub.org

Apply Today

Awards Season!

Diane Harbin

Garden club projects are vital parts of our communities. Our visible work secures the future of garden clubs. Let us remember to highlight that work by applying for awards in recognition of the significance of our work.

As you prepare your applications, follow your state and region guidelines and adhere to submission dates. Remember no individual, club, group of clubs, council, or district may directly apply to National Garden Clubs. All applications must come through your state awards chair and include the appropriate NGC Application Cover Sheet. All Application Cover Sheets are posted in fillable format on the NGC website in the [Forms Library](#).

[Diane Harbin](#), of Georgia, chairs NGC Awards.

Congratulations

Award of Excellence Recipients

National Garden Clubs, Inc. announces the 2023 winners of its highest honor, the Award of Excellence. Each year, this Award recognizes exceptional individuals, organizations or institutions that advance NGC's goals and purposes.

Donna Donnelly, 2021-2023 AOE Chair



Dan DuPre

Dan DuPre, nominated by the Garden Club of South Carolina, is the Executive Director of Camp Wildwood in Blacksburg, SC. Dan attended Camp Wildwood in 1989 and won a Garden Club of South Carolina scholarship. He was voted Boy Camper of the Week, eventually becoming a camp counselor and a Counselor of the Week. Dan encourages fun and learning through teaching conservation, habitat preservation, leadership, and environmental protection. He cultivates the whole camper, as he has done with over 6,000 students.



Mr. Bob's Garden Foundation for YMCA, Bob Markey, Founder

Mr. Bob's Garden Foundation, nominated by the Garden Club of New Jersey, was founded by Bob Markey in Rahway, NJ. Bob is a talented Master Gardener and certified Square Foot Garden Instructor. His lesson plans at the YMCA Square Foot Gardening Summer Camp include hands-on planting, educational videos, and garden-related activity books. Mr. Bob's Garden Foundation supports the YMCA's core values of youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. He encourages youth to develop a deeper relationship with nature and the food they grow.




Abbey Nilson

Abbey Nilson, nominated by the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania, is a Sustainability Instructor at Shaler High School in Pittsburgh, PA. She teaches sustainability to high school students in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh. She inspires students to examine the impact of their own water and energy use, transportation, and food choices. Abbey encourages her students to work with community leaders on environmentally-themed projects. They worked with the Allegheny Land Trust to preserve Girty's Woods - 155 acres of natural area to help mitigate flooding, raising over \$30,000.

Maine (State Garden Club with 1,000 – 2,999 members) The Garden Club Federation of Maine created *Show and Grow Open Gardens* with garden open houses and presentations across Maine. The sessions included floral and garden design plus unique plants and how to grow them.

Illinois (State Garden Club with 3,000 – 7,999 members) The Garden Clubs of Illinois created *PLANT AMERICA – Starting at Home with Food*. Seventeen clubs donated 8,600 pounds of home-grown fruits, vegetables and herbs.

Central Atlantic Region The members of the Central Atlantic Region began their *Online Seven States Program*, which created solidarity. It did not matter if you belonged to a small or large garden club, the online programs were open to all and were free. The program broke down barriers to feel connected to others in the Region.



Award of Excellence

It is time to start thinking about whom you will nominate for the **NGC Award of Excellence 2024** in your state or region! The Award categories are:

1. Award of Excellence for Non-Member (# SR-1)
 - For an Individual, Non-member, Organization, or Institution
2. Award of Excellence for State Garden Club (#SR-2)
 - a. Membership up to 999
 - b. Membership from 1,000-2,999
 - c. Membership from 3,000 – 7,999
 - d. Membership over 8,000
3. Award of Excellence for Region (#SR-3) Not applicable for 2024.

Instructions: Complete the application form, found in the Forms Library, along with your Book of Evidence. All Award of Excellence applications are limited to five single-sided pages plus this cover sheet for six total pages.

All applications are preferably submitted electronically. Send **all applications to [Gerianne Holzman](#) by January 1, 2024.**

Gerianne Holzman of Wisconsin is NGC's 3rd Vice President and Award of Excellence Chair. Contact Gerianne with any questions regarding award submission.

Youth Contests, Join the Fun

Bob Markey

Contests are open to all NGC Youth Garden Clubs and schools, scout troops, after-school and youth programs, and similar groups. For more details, see our NGC's [Youth & Scholarship](#) and [Contest & Activities](#) pages. (See related articles, in this issue of *TNG*, highlighting the poetry, high school distinguished service, and Smokey Bear Poster contests.) Remember to **send club entries to your state youth chair** and observe your state deadline.

2023 Youth Sculpture Contest Theme - "Encouraging Youth to Keep Our Planet Green"

- ◆ Eligibility: Grades 4 through 8
- ◆ This contest encourages students to keep our planet green and to get involved with saving the environment. Eligible students create a sculpture of recyclable, reused, and reduced materials.
- ◆ See the [Sculpture Contest](#) page for more details and to see the 2022 winners.
- ◆ Contact [Linda Jean Brown](#), Youth Sculpture Contest Chair, for more information.

Bob Markey, of New Jersey, is the NGC's Youth Coordinator and the Director of Mr. Bob's Foundation. The foundation received NGC's highest honor, the 2023 Award of Excellence, for its successes in teaching Square Foot Gardening to YMCA campers.



2022 Youth Sculpture Contest - 1st Place, Grade 4, Alana F. (Texas) created an owl with ten recycled items including egg carton, plastic forks, soda can, pipe cleaners, etc.



Smokey Bear Turns 80!

Terry Critchlow

Help Smokey celebrate his 80th birthday by sponsoring youth entries into his poster contest, available to children grades K - 6. This year's contest is all about Smokey. Posters should be dedicated to Smokey's 80th Birthday and his message *Only You Can Prevent Wildfires*. NGC first-place winners from each grade level are sent to our partners at USFS National Symbols/Education for selection of the Grand Prize winner. This winner is awarded an expense-paid trip to Washington, DC with their family for the ceremony. Participating in this contest helps promote wildfire and wildlife awareness to children and their parents. See the 2023 and 2022 grand prize winners, 2023 winners, and contest information on the [Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl](#) web page.

Terry Critchlow is the NGC Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest Chair. Terry lives in Washington.

Espoma Helps Youth Debi Harrington

Early in 2022, the Espoma Grant Committee had its first youth garden organization apply for an Espoma Grant. Since then, three more youth clubs applied. It is exciting to see applications from teachers and parent organizations instilling the love of gardening in their students. The school organizations are doing the work, but as the NGC Grant Chair, I must find an NGC adult member club to sponsor these youth garden clubs. At times this has not been easy. I found many NGC member clubs hesitant to support youth clubs. Often they are worried it will be "one more project." The NGC adult clubs and youth club leaders pick the amount of involvement. Some actively work together, meet quarterly, or jointly attend special garden events in their communities. All reap the benefits – receiving the grant, publicity, friendships, etc. Happily we found sponsorship for all four youth clubs. All four of the winning youth garden clubs and their adult sponsors and leaders are actively participating in the National Garden Club's Theme "Go Green – PLANT AMERICA" and meeting the goals of President Brenda Moore's Project of "PLANT AMERICA, Feed America."

Here is the success story of the first Youth Club Espoma Grant recipient. In February 2022 we received an application from Rocky Youth Garden Club. An excerpt read: *We at the Rochester Area School District (Rochester, PA) have started a school garden in our courtyard area. We are entering our second year and aim to teach students K-12 and community members about gardening in small spaces, gardening techniques, targeting local food security, and some sustainable living techniques. Our garden endeavors hope to provide an outlet for all grade levels and all subject areas. We want everyone to have a safe space to learn and grow.* I immediately sent a message to several NGC clubs in Pennsylvania seeking an adult club to sponsor the youth group. The Tusca-Ridge GC President, Ann Niemann, said TRGC would be interested in working with Rocky Youth.



Garden Lessons • Rocky Youth GC

Rocky's Teacher/Sponsor, Isaac Dixon, is the school's "Super Leader of Gardening." He leads the mid-high students in all things gardening, and they help him with the elementary students. They plant seeds and other age-appropriate gardening activities. Together, they nurture and cultivate the plantings, harvest the crops, make jams and jellies, participate in canning other produce, share extra fresh produce with summer student programs, and fight food insecurity in their community. They have installed raised beds, trellises, water collection systems, and a heated greenhouse with grow lights. The students planted a pollinator garden with plans for a future beehive. The pupils are learning seed saving, native plant culture, and more. They are learning many of the latest gardening techniques. Rocky students apply gardening to math, tool and home economy skills, science, and physical education. Congratulations to Rocky Garden Club and Tusca-Ridge Garden Club for teaching a new generation of gardeners! NGC and Espoma Organics will eagerly watch this winning project in the future.

Debi Harrington is the NGC Sponsors' Grants Chair. She lives in New Mexico.

Celebrate Youth

Tricia Mitchell

National Garden Clubs provides many educational opportunities with awards for the kids at the preschool through high school levels. Youth Awards involves youth, families, and community. They provide interactions with multiple generations. Whether flowers or vegetables, caring for plants helps young people develop responsibility, a sense of accomplishment, and self-confidence. We encourage all clubs to invest in our youth and apply for the Youth Awards.

Remember that Youth Awards and Youth Contests are different. Please send information requests and contest applications to the respective chairs.

- ★ Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Contest - [Terry Critchlow](#), Chair
- ★ Poetry Contest - [James Pavelka](#), Chair
- ★ High School Distinguished Service Project - [Lynne Ehnert](#), Chair
- ★ Youth Sculpture Contest - [Linda Jean Brown](#), Chair
- ★ Youth Pollinator Garden Grants - [Vickie Stedman](#), Chair
- ★ Youth Awards - [Tricia Mitchell](#), Chair

Thank you to all garden clubs working with youth in your community. Click to view the current [Youth Award List and the 2023 Recipients](#).

Tricia Mitchell, of Alabama, is the NGC Youth Awards Chair.



Reach for the Sky • Evgenyatamanenko

Congratulations!



Award Ceremony • Forest Service

Esther Zhang Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl 2023 National Winner.

See the other posters
[Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl.](#)

Holidays Across America



Autumn in New Hampshire • Susan Miner

Our International Affiliates shared information on their wonderful Día de Muertos celebration. We asked our Region Directors to share how they celebrate the fall and winter holidays across the country.

Central Atlantic, Monica Hansen, Director

Delaware is historic and traditional for any holiday, albeit our Delaware President has pink flamingos and bright, whimsical colors in one of her rooms to celebrate the holiday season. A **Maryland** tradition is their governor inviting garden clubs to decorate holiday trees for the State House. Some Maryland clubs participate in the Wreaths Across America program. Our **National Capital Area** members enjoy seeing the White House Christmas decorations. They mentioned that in the fall, many have home and garden tours where members enjoy decorating and sharing time. In **New Jersey**, an annual tradition is decorating a room for Christmas in the Governor's Mansion in Princeton. Added is the practice of a visit by the GCNJ's Board during the holidays to see their latest handiwork. In **New York**, they immediately think about the Rockefeller Christmas Tree – the selection, cutting, transportation to the Rockefeller Center, then the decorating and hanging of lights. In Orchard Park, NY, they have a holiday door decorating contest that brightens the town. **Ohioans** enjoy and highly recommend road trips around Ohio for holiday fun. A journey through the rolling hills and beautiful scenery of the Amish Country will make a drive worth it. Believe it or not, Ohio is one of the most haunted states in America. Road trips are a great way to see Ohio's haunted and mysterious side, from haunted hotels to creepy cemeteries. In **Pennsylvania**, many clubs are gearing up for fall events. Christmas begins early in November with a Woodland Christmas, Tinsel Tea, Holiday Market Luncheon, and Holiday House Tour and Tea.

Central, Lynne Ehnert, Director

In **Minnesota**, autumn starts as you can walk along an orchard path and bite into a juicy, sweet/tart, crisp, snappy Honeycrisp apple. The University of Minnesota took over 15 years to breed Honeycrisp, Sweet Tango, and Zestar apples. Minnesota roadside stalls change from sweet corn and vegetables to pumpkins, corn stalks, and straw bales. Some farmers take time to use their satellite-connected computers to make great corn mazes. People tend to take time to relax and go for a drive to look at the autumnal-colored trees. **Illinois'** kickoff to the Holidays in Chicago is the annual and much anticipated Disney Parade and the Lighting of Michigan Avenue during Thanksgiving weekend. The Magnificent Mile comes alive and is adorned with thousands of lights that glisten throughout the season. In **Michigan**, the Festival of Trees during Thanksgiving week kicks off the holiday season in the Detroit Area. Many clubs support it by donating and decorating trees and wreaths, which are then sold with the proceeds benefiting the Children's Hospital. **Wisconsin's** light festivals start in September and October and then go into December. A large China Lights festival in the Milwaukee area has a new theme each year. This year the large garden is turned into a space where everyone can explore biodiversity in the ocean world. At the same time, entertainment is not the only way to celebrate. Many of our garden clubs work hard adopting families for the holidays, decorating public spaces, making gifts for nursing home residents, having luncheons to raise scholarship funds, and hosting parties for those unable to celebrate the holidays.

Deep South, Debby Cooper, Director

In **Alabama**, they watch the Iron Bowl, eat pecan pies every chance they get, go to church on Sunday, have a huge family dinner afterward, consider hunting the most important part

of the holidays, and eat cabbage and black-eyed peas on New Year's Day. In **Florida**, they drink fresh squeezed orange juice at every meal, have contests with neighbors to see how many plastic flamingos they can fit in their front yards, adorn lawns with decorations consisting of lighted palms and flamingos with Santa hats, and attend beach weddings with Santa performing the ceremony. In **Georgia**, they cannot decide which Christmas tree farm to cut their eight Christmas trees from this year. They take off from work to visit all of the Christmas Holiday light displays; go ice skating in 80-degree weather wearing shorts and flip-flops, and spend hours doing holiday crafts and making gingerbread houses. In **Louisiana**, they have gumbo with every meal, insist on serving only oyster dressing with their turducken, attend holiday parades for 21 days straight, attend bonfires on the levees to light the way for Papa Noel, and read the *Cajun Night before Christmas* every chance they get. In **Mississippi**, they travel up "North" (Mississippi) to cut their Christmas tree, prepare food three weeks before any holiday, and make gingerbread houses for all their children or grandchildren. They are expected to attend all of the holiday performances and church programs of everyone in the family, contribute to the fact that thanksgiving dressing is the most searched recipe in their state, and deep fry turkeys to avoid the oven's heat. In **Tennessee**, they never miss the annual Thanksgiving fireworks show or going to the Grand Ole Opry to view the delightful Christmas décor. They attend 25 Christmas parades, visit 15 fairs and 12 holiday markets shopping for Christmas presents for this year and next, and never give up the hope that they might get snow for Christmas morning. Across the south, they watch must-see SEC football and eat goodies such as sausage balls, pecan and sweet potato pies, pralines, deviled eggs, pimento cheese-stuffed celery, ambrosia, glazed ham, fried turkey, sweet potato casserole, collard greens, mac and cheese, divinity, fudge, gingerbread houses, and decorated cookies.

New England, Susan Miner

New England is famous for its fall foliage, and tourists flock to the region in early October to see nature's splendor.

Connecticut celebrates fall with various festivals, from the Norwalk Oyster Festival to the Garlic and Harvest Festival in Bethlehem. There is something for everyone's interest, whether food, arts, maritime heritage, music, or county fairs.

Rhode Island ranks second in the U.S. by the ratio of length of coastline to acre of land area, which makes the fishing and seafood industry important in this smallest of states. Fall is the time to enjoy the harvest from the sea, hence the many seafood festivals such as the Calamari Festival in Narragansett and the Seafood Festival in Providence. In **Massachusetts**, the Pilgrims were introduced to native cranberries called Sasumaneash or "sour berries" by the Wampanoag Nation when they arrived in Plymouth, known as "America's Hometown." Many cranberry farms can be found in the Cape

Cod area, where cultivation of this versatile fruit began in the early 1800s. Here, one can tour the bogs and participate in a harvest. National **Vermont** Day is celebrated on October 12. Vermonters and garden club members commemorate the memorable day honoring the state's rich culture through fun and educational activities. Vermont was one of the first states to legally abolish the practice of slavery and gain independence from European settlement, and passing down the historical value of autonomy to the younger generation is immeasurable. Many people enjoy scarecrow displays like the one in Chester, **New Hampshire**, where the town population increases by 10% if you count the scarecrows and other Halloween displays. December is a time to celebrate lights as we approach the shortest day of the year. All New England garden club members help to decorate historic homes and gardens for the holidays.

Pacific Carol Norquist, Director

In **California**, during the holidays, one might meet a surfing Santa, watch a harbor boat parade, or build a snowman out of sand. There are festivals of lights across the state along with the Chinese New Year parade. In **Oregon**, people flock to the waterfront for the Christmas Ships Parade and view light festivals from north to south. A unique New Year's Day tradition is "First Day Hikes," hosted in state parks across the state. Head to **Washington** to enjoy the Snohomish Winter Solstice Walk, a Bavarian Ice Fest, or the Northwest Winterfest with its bright, illuminated giant lantern display and cultural celebration. **Hawaiians** celebrate the Makahiki, an ancient Hawaiian festival honoring the Hawaiian god Lono. This joyful holiday extends over four consecutive lunar months from approximately October through February. This celebration of the 'aina (land), fertility, and harvest coincides with the fall and winter holidays celebrated by other cultures worldwide. It celebrates peace, abundance, and gratitude.

Alaskans start the holidays early by hanging their decorations in September – it might be 30° below zero in December. They also enjoy ice festivals and visiting a vast gingerbread village. Winter Solstice is significant for those in the north who celebrate with fireworks, ice lanterns, and bonfires. In **Arizona**, along with traditional light festivals, they enjoy Las Noches de Las Luminarias, which includes more than 8,000 hand-lit luminaria bags inspired by the Mexican holiday tradition. Chandler residents construct a 35-foot tree of 600 – 800 tumbleweeds, paint it white, and add some glitter.

Nevada Day coincides with Halloween, and residents celebrate with parades and treasure hunts. Las Vegas, already glittery, takes on even more color with cacti strung with Christmas lights and special events for Hanukkah and Kwanzaa. In **Idaho**, people enjoy fresh (snow) powder on the slopes and a Tuba Christmas at the State Capital. They brave the cold to view the neighborhood holiday lights. Best of all, Idahoans ring in the New Year with (you guessed it) a giant potato drop!

Rocky Mountain, Robbie Kupper, Director

People drool over a chocolate village in **Colorado**, including a life-size white chocolate Christmas tree. They drive past the Denver City and County Building to view the annual light display and might participate in the charity fundraiser Santa Speedo Dash. Combining a couple of holidays with a Haunted Christmas house may not be for the squeamish. The Griswold's actual home from "Christmas Vacation" in Greely is not to be missed. Along with light festivals, people in **Kansas** enjoy a candlelight tour of Fort Scott, the Saint Lucia Festival in Lindsborg, and a "Hallmark-like" spirit in Abilene. Fall also comes alive in Kansas as drivers enjoy the festive leaves and beautiful weather. **Montana** becomes a snow globe in the winter when visitors and residents enjoy the snow and mountains. They might bundle up for carriage rides or a stroll to view holiday decorations. There are historic sites, specially decorated, for all to tour. Tucked way up north, **North Dakota** celebrates Cabin Fever Days to get people outside in the dead of winter. There is a Dickens Village Festival in Garrison, and lights abound on every town's main street and country roads. In **Nebraska**, visitors flock to the (Buffalo Bill) Cody House. At the house, local organizations adopt a room to decorate for the holidays. People enjoy the annual tree lighting, holiday expo, and family festival in Omaha. **South Dakotans** celebrate in style with a three-story Holiday Tree in their State Capital. They enjoy skiing in the Black Hills, holiday pheasant hunting, and special music with the Holiday Jam traveling across the state. Holiday lights abound throughout **Utah**, plus ice skating, and music with the Utah Symphony. The North Pole festival includes millions of lights and a gigantic Christmas tree that comes to life. Not to be missed is the Dickens Christmas Festival in St. George. The Festival of Trees, since 1970, supports the Primary Children's Hospital. Old West Holidays begin in November in Cheyenne, **Wyoming**. Holiday markets and parades flourish across the state along with light festivals. In the heart of snow country, Jackson Hole visitors enjoy sleigh rides through the National Elk Refuge.

South Atlantic, Carcille Burchette, Director

In **Kentucky**, at Christmas, the Mega Cavern in Louisville is filled with laser displays, light tunnels, over 900 lit characters, and 6,500,000 points of light. Because Kentucky is the "Bourbon Capital," we do not just drink the brown gold but eat it by pouring over fruitcake. Scuba Santa at the Newport Aquarium is a special treat. Christmas for the Garden Club of **South Carolina** means preparing for the official State Christmas Tree on the State House grounds, ready for decorations. This year marks the Governor's 57th Annual Candle Lighting, broadcast across the state, bringing joy to tens of thousands of citizens and continuing to be one of their most highly regarded traditions. Thanksgiving in **Virginia** features the historic areas of Jamestown and Yorktown, where food demonstrations teach how meals were prepared

in the colonial period. Fredericksburg is a remarkable sight and ranked as one of *Travel & Leisure Magazines'* "Best Towns for the Holidays." The Santa Slumber Party in Virginia Beach, Mount Vernon, and Colonial Williamsburg each have a distinct holiday flair. In **North Carolina**, garden clubs celebrate the holidays by decorating notable buildings such as the WWII USO Building, the Latimer House, etc. They honor those who served with Veteran's Day programs at their Blue and Gold Star Memorials. The historical Elizabethan Garden at Fort Raleigh celebrates with a "Winter of Lights" celebration festival with millions of lights dancing around in the gardens. As in most states, **West Virginia** loves to decorate! Starting with Halloween, there are corn mazes to explore and pumpkin patches ready for picking. Towns decorate their lamp posts with a variety of characters and swag. Many of their garden clubs do home tours and contests for lights or door decorations. A beloved location is Olgebay Resort with an incredible light show that brings in thousands each year.

South Central, Sarah McReynolds, Director

In **Arkansas**, the Star City Garden Club makes fruit baskets and delivers them to their community's nursing homes and assisted living homes during November. One club donates to the local food bank because they are in a food desert, even though they are surrounded by farmland. There is no produce for human consumption, and the nearest grocery store is about 60 miles away. If you are a garden club member in **New Mexico**, you have probably learned the art of Chile Ristra creation and sold it for fundraising. These decorative ristras can also be made into swags and wreaths. They use the riper red Chiles pods, and once dried, they are used in numerous dishes, such as posole, tamales, and enchiladas. You will often see Tumbleweed Snowmen constructed using three sizes of tumbleweeds: a wooden dowel or metal rod to connect the three, some white spray paint, and traditional snowman embellishments. **Oklahoma** has more tribal headquarters than any other state, but only three are indigenous. All of the rest of them were relocated to Oklahoma from someplace else, so the tribal cultures in Oklahoma are very diverse. Native communities host traditional tribal dances, round dances, and powwows on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Along with many charitable activities, **Texas** garden club members organize Operation "Holiday Cheer" in San Antonio which provides 160 children's gift baskets, 70 desk and table-top arrangements, and 70 wreaths. Mini holiday trees are provided for the Rehab Program at Audie Murphy VA Hospital. Founded in 1983, Brookwood is a non-profit residential and vocational community for adults with disabilities in Brookshire. Their citizens working in horticulture grow poinsettias for the Holiday Season. Garden clubs put their orders in early and purchase the poinsettias, visit the facility, and take them back home to keep or sell for their club.

Note: *Holidays Across America* was shortened for space, contact Region Directors for more celebrations in their area. *Editor*



Autumn Desktop • Shirophoto

President Brenda's Travels

- ❖ October 9: New England Region, Plymouth, MA
- ❖ October 16: Central Region, Des Moines, IA
- ❖ October 23: Central Atlantic Region, Corning, NY

Looking for Events?

- ❖ Search the [NGC Calendar](#) for upcoming in-person and virtual events near you or across the globe.

Coming Soon - In-Person & Online

- ❖ October '23 - March '24: [Environmental Schools](#)*
- ❖ October '23 - March '24: [Flower Show Schools](#)*
- ❖ October '23 - November '23: [Gardening School](#)*
- ❖ October '23 - August '24: [Landscape Design School](#)*

- ❖ October '23 - April '24: [Multiple Refreshers](#)
- ❖ October '23 - November '23: [Symposiums](#)*
- ❖ [International Events](#)*

*Clicking on the above links takes you directly to the most up-to-date course listings and details on the website. Looking for a specific course? Click on Course 1, 2, 3 or 4 or Month on the course listing chart.

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NOTE: Throughout TNG click on ads to go directly to our advertisers' webpages and click on blue, underlined links to get more information, contact a committee chair or author.

Support Our Sponsors

Debi Harrington

The Holiday Season is just around the corner, and you may just be looking for a unique gift for a garden club member in your life. Perhaps you are the gardener who wants a special gift this year. NGC offers many items in our [NGC Store](#), as featured in another article, or consider some of our NGC supporters and sponsors.

Is there a reader of mysteries on your gift-giving list? Someone who would enjoy reading about solving murders in garden clubs, at flower shows, and on garden tours, and where the sleuths are what we politely call "women of a certain age?" If so, [Neal Sanders'](#) books are a perfect solution. These are intelligent, tightly written books about women who are anything but docile. Neal is a devoted advertiser in *TNG* and has appeared at numerous NGC, Regional, and State Garden Club Conventions. If you are new to Neal's

mysteries, he suggests you read *The Garden Club Gang* or *A Murder in the Garden* first.

The American Horticultural Society is working to become an affiliate of National Garden Clubs and has much to offer NGC members as they are a like-minded gardening organization. This *TNG* Issue has an advertisement about their Travel Study Programs and upcoming trips should you wish to gift someone or be gifted a trip.

AMES Tools has been supporting NGC for years with its generous, yearly grants of tools to winning NGC member clubs. Did you know they have MUCH more than tools on their website, [Home by Ames](#)? Yes, their website has hundreds of tools, but it also has Lawn and Garden Decor, Outdoor Living items, beautiful Containers and Planters, a Design Studio for Indoor and Outdoor Living Spaces, and much more.

Debi Harrington, of New Mexico, is the NGC Sponsors' Grant Chair and *TNG* Advertising Manager.

Sitting on the Porch

Gerianne Holzman, Editor

This issue of TNG features a guest editorial by a garden club member. Her thoughts are so heartfelt that I invited her to share her story. Perhaps all of us have seen ourselves in her shoes. G.H.

A Source of Happiness/Una fuente de Felicidad - Anonymous/Anónima

National Garden Clubs, Inc. provides education, resources, and national networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility.

We are a limb of an extensive international organization with the quality and standards set by NGC's core values. Aside from receiving an education, we offer education, resources, and networking opportunities to our members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility within each of our communities. Thus we directly represent NGC, Inc.'s high standards. Our meetings and events are a place of goodwill, camaraderie, and nurturing new members and our community. It is a place where we all keep learning, even those who have been members for years. Is it not true that the more we know, the more we realize what we do not know and the more we want to know?

This reminds us that we should always be open to questioning ourselves, our beliefs, and our behavior. We must never forget The Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you wish them to do unto you." This straightforward and fundamental rule of life should always be present among us. Our garden clubs are supposed to be a source of happiness, a gathering place to share that which makes us happy, even happier. We have formed a garden family with whom we can reach out to when we discover a beautiful volunteer growing in our garden and do not know what it is. We share a basketful of home-grown pecans or just pruned bay leaf branches, and enjoying freshly baked brownies at the next meeting. A garden club meeting is a day to look forward to getting together with green-thumb sisters and brothers for a cup of tea or the feeling of being back in school, taking notes on the experiences of others, which is always so generously shared by our fellow members.

There is no excuse for the lack of respect and self-centeredness or the use of self-imposed superiority within garden club groups. This behavior will undoubtedly create a rift within the group. Fellow members who look the other way, excuse and disregard the ill conduct of another, might find themselves extendedly involved in what could be construed as authoritarian. As such, the group becomes submissive to a manner they would typically disapprove of. This is not only unfortunate but inadmissible amongst people who share the beauty and tranquility of their gardens, including their personal space and vulnerability.

Before an incident happened to me personally, I had seen this behavior toward others and the consequences thereof. If this happens to me in my club, might it be elsewhere? The answer is a confirmed "yes," which is why I have chosen to write about this issue of bullying. The only way to stop this behavior is to speak up and stand for the high standards of our NGC mission. As an NGC, Inc. group we all participate in our mission towards helping within our community; however, we must also implement this with ourselves as a group. After all, happiness starts within.

As garden club members, we must strive to reach a dialogue and work hard to investigate the issues within each group to enjoy the whole purpose of the garden club. That is to be with like-minded persons who relish the beauty and harmony of gardens. I hope sharing my experience will enlighten those to desist from such behavior; we can uproot them, as we do with weeds. Hopefully, this article begins to address these challenges in our garden clubs around the world to avoid any future unacceptable and painful situations.

[Traducción en español](#)

Sunset • Leonid Ikan