GARDENEWS

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Be a Steward of the Earth

The official publication of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc.

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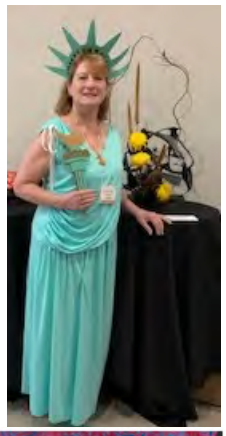
Club Submission Deadlines:
February Issue – January 10
July Issue – June 10
November Issue – October 10

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FGCMD President: *Donna Miller*

President's Message



I have just returned from another successful Central Atlantic Region – State Garden Clubs (CAR-SGC) Annual Conference held in Independence, Ohio, October 19–20. It was jammed packed with excellent speakers whose topics included native trees, northern saw-whet owls, ozone gardens, photo-documenting flora and fauna, dealing with wildlife conflict (yes, those pesky deer and rabbits!), mechanisms of color in the garden, and The Wilds conservation center.

On top of that was a "rockin' and rollin'" Petite Design Specialty Flower Show. FGCMD was well represented and recognized with awards:



Shelley Johnson – "Wild at Woodstock" Botanical Arts Design First Place



Carolyn Braverman – "Black or White" Second Place



Anne Dremluk – "Cold as Ice" Third Place



Anne Dremluk – "Black or White" Third Place

Recently, I was pleased to award my President's Project "Be A Steward of the Earth!" Grants to three District II Garden Clubs:

- Hollyberry Garden Club,
- Crofton Greenery Garden Club, and
- Crofton Village Garden Club.

There is only one more round of President's Project grants to be awarded during my administration. The deadline for submission is **February 28, 2027**.

How to Apply & Grant Application and Instructions

As we approach the coming months of winter, may you stay warm and cozy with visions of gardens dancing in your head!

The Mission of FGCMD, Inc.

The Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization, whose mission is to provide support, leadership and education for garden clubs and the public about best practices for horticulture, conservation, and landscape design. We encourage the protection of our natural resources, endeavor to create civic beauty, work for the improvement and protection of roadsides and parks, and award scholarships to further these goals.

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November 2026 Gardenews

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23: Bird Highway Poster

Present this poster to your club.

See the Howard County GC Article on page 13.





2027 Annual NGC Convention

May 14–16, 2027

Madison, WI

Convention Registration will be available in early January 2027.

Speakers Sneak Peek

Friday, May 14 – Lunch & Keynote Address

Dr. George Archibald

Cranes of the World

—

Saturday, May 15 – Lunch & Program

Doug Tallamy

Homegrown National Parks

—

Saturday, May 15 – Dinner & Design Program

Kevin Ylvisaker & Kelsey Thompson

Wisconsin Roots Design Extravaganza

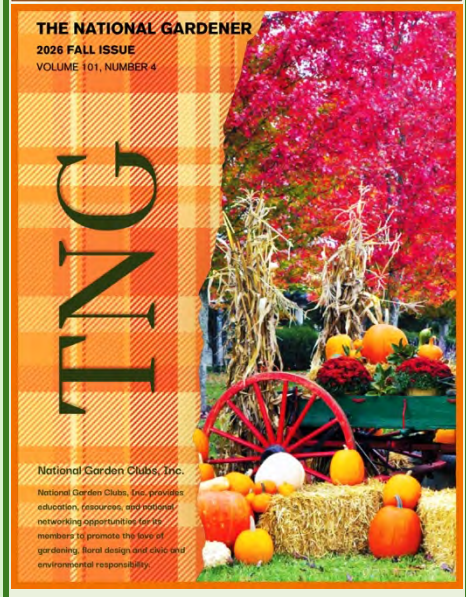
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Sunday, May 16 – Lunch & Program

Will Allen

Urban Farming

View the Latest Issue of *The National Gardener*



Blue Star Mem. Marker Dedication @ Carter Presidential Center

Flowering Plant Nutrient Storage

The Case for Imperfect Gardens

A Century of Club Membership



Maryland State House Holiday Trees and Wreaths

November 25 through December 31 (Closed 12/25)

Club trees and wreaths to be delivered to the Statehouse November 23 & 24.

December Special Edition Gardenews *will feature photos.*



FGCMD Trees and Wreaths from the 2025 State House Holiday Display

In case you missed it: Summer 2026 National Gardener





Check out the History of **Wreaths Across America** in **Civic Improvement and Historic Preservation**



DoD photo by Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi, U.S. Air Force.

and consider donating a wreath from your club.

The FGCMD President's Project

is inviting you to submit your applications for a "***Be a Steward of the Earth***" grant.

Deadline for submission: **February 28, 2027**.

How to Apply &

Grant Application and Instructions

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District News

District I: Ann *Street, District Director*

Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Wicomico, Worchester Counties

District I Director's Notes

Autumn on Maryland's Eastern Shore is a season to enjoy. The air turns crisp, the trees take on beautiful shades of gold, crimson, and amber, and the quiet charm of our small towns, winding country roads, and waterfront communities feel even more inviting. From the vibrant changing leaves to the tranquil views along our rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, the season highlights the natural treasures that make our corner of Maryland special. It is also a wonderful time to appreciate the beauty around us and the friendships nurtured through our garden clubs.

At our District I Fall Meeting, Club Presidents were asked to share updates on their youth programs, along with **one club success, one challenge, one lesson learned, and one idea for the future.** These reflections encourage us to celebrate our accomplishments, learn from one another, and explore new opportunities to strengthen our clubs. The Club reports will reflect upon the replies from our Club Presidents. Enjoy.

As we continue *Sustaining Our Future – Growing Seeds with Our Youth*, we remain committed to inspiring the next generation and ensuring a strong and vibrant future for our garden clubs.

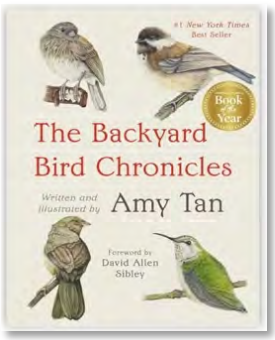
Chestertown Garden Club: *Secethia Boardley-Davis, President*



New Brick Walkway to Memorial Park

The project that the Club is most proud to present to the Chestertown Community was celebrated in June. CGC and the community gathered in celebration of the new brick walkway in Memorial Park. Brad Hollomon opened the program by playing the National Anthem on the trumpet. Opening remarks were given by Club President, Secethia Boardley-Davis. Past President, Susan Coomer spoke on the history of the project and gave recognition to the community partners and donors. Former Congressman Wayne Gilchrest also shared remarks. Secethia Boardley-Davis gave closing remarks, with a tribute to the cutting of the ribbon giving the brick walkway to the community. Susan Coomer cut the ribbon. The project was met with great joy, and all were proud of the work that was put in.

Each summer, the Garden Club chooses a book for all members to read, with topics ranging from the environment and gardening to insects and birds. This summer, the club selected ***The Backyard Bird Chronicles*** by Amy Tan in recognition of Chestertown's designation as a certified Bird City. As part of the project, members joined Washington College's Dan Small, Associate Director of Natural Land Stewardship, for a morning bird walk followed by a lively discussion.





***The Backyard Bird Chronicles by Amy Tan** maps the author's daily observations of over 60 bird species in her Sausalito, CA backyard.*

Our programs for the fall included the following:

- In September, Kirk Brown presented a program, *"John Bartram, Lives!"* a profile of America's first native-born botanist.
- In October, Nancy Lowry Moitrier presented an exclusive presentation designed specifically for the Club, "*Channeling the Magic of Garden Ornamentation*."
- In November, Ginny Rosenkranz will share a presentation entitled "*Orchards Are Not the Scariest Plants to Grow.*"



Youth Gardening: Youth gardening activities included maintaining the Good Seeds Garden. Pumpkin workshops for first-grade students will begin this month, and two fifth-grade students attended Sultana Camp in July.

As my time as Club President draws to a close, I reflect on a lesson learned: "Rome was not built in a day." I am proud that the group is energized, and events and activities have been available throughout the year. Members are having fun, and that is one thing they asked for.

My theme during installation was "Jazz It Up," and Jazz it up we did.

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District I *Continued*

Dorchester Garden Club: *Sandy Lucas, President*

Activities for the DGC have been varied and wonderful. In late Spring, May 14, our club traveled to **Chanticleer Gardens** and had a wonderful time. We had a guided tour of not only the gardens, but the historic house as well.



Sandy Lucas' Design from Flower Camp!

In July, we held our Flower Camp Session 1 with Terry Holman teaching us how to do an *"Interpretive Parallel Design"*. Our members created some lovely floral designs, and as usual our teacher, Terry, made it fun and informative! In September, we had Katie Barney speak to us about *"Edible Flowers."* I never knew there were so many flowers that you could eat.... I thought most of them were just for decoration.

Our club volunteered for the Eagleman and Iron Man races in June and September and were awarded $700 for our efforts.



Design to Edible Flowers created by Jane Bryan

Our Youth Gardening group continues to host informative speakers or lessons every other week. The garden has flourished this year, producing many vegetables for the children to take home and share with community members. Donations from individuals who sponsored garden beds provided significant budget support, and the group recently received a $500 grant from the City of Cambridge.





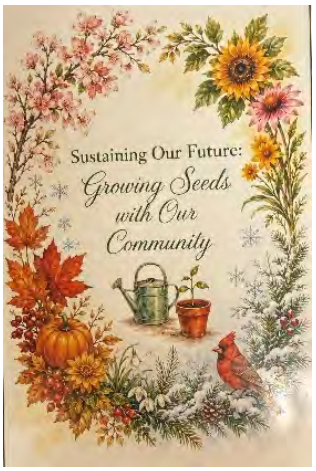
Example of Floral Design from 2025 Holiday Party

Our club is looking forward to our annual Holiday Luncheon to be held at the Hyatt on Friday December 4, 2026. Tickets are $60. An invitation will be sent to each club president to distribute to their members. We had quite a few members from other clubs join us last year....it is always a wonderful event!

Four Seasons Garden Club: *Frances Follmer, President*

The following are our responses to the District Director's request to share updates on our youth programs as well as a success, challenge, lesson learned, and idea for the future:

Youth Programs: This year, the Four Seasons Garden Club again participated in the Poplar Hill Mansion May Festival. Young participants decorated flowerpots with stickers, planted flowers in them, and took them home as Mother's Day gifts. For the past two years, the Club has also donated school supplies for local youth through area charities.



Success: The Four Seasons Garden Club's ability to continue to maintain the planters at Blind Industries under the most undesirable conditions is truly a success. Karen Butler-Shifflett has been instrumental in making sure the gardens are watered.

Challenge: The president's greatest challenge has been expanding the club's membership. With an aging membership, Four Seasons is exploring new recruitment approaches and learning from clubs that have succeeded in attracting new members. The club will celebrate its 70th anniversary this coming March.

One Lesson Learned: Do not try a multi-step long-term project with the club that depends on the public to be successful.

One Idea for the Future: The Club plans to place "Welcome to Salisbury and Four Seasons Garden Club" gift bags in a local real estate office to help attract new members.



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District I *Continued*

Kent Island Garden Club: *Bobbie Bell, President*

Projects or Activities: Our emphasis this year was to celebrate USA's Anniversary with using Patriotic Colors and Sowing Seed. We accomplished that with our new relationships built in our Youth Gardening and Garden Therapy Programs!

One Success: I am proud of the near completion of a four-phase redesign project of the Kirwan House Garden and receiving a State Grant for our work. Only thing left to do is an Educational Sign to be installed.

One Challenge: Encouraging members to take ownership of the club—not only to benefit from it, but also to contribute—by creating meaningful opportunities for those who are less able to "dig in."

One Lesson Learned: To depend on the wisdom and knowledge of others and that often the By-laws are your friend!



Gardens at the Kirwan House



One Idea for the Future: Our club was established in 1977 and federated in 1978, giving us two opportunities to celebrate our 50th anniversary. This fall, we plan to form a celebration committee to develop ideas for the 2027 and 2028 programs.

Dee Dee McCracken, Bobbie Bell, & Linda Dalesio enjoyed helping our client friends at Queenstown Landing work on their garden boxes. Visiting memory care, they added a tomato plant and several herbs to the box of lettuce and lemon balm. Traveling down the hall to another courtyard, they were happy to see the seeds they helped plant in the spring were blooming brightly! They brought zinnias, verbena, Shasta daisies, lamb's ear, and obedient plant to fill their three boxes.

Oxford Garden Club: *Sandy Wrightson, President*



Decorated Pumpkin by OGC Member, Pat Jessup

Youth Program: OGC does not currently offer a youth program but has discussed partnering with Oxford Kids Camp. Interested youth are referred to TCGC.

Success: The FALL FEST at Oxford Community Center—October 17 from 9am 'til 2pm—was great fun! OGC sponsored one of the many booths for (mostly) kids for pumpkin carving, painting and Fall decorations. Everyone is invited to come see all that is going on in and around Oxford.

Ongoing Success: We are very proud to be participating in the NexTrex project every meeting with most of our members arriving looking like "bag ladies" stepping up to the fish scales.

Challenge: Oxford Garden Club is continuing to grow with seven new members so far this year.



Oxford Museum Garden



Lisa Smit - weighing her "plastic" for Trex Project

Lesson Learned: OGC is once again collaborating with The Oxford Museum to update and care for the "Colonial Garden" next to the museum.

Idea for the Future: Our next major project, *"The Secret Gardens of Oxford Tour,"* is in the planning stages and is scheduled for June 27, 2027. Be sure to mark your calendar.

Be sure to visit our newly revised website: **oxfordgardenclub.org**.

Queen Anne's County Garden Club: *Robin Lanham, President*

Although the Queen Anne's County Garden Club does not meet in July or August, we enjoyed a highly productive summer.

Before the Centreville Town Council's July meeting, we received a citation honoring nearly a century of QACGC volunteers who have shared their passion for gardening, education, and environmental stewardship. It noted that the Queen Anne's County Garden Club has long cared for public spaces, enhancing the parks, gardens, streetscapes, and civic landscapes that contribute to the charm and historic character of Centreville and Queen Anne's County.

> *"NOW, THEREFORE, WE, THE TOWN COUNCIL OF CENTREVILLE, extend our sincere appreciation to all current and past members of Queen Anne's County Garden Club for their continued efforts to cultivate beauty, inspire volunteerism, and leave a legacy for future generations."*

Our club, in partnership with Benedict A. Andrew American Legion in Queenstown, Maryland—the former county seat—is leading an effort to establish a Gold Star Marker at the Legion. We asked the County Commissioners to support the project, and I am delighted to report that they contributed $2,000. We hope to hold the dedication in the spring or early summer.

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District I *Continued*

Somerset County Garden Club: *Kathy Henderson, President*

I am pleased to share a few highlights from the Somerset County Garden Club and some of the things we have been working on this year.

Activities: In May, we celebrated America's 250th birthday with red, white, and blue container plantings, using the planting recipe from the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland's Spring Horticulture Report. We planted red geraniums, white Angelonia and blue convolvulus in two large street planters in Princess Anne. We added American flags and signs identifying the plantings as compliments of the Somerset County Garden Club and placed them in front of the historic Washington Hotel.



Winners !

In June, we held our NGC Horticulture Specialty Flower Show, *Sunshine Celebration*. Half of our members had never participated in a flower show before, so this was quite an undertaking. Fortunately, our member Frances Follmer, a National Garden Clubs Accredited Life Judge, guided us every step of the way. We had 105 entries and two educational exhibits—and, most importantly, everyone had a good time. After filling out all those entry tags, I think we also have a club full of members who now know the importance of genus and species!



And more winners!!

Our first program of the new season featured Lisa Kuder from the University of Maryland Extension, an editor and contributing author of the forthcoming Maryland Native Plant Guide: Coastal Plain. She gave an informative and very engaging presentation on native plants and the new guide. If your club is considering inviting her, I would certainly recommend her.

We're also participating in the NexTrex Recycling Challenge; so far, we've collected 38.8 lb. of plastic film.


SOMERSET COUNTY GARDEN CLUB

Where new members and new ideas are always welcome

Our members share a love of gardening, floral design, civic beautification, conservation, and the protection of native plants and wildlife. Through education, fellowship, and service, we voice together to make a positive difference in our community.

The Club meets nine months of the year for a variety of programs, presentations, and activities. In addition to our regular meetings, members participate in projects that reflect our shared interests and support the goals of the Club.

How to Become a Member

Interested in joining us? We would be delighted to welcome you!

STEP 1 – ATTEND TWO MEETINGS

We invite prospective members to attend two of our meetings that are open to the public. Pick up a copy of our Program Schedule, or visit the Events page on our website to find upcoming meetings and programs that interest you.

Attending our meetings gives you an opportunity to meet our members, learn more about the Club, and see if the Somerset County Garden Club is right for you.

STEP 2 – COMPLETE A MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

After attending two meetings, if you would like to become a member, complete the Membership Registration Form on the reverse side of this sign or print the form from the website.

Please review the requirements for Active Membership included on the form. If these requirements work for you, complete and sign the form and return it to the Club.

Welcome!

We value the interests, talents, and ideas that each member brings to our Club and we look forward to getting to know you.

www.somersetgardenclub.com

One Success I'm Proud Of: I am especially proud of our board's work to advance the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland's three membership priorities: Recruit, Retain, and Revitalize.

- RECRUIT: We developed an informational club brochure, a one-page program calendar, and a brief "How to Become a Member" guide with the registration form on the reverse. Whenever feasible, signage credits the club for creating or maintaining a project or display. We also eliminated the invitation-only membership policy, making the club more open and welcoming.
- RETAIN: We're looking for meaningful ways to show our appreciation. This year, that includes giving each member a copy of the Maryland Native Plant Guide: Coastal Plain and sending out a monthly Gardening To-Do list.
- REVITALIZE: We've worked hard to offer a varied program schedule. Five of our nine programs are educational meetings open to the public, while four are hands-on activities designed especially for our members.

One Challenge: Our challenge is finding the best way to share useful information from the District and State without overwhelming our members with email. Our solution is to post that information on our website and mention new postings at our meetings.

Talbot County Garden Club: *Eleanor Denegre, President*



Young Gardeners October Program: Wreaths with Dried Flowers & Leaves

The Young Gardeners Club of Talbot County Garden Club coordinates programs for children focusing on gardening and conservation. Programs include flower show workshops, wreath decorating, flower arranging, starting seedlings, pumpkin succulents and winter arrangements. Our Inclusive Gardening Committee offers creative workshops to those living with disabilities and dementia, partnering with the Easton YMCA and other non-profit institutions.

I am proud of the 2026 Talbot County Garden Pilgrimage Tour. In tandem with America's 250th Anniversary, 1,700 pilgrims enjoyed viewing historic houses and gardens in Oxford, Easton, and St. Michaels. The tour generated $66,000, which we donated to the Talbot County Historical Society to fund the repointing of a brick wall.



(L-R): Camille Massie & Lousie Peterson, Chairs of Event; THS Board Member & Frank Casson, THS President; Peggy Morey, THS Director; Caroline Benson, TCGC Consultant; Eleanor Denegre, TCGC President

Challenge: To keep our members current on our abundance of activities. Last year, we created an additional newsletter, *Blossum and Blooms*, to include and share the myriads of announcements we receive.

Lesson Learned: To encourage positivity and praise, praise, praise everyone for their contributions.

Idea for the Future: To ease up on creating new club projects—we do enough and do it well.

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District I *Continued*

Worcester County Garden Club: *Susan Fletcher, President*

Robin Jenks Vanderslip has filled the First Vice President position and will transition on to the Club President role in March 2027.



District I Flower Show: Entrance Display Created by WCGC

- WCGC is hosting the 2028 District Flower Show – We are learning more about the show planning and requirements. Planning will begin shortly to secure the show location, theme, create a floor plan and select a date which will most likely be held in June 2028.
- For the June 2026 District Flower Show, WCGC volunteers designed the Show's entryway display with the theme, "Celebrating Everything Eastern Shore." Our members entered horticultural and class displays earning several ribbons.
- The WCGC Youth Committee, chaired by Joan LayHayne, continues its partnership with Maryland Costal Bays to provide Environmental Literacy lessons to kindergarten classes in Snow Hill, MD. In April, they presented a lesson on trees and their contribution to the Earth and a children's scavenger hunt around the school grounds collecting tree leaves.
- In May, WCGC had a table at the annual Bay Days festival, handing out plant seeds and seed pots they could take home.
- In September, Joan LayHayne represented the Club at the quarterly Lower Shore Environmental Literacy meeting to learn about programs, grants and learn more about 2026 & 2027 state goals.



WCGC Member Toni McAleer leading the class!

Future activities include working with Maryland State Natural Resources on October 5th in assisting Worcester County 5th graders in a day of outdoor education including having students collecting living organisms from the pond for observation so they can determine the health of the pond based on their observations and data.

- Garden therapy will be held at Gull Creek Senior Living Center on November 19th Seniors will take part in creating small wreaths to hang on their apartment doors.
- To date, WCGC has collected 166 lbs. of plastic toward the 1,000 lb. goal.
- During our October 12th meeting members will be making decorations for the State Christmas Tree.
- Christmas party tea will be held at a member's 100+ year old historic home.

Future fund raising will be a Club priority to take advantage of matching contribution offered by the owners of Gull Creek Living Center.

DISTRICT II: *LAURA SPOERI, DISTRICT DIRECTOR*

Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, St Mary's Counties

DISTRICT II DIRECTOR'S NOTES

At the April 2026 FGCMD annual meeting, District II was surprised and pleased to receive the District Bowl Award for the largest percentage increase in membership. Coincidentally, we were surveying the district clubs on their strategies to encourage new members and retain current members. The results of the survey were present by District II membership chair, Barbara Ahr at our June board meeting. One interesting fact was that often clubs lost members for various reasons and replaced them with new members so that the club grand total did not change. Retaining current members is just as important as recruiting new. Of course, life changes, moves, and family situations impact the decision to remain a garden club member. Some of the strategies used by the clubs to attract new members included invitations on the community Facebook page (great idea for a neighborhood based club), information tables at various community events (welcome events, county fair, local libraries), each member inviting a guest to a meeting, interesting and varied speakers and activities, club websites, presentations and programs presented to groups and at local churches, and conducting a mix of both day and evening meetings. Maybe some of these ideas will resonate with clubs statewide to help increase our overall member numbers.

District clubs have held flower shows over the summer and into the fall. As a district, we are gearing up for the 44th Annual Daffodil Show to be held April 12–14 at **historic Baldwin Hall in Millersville, MD**. The show will be open for viewing on the afternoon of the 13th and morning of the 14th. Please consider a club field trip to see the show. In addition, the historic Baldwin Hall volunteers are ready to take you on a guided tour of the buildings which date from 1861. Just let us know you are coming if you want a tour. You are also invited to enter your daffodils on the afternoon of the 12th and morning of the 13th. You do not need to be a member of a District II club to enter, and we welcome the daffodils from across the state.

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District II *Continued*

Bayside Bloomers Garden Club: *Susie Johnson, President*



Bayside Bloomers Before the First Session

Do you remember the fun and excitement of summer camp? This summer, the Bayside Bloomers Garden Club went to camp—partnering with the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Annapolis & Anne Arundel County** at the **Severn Center in Severn, MD**.

Opened in 2023, the Severn Center was designed as an "innovative project to provide intergenerational programming opportunities for previously underserved communities." It proved to be the perfect setting for the garden club's own version of summer camp: bringing gardening, learning, and fun together for a new generation.

Scheduled to meet six consecutive Friday afternoons, the garden club of the Boys and Girls Club was launched for up to 20 children, ages 6- to 12-years old. Boys and Girls Club members with guidance from Bayside Bloomers' volunteers, planted food and flowers, harnessed the power of the sun, tasted new foods, and learned about the science of plants and pollinators.

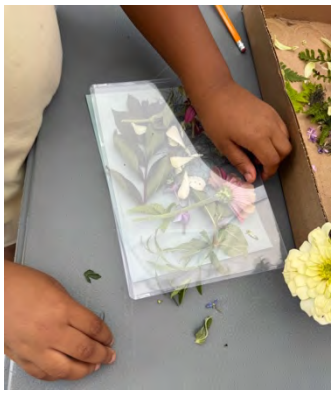
Due to space constraints, an urban style garden was planted using six large pots. Young gardeners planted cherry tomato plants, everbearing strawberries, and sunflowers, then nurturing and measuring their progress. The camp featured lessons on plant parts, seed germination, solar printing, and potting and caring for houseplants.

The Boys & Girls Club's slogan is, "To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens." The Bloomers saw that mission in action.

Boys & Girls Club members were curious, enthusiastic, engaged, and kind. They shared their knowledge, asked questions and collaborated well with one another. Not all were fans of the cherry tomatoes they tasted, but they were big fans of the sunflower seed kernels and strawberries. For one member, it was the first time trying strawberries.



Boys and Girls Club Members



Preparing the Solar Print

Along with planting pots with seeds and plants to take home, the members' favorite activity was solar printing. Using cyanotype paper and pieces of fern, flowers, petals, stems, and leaves, they created beautiful works of art.

It's hard to say which group enjoyed camp more—the Boys & Girls Club members or the Bloomers!

Chartwell Garden Club: *Liz Williams, President*



Members of Chartwell Garden Club participated in "Trunk or Treat" October 26 at the Our Shepherd Lutheran Church Fall Fest in Severna Park.

Lynn Tuozzo, in a Ladybug costume (on the left in the photo, and Joyce Bowers, in a butterfly costume (right), along with Judy Mayron handed out goody bags with candy and information about Chartwell Garden Club membership as well as little pumpkins.

This is the second meet-and-greet activity introducing garden club activities to the public that the club has taken part in.

Photo courtesy Judy Mayron

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District II *Continued*

Calvert County Garden Club: *Anne Watson, President*

Calvert Garden Club's annual ART Blooms, cohosted with Annmarie Garden, took place in early August this year. The event featured floral designs inspired by works of art displayed in two themed exhibits: "Landmark: Iconic American Views" and "Winging it: Birds in Art." Thank you to the 29 District II designers and others, we displayed 23 wonderful designs. Great job, you all!



ART Blooms Birds in Flight



ART Blooms Blue Bird 1



ART Blooms Owl

To keep the theme of art and flowers going, in October the club will visit the **Virginia Museum of Fine Arts** in Richmond, VA to see the **Fine Arts and Flowers 2026** exhibit (October 8–11, 2026). Hopefully, during their visit our members will garner inspiration and ideas for next year's ART BLOOMS.

Adding to the flowers as art theme, our very own Rose Mellies and Denise Moroney presented a two-part workshop, Plant Preservation. October's workshop presented different techniques for preserving flowers, grasses, and other plant materials and the pros and cons to each technique. During the November 18 workshop, participants will create décor with the preserved materials. Flowers as art continues...

Our November meeting features Laura Jiron, floral arranger extraordinaire and veteran floral freelancer for multiple DC floral events (including working on the White House Christmas decor). She will be our presenter on Thursday, November 19. She will bring us up to date on new trends in floral design.

December is always a busy month for Calvert Garden Club. November 30 will find club members cutting and organizing greens for the annual Greening of the Courthouse Square. December 1 is Greening Day. The club creates wreaths for the entrance walls to Calvert County, Courthouse and Annex windows, sprays for the lampposts, roping for the Courthouse entrance walls as well as decorations for the gazebo and historic Linden. December 2, the club is busy directing the county grounds crew in placing the club made decorations on the courtyard Christmas tree. December 4, the club's efforts get to shine at the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. The Christmas Parade and activities at Linden House, home of the Calvert Historical Society, take place on December 12. Whew! Then we get a short rest before we gear up for Books in Bloom. More on that in the next issue.

Hollyberry Garden Club: *Alyson Figlioli & Lenore Mirski, Co-Presidents*

The Hollyberry Garden Club recently celebrated its 70th anniversary with a special gathering that included past presidents and honored members who have dedicated 20 to 30 years of service to the club. The celebration was a wonderful opportunity to recognize the club's history and accomplishments.

The club has remained busy throughout the summer, caring for two public areas in Severna Park, Maryland. Members regularly care for native plantings at the **Hatton-Regester Green** and the **Severna Park Public Library**, helping maintain attractive and welcoming spaces for the community. In the coming weeks, our members will add additional native plants, including spotted and regular monarda, ironweed, and ruellia.



Hollyberry Members with Tudor Trellises

Giving back to the community continues to be an important part of Hollyberry's mission. Each month, club members volunteer at a local rehabilitation facility, providing garden therapy activities for residents. The program brings gardening and nature to the residents and has been a source of much joy for everyone involved. The club's first-ever daffodil bulb fundraiser is also wrapping up after a very successful sale. Members are grateful for the community's support of this new fundraising effort.

In August, several members of the club gathered to build a French Tudor trellis designed for climbing flowers. Hollyberry members organized a field trip to **Ladew Topiary Gardens** in October.

The club's major fundraiser will take place in December with its annual Christmas wreathmaking event, which is open to the public. Last year, the garden club introduced a new approach to its wreathmaking fundraiser. Rather than making and selling finished wreaths, Hollyberry began selling tickets to individuals and families who wanted to create their own holiday decorations. Club members provide the greenery, other materials, and personalized guidance, while participants enjoy the experience of making their own festive holiday pieces.

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District II *Continued*

LaPlata Garden Club: *Barbara Hays, President*



The La Plata Garden Club celebrated our nation's 250th Anniversary with a reenactment of interviews with General George Washington and General William Smallwood. The performance by local multi-talented Mike Callahan portrayed the two acquaintances as they discuss their views of the nation, the war, and each other.

General Smallwood led Maryland troops in the Revolutionary War and was successful at saving George Washington's army at the Battle of Long Island with the "Maryland 400." This is why Maryland in known as the "Old Line State." He was the state's fourth governor.

General Smallwood's estate and restored home, known as General Smallwood's Retreat, is in Charles County and is preserved as **Smallwood State Park** in Marbury, Maryland.

Moonflower Garden Club: *Jackie Richter, President*

The Moonflower Garden Club stayed busier than normal this past summer. Sylvia Deck held several small design workshops over the summer when we do not hold meetings so we could keep the design vibes flowing. We also made artificial wreaths that Sylvia will donate to her favorite charity, **Kennedy Krieger Festival of Trees**, for sale in November.

The area that the Moonflower Garden Club maintains along the **Baltimore and Annapolis (B&A) Trail**, has a damaged and drained pond that now is fenced off with orange construction fencing and caution tape. It is quite the eyesore! The Club is continuing to work with the Friends of the Anne Arundel County Trails to come up with a design for a water feature to replace the pond. We are hoping that a plan can be approved and built as soon as possible so that the garden can once again be the beautiful and relaxing space it once was.



Pergola Outside the Church Sanctuary

The Club is looking forward to the November bus trip to Radio City Music Hall. All the tickets have been sold for one large bus and a half-size bus. The trip will kick off our Club's Christmas activities.

In December, we will have a greens workshop where we will be making posies to decorate the graves of veterans at the Crownsville Veteran's Cemetery as well as small arrangements for the shut-ins of the church where we meet. The church does not charge us for meeting space. To thank them, the Club maintains a garden designed by Barb Small in an area outside the meeting hall. The Moonflowers also decorate an area outside the sanctuary for Christmas, pictures of the garden and of last year's pergola design are included.

This year the Moonflower Garden Club is celebrating its 30th anniversary! The group received a Governor's Citation recognizing the milestone that was presented to us at the recent District II meeting. May we have many more!



The Garden Outside Church Meeting Hall

DISTRICT III: MARY ELLEN PLUEMER, *DISTRICT DIRECTOR*

Baltimore and Harford Counties

DISTRICT III DIRECTOR'S NOTES

This year, District III had the pleasure of choosing a new site to continue the Alice Rush McKeon endowment for tree planting. I am sure Alice would have approved of the site we found!

Trees will be planted in Alice's name at **Angel Park** in Perry Hall, MD. This wonderful park was the inspiration of the Szczybor Family, in honor of their son Ryan who passed away at 17 months of age. The park was designed and built by community volunteers.

Angel Park is specifically designed to accommodate children with special needs by eliminating physical and social barriers to inclusion while serving children of all abilities. One example of the accessible features is a wheel-chair accessible swing that allows the entire chair to be strapped in so the child can be pushed and experience the thrill of swinging!!

Trees are needed at the park to act as both sight and sound barriers behind the amphitheater. The amphitheater is used for concerts, birthday parties and other community events. It is currently exposed to traffic and neighborhood homes.

Angel Park is celebrating its10-year anniversary this month by resurfacing the entire playground for safety. Our club was part of the Grand Reopening celebration October 30. Please **visit** this lovely park!

Excerpt from the Alice Rush McKeon Biography in the FGCMD Handbook

THE ALICE RUSH MCKEON LEGACY

Alice Rush McKeon was born in March 1884 in Philadelphia, PA and died in Ruxton, MD in February 1979, approximately a month before her 95th birthday. Alice served twice as President of FGCMD and was the first Roadside and Tree Chairman. She was a conservationist, environmentalist and poet. In 1935 she wrote "Sonnets for the Scenic-ease." The proceeds from the sale of her poetry were invested by her stockbroker son. The established fund became known as the "Alice Rush McKeon Tree Planting Fund." FGCMD administers the Fund for the purpose of planting trees. The first planting took place at a site north of BWI airport along the Baltimore-Washington Expressway in 1959.

FGCMD continues to use the Alice Rush McKeon Tree Fund to plant trees and rotates the host District so that trees are planted throughout Maryland. This is an event that passes sequentially to each of the five districts of FGCMD. Each year the Finance Committee advises amount available for current year plantings. The District Director is responsible for locating an area in his/her District, selecting the plants and arranging for their planting with the approval and assistance of the existing MD State/City Highway authorities in the District. (Native plants are preferred.) It is customary to plan and schedule a commemoration ceremony. The Director should check the FGCMD State President's schedule before planning the ceremony.

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District III *Continued*

Evergreen Garden Club: *Pat Vandrey, President*

After a restful summer, the Evergreen Garden Club restarted this year's activities with a delightful day at Citizens Care Nursing Center in Havre de Grace, Maryland.

We assisted 16 residents (guys and gals) on Thursday, September 10, in creating some fall centerpieces for their dining tables.

A fun day all around.



Evergreen GC Members with Arrangements They Made for Citizens Care Nursing Center Photo by Brenda Sochurek

Halten Garden Club: *Sue Thompson, President*

Rain Gardens: Because Even Water Needs a Place to Sit Down

This month, the Halten Garden Club bravely waded into the world of rain gardens—those magical landscape features that catch stormwater, filter runoff, and give native plants a soggy spa day.

We learned the basics: pick the lowest spot (the one your yard already complains about), choose natives that enjoy wet feet, and build a berm that doesn't flop over like a tired soufflé. Members were delighted to discover that sedges, swamp milkweed, and blue flag iris are basically the lifeguards of the rain-garden world.

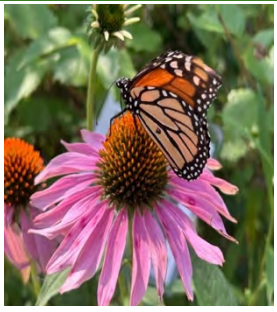


The best part? Watching gardeners gather around a swale with the kind of excitement usually reserved for football scores. Nothing bonds a club quite like discussing infiltration rates while standing in mud.

In the end, we left with new knowledge, muddy shoes, and a fresh appreciation for rain gardens — proof that sustainability can be smart, beautiful, and occasionally hilarious.

Hampton Garden Club: *Chris Neas, President*

Mary Ellen Christopher captured this beautiful butterfly photo in the butterfly house at **Ladew Topiary Gardens, Monkton, Maryland**. The gardens cover 22 acres, including the historic manor house, a nature walk, and over 100 topiary sculptures. The gardens close for the season in November, but they hold events such as **A Ladew Christmas**, which features a tour of the manor house, a Christmas Market, café and seasonal music. A wonderful place to visit.



Beautiful butterfly photo taken in the butterfly house at Ladew Topiary Gardens, Monkton, Maryland

Manor Garden Club: *Elaine Sauer, President*

The Manor Garden Club motto is "*knowing, growing, showing*." This year began with trips to the First Fruits Farm in Northern Baltimore County and the Prigel Family Creamery in Glen Arm, Maryland.



- **First Fruits Farm** began as a small garden space where the Bernstein family grew vegetables to share with the community. Since 1968, it has expanded to over 300 acres and has networked with organizations to expand its reach to feed the hungry beyond the local community. Garden Club members were reminded that they could volunteer or donate year-round to help. The website is **https://www.firstfruitsfarm.org**.
- The **Prigel Family Creamery** began as a large farm but to remain sustainable, it scaled down to the family dairy farm it is today. Its main product is ice cream, but there are other surprises for you when you visit. They sponsor "farm learning" programs for all ages (pre-school to Grade 12). Plans to make cheese are in the works. The dairy farm uses no herbicides or pesticides as its cows are grass fed. They sell fresh-cut Christmas trees starting November 27.

The Manor Garden Club will be able to take back the ideas learned from these two farms to their own gardens. Here are a couple: Let a garden patch rest for a growing season to reinvigorate the soil after several years of planting. And reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides and pesticides to protect the animals (like birds and insect pollinators) that will visit the garden.

The Manor Garden Club continues to maintain a native plant community garden off the **NCR/Torrey C Brown Trail in Baltimore County**. Additional plants were added this spring, with hopes that next year's growing season will provide food for the pollinators from spring through fall. Plans to improve the infrastructure of the hillside garden are in the works.

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District III *Continued*

Woodbrook-Murray Hill Garden Club: *Cathy Wales, Meghan McPhail, Co-Presidents*

The Woodbrook Murray Hill Garden Club held their first meeting in September. One of our members presented a talk on his German botanical books from the 1800s. He described how the books and illustrations were created.

A certified arborist from Bartlett Tree presented at our October meeting. He discussed trees that are popular in Baltimore County, shared information about the Baltimore Tree Trust, and walked us through the hostess's property teaching us about various trees.



Woodbrook Murray Hill Garden Club tours a member's property led by an arborist. Photo by Meghan McPhail

DISTRICT V: MARY HEIZER, *DISTRICT DIRECTOR*

Allegany, Carroll, Frederick, Garrett, Howard, Washington Counties

DISTRICT V DIRECTOR'S NOTES



Longwood Gardens in the Summer

District V held its semi-annual meeting on Thursday, October 8, 2026 at Holly Hills Country Club. Jim Sutton, designer at Longwood Gardens presented "How Longwood Gardens Preserves the Past, Lives in the Present and Plans for the Future." Longwood Gardens continues to expand their exhibits and conservatories and increase their acreage by recently acquiring the 500-acre **Granogue Estate** in Delaware. At this meeting, we also held a 50/50 raffle and sold fall-colored themed centerpieces created by each club. Five themed baskets including "Coffee & Chocolate," "Walking in Wildflower Gardens," "Trip through European Wine Country," and "Creative Fall Decorations" were raffled off.

All 15 of our District V garden clubs have started this fall off with a bang. I have attended Mt. Airy Garden Club's Red, White and Bloom Flower Show with their Blue Corn growing challenge and Monstera Educational Display. In addition, I have attended Silver Fancy's History in Bloom Floral Interpretations and Dorsey Hall's meeting with Dr. Zeng presenting "Tree Vaults," as well as Howard County Garden Club's presentation of "The Art of Kokedama." I look forward to Green-Walled GC's holiday luncheon and 70th anniversary celebration.

See the **Awards** section for news on awards presented to Green-walled, Mountain Laurel, and Tasker's Chance Garden Clubs.

We all look forward to decorating the Maryland State House this holiday season. What theme will your county represent? We all look forward to learning something new about each county in Maryland.

Cross Country Garden Club: *Debra Dear, Nancy Grabowski, Co-Presidents*



Cross Country GC Members Preparing Centerpieces

Cross Country Garden Club Adds Autumn Elegance to Historic Showhouse Preview

Members of Howard County's Cross Country Garden Club brought their creativity and floral design talents to the 2026 Decorator Showhouse preview gala, hosted by **Historic Ellicott City, Inc. (HEC)**. The Decorator Showhouse, September 16 through October 11, offered visitors an opportunity to explore beautifully designed interiors, discover unique items in the boutique, and enjoy a delightful outing while supporting local historic preservation.



Cross Country GC Centerpiece

Held at ***Valhalla***, an historic property built in 1832, located at 1575 Marriottsville Road in Marriottsville, Maryland, the annual Showhouse celebrates exceptional interior design while supporting the preservation of historic properties in the community.

When HEC invited the Garden Club to create centerpieces for the preview gala, members enthusiastically embraced the opportunity. Using an inviting combination of miniature pumpkins, decorative gourds, fresh flowers, glowing votive candles, and delicate fairy lights, club members transformed 10 round tables into charming autumn tablescapes. The thoughtfully arranged centerpieces brought warmth, seasonal color, and a touch of sparkle to the event tent, creating a festive and welcoming atmosphere for guests.

The Cross Country Garden Club was delighted to contribute to this special community event, demonstrating once again how flowers, creativity, and a shared spirit of volunteerism can make an occasion truly memorable.

— Submitted by Claudia Purkey

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District V *Continued*

Crossroads Garden Club: *Connie Lenhart, April Zentmeyer, Co-Presidents*

"95 years of conserving, growing, designing, and playing outside in our gardens..."



A Bit of History: Crossroads Garden Club is proudly celebrating its 95th year. It started as the Garden Committee for **The Women's Club**, which was founded in 1921 for the advancement of women. The Women's Club Garden Section, federated in 1946, became the Crossroads Garden Club in 1968.

Recent Events: The 2026 flower design show, *Greens Show*, held at 2:00pm Sunday, November 15, 2026 at The Women's Club, in Hagerstown, featured Anthony Hess of Jordan and Hess Florists in Martinsburg, WV as well as basket raffles, floral designs, and door prizes.

We will decorate The Women's Club for December with extravagant floral designs. The **Miller House Museum**, Washington County Historical Society, 135 W. Washington Street, will be open for visitors featuring period Christmas décor; Crossroads will be responsible for the dining room. **Contact the Museum** for details.

The Federal Period Memorial Garden at the Women's Club (pictured right) will be put to rest for the winter.





Howard County Garden Club: *Linda Kangrga, President*

At the September meeting of the Howard County Garden Club, our Birds and Wildlife Committee Chair, Jenny Casasco, gave such a well put together report with such an important message that the club immediately responded that we needed to share it with all FGCMD clubs. Several members have already promised to turn off exterior lights for the well-being of the migratory birds.

According to **Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's BirdCast website**, we should turn off non-essential lights from dusk to dawn during critical spring and fall migration periods, March 1 – June 15 and August 15 – November 30. Jenny's presentation, reproduced below, is a wonderful way to convey this life-saving advice to the members of your club. Use the **Bird Highway** poster on page 23.

The Bird Highway Over Our Gardens

I want you to imagine that tonight, after we all go to bed, a highway opens up over our gardens.

You can't see it. There are no road signs and no traffic lights. But thousands of birds may be flying over us on their way south. And here are four things about fall migration that might surprise you.

- **Number one: Most migrating birds are traveling at night.** In fact, about 80 percent of North American migratory birds migrate at night. It's cooler, there are fewer predators, and the atmosphere is often more stable. So, while we're sleeping, there may be warblers, thrushes, vireos and other songbirds flying silently overhead.
- **Number two: Some of those birds are smaller than your hand—but they're making an astonishing journey.** A Scarlet Tanager, for example, can travel thousands of miles between its breeding grounds and South America. And many of the birds heading south in the fall are young birds making this incredible journey for the very first time.
- **Number three: Your garden can actually serve a gas station.** When these birds come down to rest, they're looking for food and water. That's why those berries we're tempted to prune away, those seed heads we're tempted to cut down, and even those insects hiding in our leaves are so important. So this fall, I'm suggesting that we don't make our gardens too tidy. Leave the coneflowers standing. Leave some fallen leaves. Let native berries remain on the shrubs. Keep a birdbath clean and full. We're not being lazy—we're running a wildlife rest stop!

And finally, here's the one that really surprised me:

- **One of the simplest things we can do for migrating birds is to turn off unnecessary outdoor lights at night.** Bright lights can disorient birds traveling through the night sky and draw them toward buildings and glass. During migration, even the lights around our own homes can become part of the problem.

So, when you go home tonight, look at your garden a little differently. What looks to us like a messy garden—seed heads, leaves, berries and insects—may actually be a restaurant, hotel, and gas station for a bird traveling hundreds or thousands of miles.

And while we're sleeping, that invisible highway is still busy. So perhaps this fall, the best thing we can do for our gardens is not to clean them up quite so much.

A Fun Way to Present It

Bring three things with you: a coneflower seed head, a small handful of leaves, and a photo of a Scarlet Tanager or warbler.

Hold up the seed head:

"To me, this is a dead flower. To a migrating bird, it's dinner."

Hold up the leaves:

"To me, these are leaves I should rake. To a bird, they're an insect buffet."

Then point upward:

"And all the while, there's a highway up there that we can't even see."



Scarlet Tanager Photo by Matt Felperin, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Photo used by permission from Cornell Lab of Ornithology



A Bird Bander Holding a Kentucky Warbler
Photo by Ray Stanfield, USFWS (Public Domain),
Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge

Howard County Garden Club Member Is Honored: Dessie Moxley, a member of the Howard County Garden Club (HCGC) for nearly 35 years, was recently designated an Honorary Lifetime Member of HCGC. The club membership bestowed this honor on her in recognition of the many outstanding efforts in support of the club. Dessie not only held numerous leadership positions within HCGC but also increased the club's visibility through her service as both the District Director and State President.

Dessie is known by many Maryland gardeners for her design talent, showcased in numerous workshops and flower shows, and through her thoughtful mentoring of others interested in classic floral design. The club honored Dessie at a ceremony during the club's July meeting during which we presented her with a decorative certificate and a bouquet of roses. Fewer than six people have been honored by this designation since it was created more than 10 years ago.



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District V *Continued*

Mount Airy Garden Club: *Barbara Rogers, President*



To celebrate our country's 250th Anniversary, Mount Airy Garden Club presented a Red, White, & Bloom Community Flower Show on Thursday October 1, 2026, 1:00pm – 6:00pm at the Carroll County Library in Mt. Airy. It was open to the public and free. Our theme of red, white, & blue was emphasized in all areas of the show. There were two divisions: Floral Design Through the Years and Horticulture.

In the Floral Design division, different time periods in our country's history were presented: Early Georgian (1714–1760), Colonial Williamsburg (1776), Industrial Revolution (1830–1901), Space (1958–Present), Op Art (Boomed in 1969), Tubular Design (2026–Beyond) and Companion Class Cascade Design.

The Horticulture entries were numerous. There were many unusual entries and a wide variety of not only annual and perennial cut flowers and container grown plants but also vegetables, nuts, and fruit grown by our club members.

A club challenge category added much interest to the show. Club members were given sack planters and Zea mays var. amylacea (Blue Jade) corn kernels to plant in an attempt to grow Blue Corn to celebrate our 250th Anniversary. There were many entries with various stages of growth, but only one had a mature blue corn for visitors to see.

We had two Educational Exhibits. The first one was a large display of many unusual "frogs" collected over many years. Visitors learned that the purpose of the frogs is for making floral designs. The second one was a Monstera deliciosa plant growth-over-time exhibit. Club members were given plant cuttings several months before the show to plant and enter in a contest to see who had the plant with the most leaves and growth by the time of the show.

Also judged were futuristic animals created from plant and horticultural materials from original ideas of youth group members that our club members work with every other month at the library.

Residents of Lorien Nursing Home in Mt. Airy work with club members each month too. They worked together to make floral designs with white pumpkins to enter in the show.

We really enjoyed doing this Flower Show. We worked very hard on getting everything ready and were extremely pleased with the positive comments and great turnout of the community for our show.



Op Art Entry



Cascade Entry



Blue Corn Entry



Winning Arrangement

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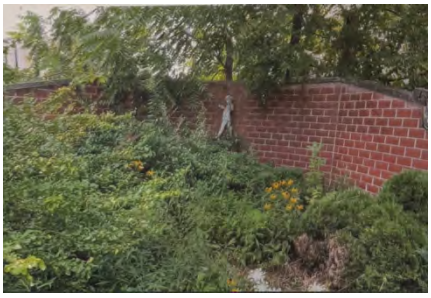
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District V *Continued*

Mountain Laurel Garden Club: *Barb Davis, Deborah Hutton, Co-Presidents*

Bringing New Life to the Jane Avery Memorial Garden

Mountain Laurel Garden Club Partners in a Community Restoration in Oakland, Maryland



Memorial Garden October 2025

What was an overgrown and nearly forgotten garden behind Our Town Theatre's Costume Shop in Oakland, Maryland, is being transformed into a welcoming place for remembrance, reflection, and natural beauty. The Jane Avery Memorial Garden was originally created as a quiet place to remember local children and others whose lives ended too soon.

The restoration is the result of a year-long collaboration between Mountain Laurel Garden Club (MLGC), Community Works Garrett County, Our Town Theatre (OTT), local businesses, and community volunteers. The partnership began in October 2025, when Lori Richards of Community Works Garrett County approached MLGC for assistance with the restoration. Richards has spearheaded and managed the overall project, securing grants, coordinating contractors and vendors, and bringing together the community partners needed to make the renovation possible. In April 2026, MLGC Co-Presidents Deborah Hutton and Barb Davis enlisted MLGC members to begin the hands-on restoration, taking responsibility for horticultural planning, garden design, and planting.



MLGC Member Suzie Sincell during Memorial Garden Clean Up April 2026

Volunteers removed years of accumulated brush, overgrown plants, and unwanted trees that had nearly overtaken the site. Two magnificent, mature specimens emerged as anchors for the new design: an old weeping cherry and a towering 30-foot arborvitae. Both were carefully pruned and preserved, providing structure, character, and a sense of continuity between the old garden and the new.

The overall design incorporates two relatively small garden beds, leaving room for a mulch pathway along the memorial wall. Visitors can now walk beside the wall, read the names inscribed on its bricks, and spend time remembering those honored there. Space was also reserved for a stone bench, creating a quiet place for reflection.

The planting design emphasizes seasonal interest, a variety of plant forms and textures, and a combination of native plants and carefully selected cultivars. Among the new additions are red-twig dogwood (*Cornus sericea* 'Pucker Up'), dwarf fothergilla (*Fothergilla gardenii*), summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia* 'Hummingbird'), 'Incrediball' hydrangea, 'Grape Crush' aromatic aster, Sombrero coneflowers, and 'Novapenrub' penstemon. Compact Mugo pine and 'Green Giant' arborvitae add evergreen structure. Additional perennials will be planted in spring to extend the flowering season and provide food and habitat for pollinators.

One of the most distinctive features of the renovated garden is a large stone water feature, created from a five-foot-long, three-foot-wide, two-foot-high rock already on the property. Rather than removing it, the team incorporated the stone into the design as a natural bubbler, adding the gentle sound and movement of water.

The restoration has been a true community partnership, combining the organizational leadership of Community Works Garrett County, the horticultural expertise of Mountain Laurel Garden Club, and the support of Our Town Theatre, local businesses, contractors, and volunteers. Under Lori Richards' leadership, Community Works secured important grant funding from the **Community Trust Foundation** and a substantial grant through **Lowe's Community Impact Program**. These grants made it possible to undertake major improvements, including hardscaping, masonry, and other essential elements of the renovation.

Lowe's contribution extended well beyond financial support. On October 21, the Oakland Lowe's store donated a full day of labor from 10 employees who joined community volunteers for "Red Vest Day." More than 20 people participated in the workday, helping to install pathways, spread mulch, remove additional overgrowth, and plant trees. The project also benefited from the generosity of local contractors and businesses who contributed their expertise and services. Together, these efforts demonstrate what can be accomplished when community organizations, businesses, and volunteers work toward a common goal.



October 21, 2026 Red Vest Day with 20+ Volunteers from Lowes, Community Works, OTT, and MLGC including Deborah Hutton (center plaid shirt), and Liz Gilbert (brown shirt pants and boots)

MLGC plans to develop a dedicated section of its website explaining the garden's phenology—how plants change through the seasons, from leaf emergence and flowering to seed development and winter interest. This will add an educational dimension to a garden already rich in meaning. A small volunteer maintenance committee, with representatives from MLGC and Our Town Theatre, is being considered to ensure that the garden remains healthy and welcoming.

For Mountain Laurel Garden Club, the Jane Avery Memorial Garden represents an opportunity to put horticultural knowledge into practice while working with community partners to restore a meaningful public space. What began with a conversation in October 2025 has grown into a remarkable collaboration, bringing together different skills, resources, and talents that returns a quiet place of remembrance to the people of Garrett County—a garden where beauty, nature, and memory can once again grow together.

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District V *Continued*

Tasker's Chance Garden Club: *Barb Falkenstein, President*



TCGC Garden Therapy Team, Diane Wilkinson (left) and Barb Falkenstein (right)

Tasker's Chance Garden Club's Garden Therapy team, Barbare Falkenstein and Diane Wilkinson, stimulate a sense of community and well-being for Frederick's Seniors at the Frederick Senior Center, while sharing a creative hands-on project that participants can take home and enjoy. Four times a year—fall, winter/holiday, spring, and summer—seniors look forward to gathering to make whatever seasonal design or arrangement Barb and Diane have planned for them. With a limited budget, the club supplies all the materials for the activities, making for a stress-free, fun-filled event.

For the summer project, the last for TCGC's 2025–2026 year, in honor of our country's 250th anniversary, seniors created patriotic planters with annuals and perennials of reds, whites, and blues, that our team provided for them. Diane Wilkinson (left) and Barb Falkenstein (right) in our TCGC aprons, are pictured with some of the patriotic planters that were created.

Our Garden Therapy workshops have become so popular with seniors that there is now a waiting list to participate. The workshops have also generated interest and requests to provide similar workshops in the community.

And 2026–2027 kicks off with our Fall Luncheon and Meeting!



TCGC Fall Luncheon 2026 (L-R): Lyn Witt, Janney Marshall, Amy Clapp, Ann Attanasio, Sue Basford, Connie Mason, Lisa Allen, Dreda Kelley, Roxanne Frank, Diane Wilkinson, Teri Yunes, Nancy Reding, Barb Falkenstein, Barbara Rhoads, Pam Robey, Jackie Bastide, Lora Coe, Andrea Hoffmaister, Susan Bittle, Protean Gibril, Margaret Cornely.

Town and Country Garden Club: *Patty Austin, President*



Town & Country Garden Club members enjoying the Denim & Diamond picnic!

Summer got off to a wonderful start with our Denim & Diamonds 75th Anniversary Summer Picnic, where we were joined by several former members, past presidents, and special guest, Donna Miller, President of Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland. We shared ideas for activities and programs members would enjoy in the coming year and began the exciting process of planning our 2026–2027 yearbook—a special project that came together beautifully through the time, talent, and enthusiasm of many members.

Throughout the summer, our members continued to put their love of gardening into action. Several members generously devoted their time to maintaining the gardens at Coffman's Nursing Home and the Blue Star Memorial, helping to keep these special spaces beautiful and welcoming.



Michele Kutzera & Donna Pietrzyk busy at the Blue Star Memorial.

Members also had the opportunity to attend a presentation by the **Potomac Valley Audubon Society**, hosted by Sunny Meadows Garden Center in Boonsboro, Maryland. The program focused on native plants for pollinators and wildlife, offering practical ideas for creating gardens that support butterflies, bees, birds, and other local wildlife. As members share what they learned with the club, we look forward to putting some of these ideas into practice in our own gardens.

And there is plenty more to look forward to this fall! Members are excited about an upcoming field trip to **Thanksgiving Farms**, where we will gather pumpkins, gourds, and other seasonal treasures. At our November meeting, these fall finds will inspire our creativity as members decorate pumpkins and create succulent arrangements to be shared with several local nonprofit organizations.

Adding to the excitement this year is a new club project: decorating the historic **Bowman House** in Boonsboro, Maryland, for the holiday season. We are especially looking forward to bringing our gardening talents and holiday spirit to this beautiful local landmark.

As Town & Country Garden Club continues to celebrate our now 76 years of conservation, community, and beauty, we look forward to another year filled with friendship, learning, service, creativity, and—of course—a little dirt under our fingernails!

— Submitted by Allison Thornton, Second Vice President, TCGC

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Committee News

Awards: *Linda Elias, Chair; Carolyn Magee, Co-Chair*

Awards Presented at the October 8, 2026 District V Semi-Annual Meeting, Holly Hills Country Club, Ijamsville, Maryland

– Article Submitted by Pat Louison, Green-Walled GC, District V

The following awards were announced, recognized, and presented at the District V Semi-Annual Meeting on October 8:

Mountain Laurel Garden Club – Conservation Committee: Linda Harris Chair; Donna Miller, Co-Chair and President of FGCMD. The Mountain Laurel Garden Club Conservation Committee received the Richard A. Johnson Environmental Education Award at a Ceremony and Reception originally held August 27, 2026 at the **University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES) Appalachian Laboratory** in Frostburg. The Awards included the Richard A. Johnson Environment Education Award Plaque and a check for $2,500 from the UMCES Appalachian Laboratory; a Certificate of Congressional Recognition from U.S. Congresswoman April McClain Delaney; and a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from U.S. Senator Angela Alsobrooks in celebration of the dedication to educating youth, fostering meaningful collaboration, and empowering their community through environmental stewardship.



Left: Certificate of Congressional Recognition from U.S. Congresswoman April McClain Delaney. Right: Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from U.S. Senator Angela Alsobrooks.



The Richard A. Johnson Environmental Education Award Plaque



The Environmental Education Award honors the memory of Richard A. Johnson, a well-known orthopedic surgeon in the Allegany County area. He passed away in 1990 leaving a legacy of a caring and dedicated physician, family man, and naturalist. The Laboratory honors his memory through its promotion of environmental education and the people who excel in its practice. The award, which is meant to aid ongoing environmental education efforts, may be given to individuals or to organizations. The award committee intends for the true beneficiaries to be the students of the community who learn from the activities of the environmental education programs.

Photos courtesy of the Mountain Laurel Garden Club Conservation Committee

Awards: The following two awards were originally presented at the NGC Annual Conference in May and presented again at the District V semi-annual meeting:

- Green-walled Garden Club and The Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc. – Youth Sculpture Award 2025 presented to Caitlin Nzuwah, a homeschooled student in the 5th grade, in appreciation for her participation in the National Garden Club, Inc. Youth Sculpture Contest, a Reindeer Sculpture.
- Tasker's Chance Garden Club and The Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc. – Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl 2025 Poster Contest Award presented to Krish Patel, First Place, Grade 4.

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Committee News *Continued*

Annual Meeting: *Betty Reeves, Chair*

Please Mark Your Calendars: On **April 27, 2027**, the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland's Annual Meeting will be held at Turf Valley Resort & Hotel, Ellicott City, MD. This will be the time to thank the outgoing administration for a job well done and the time to welcome in a new administration. Come and meet garden club members from all five districts in Maryland, shop with the vendors, take part in the silent auction, have lunch with your friends, and enjoy a wonderful program. It should be exciting!

You will be able to personally thank our outgoing administration and meet the incoming administration at the pre-dinner that will be held on Monday, **April 26, 2027**. Everyone is invited. Overnight accommodations will once again be available.

Please check the **FGCMD Calendar of Events page** for updated information. See **Special Guest for 2027 FGCMD Annual Meeting** for information on the scheduled guest speaker.

Blue Star & Gold Star Memorial Markers: *Carolyn MacGlashan, Chair; Nicki Schwab, Co-Chair*

On August 19, 2026, a rededication of one of the four original Blue Star Markers took place at the **Bay Country Welcome Center** north of Centreville, MD on U.S. Route 301. The marker, purchased in 1951 by the FGCMD, had been placed at the Western Shore entrance to the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and dedicated June 9,1953 by Governor Theodore McKeldin. It was removed years later by Maryland State Highway for construction and held in storage. Nicki Schwab recovered the marker and had it retrofitted with a post. With the assistance of Centreville's State Highway Department, it was relocated to the Bay Country Welcome Center. Thanks go to Nicki for her perseverance and determination in seeing this project come to fruition!



Blue Star Re-dedication at Bay Country Welcome Center 8/19/2026 – Standing (L-R): Sandy Wrightson, Nicki Schwab, Robin Lanham, Diana Bonner, Susie Middleton, Donna Miller, Anna O'Kelly, Ann Street. Kneeling (L-R): Carolyn Braverman, Linda Elias, and Carolyn MacGlashan.

The beautiful and moving rededication ceremony planned by Nicki included invited guests FGCMD President Donna Miller and past presidents Carolyn Braverman, Diana Bonner, Anna O'Kelly, Susie Middleton, and Nicki. Also attending were District I Director Ann Street, Assistant Director Linda Elias, Patriotic Chair Sandy Wrightson, QAC Garden Club President Robin Lanham, and Carolyn. All invited took an active part in the special ceremony, which included Blue Star Marker history; the singing of patriotic songs; the unveiling, dedication, and acceptance of the marker; and laying of a wreath. Lunch followed in Centreville.

At this time, we have two clubs working on projects for Blue Star Markers. Please feel free to contact me (**cmacglashan@gmail.com**) or Nicki (**mako261mom@aol.com**) with any questions or concerns you may have regarding markers.

Civic Improvement and Historic Preservation

Wreaths Across America, 2026: In December, several million volunteers will participate in laying holiday wreaths at the graves of fallen service members at numerous cemeteries across America. Many individuals, groups and organizations will be participating. How and when did this tradition begin?



DoD photo by Master Sgt. Jim Varhegyi, U.S. Air Force. Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In 1992, the Worcester Wreath Company in Harrington, Maine, ended up with a surplus of wreaths late in the holiday season. Wondering how to make use of the extra wreaths, owner Morrill Worchester recalled a childhood trip to Arlington National Cemetery. He came up with the idea of a way to honor the veterans he had seen buried there.

The Worcester family teamed up with the former U. S. Senator Olympia Snowe to arrange for the wreaths to be placed at Arlington in one of the cemetery's older sections. Several other people and companies stepped up and provided transportation to Arlington, and the extra wreaths were placed.

From there, wreath laying became an annual tradition, done quietly and privately at Arlington until 2005. That year, a photo of snow-covered wreaths at Arlington went viral on the internet and received widespread circulation. Suddenly, thousands of people all over the country wanted to do the same at their local cemeteries. By the end of 2006, Worcester's company supplied wreaths to over 250 state and national cemeteries.

Since 2008, Congress has proclaimed one Saturday in December each year as National Wreaths Across America Day. This year, on December 19, approximately two million graves across the country will receive wreaths, laid by volunteers. The **Wreaths Across America** website has more details on the origin of this program, including how to get your organization involved and **sponsor a wreath**.

The cost to sponsor a wreath is $17.00 per wreath. For every wreath donated, there is a "five-dollar-back" program that gives back to local communities. So far, they have raised 22 million dollars. Many organizations participate in this wonderful program. *— Joan Walker*

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Committee News *Continued*

NATURAL DISASTERS: *CHARLOTTE PENNINGTON, CHAIR*

The National Garden Club (NGC) established the **Natural Disasters USA Fund** in 1997 to receive contributions from garden club members to aid in replanting parks, community gardens, and other municipal areas. Through your donations, the Natural Disaster USA Fund has been able to grant monies to clubs needing assistance with restoration of garden-related areas devastated by natural disasters in their area.

The FGCMD Natural Disasters Committee encourages donations from our Statewide garden clubs. Donations are made through clubs or individuals. Having each garden club contribute an average of one dollar per member helps with these efforts.

Our more recent disasters have included flooding and tornadoes. Please know that even without horrific weather events, we still have disasters that affect our communities. The grants through Natural Disaster USA Funds are available to aid in restoring areas left devastated by floods and hurricanes.



How to Donate: To send donations, please fill out an online **FGCMD Donation Form**, designated for the Natural Disasters USA Fund. You may also have your donation named as an Honorary and Memorial Gift. (A digital certificate will be emailed to you along with a tax receipt for your donation). Mail your donation card to:

Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc.
P.O. Box 65172
Baltimore, MD 21209
Attn: Natural Disasters USA Fund

We appreciate your donations, and Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland thanks you.

ROBERT LEWIS BAKER MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP: *BETTY REEVES, CHAIR*

The $10,000 Robert Lewis Baker Memorial Scholarship is available to qualified students who are Maryland residents and enrolled as a full-time student in an eligible undergraduate junior, senior, or as a part-time graduate student in an Ornamental Horticulture or Landscape Architecture programs. Eligible students, who have a major course of study that is intended to lead to a career related to studies that promote the missions of the NGC/FGCMD organizations, are welcome to apply.

Please inform your family members, neighbors, or college students about this wonderful scholarship. Students can go to the scholarship link on the fgcofmd.org website for the application. The scholarship deadline is **February 1, 2027**. For info. on the application procedure and a scholarship application form, go to the FGCMD website at **www.fgcofmd.org** or contact Betty Reeves (**BReevesdesign@aol.com**).

YOUTH GARDENING, *JENNY HENRY, CHAIR*

On July 23, 2026, the Youth Gardening Chair attended the Centennial celebration of the **Gibson Island Garden Club** of District II. Gibson Island Garden club has been working with youth gardeners since the 1920s and leading the local youth on many educational programs to help the local youth learn many ways of getting to know about nature and the environment of the communities in which they live.



Posters Depicting the History of the Gibson Island Garden Club



Youth Gardening and Contests: Just a reminder about all youth award opportunities and updates on the new programs listed below.

Please encourage your club members to go to the **NGC Youth and Scholarships website** and download the new version of the updated **NGC Youth Garden Club Handbook** (PDF file), which includes all you need to know about forming, registering, and funding a Youth Garden Club; applying for awards, grants, and scholarships; and entering annual NGC youth contests. (Also, you can download a **printable black and white version**.)

All youth contests are due on **January 15, 2027**.

- High School Essay Contest (District, State and CAR levels only)–2026 -2027 topic: "Invasive Species and Their Effect on the Tree Canopy"
- Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest
- Poetry Contest–2026-2027 Topic: "Celebrate America's 250th Birthday with Red, White and Blue"
- High School Distinguished Service Project Award
- Youth Pollinator Gardens Grant
- Youth Recyclable Sculpture Contest
- Black & White Printable NGC Youth GC Handbook
- Do Something Green Workbook
- Ecology Warriors Workbook
- Pollinator Power Book
- NGC Minor Photo Release for Publication & Website

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Council News

Environmental Gardening and Landscape Design School: *Linda Harris, Chair*

Landscape Design School Course 3: April 14 & 15, 2027

The Greenhouse Classroom, Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave., Baltimore, MD 21209

Landscape Design School Course 3 is scheduled for April 14 & 15, 2027. This course includes modules on the landscape design process, using woody and herbaceous plants in the landscape, and designing landscapes with maintenance in mind. All of this culminates into a 3-hour session creating your own home garden landscaping plan with instructor Claire Jones. This is your opportunity to take back some great information to be used in projects at your garden club. For a brochure/registration form, go to the FGCMD **Calendar Page** or **Landscape Design Council front page**. Contact Linda Harris at **lindaharris355@aol.com** for more information.

Day One – Wednesday, April 15, 2027

- *Graphics Interpretation*, presented by Colleen Vacelet, President Intreegue Design.
- *Woody Plants in the Landscape*, presented by Colleen Vacelet.
- *Landscape Design with Maintenance in Mind*, presented by Kelley Oklesson, Owner, Groundsmith Collective Design Firm.
- *Landscape Design Process*, presented by Kelley Oklesson.
- *Outdoor Cylburn Arboretum Activity*, led by Lisa Kuder, Native Plants & Landscape Specialist, UMD Extension.

Day Two – Thursday, April 15, 2027

- *Creating Your Own Landscape Plan*, presented by Claire Jones, Principle, Claire Jones Landscapes.
- *Herbaceous Plants in the Landscape*, presented by Carrie Engel, Greenhouse Manager, Valley View Farms.
- ***Review & Exam***



Click Here for the School Brochure and Registration Form (PDF file).

Objectives of Landscape Design School

- *Develop a greater sense of appreciation, pride, and knowledge about our private, public, and historical gardens.*
- *Become better informed to promote positive changes in our surroundings to encourage beauty, utility, convenience, sound ecological practice, and ease of maintenance.*
- *Encourage a better understanding of the landscape design process to promote landscapes that will sustain sound management.*
- *Stimulate interest in all phases of landscape design, including community planning.*
- *Develop a contingent of qualified Landscape Design Consultants to serve in such decision-making areas of public life as providing leadership, educational programs, scholarships, awards, and promoting better landscape design.*

Landscape Design Council: *Betty Reeves, Chair*



On a beautiful October day, the three FGCMD councils—Landscape Design, Environmental Consultants, and Gardening Consultants Councils—had a Tri-council tour of the beautiful Walnut Hill. Members enjoyed a guided tour by homeowner Penney Hubbard and Kathy Hudson, the editor of the book *On Walnut Hill*. Not only did our hostesses speak about the many beautiful plants and how they are used in the landscaping, but they also focused on how the hardscaping had been incorporated into the gardens. After a lovely tour, everyone left with a beautiful copy of *On Walnut Hill*.

Council Awards: Just a reminder, that each council offers monetary awards for your garden club projects. If your garden club happened to miss this year's deadline, November 1, start planning to submit your projects for next year's awards. The councils offer these awards annually, and they want to help with your club's projects. You can go to the **Councils and Schools page of the FGCMD website** to get details on each award and download the applications:

Garden clubs and garden club members can apply for any of the Landscape Design Council monetary awards annually by completing one of the award applications on the **LDC page on the FGCMD website** and submitting the application to the LDC chairman by **November 1**.

Landscape Design Award for Public Places

Habitat for Humanity Award

Mae Scott Tapestry Landscape Award

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Council News *Continued*

PROGRAM LIAISON: *LINDA HARRIS*

Special Guest for 2027 FGCMD Annual Meeting



The special guest speaker for the 2027 FGCMD Annual Meeting at Turf Valley Resort on **April 27, 2027** will be **David Pippin**, floral arrangement designer and educator. He will be demonstrating six floral designs that will be raffled off to those attending. The theme of these designs will be "Art Blooms" where David will interpret various pieces of artwork with flowers. David will be coming from the Richmond, VA area; he as a B.S. in Agricultural Education and is adjunct professor in the Horticulture Department at Reynolds Community College where he teaches floral design, Practical Horticulture, and Horticultural Botany. He has been the floral designer for The Executive Mansion of Virginia since 2014 and has done floral design programs for FGCMD's District II. He was recommended by Anna O'Kelly and is also an instructor in the Landscape Design School. We hope you will join us for an exciting floral design program!



The Gardens of Maryland Photo Gallery



Photo from Hampton Garden Club

In addition to the photos in your news items, please send photos of your favorite garden spots in your yard, in your district or anywhere in Maryland to:
gardenews@fgcofmd.org
Meanwhile, revisit these photos from District clubs, and challenge your botanical taxonomy expertise to identify the photos below.






Photos in the Wild: Can you identify these plants?



Photo from Calvert County Garden Club

The FGCMD President's Project
is inviting you to submit your applications for a "***Be a Steward of the Earth***" grant.

Click here to apply for Garden Club Grant: (Application and Instructions)

Click here for Donation Card

Healthy Planet Pledge for Individuals Download Here

Healthy Planet Pledge for Garden Clubs Download Here

Deadline for Submission:
February 28, 2027

Support Our FGCMD Scholarship Fund

…and become a Life Member!

Life Memberships may be purchased for $75 per individual. Proceeds go entirely to the FGCMD Life Member Scholarship Fund, which awards scholarships annually to qualified students in accredited U.S. colleges and universities.

Life members receive a **Black-eyed Susan pin.**



State Life Membership Application

Member Support link:
fgcofmd.org/membersupport/

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Upcoming FGCMD Events

*Check the calendar on the FGCMD website (**https://fgcofmd.org/calendar/**) for updates on scheduled events.*

December 2026	
4	Dorchester Garden Club Holiday Gala, Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Ballroom, 9:30am–2:30pm, luncheon, vendors, auction, program by Kate Hugo Vernon from Arrangers Market, $60 pp. For more details and to RSVP by 11/20/26, go to: **Dorchester Garden Club - Growing Communities Through Gardening**
5	The York Manor Garden Club is having its annual fundraiser at Mercy Ridge Retirement Community, 10:00am–2:00pm. **More Information**
January 2027	
12	State Board Meeting via ZOOM
February 2027	
3	District I Board Meeting, Wednesday at 9:45am, Cambridge Center, 416-418 Race Street Rm 101, Cambridge, MD 21613
23	FGCMD Judges Council Meeting Tuesday, 10:00am,Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Severna Park, MD
March 2027	
3	District I Annual Meeting, Location TBA
4	District V Annual Meeting, Holly Hills Country Club, Ijamsville, MD
5	District III Annual Meeting at Valley Mansion, Cockeysville, MD
12	District II Annual meeting; Comfort Inn, Bowie, MD
April 2027	
6, 7, & 8	Maryland Daffodil Society Show, Vollmer Center at Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave., Baltimore MD 21209. Setup and entries April 6 and 7; show free and open to the public 2:00–7:30pm April 7 and 10:00am–3pm, April 8. 2027 Show schedule, hours and other details will be posted on **http://www.marylanddaffodil.org**.
9–11	Art In Bloom at the Washington County Museum of Fine Arts in Hagerstown, MD hosted by Town & Country Garden Club and the museum **Information**
12, 13, & 14	The 44th Annual District II Daffodil Show and NGC Standard Flower Show, Historic Baldwin Hall, 1358 Millersville Road, Millersville, MD 21108. For Information, please contact: Liz Williams, 443-474-8748 or **mliz.williams825@gmail.com**.
14 &15	Landscape Design School Course 3, The Greenhouse Classroom, Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave, Baltimore, MD 21209 **Brochure**
27	FGCMD Annual Meeting, Turf Valley Resort
May 2027	
4	Talbot County Garden Club Garden Symposium: "Cultivating Beauty from the Outside In," 9am–3pm, The Oaks Waterfront Hotel, 25876 Royal Oak Road, Easton, MD 21601. Tickets available in January. **Details**
14–16	2027 NGC 98th Annual Convention, Madison, Wisconsin **Information**
17–29	From Chelsea to the Welsh Hills: A Garden Connoisseur's Tour **Information**
25	FGCMD Judges Council Meeting Tuesday, 10 AM. Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Severna Park, MD
September 2027	
13–27	Austria & Hungary: A Curated Garden and Cultural Journey: **https://tri.ps/NtEPT**
October 2027	
6	District I Board Meeting, Location TBA
9	The Lutherville Garden Club Blue Star Memorial Dedication, October 9, 2027, at the Lutherville Volunteer Fire Company, in Lutherville, MD
17–20	2027 CAR-SGC Conference hosted by National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc., Arlington VA, Tri-Refresher. More details to follow.

*Check the calendar on the FGCMD website (**https://fgcofmd.org/calendar/**) for updates on scheduled events.*

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Bird Highway

The Bird Highway Over Our Gardens

I want you to imagine that tonight, after we all go to bed, a highway opens up over our gardens.

You can't see it. There are no road signs and no traffic lights. But thousands of birds may be flying over us on their way south. And here are four things about fall migration that might surprise you.

- **Number one: Most migrating birds are traveling at night.** In fact, about 80 percent of North American migratory birds migrate at night. It's cooler, there are fewer predators, and the atmosphere is often more stable. So, while we're sleeping, there may be warblers, thrushes, vireos and other songbirds flying silently overhead.
- **Number two: Some of those birds are smaller than your hand—but they're making an astonishing journey.** A Scarlet Tanager, for example, can travel thousands of miles between its breeding grounds and South America. And many of the birds heading south in the fall are young birds making this incredible journey for the very first time.
- **Number three: Your garden can actually serve a gas station.** When these birds come down to rest, they're looking for food and water. That's why those berries we're tempted to prune away, those seed heads we're tempted to cut down, and even those insects hiding in our leaves are so important. So, this fall, I'm suggesting that we don't make our gardens too tidy. Leave the coneflowers standing. Leave some fallen leaves. Let native berries remain on the shrubs. Keep a birdbath clean and full. We're not being lazy—we're running a wildlife rest stop!

And finally, here's the one that really surprised me:

- **One of the simplest things we can do for migrating birds is to turn off unnecessary outdoor lights at night.** Bright lights can disorient birds traveling through the night sky and draw them toward buildings and glass. During migration, even the lights around our own homes can become part of the problem.

So, when you go home tonight, look at your garden a little differently. What looks to us like a messy garden—seed heads, leaves, berries and insects—may actually be a restaurant, hotel, and gas station for a bird traveling hundreds or thousands of miles.

And while we're sleeping, that invisible highway is still busy. So perhaps this fall, the best thing we can do for our gardens is not to clean them up quite so much.



Scarlet Tanager Photo by Matt Felperin, Cornell Lab of Ornithology
Photo used by permission from Cornell Lab of Ornithology



A Bird Bander Holding a Kentucky Warbler
Photo by Ray Stanfield, USFWS (Public Domain),
Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge

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