

The North Carolina Gardener

"Growing Together"
Fall 2026

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF NORTH CAROLINA, INC.
Member: National Garden Clubs, Inc. South Atlantic Region (SAR)
Fall 2026-Vol. 94 No.1

Table of Contents

Table of contents	**page 2**
Elected Officers	page 3
President's Message	page 4
From the Desk of our First Vice President	page 5
Editor's Note	page 6
Becoming a Flower Show Judge…	pages 7-8
Flower Show School I	pages 9-10
News From the Eastern Carolina Flower Show Judges Council	page 11
Key Information From the Flower Show Judges Council	page 12
New Program to Inspire Floral Designers	page 13
GCNC Landscape Design School Schedule	page 14
Special Interest Articles	**page 15**
Blue and Gold Star Markers	pages 16-18
Native Plant News	page 19
North Carolina Nature Conservancy	page 20
Disaster Relief in North Carolina	page 21
How a Designer Plans an Edible Landscape	pages 22-24
From the Pamlico to Cape Fear: The Remarkable Journey of Bath's Camelias	pages 25-30
Pollinator Parties!	pages 31-32
Club Tidings	**Page 33**
Garden Club of North Carolina District Map	page 34
Lake Norman Garden Club D1-2	pages 35-36
Transylvania Garden Club D1-2	page 37
Mooresville Garden Club D3	pages 38-40
District 4 Update	page 41
Flower Lore Garden Club D4	page 42
Old Salem Garden Club D4	page 43
Yadkin Valley Garden Club D4	pages 44-45
Anderson Creek Garden Club D8	pages 46-48
Steel Magnolias Garden Club D10	pages 49-50
Garden Bees D11	pages 51-52
Coastal Garden Club D11	pages 53-55
New Hanover Garden Club D11	page 56
National Garden Club Information	page 57

Summer 2026-Vol. 93. No. 1

ELECTED OFFICERS 2025-2027

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On our cover: Bess Treadwell Master Flower Show Judge demonstrates a floral design using common grocery store flowers for garden club members. In a matter of minutes her experienced eye for composition and color created the arrangement featured on the front cover. Bess is an award-winning floral designer with a passion for her craft who freely shares her talent and experience with anyone interested in learning.



Gardener Quarterly Newsletter Schedule:

Issue	Submission Deadline	Publish Date
Spring (Apr-Jun)	March 1	April 1
Summer (Jul-Sep)	June 1	Jul 1
Fall (Oct-Dec)	September 1	October 1
Winter (Jan-Mar)	December 1	January 1

Our mission is to provide education, resources, and networking opportunities for our members and to promote the love of gardening, floral design, civic and environmental responsibility.

President's Message

Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc.
Charles' Thyme

Hello Fellow Garden Club Members,

As August comes to a close, we begin to welcome the familiar signs of fall. The "-ber" months are just around the corner, bringing cooler temperatures, colorful leaves, flannel shirts, and, for many of us, a warm bowl of homemade soup. While summer may be winding down, an exciting season of Garden Club activities is just beginning.

Many clubs will be resuming regular meetings in September, creating opportunities to reconnect with friends, welcome new members, and strengthen the bonds that make our organization so special. As always, "Members Matter," and I hope each of you enjoys the fellowship and inspiration that comes from gathering together once again.

We are entering one of the busiest times of the year. Our Fall Board of Directors Meeting will be held on September 22, 2026, and I look forward to seeing many of you there.

The Landscape Design School, Course 2, will be held at the JC Raulston Arboretum on October 5–6, 2026. Please consider attending and supporting this important educational program.

Flower Show School, Course 1, will take place at the JC Raulston Arboretum on October 26–28, 2026. We continue to need qualified flower show judges, and this course provides an excellent opportunity for learning and growth. Clubs may also wish to sponsor a student who would otherwise be unable to attend. It promises to be an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

During October, GCNC officers will be visiting Districts 4, 5, 10, and 11. We look forward to meeting with members across the state and hearing your ideas, concerns, and successes. Please let us know how the Garden Club of North Carolina can better serve you and your club.

Thank you for the countless ways you enrich the lives of our members, families, and communities. Your dedication, service, and passion are what make the Garden Club of North Carolina such a strong and vibrant organization.

With gratitude,

Charles McLendon
President
Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc.





From the desk of our First Vice President, Marilyn Wright

A new resource for our members. We now have a wonderful collection of garden videos for your viewing pleasure. Program speaker cancels at the last minute? Show a 30-minute video.

GO TO .....

GCNC website

Member section

Choose 'VIDEO CAFÉ" from left menu.



Editor's Note
Landes Rigby Coastal Garden Club D11



I want to thank all the members who submitted articles for this issue and for the even greater number of members who take the time to read all the way through to the end! The objective of this publication is to share what's happening in our clubs across the state, to celebrate their successes while inspiring other clubs to try new things.

The feature of the Fall 2026 issue is North Carolina Flower Show School. Education is one of the key objectives across all clubs and groups at the local, district and state level. There is still time to register for Course 1 *Growing, Staging, Exhibiting, Judging*. The course will be held at the JC Raulston Arboretum between October 26-28th. Anyone with an interest in learning more about horticulture and floral design, taught by experienced instructors, can attend. Even if you don't think you want to become a judge, this is a great opportunity to expand your floral knowledge!

The club reports included in this issue represent the "tip of the ice burg " for what is achieved by members across the state benefiting their communities. Each time I speak to a member from another area, I continue to be impressed with the effort, creativity and community outreach happening every day through the coordinated efforts of our clubs.

I look forward to hearing about what's coming next!

Becoming a Flower Show Judge and What it Means to Me

Submitted by Bonnie Giehl, Coastal GC

Flower Show School is a comprehensive program that teaches all you need to know about judging, entering, competing, chairing and writing a schedule for an NGC flower show. There are 4 courses, each generally scheduled over a 2-3 day period, and each with a specific curriculum that includes horticulture, design, and flower show procedure (FSP)

These schools educate a person on how to become an accredited National Garden Club Flower Show Judge.

In addition, accredited Flower Show Judges must continuously earn exhibition and judging credits and regularly attend NGC advanced symposiums to remain in "Good Standing"

If you are considering becoming a flower show judge, planning to chair a flower show, or simply want to learn more, your first step is to attend Course 1.

The accreditation process will demand your focused effort, but the reward will be great in knowledge gained and friendships made.

I love being an accredited National Garden Club Flower Show Judge. In addition to gaining a vast wealth of horticultural knowledge and gardening skills, I've met lots of interesting people and have become part of a vibrant community of flower design enthusiasts and plant lovers in many areas.

Becoming a Flower Show Judge and What it Means to Me

Submitted by Bonnie Giehl, Coastal GC

I enjoy the fun, work and satisfaction in helping organize, promote and run successful NGC flower shows.

I also enjoy creating award-winning designs by applying the Elements and Principles of Design, collecting and displaying horticulture exhibits correctly and the challenge of writing an accurate NGC Flower Show schedule.

Being an NCG Flower Show Judge is awesome, and it's an honor to represent such a great organization.

NCG is the largest gardening organization in the world. Overall, NGC promotes the love of gardening, floral design, civic and environmental responsibility and helps coordinate the activities of state and local garden clubs in the U.S. and abroad.



Bonnie Giehll Master Flower Show Judge

Flower Show School 1, October 26-28
Tri-Fold Flyer
Submitted by Mary Vacek

Come Join us for Education and Learning to become a NGC National Flower Show Judge. You will meet new friends And expand your horizons.

We will accept late registrations

Save the Date: Flower Show School II
April 11-13, 2027 Raleigh, NC



Our Instructors

Gina Jogan
Design and Flower Show Procedure
Gina has been an Instructor of Design and Flower Show Procedure for NGC's Flower Show Schools (FSS) since 2002 and NGC Symposia, Design and Allied topics since 2004. She is an National Garden Clubs (NGC) Accredited Master Flower Show Judge, and Master Emeritus Consultant in NGC Gardening Consultant and Landscape Design. Gina is 2025-2027 NGC Flower Shows and FSS Chair.

Jan Griffin
Horticulture
Jan moved from the Seattle area to Florida where all the plants she knew would not thrive in Florida's climate. She joined a Garden Club and started her quest for learning about other varied and interesting plants. She became a NCG Flower Show Judge. Jan now teaches floral design classes as well as horticulture for flower show schools and has developed several horticulture programs, for clubs, judges, and civic groups.
Being actively involved in the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and Florida Flower Show judges keeps her busy. She has served as horticulture chairman for six flower shows and several district shows. Her interests other than Garden Club are her family, golf, and working in her friend's florist shop. Her comment to all her wonderful design friends is that 'you need great horticulture to create great designs'!

Required Reading

- *Handbook for Flower Shows 2017 Edition* revised July 2025, digital version is available free online at www.gardenclub.org/flower-show-schoolresources
  Headquarters phone # 800-550-6007
- *Outlines of Period Flower Arrangement by Frances J. Hannay. Available online at the NGC Store at www.gardenclub.org for $5.00.*

All taking courses for credit must:
- Attend all sessions. Be on time.
- Have attendance verified.
- Bring *Handbook for Flower Shows 2017*, Revised July 2025.
- Outlines provided to study
- Pencils
- Review Page 124 of Handbook For FS, Course 1

Study Outline will be emailed in advance to registrants.
Please review material to understand what will be taught by the instructors.

LODGING
Hotel Information
Ramada Inn
1520 Blue Ridge Parkway
Raleigh, NC 27607
919-832-4100
Room Rates $89 plus tax
Buffet Breakfast included
Deadline to book a room is
October 15, 2026

FLOWER SHOW SCHOOL

Course I

Growing, Staging, Exhibiting, Judging
October 26-28, 2026
JC Raulston Arboretum 4415
Beryl Road
Raleigh, NC 27636

Sponsored by
North Carolina
State Judges Council

State Flower Show Chairman
Mary Vacek
936-689-0328
mary.o.vacek@icloud.com

Registrar
Connie Goodson
1320 N. River Drive
Surf City, NC 28445
910-526-1898

Flower Show School 1, October 26-28
Tri-Fold Flyer
Submitted by Mary Vacek

FLOWER SHOW SCHOOL is a comprehensive program with all you need to know about judging, entering, competing and chairing a National Garden Clubs (NGC) flower show.

Four (4) courses are scheduled over a two-three (2-3) day period each with its own curriculum in horticulture, design, and Flower Show Procedure (FSP) and may be taken in any order. **Course 1** is the perfect place to start!

All are welcome to attend. NGC members who take the full course with examinations are eligible for credit.

- Become a flower show judge!
- Plan a beautiful, educational flower show!
- Learn more about horticulture and design!

Join this unique experience. Become an active part of flower shows. Learn more about growing, preparing, planning, staging, and judging for smooth, seamless, successful shows!

Course 1 is facilitated through a variety of methods by NGC accredited, qualified instructors with outlines provided. See the NGC Handbook for flower shows and all related forms on GardenClub.org.

Learn:

- To display and critique horticulture and floral design
- Point-scoring to evaluate how entries are judged and see what it takes to get the blue ribbon.
- About awards, types of shows, and what committees are needed to produce a show.

Register early to guarantee space and supplies. Garden clubs are encouraged to sponsor and provide registration for at least one member

Interested in learning more about flower shows? Visit NGC Flower Shows on GardenClub.org.

FLOWER SHOW SCHOOL Course 1 AGENDA

Flower Show Procedure (FSP) & Design - Gina Jogan

Horticulture ~ Jan Griffin

Possession of Handbook required for CREDIT. Must be on time and seated when sessions begin and attend all sessions. Please bring pencils, clipboard will be provided. Personal devices must be silenced throughout all sessions and Exams.

Monday, October 26, 2026
1:15 Registration
2:00 Announcements
2:30-4:30 Flower Show Procedure (FSP)

Tuesday & Wednesday, October 27-28

8:00 (Tuesday) FSP Exam
8:00 (Wednesday) Design Exam
8:00 (Thursday) Horticulture Exam

8:30 - 9:00 Registration
9:00 - 9:15 Announcements
9:15 - 10:15 Design or Horticulture
10:15 - 10:30 Break
10:30 - 12:30 Design or Horticulture
12:30 - 1:00 Lunch
1:00 - 2:00 Design or Horticulture
2:00 - 2:15 Break
2:15 - 3:15 Practice Point Scoring
3:15 - 3:30 Break
3:30 - 4:30 Point Scoring

Flower Show School Course I October 26-28

Deadline to Register October 10th, 2026
Complete form and mail check payable to NCFS Judges Council
to Registrar Connie Goodson
1320 N. New River Dr
Surf City, NC 28445
conniejog@gmail.com

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____
Your Garden Club _____

Full Course, plus exam and lunch ___ $170

Full Course, no exam and lunch ___ $160

One Day - $80 + $20 Lunch

Total Enclosed _____

Checks payable to:
North Carolina State Judges Council
No refunds after October 15, 2026

More information is availaibe on the GCNC website

News From the Eastern Carolina Flower Show Judges Council
submitted by Bonnie Giehl

The Eastern Carolina Flower Show Judges Council held their fall semi-annual meeting on Wednesday, August 26, 2026 at the Shallotte Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall in Shallotte, N.C.

In attendance were 10 of their 14 members.

A very interesting and productive meeting was held, several important topics were discussed including the importance of attending and supporting Flower Show School I, October 26-28. It was unanimously agreed by those in attendance that a $250.00 donation be made from the treasury to Flower Show School I.

Other topics of discussion were the State Flower Show to be held in conjunction with the Garden Club of North Carolina's May, 2027 annual meeting in Wilmington, planning the ECJC Flower Show in August, 2027 and the importance of supporting the Flower Show Judges Council of North Carolina. Like many states throughout the country, our number of judges is declining and the coming together in membership unity is necessary and needed.

A "Floral Design Challenge" was the interesting and educational program was presented by Vice President Sherry Jeffries. Three (3) members were given the same plant material, and the photos show the creative designs that were done by Charles McLendon, Connie Goodson and Marge Comer.

The next scheduled Meeting will be March 24, 2027 in the Jacksonville area.







Key Information From the Flower Show Judges Council of North Carolina and Meet the New Officers

submitted by Bonnie Giehl

The membership of the Flower Show Judges Council of North Carolina (FSJCNC) are National Garden Club (NGC) accredited flower show judges. Student judges who have passed three courses of Flower Show School and are active members of an NGC garden club may become provisional members. It is advantageous for all levels of judges, including Student Judges, to belong to their local judges' council – per the NGC Handbook for Flower Shows.

The Purpose of FSJCNC is to further the education of members in floral design and horticulture through educational programs, flower shows and symposiums, support NGC Flower Show Schools and symposiums, and to promote the standards and ethics of flower show judging. The Council will strive to create a caring community that fosters friendship, support and communication among the members.

FSJCNC shall assist garden clubs and their members in sponsoring NGC flower shows and encourage garden club members to become accredited NGC Flower Show Judges.

Future plans are to have at least two (2) FSJCNC meetings per year. One (1) of these meetings will be in conjunction with the annual convention of the Garden Club of North Carolina and the other scheduled at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

We now have three (3) Area Councils consisting of the following: Eastern, Piedmont East/Raleigh and Winston Salem areas. The Area Councils encourage members by providing educational programs, study groups, practice and the exchange of ideas to keep abreast of the current NGC Flower Show Handbook.

The current FSJCNC membership is 31 (thirty-one) members. That number will decline at the end of the year due to several members going Emeritus and others that will not be renewing their credentials.



New Program to Inspire Floral Designers

Submitted by Bess Treadwell Master Flower Show Judge
Member of Coastal Garden Club

The Coastal Garden Club in Shallotte sponsors a Flower Show every other year. In order to do help with participation, we teach our current and new members Horticulture and Floral Design at each meeting.

Members bring in horticulture exhibits from their gardens in what we call 'Grow and Show.' Our Horticulture Chair talks about these exhibits for 5 - 7 minutes. There is also a design workshop where members bring in flowers and a container and put together a floral design with the help of our member flower show judges.

This year we decided to expand our Floral Design time by having two workshops outside of our regular meetings. Bess Treadwell, Master Flower Show Judge, will present 2 @`two hour workshops. The first will feature a basic line design to be held on October 16th. Each member will pay a small fee to cover all costs for the materials. How fun to go home with the knowledge of floral mechanics along with a beautiful floral design? The second workshop is scheduled for April 16th, 2027, and will focus on color. After the second workshop each participant will go home with a color wheel along with a floral design. Whether you just want to make home flower arrangements or enter a flower show, these workshops will be fun and educational.

The purposes of a National Garden Club Flower Show.

(Page 1 of the National Garden Club Flower Show Handbook.)

1. To educate club members and the viewing public.
2. To stimulate interest in Horticulture and Floral Design.
3. To provide an outlet for creative expression.
4. To communicate National Garden Club goals and objectives.

Save the Date: GCNC Landscape Design School Schedule

We are excited to share that Landscape Design School will return to North Carolina this October.

We have reserved space at the JC Raulston Arboretum for Monday, October 5th, and Tuesday, October 6th. We are pleased to offer an excellent group of instructors, each with expertise in the subject area they will be teaching. We are fortunate to have such a strong pool of instructors here in North Carolina.

We are planning to offer Course 3 and Course 4 at the JC Raulston Arboretum in the spring and fall of 2027, followed by Course 1 in the spring of 2028. This schedule will help students who began in October 2023 complete their courses within five years. LDS policy allows seven years to complete all four courses required for the Consultant designation.

We will continue to offer this rotation of courses, but we cannot do it without your interest and support. Please consider taking the classes and joining a community of lifelong learners. Whether you are working on your own landscape or helping your club with a civic project, the knowledge you gain can make a meaningful difference. We hope you will join us!

Important Recordkeeping Reminder

If you take an in-person or Zoom Landscape Design School course in another state, please contact me so I can send your Form 6 or Form 7 to that state chairperson. This step ensures your course completion is recorded properly.

Thank you for the support of the Landscape Design School by the Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc. Board members!

I look forward to seeing you all in school!

Sandy Anastasio

The Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc.

Landscape Design School Chair

LDS is held in the beautiful JCRA facility





Special Interest Articles

Garzania rigens, photo courtesy of Barbara Stone Coastal Garden Club

Blue and Gold Star Markers
submitted by Paula Hartman

Blue and Gold Star Memorial Markers – Update 2026

This year was an exciting year for this NGC Project. The Blue Star Memorial and Highway Markers have been placed by local garden clubs all over the United States. We are proud of these tributes to our servicemen and women who have served and are serving in our Armed Forces. This endeavor started at the end of World War II and continues to be supported by our members.

In 2015, NGC added the Gold Star Families Memorial Marker to honor the families of those who lost their lives in the defense of our country.

Garden Clubs of North Carolina have placed over 230 Blue Star here in our state. We are grateful to those clubs who have participated and supported this endeavor. We now have placed 11 Gold Star markers since its inception.

This year we witnessed a beautiful moving dedication by Emerald Isle Garden Club whose past president, Tula Satterfield, gave testimony of her Gold Star family status. Duplin County Historical Society also dedicated a Gold Star Families Marker among many other monuments honoring our fallen heroes.

We are looking forward to placing a marker in front of the new Carolina Museum of the Marine in Jacksonville in the near future sponsored by Gardenerettes Garden Club. Two by-way markers (one Blue and the other Gold) sponsored by Greensboro Council of Garden Clubs, Inc. have arrived and are awaiting a dedication date. In addition, Garden Club of North Carolina is sponsoring a Blue Star marker in Kenansville at the Duplin County Veterans Museum in Warsaw. This sponsoring group also recently placed a Gold Star Families Memorial Marker at their historic Duplin Courthouse.

Blue and Gold Star Markers
submitted by Paula Hartman

All of these dedications are unique and special to those attending. The addition of Gold Star Families Markers show the commitment of our National Garden Club to show the significance of our armed forces those who have served or are serving.

I ask all of the garden clubs of North Carolina to consider placing a Blue or Gold Star marker in their communities. It can be a simple By-Way Marker in a neighborhood park, or one in front of a VA facility or historic landmark. Also, we should have markers in all of our state's Rest Areas. And remember, that the cost of the marker ($2460) or by-way marker ($685) should not deter you as many civic minded groups would welcome this opportunity to honor our veterans. Let us continue our resolve to honor all who have served and are serving,

"All to see, less we forget, all those who keep us free."

Please contact me, Paula Hartman, NC Chair of Blue and Gold Star Programs at

Paulamhartman1947@gmail.com or 25 670 3233



Blue and Gold Star Markers
submitted by Paula Hartman





Submitted by Marilyn Wright

Native Plant News

NORTH CAROLINA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The NC Native Plant Society promotes the enjoyment and conservation of North Carolina's native plants and their habitats through education, protection, cultivation, and advocacy.

ncwildflower.org/join-us

The North Carolina Native Plant Society, headquartered in Greensboro NC, is a valuable resource for garden club members. The Society maintains an extensive archive of its quarterly newsletters from 1951, when the organization began, to 2026. The website has a lengthy list o potential speakers in the "Speakers Bureau." A garden club member can locate a nearby chapter to join and learn about field trips in their area. With 11 chapters across the state and over 2,400 members, NC Native Plant Society has become a "something for everyone" organization. Why join this group? There are at least 4 good reasons:

- Explore new places in North Carolina
- Improve your plant identification skills
- Learn more about North Carolina's flora
- Have the satisfaction of saving an endangered native plant species and eradicate the "bad players", the invasives, in the plant world.









Submitted by Marilyn Wright

NORTH CAROLINA NATURE CONSERVANCY

Places We Protect

Green Swamp Preserve North Carolina

LET'S GO FOR A HIKE



The Green Swamp is famous for its carnivorous plants and magnificent orchids. The Brunswick County Sheriff's Office has had to rescue several hikers from the Green Swamp Preserve. Please follow these recommendations to ensure your safety: Bring water, wear sturdy shoes, protect yourself from ticks and mosquitos and stay on the trail (marked with red diamonds). You can easily get lost if you leave the trail.

Description

The Green Swamp Preserve contains some of the country's finest examples of a healthy longleaf pine savanna managed with controlled burning. The trail is 1.3 miles one-way (2.6 miles in total) and 2-3 feet wide. The trail is mostly flat, with no significant steep slopes. The walking surface is uneven with dirt, grasses, inundated water and exposed roots; we advise wearing closed-toed shoes. The route is marked with red diamonds on the trees, and it starts at the parking lot area (trailhead), where you will see a pond and continue through a pine savanna until you reach a boardwalk. After crossing the boardwalk, you will hike through Shoestring Savanna, Stringbean Savanna and Beanpatch Savanna—where you will turn around and walk back. Always follow the red diamonds on the trees. Download the trail map before you visit.

Longleaf pine savannas are open and clear, so all the sunlight comes in—please use sunscreen and use sunglasses to protect your eyes. The preserve is open to hunters during hunting season; you may hear the sound of gunfire during this time. Keep in mind that there are no resting benches along the trail or restrooms on site.

VENUS FLYTRAP A flytrap in North Carolina's Green Swamp. © Skip Pudney

Nature Conservancy website August 8, 2026

Join today! Donation includes membership: https://preserve.nature.org/page/80429/donate/1

Disaster Relief in North Carolina

Submitted by Marilyn Wright

DISASTER RELIEF IN NORTH CAROLINA

Presently the Garden Club of North Carolina maintains a small disaster relief fund. It provides financial grants to our garden clubs who experience damage to the public gardens they maintain in their communities. Disaster comes in many forms: Floods, forest fires, hurricanes, snowstorms, unforeseen events which destroyed public areas and natural habitats. In 2024, we witnessed nature's destructive forces when Hurricane Helene made its way through our North Carolina mountains. Currently the disaster fund stands at less than $5,000. But we can donate and add to its reserve. Consider a special donation to The Garden Club of North Carolina's disaster relief fund. If we can help one club restore its public area, we have served garden clubs everywhere.

Donations can be sent to our Office manager – Ruth Garver
PO Box 33520
Raleigh NC 27636
Indicate *disaster relief fund* on check







How a Designer Plans an Edible Landscape

submitted by author Ingrid Fromm

How a Designer Plans an Edible Landscape

A permaculture-based approach to soil, sun, and site before a single plant is chosen

Every edible landscape project begins the same way: a homeowner imagines tomatoes, peach trees, and berries where grass used to be. It is a beautiful image, and it is almost never how the transformation actually happens. After years of **designing food forests, kitchen gardens, and pollinator systems across the Piedmont, I have come to recognize a handful of misconceptions that appear in nearly every first conversation with a new client.** Understanding them and understanding why a trained designer approaches the same blank yard so differently is the real starting point for anyone hoping to grow their own food without years of trial and error.

The Myth of the Instant Garden

The most common misunderstanding is scale. Clients often arrive with a vision of a fully mature, fruit-laden landscape and want to know how quickly it can be installed. But **an edible landscape is not a renovation; it is a living system, and living systems need time to establish their relationships before they perform.** A newly planted fruit tree spends its first two or three years building roots, not fruit. Perennial herbs and berry shrubs need at least a full season to settle in before they produce meaningfully.

A designer plans for this timeline from day one, layering in fast-yielding annuals and quick perennials like herbs and greens so a client sees results in the first season, while the slower, structural plantings, the trees and shrubs that will anchor the space for decades, quietly take root in the background. **The garden that looks abundant in year five was never trying to look abundant in year one.**

Soil Comes Before Anything Else

Clients want to talk about plants. Landscape designers want to talk about soil. This mismatch causes more early frustration than almost anything else in the process. Here in the Piedmont, most residential yards sit on compacted red clay stripped of topsoil during construction, and **no amount of enthusiasm for a plant list will overcome soil that cannot support root growth or retain water properly.**

A proper design process starts with understanding what is actually happening underground through observation, simple testing, and an honest look at drainage and compaction before a single plant is chosen. **Amending and building soil structure is unglamorous work, but it determines whether everything planted afterward thrives or struggles for its entire life.**

A Garden Is Living System

Perhaps the deepest gap between how clients imagine the process and how it actually works is the idea that landscaping is fundamentally a matter of selecting plants. Clients bring Pinterest boards. Designers bring site assessments. **The plants are the last decision in the process, not the first, because a functioning edible landscape depends on relationships**: which plants shade which, which fix nitrogen for their neighbors, which attract the pollinators that everything else depends on, which serve as chop-and-drop mulch to feed the soil in place.

This is the essence of **permaculture thinking, treating a landscape as an interconnected system in which every element serves more than one purpose.** A closed-loop system in which chickens convert kitchen scraps and garden waste into eggs and finished compost is a good example of this kind of stacking, **in which the design does more work with less external input over time.** A plant list assembled without this type of systems thinking tends to result in individual specimens competing for the same light and water rather than a landscape that supports itself.

Design Starts with Sun, Water, and Wildlife

Clients frequently underestimate how much the site itself dictates the design. **A yard's sun exposure changes across seasons** as deciduous trees leaf out and drop their leaves, and a spot that looks full sun in March may be deep shade by July. Water moves through a sloped property in ways that are invisible until heavy rain reveals exactly where it pools and where it runs off.

In this region, deer and rabbit pressure can undo a season's worth of planting in a single night if a design does not account for it from the outset. **A thoughtful plan reads the site across all four seasons before committing to a layout,** choosing plant placement based on how light, water, and wildlife actually move through that specific piece of land rather than on a generic template.

Designing for the Life the Client Actually Has

Finally, clients often design in their imagination for the gardener they wish they were rather than the one they actually are. A design process should include an honest conversation about how much time a client realistically has for maintenance, **whether they want a garden that asks for daily attention or one that is more self-sufficient once established, and how children, pets, or entertaining fit into the space.** A dog-friendly garden needs different pathway materials and plant choices than one designed purely for maximum yield. A family that travels often needs a system that can go two weeks without a human checking in on it. **The best edible landscapes are the ones still being tended five years later, and that only happens when the design fits the life it is built into**, not the fantasy of an unlimited garden-hours life.

An edible landscape rewards patience, careful observation, and systems thinking over any single plant choice. Clients who understand this from the start tend to end up with gardens that not only produce food but also thrive season after season, because the design is built on how the landscape and its inhabitants behave rather than on how a picture of a garden is supposed to look. **The real payoff is a landscape that is designed to last.** In the end, the most successful edible landscapes are not the ones that look complete on day one, but the ones that keep growing into themselves year after year.

About the Author

Ingrid Fromm is a certified permaculture designer and the owner of Ralstead Foodscapes, a permaculture-based edible landscaping business serving the greater Triangle area of North Carolina. Her own property, transformed over many years from compacted red clay and deer pressure into a thriving food forest, kitchen garden, and side-yard chicken flock, serves as both proving ground and inspiration for the closed-loop, ecological approach she brings to client designs. Ralstead Foodscapes offers foodscape garden design, kitchen gardens, free-range chicken gardens, native pollinator plantings, and workshops throughout the region.

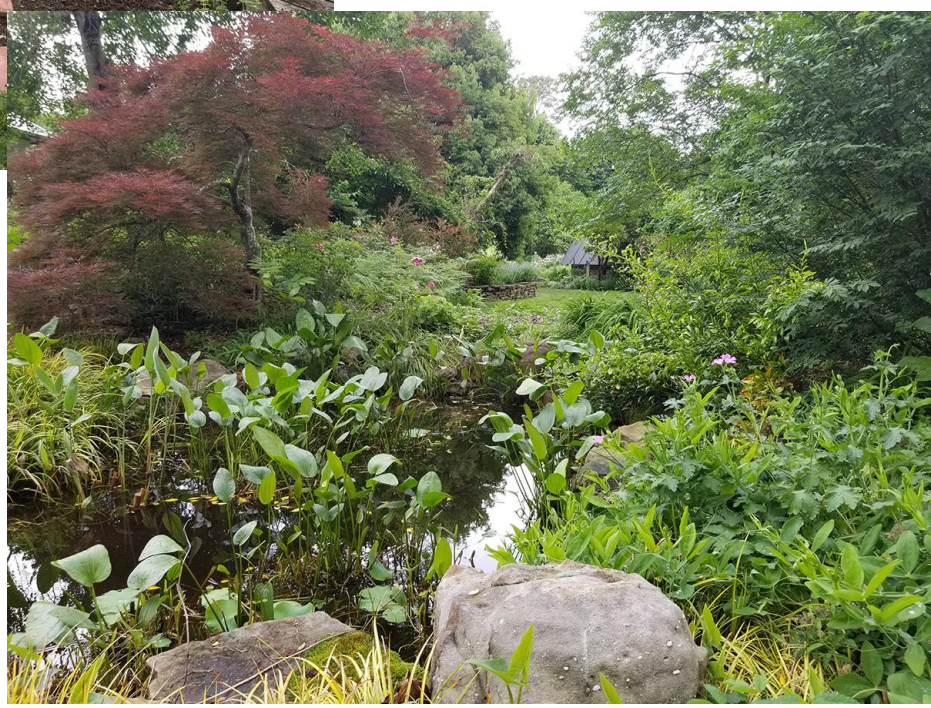
How a Designer Plans an Edible Landscape

submitted by author Ingrid Fromm









From the Pamlico to the Cape Fear: The Remarkable Journey of Bath's Camellias

By Angela Mason Foster
Second Vice President, Washington Garden Club

Some gardens are created all at once. Beds are designed, plants are ordered, irrigation is installed, and within a season or two, the landscape begins to resemble the plan drawn on paper. Other gardens acquire their meaning slowly, through decades of growth, personal attachment, and the accumulated history of the people who tend them. The McLaurin Camellia Garden at Cape Fear Botanical Garden in Fayetteville belongs firmly in the second category.

Although the garden was formally established in the 1990s, many of its plants were already mature long before they arrived there. Their story begins not beside the Cape Fear River, but much closer to home, near Bath and the Pamlico River. Today, the McLaurin Camellia Garden contains more than 100 varieties and is recognized as part of the American Camellia Trail. Visitors see an established collection of evergreen shrubs and small trees that bloom through the cooler months in shades of white, blush, pink, red, and variegated combinations. What visitors may not realize is that many of those camellias came from a private Beaufort County garden and were moved to Fayetteville in an extraordinary effort to preserve them.

A Camellia Collection Takes Root Near Bath

In the late 1940s, Mary McLaurin and her husband, James "Mac" McLaurin, settled on property about a mile upstream from Bath. They named their home **Secota**, a name with connections to the early history of the region and to an Indigenous village recorded by John White. It was there that Mary created an extensive garden, although her interest in camellias began even earlier.

According to a 1998 account published by the Atlantic Coast Camellia Society, Mary remembered admiring a neighbor's 'Compte de Paris' camellia while growing up in Washington, North Carolina. That early experience developed into a lifelong enthusiasm for the genus. Camellias reward that kind of long relationship. They are not plants that reach their full potential overnight. Given suitable conditions, they can live for generations, gradually developing into large, beautifully branched specimens. Their glossy evergreen leaves give the landscape structure throughout the year, while their flowers bring unexpected color to winter and early spring.

At Secota, Mary began acquiring varieties and learning how to propagate them. An important connection came through a nursery at Orton Plantation, where she reportedly purchased one of every available camellia variety for one dollar apiece, a considerable investment at the time. She also learned grafting, a skill that allowed her to preserve and multiply valued cultivars. Grafting requires precision and patience, but it also gives a

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collector the ability to maintain unusual or cherished plants that might otherwise be difficult to reproduce.

Her collection expanded rapidly. Camellias were joined by azaleas and other ornamentals, creating a landscape that eventually became known among fellow enthusiasts. She selected plants with different flowering periods, including early-blooming *Camellia sasanqua* types as well as mid- and late-season cultivars. By staggering bloom times, she created a camellia season that could stretch across much of the cooler portion of the year. Over time, Secota became home to hundreds of mature camellias, with one contemporary account describing more than 300 large specimens. These were not recently purchased shrubs that could simply be replaced with another trip to a nursery. They were established plants that had taken decades to develop.

When a Private Garden Becomes Vulnerable

No matter how carefully a garden is tended, its future is never guaranteed. Land changes ownership, gardeners grow older, storms arrive, development expands, and the landscape surrounding a cherished garden may change in ways its creator never anticipated. Eventually, Secota faced just such an uncertain future.

The property had been purchased by PCS, identified in the period account as Phosphate Canada Saskatchewan. Concerns arose that the ornamental plant collection would not be preserved as activities on the property changed. Logging had already affected portions of the site, and heavy equipment had damaged the landscape. Camellias that had grown for years beneath protective tree cover were suddenly vulnerable to increased sunlight, heat, and stress. The danger was not theoretical. A collection built over decades could simply disappear.

At the same time, Cape Fear Botanical Garden in Fayetteville was developing plans for a camellia garden. Its director, Greg Nace, faced a challenge familiar to anyone attempting to establish an instant mature landscape: money can purchase plants, but it cannot purchase age. Young camellias could certainly be ordered and planted, but what could not easily be obtained were large, mature specimens with decades of growth behind them.

The Secota collection offered exactly that opportunity. Connections among horticulturists, educators, camellia enthusiasts, and community supporters eventually brought the two needs together. Clay Carter, then a horticulture instructor at Beaufort Community College, was among those who helped connect people interested in the collection with Mary McLaurin and her garden. Mary was willing to allow her camellias to go somewhere they could survive. Instead of watching the collection disappear, she chose to give many of the plants another home.

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Moving a Mature Garden

Moving a mature shrub is nothing like transplanting a one-gallon perennial. A large camellia may have a substantial root system, considerable weight, and a canopy that has developed over many years. Successful relocation requires digging an adequate root ball, securing it, lifting the plant without excessive damage, transporting it, replanting it promptly, and then carefully managing water and stress while roots reestablish themselves.

Now imagine doing that more than 100 times. The rescue required hydraulic tree-moving equipment, trucks, financial support, labor, planning, and a willingness to accept that some plants might not survive the journey. Cape Fear Botanical Garden dates the establishment of the McLaurin Camellia Garden to 1997, when Mary donated approximately 200 camellias from her collection. More than 100 mature plants were transplanted from the Bath-area property.

They traveled west from the Pamlico region to Fayetteville, where they were given new ground along the Cape Fear River and Cross Creek. The move preserved something that otherwise might have been lost—not merely individual shrubs, but decades of growth and a significant piece of eastern North Carolina gardening history.

Why the Garden Feels Older Than It Is

One reason the McLaurin Camellia Garden has such an established character is simple: many of its plants already had history when they arrived. A newly created garden usually reveals its age. Young trees have thin trunks, shrubs are separated by conspicuous gaps, and branching is sparse. Visitors must imagine what the planting might become years later. The McLaurin collection arrived with much of that waiting already completed.

Its mature specimens brought structure, scale, and character to the new garden. Their trunks and branches carried the evidence of years spent growing beside the Pamlico. Camellias themselves are particularly well suited to creating this sense of permanence. Their dense evergreen foliage gives them presence throughout the year, while older plants often develop attractive branching and substantial trunks.

Their flowers add another dimension. A winter walk through a camellia collection can feel almost contradictory. The surrounding landscape may be dormant, gray, or bare, while a camellia opens a flower that looks as polished and deliberate as something made from porcelain. That winter beauty is part of what has made camellias such enduring favorites throughout the South.

A Place on the American Camellia Trail

The collection eventually became part of the **American Camellia Trail**, joining other significant camellia gardens across the country. That designation gives the Secota plants a broader horticultural context. Their preservation was not simply about saving attractive

shrubs. The collection represents cultivars, propagation history, garden culture, and the personal work of a devoted collector.

Public gardens play an important role in protecting that kind of horticultural heritage. Private collections can disappear quickly when properties are sold or circumstances change. Once incorporated into a botanical garden, important plants can be maintained, documented, interpreted, and enjoyed by far more people.

The McLaurin Camellia Garden has also accumulated new history since its establishment. Art and memorial elements have been incorporated into the landscape, including the "Camellia Fairies & Poem" scrollwork installation given in honor of the founders of the Fayetteville Camellia Club. In that way, the garden has become more than a transplanted collection. It has become a landscape shaped by several generations of people who valued camellias enough to preserve, grow, and celebrate them.

A Beaufort County Story Growing Elsewhere

For those of us in the Washington and Bath area, perhaps the most interesting part of the story is knowing that an important public garden elsewhere in North Carolina has roots here. Plants frequently outlive the gardeners who select them, and that is one of the strange and wonderful qualities of gardening.

We tend plants knowing that some may continue long after we have stopped caring for them. A tree planted today may shade someone we will never meet. A perennial may be divided and passed among families for generations. A cutting may travel hundreds of miles and become part of another garden entirely. The McLaurin camellias demonstrate that idea on an unusually large scale.

They began as one woman's collection beside the Pamlico River. Through decades of attention, propagation, and patience, they grew into a remarkable private garden. When that landscape became threatened, people recognized that the plants represented something worth saving. Instead of disappearing with the property, many of them traveled to Fayetteville, where they became part of a public garden that thousands of visitors can enjoy. The geography changed, but the history did not.

The Larger Lesson of the McLaurin Garden

There is also a useful lesson here for anyone who gardens. We often think of preservation in terms of buildings, documents, furniture, photographs, or works of art. Gardens are more complicated because their historical materials are alive. They grow, decline, reproduce, respond to weather, and sometimes die. Preserving a historic plant collection therefore requires active participation.

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Someone must propagate the plant, move it, water it after transplanting, and remember what it is. The survival of the Secota camellias required all of those things. Their story also reminds us that plant sharing is one of the oldest forms of gardening continuity. Gardeners have always passed along seeds, divisions, cuttings, scions, bulbs, and entire plants. A cherished plant rarely remains confined to a single property if someone loves it enough.

That may be the most fitting way to think about Mary McLaurin's camellias. They were not preserved by freezing a particular moment in time. They were preserved by allowing the garden to change. The plants moved, the landscape changed, new gardeners took responsibility for them, and new visitors began making their own memories among them. Every winter, the camellias bloom again.

If you visit Cape Fear Botanical Garden and walk through the McLaurin Camellia Garden, take a little extra time among the older specimens. Look beyond the flowers to the trunks, branching, and scale of the plants. Some of what you are seeing was shaped many decades ago in a garden near Bath. Those camellias may now grow beside the Cape Fear River, but part of their story will always belong to the Pamlico.

Suggested Reading on Camellias

Trehane, Jennifer. *Camellias: The Gardener's Encyclopedia*. Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2007.

Ackerman, William L. *Beyond the Camellia Belt: Breeding, Propagating, and Growing Cold-Hardy Camellias*. Batavia, IL: Ball Publishing, 2007.

American Camellia Society. *Education and Camellia Care*, including the ACS Camellia Encyclopedia and culture guides.

North Carolina State University Extension. *Camellia japonica*. Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox.

International Camellia Society. Odom, Debbie. *Basic Camellia Care*.

Camellia Garden Path in Bloom by Angela Mason Foster



Pollinator Parties!

Submitted by Marcia Doering Cape Fear GC

Several members of the CFGC Committee, Gardening for Wildlife/Birds, Bees and Butterflies, participated in the Great Southeast Pollinator Census. On August 21, 22, in spite of the rain, and on two days extended, August 23, 24, we counted in our own gardens as well as at several locations around Wilmington: The New Hanover County Arboretum, Willowdale Community Garden and at one of our installations of a public garden across the street from the Skyview Center, the Headquarters for the City of Wilmington. Some of the flowers that were very active with pollinators were Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma*), Black Eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia fulgida*), Mexican Sunflower (*Tithonia rotundifolia*), a favorite of butterflies, and one food source in the community garden, Okra (*Abelmoschus esculentus*) over five feet tall and buzzing with activity!

Our counts have been recorded and will be combined with the information from the five participating states: NC, SC, GA, FL, MS. This count contributes valuable data on pollinator activity that helps researchers track trends over time. We, the citizen scientist, selected a flowering plant to watch for fifteen minutes. We identified the pollinator from a picture list provided by the University of Georgia, the national coordinator of the Census. At the end of fifteen minutes, we tallied our counts and submitted the information to the GSEPC website, a very easy task.

To help children become aware of the Census, using Award money, the CFGC purchased six books for the New Hanover Public Libraries. The Great Pollinator Count, by Susan Edwards Richmond. This picture book follows a young girl named Millie as she counts pollinators in her school garden—an inviting, accurate introduction for the youngest counters.

Cindy Henry, CFGC Awards Chair, has an annual Zinnia Party in late August. We were able to watch the pollinators in action and then take home a bouquet of flowers!

WE are becoming more aware of the value of pollinators as we witness their activities up close and personal! Plan to join the Census next year, always scheduled in late August. It is enlightening!

Pollinator Parties!



Watching the
bees & butterflies



Home with a bouquet!



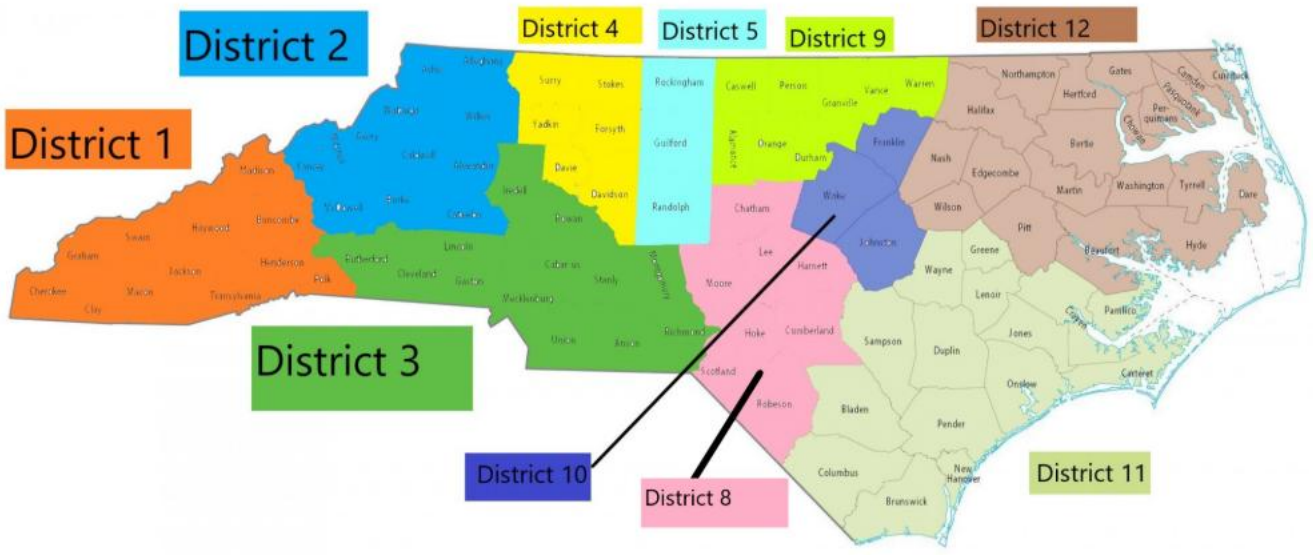
Monarch butterfly landing
on a zinnia

Club Tidings



Rose of Sharon photo courtesy of Shay Blakemore, Raleigh CG

Garden Club North Carolina District Map



District 1-2
Asheville
Brevard
Hendersonville
Morganton
Newton
Piney Creek
Sherrills Ford
Sylva
Tryon
Waynesville

District 3
Charlotte
Cherryville
Davidson
Huntersville
Monroe
Statesville
Troutman

District 4
Bermuda Run
Elkin
King
Lexington
Mount Airy
Pilot Mountain
Winston-Salem

District 5
Greensboro
Jamestown
Julian
Liberty
Reidsville

District 8
Dunn
Fayetteville
Laurinburg
Lillington
Pinehurst/
Southern Pines
Pittsboro
Spring Lake

District 9
Chapel Hill
Durham
Hillsborough
Roxboro
Warrenton

District 10
Cary
Knightdale
Raleigh
Wendell
Zebulon

District 12
Ahoskie
Farmville
Maneto
Moyock
Rich Square
Rocky Mount
Taraboro
Washington
Wilson

District 11
Cape Carteret
Clinton
Dudley
Emerald Isle
Goldsboro
Jacksonville
La Grange
New Bern
Newport
Pine Knoll Shores
Shallotte
Sneads Ferry
Southport
Surf City
Tabor City
Whiteville
Wilmington
Wrightsville Beach

Digging In: What's Happening at Lake Norman Garden Club D1-2…submitted by Donna Smith

There has been a lot happening **behind the scenes this summer at Lake Norman Garden Club!** From launching a new website to preparing for our annual plant sale, supporting our local schools, and giving back to our community, our members have been busy digging in!

🌿 A New Website Is Coming!

In May, our club decided it was time to develop a website, and over the summer the Board and Website Committee met several times to design and create **lkngardenclub.org**. Despite a few remaining tweaks, we are excited to announce that our new website will go live this month!

Looking ahead to 2027, we hope to develop a **quarterly community newsletter** serving our club and surrounding communities. It will include news about LKN Garden Club, gardening tips and tricks, a Master Gardener column, and even some fun recipes from the garden.

A very special **thank you to Kathie Malone, our webmaster**, for the incredible job she has done in bringing this project to life!

🌱 The Annual Plant Sale Is Almost Here!

We are busy preparing for our **Annual Plant Sale on Saturday, September 12, from 8:00 a.m. to noon in Terrell, NC.** Over the years, our plant sale has become the place to be on a Saturday morning—with coffee in hand and plenty of gardening treasures to discover!

On August 10, our members gathered at the home of Alice and George Freeman for a **"Potting Party."** Alice and George, avid gardeners and great friends of our club, graciously opened their garden to us and allowed our members to dig and take home **more than 150 perennials and other plants** for the sale. These will be added to the generous contributions from our members.

In addition to our potting party, over 12 members gathered for a "Craft Day" in preparation for our Plant Sale. I couldn't make it, but everyone had a wonderful time and now want to have more craft days!!!!

A huge thank you to the Freemans for letting our "Dirty Girls" dig in!

🌳 Community Workday at the Library

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, October 24, from 8:00 a.m. to noon**. LKN Garden Club will join the **Catawba County Wildlife Federation Team, Friends of the Library, and library patrons** for a community workday at the Sherrills Ford/Terrell Branch Library.

Digging In: What's Happening at Lake Norman Garden Club…



Our annual plant sale
September 12, 2026



Craft Day at Michele Petit's home in preparation for the Plant Sale!

Our new logo for our website!

Transylvania Garden Club D1-2
submitted by Alane Klink

Club Calendar Events:

October 8 10:30AM
VanWingerden International Greenhouse Tour

November 12 10:30 AM
Conserving Carolina
Understanding Conserving Carolina's mission to protect,restore,and inspire appreciation of the natural world around us and how we can do our part
Railroad Depot Meeting Room
390 Railroad Avenue,Brevard, NC

December 9
Holiday Luncheon
Joyfully celebrating 250 years of gardening

Club recap of events Summer Months:

June 11
North Carolina Arboretum
A personally guided tour ,learning more about the past present and future of gardens

June
Gardens of the Railroad Depot were decorated by a special committee with red,white,and blue flowers.
A member and her husband constructed patriotic bird houses
A member planter red ,white, and blue flowers and flags at Brevard's Memorial Marker

July 9
Patriotic History of America's Victory Gardens
Exploring how America's homegrown gardens have patriotic roots

August 13
Annual member home garden tour with luncheon hosted at another members home

August 21
Great Southeastern Pollinator Count with members at the Railroad Depot

Throughout the summer a team of members maintained the gardens at the Railroad Depot

The Story of the Mooresville Garden Club D3

submitted by Barbara Besecker

The years following World War II was a time of rapid growth in population and industry. There was a growing interest in making Mooresville a great town in which to live. The town motto was "Moore Living in Mooresville." In 1939, an organization called The Women's Club, was created to give women an opportunity to gather, have fun, and work on projects while learning all aspects of home life. It had 13 branches from which the Garden Club of Mooresville began in 1948.

Becoming a Federated Garden Club in 1952 meant that we have an identity that is much larger. From the local club we are a part of the Statesville Council, North Carolina District 3, The Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc., South Atlantic Region, National Garden Clubs, Inc. Each level has its own officers and meetings. The State and National level organizations have websites that allow all members to utilize its educational offerings, award opportunities, leadership, and mentoring programs. Attendance at the higher levels of garden club meetings helps facilitate relationships across the country while learning new ideas in a fun environment!

The Mooresville Garden Club, from its inception to current day, has been an integral part of the community. As a non-profit organization, our Purpose is to stimulate interest in gardening and related subjects and to promote the beautification of the community of Mooresville.

The implementation of our purpose may look different over the years, but at its core, club members share the love of gardening while in service to our town.

Just a few of the activities are discussed in this article. The thought is to give a reader in concept what we are about.

Going back to 1951, the Club and the Chamber of Commerce partnered to plant 3,000 naturalized daffodil bulbs in the wooded area behind the War Memorial building, followed by a Weiner roast with all the trimmings.

A Flower Show in collaboration with the Women's Club was held in 1952 in the War Memorial building. Per an article in the local paper (see other file of our history) "the cream of the artistic talents of the town's school students in horticulture and flower arrangements" will be displayed.

Moving forward to the 1960's, the club created a committee called HANDS (Home and Neighborhood Development Sponsors) which created several programs to encourage homeowners and school children to beautify Mooresville. One of the programs was for Jr. High School students to write an essay on the theme "Let's Keep Mooresville Beautiful" . Other projects included luminaries along the walkways in December. White paper bags with sand in them to secure a candle. (see Mooresville Tribune -December 14, 1981)

Planting trees has been an important aspect to promote the slogan of "tree city." In 1952, a service project we collaborated with the Beautification Board was the planting of 23 water Oak trees at the War Memorial Community Center. We believe we identified one of them and have a photo to remind us of the ever-changing beauty of nature.

For the last 20 plus years, our Arbor Day programs have donated a tree to the city of Mooresville to beautify and provide shade for humans and homes for wildlife. Check out the beautiful Redbud tree in the Sensory Garden at the Mooresville Library on Main Street which was planted in 2026.

The Story of the Mooresville Garden Club





Members at our annual Plant Sale

End of Year Luncheon

The Story of the Mooresville Garden Club

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month from 10:00 -12:00AM. Most of the meetings occur in the Mooresville Main St Library, however we do meet in parks around town. We encourage socialization, education, and volunteering. A speaker will give a presentation on a wide variety of gardening subjects for the first hour, followed by a business meeting to discuss projects, tours, and activities.

WE love partnering with the library! A significant project we engage in is the design and maintenance of the plants that surround the gazebo called the Sensory Garden. In it, there are mechanical items the encourage curiosity of sight, sound, and touch. Our club added perennial plants to continue this wonder. Visitors tell us that it is such a relaxing, pretty pocket garden!

Our 75th Anniversary Luncheon held on April 14, 2023, was held at the War Memorial Building (the same building where we had our first meetings) and allowed us to look back at our history as well as anticipate the future. Community dignitaries, city workers, and other Garden Clubs in our district were in attendance.

There are 2 landmarks in town that were installed in cooperation with Mooresville leadership, as an initiative of The National Garden Club. A Blue or Gold Star Memorial Marker is a cast-iron plaque which is used to honor all men and women who have served, are serving or will serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. The first one was installed in 2015 on N. Main St in front of Town Hall. We recently refreshed the plants around the plaque to keep it looking great!

The second marker, installed in 2022 is in Eastern Heights Park (formerly Willow Valley Cemetery) near the American and N.C. State flags. The plan was to have a presentation on site then to follow with a luncheon at Richards Coffee Shop. However, mother nature gave us a torrential rain shower that morning, so we had to quickly pivot and had the entire program at Richards. The sound of singing the National Anthem and finishing with a live trumpet was awesome!

Club members really enjoy tours of gardens. We are planning on going to the Daniel Stowe Botanical Gardens in September.

A project we are looking forward to is adding fall decorations to the front entrance of the West Branch Library!

It will be a FALL Explosion!

Writing an article about a club with such an extensive history and varied memories is difficult, but I hope it gives you a sense of who we are and what we love to do!

Please follow us on Facebook.

We can be contacted at: Mooresvillegardenclub@yahoo.com

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara L. Besecker

281 728-6472

District 4 Update

submitted by Deborah Thompson Director

Flower Lore Garden Club celebrates 70 years

Member of Flower Lore Garden Club met on September 16th at a local restaurant for a luncheon
to celebrate their 70th year anniversary.
At the luncheon they also celebrated being recognized with 4 GCNC awards
1st Place Award of Excellence
2nd Place Brenda Crocker Bluebird Award
2nd Place Jenene Curtis Smith Bird Award
Honor Roll Award
Congratulations to Flower Lore Garden Club!



Members of Flower Flore Garden Club.

Flower Lore Garden Club 70th Anniversary

submitted by Bonnie Breece

Flower Lore Garden Club is proud to be a co-sponsor of Community Roots Day 2027 in celebration of our club's 70th anniversary. The club will provide funding for 197 trees that will be planted on the east side of Meadowlark, oriented from Country Club Rd. to Robinhood Road. The area is currently a tree desert; the plantings will beautify the travel way and improve environmental conditions and habitat. All other expenses associated with Roots Day will be paid by other sources.

Community Roots Day is a collaborative effort for Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful, the Community Appearance Commission and the City's Vegetation Management Department. The Garden Club Council has also been a generous sponsor. As a provider of the funding for the plant material, our club will be a sponsor of this important event and enable further support of the Council's and Flower Lore's mission to improve and beautify the community through roadside and neighborhood improvements. The initiative will aid in the promotion of natural resources while educating volunteers and the community about the importance of beautifying our environment.

Plant material will include:

40 Black gums, 28 Armstrong Maples, 35 White Oaks, 28 Eastern Redbuds, 20 Hearts of Gold Redbuds, 17 Stellar Pink Dogwoods and 20 Serviceberry

Flower Lore will contribute $15,000 to the initiative using funds from two 2025 fundraisers: a Dine and Wine series and Bulb Sale. The Bulb Sale will continue again this year. The Dine and Wine series of events will be on a biennial basis.



Old Salem Garden Club D4

Submitted by Debbie Linville

Old Salem Garden Club celebrated the 2025/2026 year of their garden club meeting with a luncheon at a local restaurant. At that meeting they were presented with a GCNC and SAR award.

They were recognized with 1st place Elma K. Porter Bowden Yearbook Award. They placed 3rd in the South Atlantic Region for their yearbook. Congratulations to Old Salem Garden Club



Pictured are Old Salem Garden Club President, Debbie Linville, and Cathy Owen Yearbook Chair

Yadkin Valley Garden Club D4, Elkins Walking Trails Landscape

submitted by Martha Smith

The Yadkin Valley Garden Club assisted a local walking trails organization, Elkin Valley Trails Association, during the past spring and summer months. A walking trail at the local hospital, Hugh Chatham Health, was completed, and the Club planted a dogwood, rhododendrons, and small hollies at the trail's Moon Gate entrance. Steady watering and weeding kept the location looking attractive for visitors during the summer.





Yadkin Valley Garden Club D4
Elkin Gold Star Memorial

The Yadkin Valley Garden Club installed and maintained red, white, and blue annual plantings at the Elkin Municipal Park this summer. Red geraniums, white vinca, and blue evolvulus and veronica graced the Gold Star Memorial area. The Club has planted at the area each summer since 2021.



Anderson Creek Garden Club D8

A Summer of Celebration, Partnership, and Growth

District 8 • Spring Lake / Harnett County

Submitted by Janelle D. Babbs-Nesbit, President

The Anderson Creek Garden Club has been exceptionally active this summer, supporting our community while advancing the mission of the Garden Club of North Carolina and National Garden Clubs: horticulture, youth gardening, civic beautification, conservation, and remembrance.

Freedom Festival and Community Celebrations

Members were proud to support Anderson Creek's 250th Freedom Festival and a series of back-to-back community festivals. At these events the club hosted membership tents, welcoming neighbors and sharing information about our programs and projects.

As a club fundraiser tied to the festival season, members gathered to make pinecone bouquets and decoupage seashell ornaments. Sales of these handmade items helped support club activities throughout the events.

Johnson Nursery generously provided red, white, and blue flowers to garden clubs in honor of America's 250th anniversary. Our members used those plants to create several large Freedom Fest container arrangements that brought patriotic color to the celebration.

Gold Star Memorial on Highway 87

In August the club received final approval to place a Gold Star Memorial along NC Highway 87, a designated Gold Star Highway/Byway. Fundraising began in the last week of August, and members are reaching out to veterans' organizations, neighbors, and community partners to bring this lasting tribute to Gold Star families to our area.

Western Harnett FFA Becomes Our Youth Garden Club

Another highlight of the summer is the decision by Western Harnett High School FFA to become the Anderson Creek Youth Garden Club. Western Harnett FFA is a strong program whose floral design and horticulture students have supported our club for two years. We look forward to formally recognizing this partnership and welcoming them as a federated youth garden club.

The students are already looking ahead to a demonstration garden booth at the fair—an excellent opportunity to share horticulture skills with the public and to grow the next generation of gardeners.

Community Partnerships

The club continues to seek partnerships throughout Harnett County. One relationship we hope to build is with Parks and Recreation and the Senior Center. We hope to assist with plantings along a new quarter-mile walking path behind the Senior Center and to offer help to other Harnett County community organizations as opportunities arise.

Botanical Garden Renovation Design

Members were also invited this summer to help renovate a botanical garden. Working together, they completed a full draft plan for a new area to be developed over the coming year.

The design calls for new a removal of an old garden area, soil testing, redressing of soil, replacing irrigation, and plantings organized into four demonstration areas displaying garden types, that thrive in Zone 8a Sandhills conditions. The vision is an everblooming, year-round Carolina garden that includes hardscaping, a fountain, statuary, birdhouses, a bee house, four well-adapted trees, a seed and plant sharing library, and handicap accessibility—pending acceptance of the design and available budget.

Anderson Creek Garden Club

Flower Show School Course 3

Two members of the Anderson Creek Garden Club were fortunate to attend National Garden Clubs Flower Show School Course 3 in Memphis, Tennessee, August 16–18. The horticulture part focused on scoring succulents. The design portion focused on cascade designs and creative designs.

Both described the experience as incredible and in-depth. They left with a far greater appreciation for all that goes into the art of design and for the rigorous process of becoming a flower show judge—and with much more understanding to bring home to our club and community.

First Membership Meeting of the New Year

The club is looking forward to its first membership meeting of the 2026–2027 year on September 17 at 216 Anderson Creek Drive in Spring Lake. Members and guests are welcome.

We will welcome Margie Case of the Central Carolina Chrysanthemum Society to present on chrysanthemums. A dedicated grower whose Raleigh garden—planted with more than six classes of mums—was featured on the cover of The Chrysanthemum, the journal of the National Chrysanthemum Society, Mrs. Case will share practical guidance as members prepare gardens and containers for fall color in Zone 8a.

Looking Ahead

The Anderson Creek Garden Club is grateful for the energy of its members, the generosity of partners such as Johnson Nursery and Western Harnett FFA, and the chance to serve our community while growing gardeners of every age. We welcome fellow GCNC clubs who would like to share ideas, visit, or partner with youth and support our memorial projects.

Anderson Creek Garden Club



Freedom
Festival table





September meeting
freedom container

Let’s Talk Tech: Growing with Sign-up Genius 🌻

Submitted by Steel Magnolias GC D10 Tina Murphey

Cultivating Community: How Our Club Tamed the Volunteer Chaos (And You Can Too!) 🌿

Running a successful club takes a village—or at least a very dedicated group of volunteers! Between organizing committee chairs, scheduling garden watering rotations, and staffing community events, managing the logistics can quickly turn into a full-time job of sorting through "reply-all" email chains and misplaced text messages. 🤦‍♀️

We want to share a quick tip on a tool that has completely transformed how our club coordinates our helping hands: **SignUpGenius**! 📱

We have been using this digital platform to streamline:

Committee volunteers 👥

Meeting & Membership hosts 🏡

Garden watering schedules 💧

Community event staffing 🎪

Special project needs 🛠️

And so much more... ✨

🌟 Why It’s a Game-Changer for Club Leaders

If your club is still tracking sign-ups on clipboards or spreadsheets, switching to this digital tool offers huge perks for your organizers:

No Account Required for Members: Your members do **not** need to create a password or register to sign up. They simply click the link you send them, pick a slot, and type their name. 🔗

Automatic Reminders: The system automatically sends a friendly email reminder to volunteers a few days before their shift, drastically cutting down on no-shows.

Let’s Talk Tech: Growing with Sign-up Genius 🌻

Zero Spreadsheet Maintenance: The slots fill up in real time, so everyone can see exactly what needs are still open without your coordinator needing to manually update a master list. 👀

📋 How to Bring It to Your Club

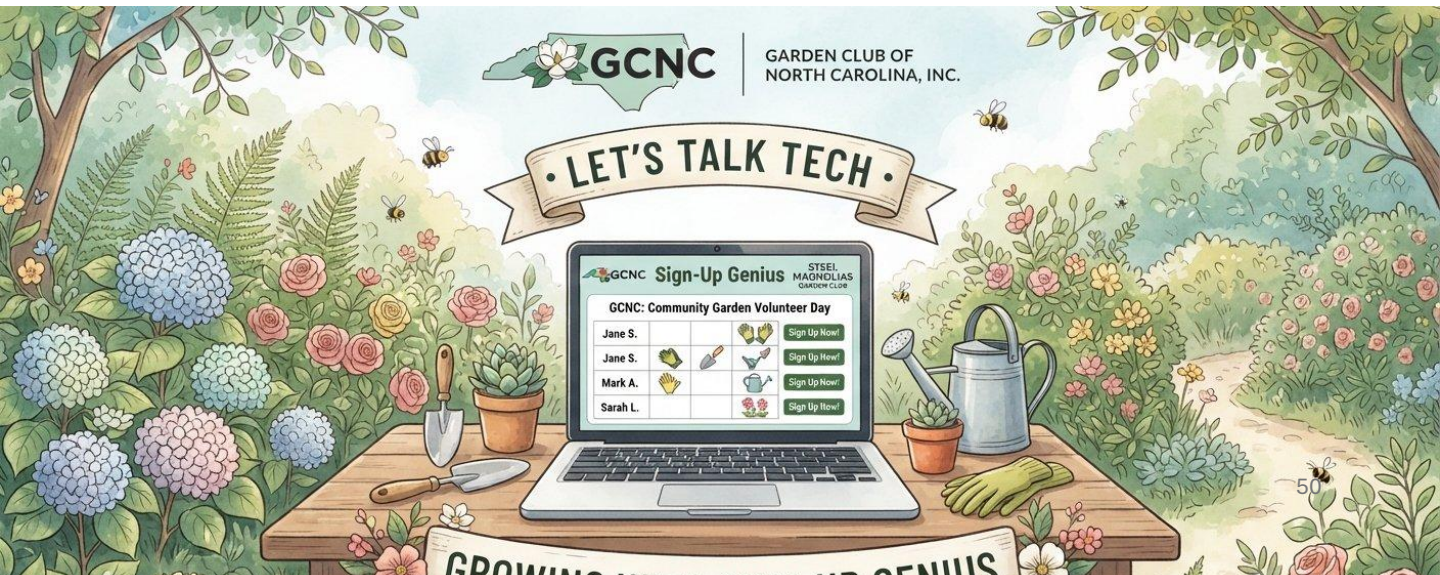
Getting started is simple and can be done entirely on their free plan:

Create a Free Account: Head to SignUpGenius.com and register as a creator.

Build Your First Sign-Up: Use their wizard to input your dates, times, and specific slots (like *"Shift 1: Setup Crew"* or *"Shift 2: Clean-up"*).

Share the Link: Copy the unique link generated for your sign-up page and drop it directly into your member emails, newsletter, or group texts. 🎉

Sharing our tools helps all of our community organizations thrive. If your leadership team ever wants a quick walkthrough of how we set up our watering schedules or event slots, please reach out—we would love to help your club bloom! 🌸





BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE COASTAL PLAIN

Garden Bees D11
Youth Garden Club
Summer 2026

Submitted by Karen Powers

The intense summer heat and drought unfortunately reduced the productivity of many of the Garden Bees' crops. Fortunately, automated watering systems were completed in time to provide the gardens with much-needed irrigation throughout the extended periods of heat and dry weather. Club members also stayed busy caring for the garden by watering, weeding, and fertilizing throughout the summer.

Despite the challenging growing conditions, the Garden Bees were still able to harvest and take home several hundred pounds of fresh peas, beans, potatoes, squash, zucchini, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, and okra. They are now eagerly awaiting the maturation of their watermelons, cantaloupes, carrots, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes. The Garden Bees also added a banana tree to the garden, bringing another exciting addition to their growing collection of plants. The fig trees in both the community garden and at the site of the proposed new Boys & Girls Club clubhouse produced an abundant harvest. The teen club members put the figs to good use by making a delicious fig cake to share with the group, as well as preparing strawberry fig preserves.

The club members also held another very successful flower sale, offering beautiful bouquets of zinnias and wildflowers, along with packets of seeds they had preserved from the garden and jars of dried herbs from their herb garden. With some of the proceeds, the club members enjoyed a well-deserved ice cream sundae party. The remaining proceeds, along with a very generous donation, were used to purchase fertilizer, straw mulch, and other supplies needed to maintain the garden.

The Garden Bees were also pleased to donate fresh basil from their garden to Cork Restaurant. The Garden Bees' honeybees continue to flourish as well. During the most recent hive inspection, plenty of honey was observed, raising hopes that the club may be able to extract honey this fall. As the bee population continues to grow, an additional box was added to the hive to provide the colony with more space.

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE COASTAL PLAIN

Garden Bees
Youth Garden Club
Summer 2026



Summer produce



Baked Fig Cake



Flower Sale

News from the Coastal Garden Club D11

submitted by Sherry Jeffries

We have an exciting and informative year ahead of us. Club members will learn how to select and grow plants from seeds, participate in a Q & A session with experienced club gardeners, hear about our native birds and their environment, understand more about tree deforestation and the resultant natural habitat loss, consider the impacts of fossil and renewable fuels, and see the transformation of a suburban yard to a native low maintenance beachy landscape.

We are proud to announce a scholarship donation in the amount of $1,000 to a horticulture student at Brunswick Community College. Gabriella DiSisto, Director of The Foundation of Brunswick Community College, and the recipient of the scholarship, Caroline Bailey, accepted the donation at the Coastal Garden Club's general meeting on September 21st.



Pictured from L to R: Kathy Temchack, Sherry Jeffries, Caroline Bailey, Gabriella DiSisto

Coastal Garden Club

Members are welcoming the fall season with a **popup mum Fund Raiser!** Beautiful chrysanthemums from Johnson Nurseries in 5 different colors and 2 sizes will brighten so many front doors. Our fund raiser will support the club's community projects and programs that we care about throughout the year.



Speaking of fund raising, our members are preparing for our second annual **Jingle Bell Bazaar** to be held during our December 14th meeting. Members are encouraged to contribute their talents and holiday spirit to this fun event featuring member donated grown, arranged, crafted, baked and recycled items to be raffled and sold via live auction. The Bazaar offers an opportunity to do some Holiday shopping while enjoying the spirit of the season.

Beautiful gardens require effort and diligence and Coastal Garden Club has consistently recognized such gardeners. During the summer the **Civic Beautification Awards** Committee consisting of Bonnie Giehl (Chair), Becky Hucks, Wendy Cifelli, Barbara Stone and Landes Rigby visited several outstanding gardens and business/commercial landscaping areas within Western Brunswick County. At our September meeting the 2026 Landscape Excellence Awards were presented to the following:

Coastal Garden Club Annual Beautification Awards

Garden Club Member: Debbie Wilson, Sunset Beach (Sea Trail Community)





Non-Member: Lori Harper, Sunset Beach (The Sanctuary Community)





Business/Commercial: T&T Landscaping, Shallotte Crossing Shopping Center





Save the Date: "Deck the Halls in Bloom" Flower Show presented by the New Hanover Garden Club D11 December 3-4th

"Deck the Halls in Bloom"



An NGC Small-Standard Flower Show

Presented by the New Hanover Garden Club
Member Of: National Garden Clubs, Inc.
South Atlantic Region
The Garden Club of NC, Inc., District 11

Thursday, December 3rd, 2026, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Friday, December 4th, 2026, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

NHC Arboretum
6206 Oleander Drive
Wilmington, North Carolina 28403
(910)798-7660 Open and Free to the Public

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Our mission is to provide education, resources, and networking opportunities for our members and to promote the love of gardening, floral design, civic and environmental responsibility.