



Garden Gateways

The Official Publication of The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.



*A "Field of
Dreams" in
Savannah*

**PREPARING
YOUR
GARDEN FOR
SPRING**

*Winter Wonders
for the
Landscape*

The University of Georgia Office of the President presents

WINTER WONDERLIGHTS

Select dates
November-January

Tickets on sale
starting in September



State Botanical Garden
of Georgia
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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Mark Your Calendar

Join us as GCG hosts the 6 states of the Deep South Region for the

Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc. 67th Annual Convention *Charms of the South*

March 11-13, 2025 Valdosta, Georgia

Events to Enjoy

- Guest Speakers at meals
- Afternoon presentations
- Tri-Refresher with speakers
- Flower Show featuring Petite Designs
- Historic Mill Pond Plantation Tour
- Crescent Gardens and Grand Bay Wetlands Conservation Area Tour

Speakers Include

- Georgia Grown; blueberries and olives
- Mark Crawford, local camellia grower, with plants and information
- Becky Griffin of the SE Pollinator Count
- Lynn Fronk with a floral design program

Consider Making a Donation as the Deep South Region does not contribute funds and many businesses in the area we would normally appeal to have suffered hurricane damage and find their dollars need to be redirected. We are happy to report that the convention center, hotels and our tour venues were spared and are ready for us.

Donations of any size are welcome from \$25 or more and will be recognized in the Convention Program.

Make donation checks to "DSGC Convention" with "Donation" noted on check and send to:

Suzan Bennett, DSGC Convention Treasurer; 5866 Riverside Drive, Macon, GA 31210.

Online registration will be available on the GCG and Deep South websites in December.



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Accents*

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Garden Gateways readers?**

Contact Stephanie Corley at gardengatewayseditor@gmail.com or
Bess Hartley at besshartley@gmail.com

To say we have had a tumultuous fall is an understatement! As you all know, our state was hit by Hurricane Helene on September 26. Southeast Georgia was in the path of the hurricane and Valdosta and the surrounding area took a direct hit. As I am writing this, there are still many trees down, damage to buildings, and still some power outages in rural areas. There was a lot of damage in Augusta as well with the city losing many trees. Atlanta suffered rain and severe flooding from this massive storm. There were power outages and tree damage all along the coast.

Our garden club friends continue to be in our thoughts and prayers. They are still working on getting back to some sort of normal. However, with all the destruction, our Valdosta friends Rita Hightower and Cathy Perry soldier on preparing for the six-state Deep South Regional Convention to be held March 11-13 hosted by The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. in Valdosta. The Convention Center, hotels and venues we will be visiting are intact and will be ready for all of you to join us! And Betty Davis and Molly Kimler and the Azalea District will be ready for us for our annual GCG Convention April 29-30 in Augusta. Please attend and support our events! You will enjoy them!



October is a wonderful month because we get to gather in each of our 7 districts for annual meetings. All have been fabulous! It is wonderful to see old friends and meet new! I enjoyed the enthusiasm and camaraderie at each event. Garden club events continue through the holidays. I hope that you take the time to enjoy many of the offerings. Check out the calendar of events on our website www.gardenclubofgeorgia.org and featured or listed in this issue of Garden Gateways.

Wishing you a very happy and prosperous New Year!

Lisa



Many of you living in the eastern areas of our state have been affected by Hurricane Helene. You are in our thoughts and prayers. There are grants available through National Garden Clubs for disaster relief.

From the NGC website: *"The Natural Disaster USA Fund was established by NGC in 1997 to receive monetary contributions from states, clubs and individuals for the purpose of assisting local and state clubs with their garden-related restoration efforts. This fund has helped to replant parks, municipal gardens and other garden related sites due to natural disasters caused by floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, ice storms and wildfires".*

Grants of up to \$5000 per project may be awarded in a fiscal year to local or state clubs. More information and application are available on the NGC website: gardenclub.org.

"O wind, if Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem "Ode to the West Wind" is an oft quoted expression of hope for gardeners. Not surprisingly Shelley wrote his poem deep in the natural world from a forest outside of Florence, Italy. Any gardener who has endured a difficult Winter can understand the hope that we cling to during the shortened dark days when the chill seeps from the earth and into our bones. That hope gives us the will to make plans for a beautiful and successful Spring in our gardens. There is work to be done.

For those who sustained destruction in their gardens from the two hurricanes that tore through Georgia, the rebirth that Shelley explores in his poem strikes a chord. After the destruction and resulting decay, whether by the natural course of winter or winds of a hurricane, we can count on the joy of rebirth with spring's arrival. Through our pact with Nature to create a more beautiful and bio-diverse garden, we remove the debris of a hurricane, look for the holes that stand out, and get busy preparing for spring.

While you patrol your garden during the winter months, slow your pace and find the magic that is created after the leaves have fallen and some plants have gone dormant. With grasses and perennials cut back and dead annuals pulled from their warm weather places, there is an open canvas on which to draw new ideas. The quiet winter walks, drawing inspiration from the changed landscape are a time to draft your intention for another glorious spring.

Last winter, I watched as one of the stalwarts of my garden, the bronze fennel, succumbed to an unusually cold Christmas freeze. This fabulous host plant to the black swallowtail butterfly was the backbone of an area which also included passionflower, zinnia and lantana. The nectar from the flowers was available after the caterpillar feasted on the fennel, then metamorphosis took place to chrysalis stage and voila, the nectar was available for the beautiful butterfly. Without the host plant, there was less of a chance that this cycle would happen in my garden,

but I had time during those winter wanderings to think about the possibilities of repair. I chose to plant parsley and dill seeds indoors that were ready by Spring to offer to the hungry caterpillars. I planted a lot for the caterpillars, and some for me. My Winter plan was successful and butterflies were abundant in my garden this year.



Speaking of winter sowing, the seed catalogs arrive earlier each year. They are food for the garden soul with their extensive and tempting display of all the colorful flowers and vegetables available. One of my favorite garden books of all time is Katharine S. White's *Onward and Upward in the Garden* (1958). Why wouldn't you read over and over during the dull months of winter a book whose first chapter is entitled, *A Romp in the Catalogs?* You sense the author's joy on every page as she reviews the onslaught of seed catalogs. Her sense of humor is always evident in her grumbling too. "Now I like chrysanthemums but why should zinnias be made to look like them?"

Our mild Winters are the envy of our Northern neighbors, but I appreciate the chill and iciness that we can experience in the South. Slowing the pace of my walks inside the garden gate, the winter winds promise spring is not far behind. With tall boots, heavier gloves and a scarf donned, take a walk where new plans will be hatched and hope for another beautiful spring takes root.

Bess Hartley, Life Membership Chairman

New Life Members

New State Life Member

#2163 Bonnie Dudley; Redbud District

New Deep South Life Member

Marilyn Aldrich; Magnolia District

In elementary school, I loved the ceremonial flipping of the classroom calendar, which would reveal a picture that captured the essence of the new month. Inevitably, January or February would present a “Winter Wonderland” of snowcapped branches on leafless trees and a wisp of smoke rising from a tiny cottage in the distance nestled in the snow-laden hills of a crisp, white, bucolic landscape. That peaceful, icy image seemed as mythical as the land of Oz to this girl raised on the warm, clay soil of South Georgia, and I felt cheated. As an adult, I appreciate our mild winters, sunshine, and lack of snow. As a landscape architect, I love what the southern climate affords us in creating winter interest in the garden. Below are some of my favorite plants to add a fall and winter flourish to my landscape designs.

As the air turns cool, the sasanqua camellias signal fall with blooms ranging from crisp white to dark hot



Camellia Sasanqua

pink. A popular, well-behaved, and moderate grower is the ‘Shi Shi Gashira’ sasanqua (*Camellia sasanqua* ‘Shi Shi Gashira’), which puts on a show of warm, dark pink blossoms in the fall that last well into December. For the rest of the year, it remains a beautiful, dark green, dense shrub that works well in mass plantings. ‘Mine no Yuki,’ also called ‘White Doves,’ is a hardy, larger form of sasanqua that reaches up to 9’ tall. ‘Mine no Yuki’ (*Camellia sasanqua* ‘Mine No Yuki’) can make a



Sasanqua Hedge

perfect evergreen hedge with the bonus of profuse white flowers throughout the fall and early winter. Just as the sasanquas are finishing up their display of color, the classic *Camellia japonica* parades its prominent blossoms on a backdrop of glossy dark green leaves born on large upright, evergreen shrubs. The varieties are endless, and if you’ve ever experienced the pink, red, and white carpet of blossoms along the camellia walk at Middleton Place Plantation in Charleston, you know why *Camellia japonica* remains an iconic southern shrub.

As soon as night temperatures drop, we can depend on the hydrangeas to put on their encore.

The foliage of our native oak leaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) turns warm shades of burgundy and red while the flowers dry into a light tan. The blooms of the ‘Vanilla Strawberry’ hydrangea (*Hydrangea paniculata* ‘Renhy’ PP20,670) turn from a creamy white to pink in the fall and continue to darken into a lovely strawberry color that persists into early winter.

Fall in the Deep South brings with it a special olfactory treat. The fragrant tea olive (*Osmanthus fragrans*) blooms twice a year, once in the spring and then again in late fall. The blooms persist into winter, filling the areas nearby with heavenly scent. Although not exclusive to the South, it’s hard to discuss winter interest without mentioning the saucer magnolia (*Magnolia soulangeana*). It brightens February with its magnificent pink or purple blossoms on leafless branches.

Blooms are not always the star of the show. Berries and bark also provide unexpected winter interest. The Savannah Holly (*Ilex attenuata* ‘Savannah’) is a favorite for its prolific winter berry production and smooth, light grey bark. The ‘Natchez’ crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica* ‘Natchez’) is another hard-working landscape plant. After shedding its signature white flowers, its leaves turn bright golden orange and red in the fall, then the beautiful silver and orange exfoliating bark puts on a show when the leaves fall. Our hills may not be aflame with fall color as our northern neighbors, but a winter stroll through the southern landscape reveals its own kind of beauty!



‘Vanilla Strawberry’ Hydrangea

A Guide to Your Next Treasure Hunt

I love treasure hunts, especially when it is for my garden because it combines a love of history, adventure, research, being outdoors and a knack for finding just the right plant. Sometimes I look through my neighbors' yards on my own curated tour of homes, or somewhere else; a park, farmers market or botanical gardens, and add a picture of a plant to look up later on Google Lens. (There are several plant identification sites if no one is around to ask, but I usually use Google Lens.)



You can look anywhere and it's fun for all ages so include your friends and family on your next plant treasure hunt. My own experience has been better when I am getting bits and pieces of plants from someone else (pass along plants) rather than going to the garden center. The whole notion of pass along plants has been around forever, but it is best described by popular authors, Felder Rushing and Steve Bender.

There are certain attributes of a pass along plant gardener according to Rushing. It's someone who

takes or gives those bits and pieces of plants from here and there, finding things including a common thread of spirit. It's an outreach of the heart and mind in an informal way to form new friendships, and to supplement a garden without requiring a lot of money.

His Pass along Triarchy is not ironclad, but more people will grow and share plants with these features.

First, a plant should be valuable, meaning value of beauty, fragrance, history, good pollination, supporting wildlife or a reminder of something such as family, home or culture. Second, it should be easy to grow without a lot of expertise as you want a plant that can be enjoyed by a lot of people and can tolerate a wide range of conditions. Finally, it has to be easy to propagate through seeds, divisions or cuttings since the easier to share, the more it will be shared.

Spring is a good time for passalong plants, and if you need a few more suggestions for your plant searches, try these other options beyond your neighborhood- local garden club plant sales, master gardener plant sales, local farms for heirloom plants, plant swaps, plant societies, seed exchanges, natural history museums, universities, libraries, cemetery and church plant sales.

For more reading about pass along plants, try the insightful, warm and zany *Maverick Gardeners* by Felder Rushing (2021) or *Pass along Plants* by Steve Bender and Felder Rushing (1993).



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or go to

<https://www.flowerpowerfundraising.com/index.php/marketplace/seller/profile/shop/gardenclubofgeorgia>

GCG's 97th Annual Convention

Gather on the River

With the Birds & the Bees and the Flowers & the Trees

The Azalea District cordially invites you to join us to learn more about the birds and the bees and the flowers and the trees. On Tuesday vendors will be set up for you to have a fun shopping experience before gathering to enjoy a delicious luncheon and hear about the beginning of the Augusta National Golf Club and its trees from our keynote speaker Stan Byrdy. In the afternoon two breakout sessions will be offered where you will learn more about the birds & the flowers. The first session will feature Vera Stewart, and the second session will feature Glen & Gail Hendry. Immediately following you can tour the Morris Museum of Art for (\$5-\$3 senior) where you can enjoy the art displays and visit the gift shop. You can also travel down to the end of Riverwalk and see the Bonnie McClain Perennial Garden, which is sponsored and maintained by clubs of the Augusta Council. That evening we will have district photos, a cash bar, and a fine evening dinner as you have a brief glimpse of some rare spider lilies by Owen Navarre. Then our world-famous Awards Event will take place. On Wednesday morning following the business meeting, we will conclude the convention with our installation luncheon and speaker presenting the photographic beauty of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge by Mark Albertin.



Stan Byrdy

A veteran of 46 years in television and media, Stan Byrdy is an author, journalist, and Augusta historian. Stan began a TV career in 1978 as a sports anchor and reporter while attending Youngstown State University in Ohio. He came to Augusta in 1985 and served as Sports Director at WJBF-TV for 9 years and at NBC Augusta for 3 more. Stan is the winner of numerous Georgia and South Carolina AP and UPI awards and won the 'Best of Augusta' Magazine Award 12 consecutive years. His documentary, *Augusta's Master Plan*, was nominated for an Emmy in 2010. Byrdy's work has appeared on CNN, ESPN, The Weather Channel, PBS, and ABC affiliates nationwide. Stan is also the author of four books, *Augusta and Aiken in Golf's Golden Age*, (2002), *The Augusta National Golf Club*, (2005), and *Against All Odds*, (2019). His latest, *The Brilliance of Berckmans*, is set for release in 2025 and is the topic of his presentation.



Vera Stewart

Vera Stewart is a nationally recognized TV personality, two-time cookbook author, and entrepreneur whose career in the food and hospitality industries spans four decades. Vera graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in Home Economics education in 1974. Launching her career in the 1980s, she has become a household name with ventures that included a bakery and café, and a national mail order business for her signature cakes and casseroles. She currently has the syndicated "The VeryVera Show" in the 13th season, the "VeryVera Cooking Camp" that completed its 21st year, and "VERA," a multi-scoped hospitality service for patrons of the Masters tournament. With a passion for Southern dishes passed down through generations, her manifold business endeavors have inspired people all over the nation to create memories in the kitchen. Vera's philosophy is based on a winning attitude and passion for perfection.



Glen, Gail & Maggie Hendry

Glen Hendry serves on the board of directors for the South Carolina Bluebird Society (SCBS) and is a life-time member since 2010 and heads up the Trails Committee. Glen & Gail monitor the Hitchcock Woods trails in Aiken, SC which consists of 86 bluebird nestboxes and 12 screech owl boxes. Glen does the statistical reporting for the SCBS including supplying the data to the Cornell Nest Watch program. Glen received a B.S. in Geology in 1976 from The Pennsylvania State University. He met his wife, Gail, in an underground uranium mine in New Mexico where Gail was a miner (drilling, packing dynamite, and blasting the rocks). Gail received her degree as an RN from Augusta College in 1994. Both are retired now (but working harder than ever!!).



Owen Navarre

Owen Navarre is a native of Augusta, Georgia where he got his passion for wildlife from hunting and fishing with his family. Owen started his botanical work at the Augusta National nursery pruning their famous Azalea bushes in the Summer of 2021. While in college, he performed a deer deterrent study at the Savannah River Ecology Lab. In May of 2023, he began working at Phinizy Center for Water Sciences as a researcher working to study and restore the Rocky Shoals Spider Lilies in the Savannah River. Owen graduated from Augusta University with a bachelor's degree in biology in the Spring of 2024 and is looking to further his career in Wildlife Biology.



Mark Albertin

Mark Albertin moved from Wisconsin south to Georgia in 1986 and has loved his transplanted home as if it were his birthplace. Albertin has had a camera around his neck since he was a teenager, eventually starting his own darkroom and then working at a private photo studio through college. He has an associate's degree in printing and publishing and has worked extensively in the color separation field of the printing industry. Since 1999 he focused on documentaries, many of which have aired on PBS or screened at film festivals across the country. Since 2016, he has gone back to his roots as a film photographer, starting Albertin Film Photography and opening a community darkroom where he teaches the craft and creates large fine art prints at art museums and galleries. His first book, *Along the Fall Line*, contains photographs taken around Georgia and South Carolina was released in January. His second book, on the Okefenokee swamp, will be released this Spring of 2025.



Dollars Educate Scholars

Mark your calendars, January is the Official GCG Scholarship Month!

Members donating \$1.00 or more now through January will make a **BIG** impact on Scholarships.

It's easy to donate. Contributions are given through your garden club treasury. Your club writes one check to GCG along with the completed form to:

Asst. Treasurer, Anita Allen,
381 McSwain Lane, Wray, GA 31798

Support your District and your Director in the 10th Annual Dollars Educate Scholars fundraiser! The winning District will be determined by total funds and the percentage of district/club participation.



Join the fun at the GCG Annual Convention hosted by the Azalea District, April 29-30, 2025 where we will once again crown

The Queen of Scholarships!

For more information, contact Susan Turner,
Scholarships Chairman
770-922-4411 - glencree@bellsouth.net

Dollars Educate Scholars - TRANSMITTAL FORM

Please complete the following information and mail with your clubs check for \$1.00 or more per member to Anita Allen, Assistant Treasurer
381 McSwain Lane, Wray, GA 31798.

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO
THE GARDEN CLUB OF GEORGIA, INC. or GCG**
Please write legibly. Contributions received through January 2025 will count in this giving period.

Club Name: _____

District: _____

Club Representative & Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____

Club Number: _____ Number of Members: _____

100% Participation? Circle one Yes No

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

2025 Convention Registration Form

The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. • 97th Annual Convention *Gather on the River*

April 29-30, 2025 • Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Badge Name Preference _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Club Name _____ District _____

THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO REGISTER

PACKAGE PLAN Includes Registration Fee, Tuesday Luncheon, Breakout Sessions, Awards Banquet, and Wednesday Luncheon.

PACKAGE PLAN TOTAL \$190 \$ _____

PART-TIME PLAN: No extra fee for workshops

Tuesday Opening Luncheon \$45 \$ _____

Tuesday Awards Banquet \$60 \$ _____

Wednesday Luncheon \$45 \$ _____

REGISTRATION FEE per day \$30 \$ _____

PART TIME PLAN TOTAL \$ _____

TOTAL REGISTRATION COST \$ _____

Late Registration Fee (postmarked after April 18th) \$30 \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

- State President
- Member
- Guest
- Voting Delegate **
- My First GCG Convention
- Club President
- District Director
- District Board Member
- Council President
- Former State President
- State Board Member
- State Life Member
- Former Deep South Director
- Deep South Board Member
- Deep South Life Member
- Former National President
- National Board Member
- National Life Member

****All GCG Board Members, GCG Life Members and one member from each club are Voting Delegates; please check Voting Delegate box if applicable.**

Special Dietary Needs:

REGISTRATION DEADLINE APRIL 18, 2025

Make Check Payable to: **GCG 2025 CONVENTION**

Mail Check & Registration Form to: Jan Stewart; 722 Nancy Gunn Circle SE, Crawfordville, GA 30631

For more information contact janlamerle50@gmail.com or 706.401.8560

No refunds after April 10, 2025 - Registration fee not refundable

No registrations accepted after April 18th

On-line registration with credit card payment will be available in January at gardenclubofgeorgia.org

HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center, 2 Tenth Street, Augusta, GA

\$175 per night for King or 2 Queen room

Click [HERE](#) to book your reservation or go to gardenclubofgeorgia.org

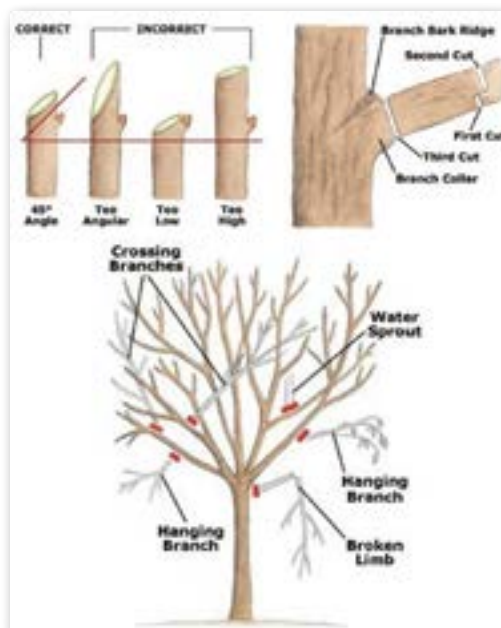
you can also call the Augusta Marriott at 888-861-8331 and ask for The Garden Club of Georgia Conference rate

Reservation Deadline for Group Rate: April 7, 2025

How and When to Prune Trees and Shrubs

When to Prune

1. Late Winter to Early Spring
 - Best for most deciduous trees and shrubs before new growth begins.
 - Pruning at this time encourages vigorous growth in the spring.
 - Ideal for trees like maples, oaks, and fruit trees.
2. After Flowering
 - Spring-flowering shrubs (like lilacs or forsythia) should be pruned right after they bloom. This prevents removing next year's flower buds, which form soon after blooming.
3. Summer Pruning
 - Use light pruning in summer to shape fast-growing plants and control size.
 - Great for hedges and shrubs like boxwood or privet.
4. Fall Pruning (Minimal)
 - Avoid heavy pruning in fall, as it can encourage new growth susceptible to frost damage.
 - You can remove dead or diseased branches at any time.



How to Prune

1. Remove Dead, Damaged, or Diseased Branches - Start by cutting away any broken or infected limbs to improve plant health.
2. Thin Out Crowded Branches - Remove branches that cross or grow too close together to allow better air circulation and light penetration.
3. Cut Just Above the Bud - When pruning, make clean cuts just above a leaf node or bud, angled away to encourage healthy growth.
4. Use the Right Tools - Use sharp pruners or loppers to make clean cuts and prevent damage to the plant.

(Source: <https://www.facebook.com/gardeningsoul>. Linda Parker, October 28, 2024)

Thank you for your Scholarship Support ~ You make a difference!

On behalf of the GCG Scholarship Committee, I share our sincere appreciation to all who have contributed to our Scholarship program this past year.

- Named Scholarships Contributors
- Patrons of Scholarships
- Contributions for the General Scholarship Fund to include Honors & Memorials
- Participation in the Dollars Educate Scholars Fundraiser
- Contributions for the Brown Thrasher & Cherokee Rose Funds
- Life Memberships



All contributions are significant in their importance to this GCG Mission of Education.

The Scholarship Committee meets annually in February to award our deserving students their scholarships. We continue to accept contributions for this giving period, including Dollars Educate Scholars. You can play a part in the future of a student who is seeking a life that speaks to our own hearts. We thank you again for the commitment you bring in the success of a young person dedicated to the same mission as The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc., Beautification, Conservation & Education. With sincere thanks to all,

Susan Turner, Chairman

Anita Allen
Janet Carn
Carolyn Culpepper

Brenda Griner
Lisa Hall
Diane Hunter

Rosemary Maulden
Marianne McConnell
Gerri Shaw

When Europeans arrived on the North Atlantic shores, they were astounded to see unbelievably large forests of Long Leaf Pine trees. From the coasts of Virginia to Florida and around the Gulf of Mexico to Texas stood pines as far as the eye could see. These trees were 100 feet tall with trunks bare of limbs until the top of the trees. Perfect for ship masts, lumber for building and resin to supply turpentine and other necessities for navies, the wood was stronger than other pines and the dense wood was resistant to insect damage. It took a few centuries to decimate the entirety of these forests, but it was done. Now, scattered long leaf groves can only be found in Georgia, Florida and Alabama. The pines currently planted for managed forestry are mostly Slash (*Pinus elliottii*) or Loblolly (*Pinus taeda*). These species are easy to plant and grow more quickly than Long Leaf Pines thus yielding a quicker return on investment. The requirements for growing Long Leaf were not readily apparent. It is imperative that fire is not suppressed. Fires in the Long Leaf forests keep down the faster growing trees and weeds that are not adapted to fire. Additionally, in its early stages a Long Leaf looks more like a bush with long hair. The first few years the Long Leaf is busy putting down very deep roots but not growing a trunk. These roots help keep it upright in the fierce storms that plague our coasts and allow trees to access deep water in times of drought. The name Long Leaf comes from what we call pine needles—this species of pine has needles 18 or more inches long and very large cones. Long Leaf needles are now prized for use as mulch and their cones for beautiful decorations.



over 600 plant and animal species, half of which are endangered. The Jones Center has increased the number of Red cockaded woodpeckers from one family to over 35. Studies are currently focused on gopher turtles, chaff seed, and how the Floridan Aquifer is impacted. Recharging this very important water source is of utmost importance.

Military bases in the Southeast now have 700,000 acres of Long Leaf in 36 installations. Fortuitously, the Long Leaf habitat is perfect for training purposes. When properly maintained the understory is wire grass, shaded by widely spaced pines 100 feet high—good for maneuvers. Additionally, this forest habitat requires frequent fires, so those set by ordinances during training are good for the forest growth. Currently the Department of Defense, using its guidelines of Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) work together to assure the vitality of the forests and the wildlife within the military bases.

Knowing how to regrow and maintain the Long leaf provides the opportunity and responsibility to recreate the entire ecosystem. Hundreds of plants and animals, many of which are only found in the Long Leaf forests, need reintroduction. Currently agencies in Alabama, Georgia and Florida are coordinating to reintroduce Red-Cockaded woodpeckers, gopher tortoises, Indigo snakes, and many plants especially the insect eating pitcher plants.

The ecosystem of the Earth is such an interconnected web that we cannot predict what happens next when an entity is removed. But, thanks to the hard work of many, we are beginning to turn the corner on the Longleaf Pine. The acreage is increasing, and the ecosystem is beginning to return to its original composition.

I was fascinated by an hour-long film created by Rhett Turner shown on PBS. It clearly shows a healthy Long Leaf Forest and focuses on reintroduction of several species. See it at www.longleafpine.org.

Here in Georgia, we can thank military bases and quail for the remaining large tracts of Long Leaf. In the late 19th century Northern industrialists purchased tracts of land which were developed for quail and deer hunting. In 1920 Robert Woodruff, an avid hunter and environmentalist, began to accumulate land for hunting. This became known as Ichauway



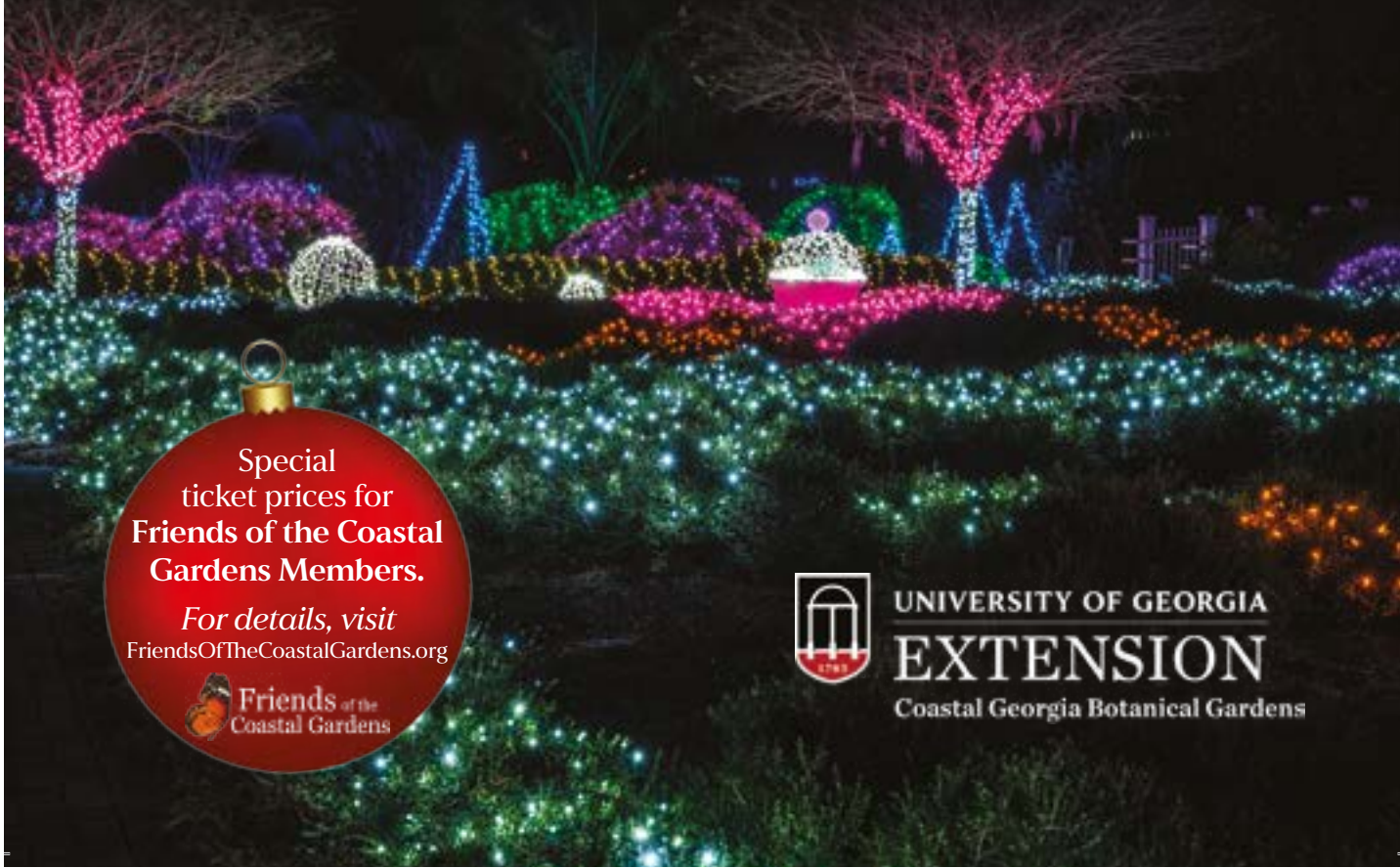
Plantation. When he died in 1985, his 29,000 acres of Long Leaf Pine became the Joseph W. Jones Ecological Center. Research here focuses on how to restore the land to Long Leaf Pine and how to make it profitable while preserving the entire ecosystem of the Long Leaf forests. The Jones Center partners with nine universities providing hands on research opportunities for graduate students. In a healthy Long Leaf Forest there are

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A "Field of Dreams" in Savannah

~ Stan Gray

I will never be confused with Kevin Costner, but like the character he portrays in the 1989 classic "Field of Dreams", I too decided to build a Field of Dreams in Savannah. Except that instead of being designed for baseball players, mine is filled with beautiful irises.

Some of you attended my presentation at the GCG's Convention in April 2022. If you did, you learned the history of this project, the circumstances of its creation, and its scope and nature. While I inherited my parents' famous private iris garden in northern New Jersey and managed it for years as a major springtime attraction, I always dreamed of creating a large, flowing display on public land, on a space that could be enjoyed year-round, without concern of treading on someone's private property. That dream was realized when I was offered a piece of ground at the then Bamboo Farm in Savannah in 2007 to start an iris garden. The road traveled from there has no doubt been rocky at times (virtually the entire collection I brought down from New Jersey rotted away and died within the first year in its new home), but my vision for what could be was not deterred. In the back of my mind, I could always hear the voice of James Earl Jones saying "If you build it, they will come."



So now as we descend into winter, we gardeners are already planning for next spring and dreaming of the backyards and fields of magnificent floral displays that will greet us. I invite you to make a trek to Savannah as one of your annual rites of spring. Come to the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens (CGBG) in April and here is what I promise you will see in the iris gardens I have built there:

- One of the largest public, non-commercial collections of iris in the world
- **Louisiana Iris:** the basis for a complex of flowing "rivers of iris," over 200 cultivars of every color and form await your eye. Louisianas are often mistaken for other aquatic iris with far more limited color representations, typically blue (*Iris virginica*) and yellow (the invasive *Iris pseudacorus*). The only true

red in the iris world is in the Louisiana Iris family.

- **Louisiana Iris species:**

In 2018 I was selected as one of just several stewards nationally for a Society for Louisiana Irises project to preserve the five or more species that constitute the genetic basis for the modern day Louisiana Iris cultivars (see above). The CGBG collection currently consists of over 150 species variants collected from the wild. The role my collection plays is to ensure that populations of these species remain viable, and that with time the plant increases are re-distributed to safe havens

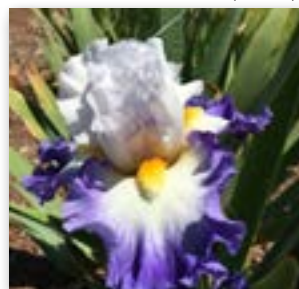


- **Spuria Iris:** Very few people in the eastern U.S. are even familiar with these stunning iris, and the CGBG collection of more than 100 cultivars is arguably the most extensive east of the Mississippi, showing off with vivid, saturated colors on ramrod straight stalks often 4-5 feet in height.

- **Japanese Iris:** More commonly seen above the fall line in Georgia, I have created a small collection of the most popular cultivars in the U.S. These ruffled beauties extend the bloom season in Savannah, peaking in mid-late May when all other iris types are done.



- **Tall bearded Iris:** no doubt the Queens of Show of the iris world, everyone loves the tall bearded (TB's). In fact, many of you above the fall line probably have



some incorporated into your gardens. As we approach the coast, the number of chill hours annually (most critically 32-45 degrees) becomes too few for most TB's to perform successfully. So many times I have heard recent arrivals to Savannah lament that the iris they brought from Atlanta (or practically any other more temperate location in the U.S.) fail to bloom. Unfortunately, the lack of chill hours is the culprit. Come to the CGBG and you will see the most

consistent performers in the Low Country, cultivars that thrive on little "chill." And each year I test new introductions, so the research is ongoing.

As your own garden begins to wake up next spring, you may be asking what you can do to enhance the performance of your iris. Depending upon which iris type(s) you have and where you reside, the answer can be quite varied. Regardless, removing any dead leaves (or portions thereof) from your plants, and amending your soil with well-aged organic matter are always sound practices. Sprinkling a small amount of a well-balanced fertilizer (such as 10-10-10) around each plant 3-4 weeks before bloom should give them that extra push to put up strong stalks and blossoms.

If you really wish to learn more about growing iris in Georgia, there are many qualified resources available affiliated with the American Iris Society. If you contact me with your specific interests, I will be happy to point you in the right direction. Even the question of which cultivars do best where varies significantly by region, as my years of experimenting with tall bearded iris has proven.

Lastly, I hope you will plan a trip to the Field of (Stan Gray's) Dreams in Savannah. Feel free to contact me



at graysirisgarden@comcast.net or (912) 659-5020. I welcome all individually or as a group. Group/club tours of the iris display can also be arranged for a small fee. And there is so much more to see at the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens, so plan to make a full day of it. For Gardens details, see <https://coastalbg.uga.edu>.

See you next spring!

– Stan Gray has been growing iris as a lifetime hobby for 60+ years. He is a volunteer and Curator of the Iris Collection at the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens.

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Ball Ground Garden Club Dedicate a New Blue Star and Gold Star Markers: In September the Ball Ground Community held a heartfelt dedication ceremony to unveil the Blue Star and Gold Star Families Memorial Markers. Despite the challenges posed by Hurricane Helene, community members gathered at the award-winning Ball Ground Botanical Garden to honor those who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. SSGT John Blair USMC (retired) shared his wartime experiences and emphasized the importance of the Blue Star Mothers of America organization in supporting families of military personnel. Notable speakers included Lisa Jenkins, president of the Georgia Gold Star Mothers, who reflected on her son's sacrifice, and Carolyn Cagle, who honored her son with a wreath during the ceremony. The event featured an original Blue Star banner from World War II, presented by Didi Nelson, and concluded with a three-volley salute and taps played by members of the Marine Corps Detachment League and Buglers Across America. A dedication statement was



presented by Diane Hunter, GCG President-elect, and was read by Laurel District Director Cheryl Briscoe. President Karen Hawkins of the Ball Ground Garden Club accepted the responsibility for maintaining the memorial markers. The Ball Ground Garden Club is committed to maintaining the memorial markers, ensuring that the community's tribute to its fallen heroes and veterans remains a lasting legacy.



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Marietta Council of Garden Clubs Hosted Fall Family Fun Day: Close to 200 guests attended the annual Fall Family Fun Day on Oct. 27th at Fair Oaks, home of the Marietta Council of Garden Clubs. With an "owl" theme, grandparents, parents, and children of all ages came to hear Bea with the Chattahoochee Nature Center talk about feathered friends and to see a rescued barn owl. The children filled owl planters with plants, made owls out of pine cones, tried to



eat donuts on strings without using their hands, got their faces painted, and saw a baby pig to mention a few of the activities. Children are given trick or treat buckets to can carry their crafts home.



Each fall around Halloween, garden clubs that are members of the council come up with activities designed around a theme that allows them to educate children about nature. Each garden club that participates provides a game or craft or snacks!

Families and council members look forward to coming back each year. This activity attracts people who are not garden club members to Fair Oaks and gives them a chance to see the value of garden clubs in our community.



Rose and Dahlia Garden Club joined the hugely popular photo and video-sharing social media platform, Instagram. Here we are able to share and engage with our members, friends, family, community, partner organizations, and gardening lovers everywhere. This summer we posted about our members' summer travel adventures featuring beautiful flora from all over the US, Canada, the UK, and even Iceland. The global data platform, Statista, found that "over 62 percent of Instagram users are under 34, while 16 percent are between the ages of 35 and 44." What a great way to reach a younger audience! Check us out using this convenient QR code or

<https://www.instagram.com/roseanddahliagardenclub>



Burkeland Garden Club members recently held a terrarium workshop for the ladies at Waynesboro Senior Apartments. Each resident was given supplies and instructions on how to make a terrarium for them. This was made possible by a grant from Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. Pictured are Garden Therapy Chairperson Cheryl Shepard and Mary Lynn Edenfield along with residents.

Watkinsville Garden Club Awards Scholarship:

Leslie Sharard of Oconee County High was the first recipient last spring of the Jane Bath Scholarship from the Watkinsville Garden Club. Leslie is attending the University of Georgia, where she is studying agribusiness and horticulture. Jane Bath is a long-time member of the Watkinsville Garden Club. She was a landscape designer, operated a nursery and wrote a book to help gardeners with practical tips: *Landscape Design Answer Book: More Than 300 Specific Design Solutions for Your Landscape*. Bath's Pink dianthus is named for her.

In the photo: left to right, Jane Bath, Leslie Sharard and Blake Giles, president, Watkinsville Garden Club.



The Garden Club of Savannah at its September meeting welcomed 18 new members and had 90 in attendance at a luncheon at the Savannah Golf Club. The flower centerpieces came from the garden of Amy Gaylor Nedriga, who started Elonti Gardens to make beautiful natural bouquets, the proceeds benefiting local charities as well as her charity, Children Inspiring Hope in Ghana. CIH promotes education, supplies clean water, and grows organic vegetables on 8.5 acres in Ghana.



A wonderful first meeting of the year, Amy inspired us all.

Oleander District Provides Disaster Relief

In August, Hurricane Debby caused a hundred-year flood of the Ogeechee River. Many whole neighborhoods in Bryan County were inundated so quickly that vehicles were useless to get residents out to safety. The City of Richmond Hill was greatly affected, and rescue operations were in place the day the Oleander District had the August Executive Board meeting.



Diana Malone suggested a donation be collected at the meeting. Joni Thompson brought a basket with her and asked members to donate. At the end of the day, \$462.00 was collected and given to the Richmond Hill Garden Club. President Sue Sharp and Treasurer Linda Bessent made the decision to match the generous amount collected. Ten \$100.00 gift certificates from Lowe's were purchased to help flooded homeowners. These certificates were taken to the Flood Relief Center to be distributed.

The Richmond Hill Garden Club was touched and grateful for the support and aid given from the Oleander Executive Board members and attendees present at the August meeting this year.

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The Magnolia Garden Club met at the Eagle's Nest Café at Mitchell County High School. The meal was planned, cooked and served under the supervision of Lillibel Wingate, Georgia certified culinary teacher, at the high school. Students that are interested in majoring in a culinary career may coordinate the high school culinary classes with the college curriculum. Some of the food provided was grown by FFA horticulture students of Mitchell County High School.

Mia Burnett, a Junior from Westwood High School, was the guest speaker. Burnett is a Georgia Ambassador of the Great Southeast Pollination Program. She travels throughout the state speaking on pollination of bees and their importance in pollinating crops that provide our food supply. She has also shared her message in Washington, DC and Plains Georgia.



The Federated Garden Clubs of Macon Blue and Gold Star Marker Dedication On Thursday, Aug. 29th, The Federated Garden Clubs of Macon (FGCM), dedicated a Blue Star Memorial Marker and a Gold Star Families Memorial Marker at the visitor's center of Macon's historic Fort Hawkins, also known as the Birthplace of Macon, Georgia. The markers were sponsored by The FGCM in cooperation with Macon-

Bibb County and the Fort Hawkins Foundation. They are prominently located on Emory Highway where the markers will be seen by hundreds passing by every day and those attending special events at Fort Hawkins.

All will be reminded that we must not forget those who serve in the Armed Forces and the Families of those who gave all in service to our United States of America.



The Lady Banks Garden Club honored late gardener and member Bonnie McMillan with the Bonnie McMillan Garden Therapy at Vashti initiative. According to Lady Banks Garden Club President Marcy Sizemore, the McMillan family gifted the club with a donation following Bonnie's passing. The club decided to put the donations to good use, partnering with Vashti to offer kids at the Clubhouse after-school program a new opportunity. The kids at the Clubhouse had the chance to pet and learn about the animals at Redemptive Love Farms.



Pictured: LOVING ON THE LLAMA: Kids from the Vashti Clubhouse stand with the llama they met from Redemptive Love Farms. They were joined by members of the Lady Banks Garden Club and Clubhouse Director Monika Bowdry. (Source: Jill Holloway/Thomasville Times-Enterprise)



The Butler Garden Club Learns to Propagate Pineapples

The Butler Garden Club met in October and Club member and Master Gardener Pam Weldon presented a program on propagating pineapples. Ms. Weldon drew on her background living and gardening in Plantation Key, Florida. She explained propagation techniques, how to use pineapples in your landscape, and how to overwinter them. She even used pineapples in the ten plus table arrangements while members munched on pineapple cobbler. Pictured left to right is Sylvia Harris, Vice President and Program Chairman and Pam Weldon, Master Gardener.



First Place Winners

Magnolia District Club of the Year Awards:

The award, based on points received on the Presidents Report resulted in a tie for 1st Place. The winners are Village Green Garden Club of Byron accepted by Bonnie Bowlin and Camellia Garden Club of Cuthbert accepted by Bobbie Liggett. 2nd Place, just one point less went to Fort Gaines Home and Garden Club accepted by Club President, Caroline Hartley Culpepper.



Second Place Winner

Lisa Hall, GCG President presented the Certificates to the winners at the Magnolia District Annual Fall Meeting.

Winchester Garden Club makes Pies fit for A King:



The JoAnn Holt Scarecrow Walking Trail held a scarecrow contest to support the Columbus BOOtanical Garden's not so scary Halloween in October. The Winchester Garden Club's entry was based on the old poem "Four and Twenty Black Birds" and there are two pies in the pie safe. Community members cast votes for their favorite scarecrow in the fun competitive contest. Families can Trick-or-Treat in a safe environment surrounded by the beauty of nature! Games, educational activities, CANDY, and a LIVE BAT program are part of the fun. Have YOU tried the Winchester Garden Club Pie Recipe? Follow it carefully!

BRING ON THE CROWS! are their words at the bottom of the recipe!



Country Hills Garden Club is preparing their Vegetable Plot for the winter crop. They were very successful in harvesting over 60 pounds of vegetables each week to donate to the local food bank as part of the NGC Plant America/ Feed America Program.

Pictured are Monica Bozonier, Katrina Scott, Winnie White and Vivene Holley, Priscilla Drain, Johnetta Gillies



Dogwood District Club of Excellence:

Congratulations to the garden clubs who received the Club of Excellence Award. Great Job!!!

Alpharetta GC, Ama-Kanasta GC, Bellmere GC, Camellia GC, Club Estates GC, Country Hills GC, Druid Hills GC, Indian Creek GC, Magnolia GC, Norcross GC, Piedmont GC, Pine Tree GC, Roswell GC, Sandy Springs GC Spade and Trowel GC and Spalding GC.



The Redbud Standard Flower Show was held August 28th and 29th at Callanwolde



Gale Thomas with radio host Ashley Frasca

Fine Arts Center in Atlanta. This year's theme of "Daisy's Movie Mania" was all about cinema which is very fitting as so many films and television shows use Callanwolde's gracious mansion for their locations. Chairmen Gale Thomas and Joy Zaidan orchestrated a legion of garden club volunteers to create the beautiful displays of floral designs and horticulture and this year's new Botanical Arts division. In addition, there were educational exhibits featuring Callanwolde's movie history and the Secret Gardens of Callanwolde. The entries came from 19 Redbud garden clubs which include DeKalb and Rockdale Counties and extends to LaGrange, Griffin and Thomaston. There were 470 pieces of horticulture submitted and dozens of themed designs. The honorary host of the show this year was Ashley Frasca with WSB Radio, host of "Green and Growing."



Flower Show Musical Instrument themed entry



Callanwolde Courtyard with exhibits

Members from Mountain Mums, Smoke Rise and Smoke Rise Morning Glories volunteered in many different roles on the Daisy committee. We also recruited Smoke Rise residents and DeKalb County Master Gardeners to help with staging and placement. Flower show judges from all across the area and were assisted by clerks from Redbud clubs. Congratulations to all who participated in this beautiful and unique floral showcase! Go Redbuds!

Redbud Annual Meeting: On a lovely fall October day, the Redbud District had their General Meeting in Thomaston. About 100 people were in attendance. Green Thumb, Spade and Trowel and Thomaston Garden Clubs hosted the event at Thomaston First Baptist Church, beautifully decorated with fresh flower arrangements and pumpkins en masse. A delicious lunch was catered by Green Thumb members Cathy Lee and the Party Girls .

In addition to Redbud District members, there were many special guests: Lisa Hall, GCG President; Peggy Tucker and Barbara Borque, Former GCG



Angie Short receives Award for Green Thumb Garden Club from Gale Thomas

Presidents; William Tucker, husband of Peggy Tucker; Diane Hunter, GCG President Elect; six of seven District Directors; DeKalb Federation President, Quill Duncan and representatives from Birds Georgia and the Flint River Keepers. Other invited guests included the Mayor of Thomaston, J.D. Stallings; and the Reverend Bryan Stallings, Thomaston First Baptist Church. We were especially happy to see Co-Director Bonnie Dudley back with us after some absence due to illness.

An entertaining and informative program was given by Matthew Stafford, Daylily Hybridizer from the Country Estate in Williamson. Attendees enjoyed educational displays, a gift basket raffle, a silent auction for handmade pottery, meeting new people and seeing old friends. Redbud Awards were announced and awarded by Co-chairs Glenndolyn Hallman and Gale Thomas. A memorial service and moment of silence for our members who have passed last year were led by Chaplain Juanita Baron and Jennifer Warren. A slate of officers for Redbud Term May 2025-27 was presented and voted on by the members.

It was a lovely event. Thanks to all the Thomaston Garden Clubs, for hosting!



Coming Up



December

Dec. 1 - 30 - Winter WonderLights

5:30 - 9:30pm; Selected nights, State Botanical Garden, Athens, See botgarden.uga.edu for details

Dec. 6 - December Friends First Friday Pining for Spring

9 - 10:30am; Gardenside Room, State Botanical Garden , Athens; See botgarden.uga.edu for details

Dec. 7 - Holiday Décor: Wreath Workshop

10am- 12:00pm; State Botanical Garden, Athens Horticulture Complex; See botgarden.uga.edu for details



January

Jan. 2 - WonderLights Disco Nights

5:30 - 9:30pm; Selected nights State Botanical Garden , Athens; See botgarden.uga.edu for details

Jan. 15-18 - Creative Floral Arrangers of the Americas, Inc. Annual Seminar;

Embassy Suites Tampa Airport Westshore 555 N Westshore Blvd, Tampa, FL See <https://creativefloral.org/> for more info

Jan. 21 – Oleander District Winter Board Meeting

9:30am - 2:00pm First Christian Church 306 Frontage Rd E, Sylvania

Jan.22- Dogwood District Winter Board Meeting

10:00am - 12:00pm; Lost Corner Preserve 7300 Brandon Mill Rd, Sandy Springs



February

Feb. 1 - Athens Beginners Beekeeping Seminar

9:00am - 3:30pm; \$65; Terrace Room , GCG Headquarters ; State Botanical Garden, Athens See botgarden.uga.edu for details

Feb. 2 - Fundamentals of Design Graphics

9:00am - 4:30pm; Gardenside Room; State Botanical Garden , Athens See botgarden.uga.edu for details

Feb. 10 - Redbud Winter Board Meeting

10:00am - 2:00pm; Callanwolde Fine Arts Center 930 Briarcliff Rd. NE, Atlanta

Feb. 13 - Magnolia District Winter Board Meeting

8:00am - 5:00pm; Butler/Reynolds; time and location TBA

Feb. 18 – Azalea District Winter Board Meeting

10:00am - 1:00pm; Crawfordsville; time and location TBA



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