



Redbud Reporter

Winter 2025

From the District Director

Nuisance Plant—or Gorgeous Native Weed?

The Perimeter College Native Botanical Garden in Decatur, Georgia includes the Ferns of the World Garden, which is possibly the largest collection of ferns in the US, according to their website. There are several types of native plant gardens there, and it showcases over 4,000 species of native plants. It's a fascinating garden and they propagate plants from their collection to sell as a fundraiser.

It was late in the season several years ago when I visited there, maybe August or September, when most annuals and perennials are beginning to fade and the fall flowers are beginning their show. There was a gorgeous plant there – 6 feet tall and covered with Black-Eyed Susan type flowers, stunning and golden in the sunshine. Its name? Swamp sunflower!

I was smitten! I bought **one**. It was small and not very showy that year. The next fall it was 6 feet tall and covered with golden blooms. I was thrilled! After the flowers bloomed, I decided I would not cut it back so the birds could enjoy the seeds during winter. The following year, it spread to 3-4 feet wide and had babies all over the yard. Yikes!

A few years later when the whole area was weeded and tilled and landscape fabric laid down, I decided to keep just a few of them. They bloomed in great abundance, but Hurricane Helene laid them on the ground. I was busy with company for Thanksgiving and the weather was rainy and cold, so their flower heads remained untrimmed. One cloudy and cold



day last week, I saw dozens of finches in, on, and around the sunflowers. The next day they were gone. I am really rethinking the concept of “weeds”. We learn as we go along, don't we?

Redbud had a fabulous General Meeting on Oct 22 in Thomaston. The three garden clubs of Thomaston – Spade and Trowel, Green Thumb, and Thomaston Garden Club – were our creative and gracious hosts. Please read all the details in the following pages.

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday and the best New Year yet.

Thanks for all you do,
Kim Fair
Redbud District Director

Swamp Sunflower

The swamp sunflower (*Helianthus angustifolius*) is a native, perennial plant in the Aster family. It is a tall, upright plant with narrow, dark green leaves and bright yellow flowers. It can grow up to 8 feet tall and 2 to 4 feet wide.

Swamp sunflower is native from New York to Florida to Texas. It can be found in a range of soil conditions, from wet swamps to forests. It prefers moist, acidic, sandy to clay loam soils in full sun, but can tolerate part shade. It was the 2007 North Carolina Wildflower of the Year

Swamp sunflower blooms from late summer to fall and is among the last plants to bloom in the season. It attracts many pollinators, including butterflies and bees, and is the larval host to the silvery checkerspot butterfly. Its seed heads provide food for songbirds, mourning doves and small mammals in the winter.

Swamp sunflower can be grown from seed indoors or directly outdoors. It should be pruned in June to encourage branching. It is generally resistant to serious pests and diseases, but can be susceptible to rust, leaf fungal spots and powdery mildew.



2024 Redbud Annual Meeting

On October 22, the Redbud District had its General Meeting in the town of Thomaston, led by District Director Kim Fair. About 100 people were in attendance on that lovely fall day. The three garden clubs of Thomaston hosted the event at Thomaston First Baptist Church, which was beautifully decorated with fresh flower arrangements and pumpkins en masse. The host clubs were: Green Thumb Garden Club, President Angie Short; Spade and Trowel Garden Club, President Melody Gaskins; and Thomaston Garden Club, President Janice Goins. A delicious lunch was catered by Cathy Lee and the Party Girls, who are members of the Green Thumb Garden Club.

In addition to Redbud District members, there were many special guests: Lisa Hall, GCG President; Peggy Tucker and Barbara Bourque, Former GCG Presidents; William Tucker, driver and husband of Peggy Tucker; Diane Hunter, GCG President Elect; six of seven District Directors; Quill Duncan, DeKalb Federation President; and representatives from Birds Georgia and the Flint Riverkeeper. 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, Ga. Attendees enjoyed educational displays, a gift basket raffle, a silent auction of handmade pottery, meeting new people, and seeing old friends. Redbud Awards were announced and awarded by Co-chairs Glendolyn Hallman and Gale Thomas. A memorial service and moment of silence for our members who passed away in the 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. Thank you so much, Thomaston Garden Clubs, for hosting!



The County Estate owners Matthew Stafford (far left) and Jonathan McDaniel (far right) pose with Redbud District Director Kim Fair and GCG President Lisa Hall. Mr. Stafford gave a presentation on his nursery's daylily hybridization program during the meeting.



GCG President Lisa Hall presents a Certificate of Achievement to Thomaston Garden Club President Janet Goins in honor of her club's 95th Anniversary.



Upcoming Basic Floral Design Class

The Conyers Garden Club is sponsoring a Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. Basic Floral Design I Course in 2025. The class will meet at the Conyers Presbyterian Church in Conyers. Dates for the classes are February 19, March 19, April 16, and May 21, 2025. Session times are 10 am - 3 pm. The registration for the course is \$125.

To register, please click on this link: <https://forms.gle/WfPQqD1Z5TvU2sKJA>

For more information, please contact Gale D. Thomas via phone (404-790-7101) or email (galedthomas@gmail.com).

As someone who took the 2024 class in Griffin, I can attest to how beneficial this class is. Anna Burns, with assistance from Ellen Nichol and Gale Thomas, did a wonderful job of teaching the class. Members ranged from the total novice to people who had considerable experience creating floral designs.

As one of the extremely inexperienced members, I was worried that my designs would be disastrous! While I would still be nervous to put anything I created in a show to be judged, I now feel comfortable doing a design for my house. So don't hesitate to sign up for the class because you think you have no artist talent! Anna will guide you through the process of creating balanced, attractive designs.

Sandy Reed

Results of Pollinator Census

During the August 2024 Great Southeast Pollinator Census, 18,776 counts were uploaded, recording 394,561 insect visits. This is an increase from the 2023 count of 12,293.

Four states – Georgia (13,269 counts), Florida (2,808 counts), North Carolina (2,287 counts), and South Carolina – participated in the count. South Carolina was impacted by Hurricane Debby during the count, but 412 participants still counted and recorded their data.

The 2024 Census detailed data is on the [project website](#). Remember the data from all years is on the website and accessible for anyone to use.

Redbud District counties, along with their number of participants, were: Butts (13); Clayton (78); Coweta (212); DeKalb (2034 – most in state!); Fayette (228); Harris (112); Heard (87); Henry (18); Lamar (153); Meriwether (95); Monroe (20); Newton (21); Pike (50); Rockdale (100); Spalding (13); Troup (244); and Upson (14).

Please make sure your calendars are marked for August 22nd and 23rd, 2025. More information can be found on the [project website](#), [Southeast Pollinator Census Facebook page](#), and [@SoutheastPollinators Instagram](#).

Deep South Convention

The Deep South Convention will be held March 11-13 in Valdosta. The Garden Club of Georgia is host this year.

GCG President Lisa Hall is asking that each Club considers making a donation to fund the convention. The convention center, hotels and our tour venues were spared from extreme damage by Hurricane Helene. Many in the area have suffered greatly and are still in recovery mode. Normally we would appeal to local merchants but, due to the hurricane damage in the area, their dollars will be redirected.

The Deep South Region does not provide monetary assistance in producing their convention. Donations of any size are welcome from \$25 on up!

Donation checks should to be made out to “DSGC Convention” with “Donation” noted on check.

All donations will be recognized in the Convention Program. Please send any contributions to:

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

Per a recommendation by your District Directors, any club making a donation of \$25 or more will receive a point on the President’s Report!

More information on the convention, including registration form and hotel information, can be found at [Deep South Convention](#).

GCG Convention

The 97th Annual Convention of The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. will be held April 29-30, 2025 at the Augusta Marriott at the Convention Center. Hosted by the Azalea District, the theme of the convention is “Gather on the River with the Birds & the Bees and the Flowers & the Trees”.

On Tuesday, vendors will be set up for you to have a fun shopping experience. Then we will enjoy a delicious luncheon and hear about the beginning of the Augusta National Golf Club and its trees from Keynote Speaker Stan Byrdey.

In the afternoon, two breakout sessions will be offered where you will learn more about the birds and the flowers. Immediately following, you can tour the Morris Museum of Art where you can enjoy the art displays and visit the gift shop. Or you can

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 Mark Alberin will present the photographic beauty of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge.

The registration form and hotel information is the Winter 2024-2025 Garden Gateways.

Dollars Educate Scholars

Mark your calendars for January as our Official GCG Scholarship Month!

- Members donating \$1.00 or more now thru January will make a BIG impact on Scholarships.
- *Dollars Educate Scholars* contributions from members are given thru your garden club treasury.
- Your club treasurer writes one check to GCG to mail along with the completed form to:
- Assistant Treasurer, Anita Allen, 381 McSwain Drive, Wray, GA 31798

*Please 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 Meeting hosted by the Azalea District, April 29-30, 2025
where we will once again Crown the Queen of Scholarships!*

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

“Dollars Educate Scholars” TRANSMITTAL FORM

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE GARDEN CLUB OF GEORGIA, INC. OR GCG

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 Drive, Wray, GA 31798

Please write legibly. Contributions received through January 2025 will count in this giving period.

Club Name: _____

District: _____

Garden Representative & Title: _____

Email: _____

Phone number: _____

Club number: _____ Number of Members _____ :

100% Participation? Circle one. Yes No

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

News from the Clubs

Avon Garden Club Installs New officers

The Avon Garden Club concluded its 70th year on May 2, 2024 with the installation of its new slate of officers. Officers pictured from left to right in the photo below are Frank Mullins, President/Treasurer; Erin Vaughn, First Vice President; Joy Cole, Recording Secretary; Mary Lou Newcott-Oechsner, Parliamentarian; and Rosemary Cox, Second Vice-President.



Ruth Olson (pictured below), a longtime Club member and former Club President, conducted the installation. Ruth was recently selected by The Dekalb Federation of Garden Clubs to be included in its prestigious Legends Club.



The theme of the installation was one evocative of sweetness and delights where incoming officers were presented with candy bars that best described their respective roles:

- A Milky Way, representing the principal star in our galaxy, to Frank Mullins who as President will help the Club light its way through its 71st year.
- Skittles to Rosemary Cox as First Vice President to help in planning programs of many flavors and colors.
- M&M's to Erin Vaughn as Second Vice President for the ability to be any color at any time in overseeing executive meetings and stepping in when needed.
- A Mounds bar to Joy Cole as Recording Secretary for her handling of "mounds" of paperwork, digital or otherwise.
- A Payday to Frank Mullins as Treasurer for keeping account of all Club financial transactions.
- A Three Musketeers bar to Mary Lou Newcott-Oechsner as Parliamentarian to be "All for One and One for All" as she strives to make meetings run in a smooth and orderly fashion.

Under the leadership of these new officers, Club members can look forward to a year of stimulating programs, field trips and participation in legacy projects as well as in new cooperative community projects such as providing and installing birdhouses and beautifying the grounds around the Avondale Estates 30002 Post Office.

Conyers Garden Club Takes a Wetland Walk

The members of the Conyers Garden Club braved the cool fall morning on November 12, 2024 to take a 3.4 mile guided walk in the wetlands of the Big Haynes Creek Nature Center located in the Georgia International Horse Park. This nature center spans 173 acres and serves as a haven to numerous wildlife species and is part of the Roslyn Carter Butterfly Trail. Along the trail, members were delighted to see the newly installed Herald of Herons art exhibit. The whimsical works of art in the form of decorated heron statues were inspired by 10 local school students whose winning designs were selected from over 200 student entries. Along the walk, Conservation Manager Dawn Tanner pointed out the herons, osprey and other birds as well as noting the hundreds of native plants along the trail. The walk also focused on the importance of wetlands to the community.



Club members reach the first of 10 decorated herons in the Herald of Herons art exhibit.

Conyers Garden Club Therapy Projects are a Success

The Conyers Garden Club (CGC) held two Garden Therapy workshops this fall on October 28 and November 5, 2024. The October 28 workshop involved making handmade cards. Club President and Garden Therapy Chairman Gale Thomas put together individual card kits for each senior member registered for this session. She, along with club members Susan Turner and Jessica Warren, led nine members of the Senior Center in a handmade cardmaking session.

Each center member was provided with a package containing all the supplies needed to make three different “Thinking of You” themed greeting cards. Using the models provided, the seniors made their cards and added extra personal decorative touches (i.e., bling with stick-on “rhinestones”, pop-up dimensional stickers, and creative use of the sentiment tags provided).

The November 5 session was one on Holiday Wreath Making. Using purchased and donated wreath forms, holiday decorations, and other decorative items, CGC members set up a “pop-up shop” of Christmas decorations for each participating senior center member to “shop” and select a wreath form and decorative items for their wreath.

After all the “shopping” was done, 2nd Vice President Kathy Williams demonstrated bow-making to the senior members for their holiday wreaths. CGC members answered questions and provided feedback to the participants. Members also assisted those few senior members with limited fine motor skills.



Due to the overwhelming interest from the senior members, the CGC had to have three consecutive sessions to allow all interested persons to participate in this activity.

After the initial 12 registered participants shared their new wreaths with fellow center members, others came to request an opportunity to make a wreath. In turn, that created additional requests to participate. The CGC members allowed additional persons to participate until they ran out of wreath forms. After the last person finished her wreath, a total of 25 persons, including 2 male participants, had made holiday wreaths.

Many of the participants expressed their appreciation for the session and the opportunity to participate. Each one thanked the CGC members. As wreaths were completed, each person had a photo taken with his/her wreath. These photos will be posted on the Center’s bulletin board.

Clockwise, from top left:

- As a senior member works on her cards, Gale Thomas shows her the “bling” add-ons available to add personal touches to cards.
- Jessica Warren provides support for seniors as they make their cards.
- Susan Turner and a senior member showcasing the senior’s completed cards
- 2nd Vice President Kathy Williams demonstrates how to make a bow.
- Senior members making holiday wreaths.
- Senior members get busy with decorating.

Green Thumb Garden Club Has Busy Fall

Green Thumb Garden Club participated in a community project during October. For the annual Downtown Thomaston Mule Days Festival, club members Kathy Hightower, Sherry Brazelton, Tina Rogers, and Debbie Gignilliat decorated the front of a building located on the square. In keeping with the theme of “Mule Days,” mules were made from cornstalks and decorated with fall flowers (photo below).



Also, the downtown hanging baskets were replanted by members Carey Elder, Traci Harrison, Barbara Andrews, and Jessica Deen in preparation for fall and the downtown festival (photo, top right).



Green Thumb Garden Club members heard an interesting program on hollies at the November meeting. The program was presented by club member Barbara Holloway, whose previous residence was named “Holly Hill” (photo, bottom right). She provided information on the different types of shrub hollies and examples of how to use holly foliage and berries in holiday decorating.



Lullwater Garden Club Decorates Conservation Garden

Lullwater Garden Club recreated decorations from the 1935 archives in their Lullwater Conservation Garden. Strings of popcorn and cranberry garland, dried oranges and apples, homemade suet cakes,

and peanut butter/birdseed pine cones were placed in the formal garden for birds to enjoy. Members enjoyed hot cider and donuts.



Pine Needle Garden Club Honors Member and Decorates Plantation

Pine Needle Garden Club voted last year to create a memorial for one of our dear and most active members, Theresa Borders, whom most people knew as “Tee”. With a generous donation from one of our members, we were able to place a marker for her at the La Grange Active Life Center. Tee was a Master Gardener and we wanted to remember her for all her club contributions. We were able to purchase the marker locally and place it on granite, so it would not blow away. We further decided to place a 5-foot ring around her memorial to protect it even further. We have not finished yet. There will be a red brick edging all around the tree and marker, forming a circle. Then we will plant the inner circle with “Baby Boomer Daffodils”. The bulbs will be covered with mulch and protected from mowing or strong winds.

For several years our garden club has partnered with the LaGrange Women's Club to decorate Bellevue Plantation for the Christmas season. Members of Pine Needle Club and Women's Club provide all the greenery for the decorations. Wreaths and garlands greet people as they come to take a tour of the

home. This was the original home of Samuel Harvey Hill, built between 1858 and 1860. It is a beautiful, old and well-kept colonial home. The interior of the home has original arrangements placed on each mantel. The home is often used as an event center for weddings, showers, and meetings.



Shenandoah Rose Garden Club Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Shenandoah Rose Garden Club members celebrated their 60th Anniversary on November 20 with a formal tea at the home of member Barbara Adam.

Each member contributed something to the tea: homemade savory items; pimento cheese and chicken salad tea sandwiches; English scones from “Taste of Britian” in Norcross; cheese straws; an assortment of miniature desserts from Alons Bakery; petit fours from Publix; and cloth napkins.

One member prepared an assortment of teas for attendees to try, while another created a lovely Ikebana floral design.

Nine out of ten members were in attendance at the tea. DeKalb Federation President Quill Duncan attended as our special guest. It was a lovely event enjoyed by all!

Smoke Rise Morning Glories Decorate Wells-Brown House

For over ten years, the Smoke Rise Morning Glories have decorated the historic Wells-Brown House in Stone Mountain Village for Christmas. The headquarters of the Stone Mountain Historic Society is located on Ridge Avenue and was built in 1870. The construction was unique for the time. In fact, only a few homes in Georgia of that period were built of fireproof concrete cut to look like stone. The house sports a new roof now and is also the location of a DeKalb County Master Gardener project on the grounds of the property.

This year nine club members added period appropriate greenery, fruit and festive red ribbons to the Wells-Brown sign, lamp post, Juliet balcony and front door. On the inside of the home, the club decorated the three mantles and added a beribboned evergreen swag to the stair banister. A few years ago we started the tradition of clove-studded oranges for the mantles for a lovely holiday fragrance. That job is assigned to Marsha Pittard who always adds creative flair to the task.

The Historic Society holds a holiday party each year and we completed our décor just in time for the festivities, which were attended by our own Redbud Director Kim Fair and her husband Reuben.



Stonecrest Garden Club Adopts School

The Stonecrest Garden Club has adopted the Browns Mill Elementary School as one of its 2024-2025 projects. The club members are working with the school staff to repurpose the school's courtyard into a Garden Sanctuary.

Using a landscape plan drawn by member Shelton Fleming, Stonecrest Garden Club members met on October 16, 2024 to plant over 50 native perennials in the school's courtyard. Joining the club members in the day's work was the school principal.

