

## Laurel Letters- Winter 2025-2026



Dear Laurel District,

We had SOME FUN at our Annual Fall Meeting in Rome in October 2025! All our preparations paid off and it was a thrill to see us in action. I am thankful to all who pitched in to make it an amazing day. If you had to miss it, we have some highlights in this issue of Laurel Letters. I hope you are able to make it next year!

Mikel and I will be firing up the Laurel District Zoom account for meetings in 2026 including all club presidents and board members. We plan to meet for Laurel Forum the first Tuesdays of January, February and March in the mornings and evenings. Laurel Forum is a great opportunity to ask questions and get ideas from other clubs. We are here to help your clubs with all that Garden Club of Georgia has to offer.



Remember that <https://gardenclubofgeorgia.org/laurel-district-page/> at <https://gardenclubofgeorgia.org/> is the first place to go for information about many things. Our webpage lists deadlines for Laurel Letters and

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Garden Gateways along with events and a listing of our clubs by city. **If you are not receiving emails from me or GCG, you can press the Sign up to be on Our Mailing List for Laurel District News button. You may have been removed for some reason.** My email address is on our webpage. Everything goes to me to be funneled out.

I hope you all have wonderful celebrations in this Christmas season. It makes me so happy knowing that your garden clubs are sharing joy. God bless your families, friends, communities and you!

Sincerely,

*Merrell Holden*

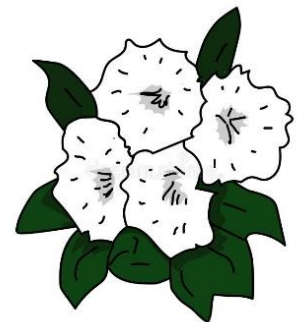
*[laureldistrictdirector@gardenclubofgeorgia.org](mailto:laureldistrictdirector@gardenclubofgeorgia.org)*

***Let's get out there and have fun!***

*<https://gardenclubofgeorgia.org/>*

### ***Condolence Procedure***

*Laurel District asks that you let us know at [laureldistrictdirector@gardenclubofgeorgia.org](mailto:laureldistrictdirector@gardenclubofgeorgia.org) if a garden club member has passed so we may reach out to the family with a card and honor them at our memorial service. We would like to know the name, garden club with city and the mailing address of the family.*



FROM MIKEL VANN, CO-DIRECTOR:

It was wonderful to meet so many of you at the district meetings in October. You are all amazing by what you do in your clubs and communities. What a privilege it is to have this position in boosting new members and new clubs. I am here to help in any way I can.

Also, don't forget about the challenge of adding one new subscribing member to your club roster by January first. These could be speakers, local dignitaries, community leaders, or sponsors. You can find everything you need on the GCG website.

I appreciate all of you!



### **Laurel District Annual Meeting 2025**

Laurel District of the Garden Club of Georgia held their annual meeting on Wednesday, October 22, 2025, at Coosa Country Club in Rome. The meeting was hosted by Rome Federated Garden Clubs, Inc.

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The event was preceded by a warm and wonderful welcome party followed by dinner for visitors staying in town Tuesday night. The Roman Chariot provided transportation around town from the hotel to the party and the dinner at Harvest Moon and back to the hotel.

It was a blast!



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On Wednesday morning, Rome Federated Garden Clubs, led by co-presidents Kathy Cooper and Linda Easterwood, including Lavender View Garden Club, Mountain View Garden Club, Rome African Violet Study Club, Seven Hills Garden Club, Thistle Garden Club, Three Rivers Garden Club and Townview Garden Club welcomed 115 club members and guests to our annual meeting which was decorated amazingly with the theme of *Between the Rivers*.



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We enjoyed beverages and breakfast bread baked by Anita Bridges with special recipe from Caroline Alford. Raffle baskets and Laurel District merchandise were made available for purchase from our delightful meeting hosts.

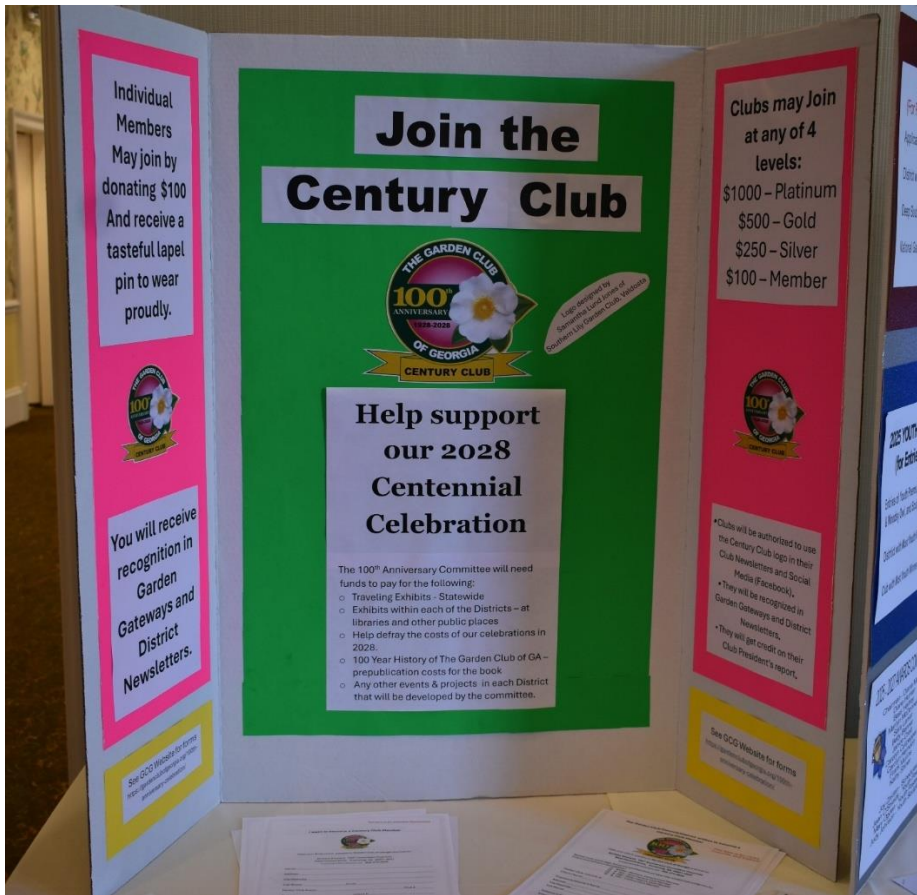
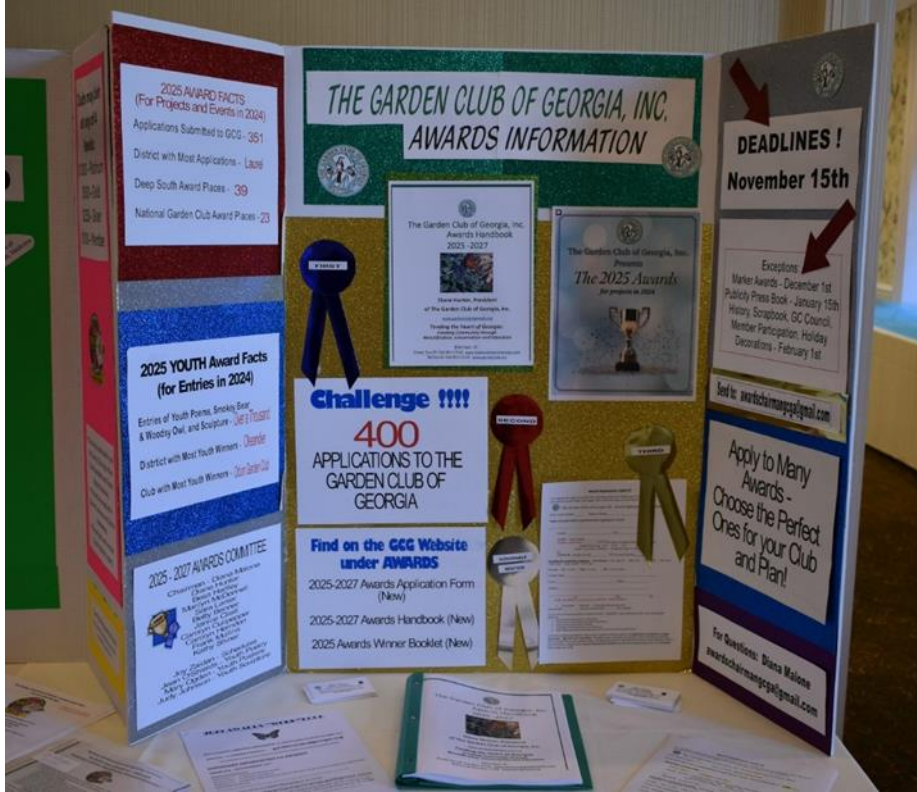


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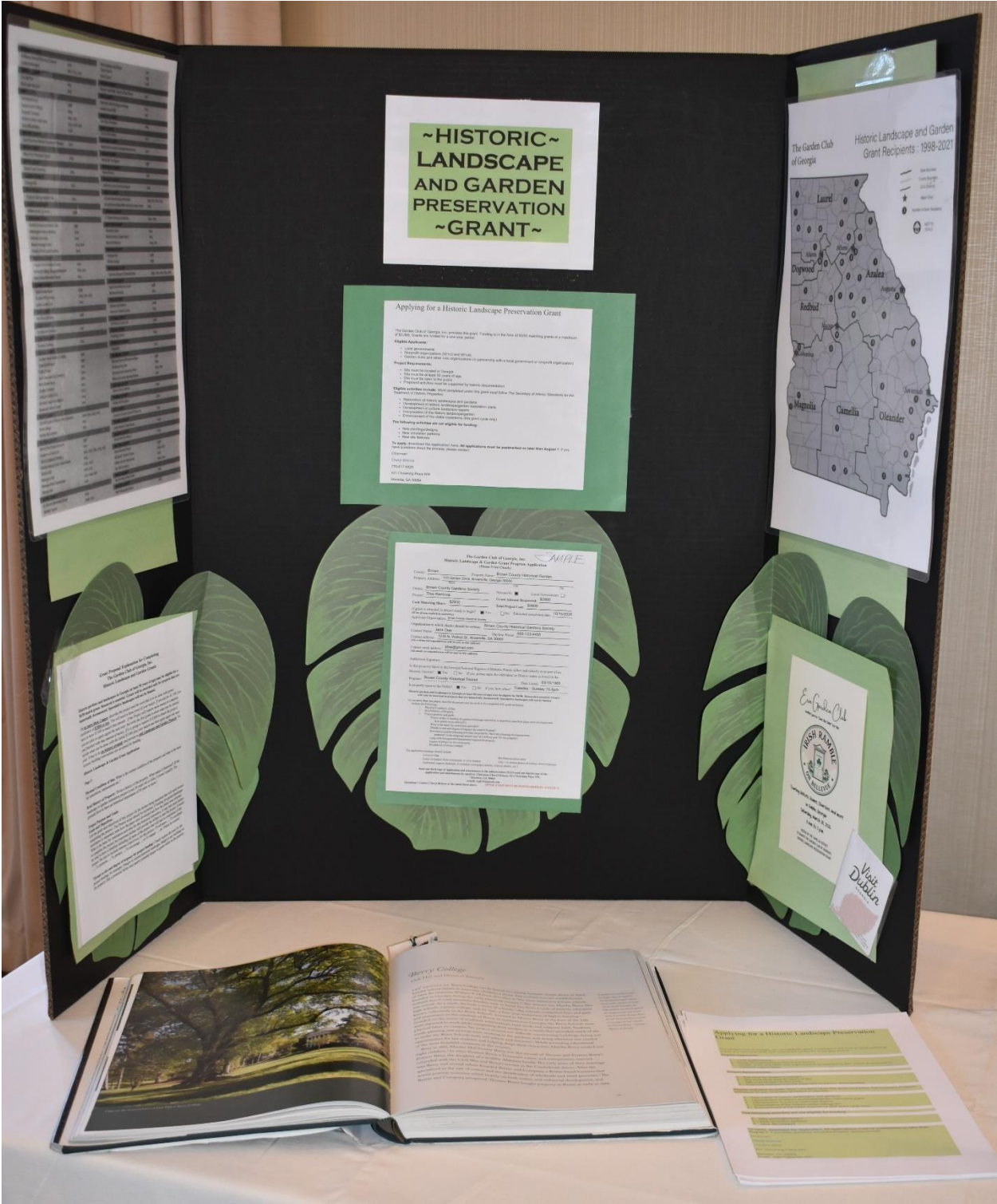




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The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM. Merrell, Kathy and Linda greeted everyone and introduced Lieutenant Colonel Rob Skelton USAF (retired) who gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag with the Junior ROTC Rome High School Honor Guard.



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Kathy and Linda expressed our thanks to former Laurel District Director, Caroline Alford, who obtained the venue for our meeting through her sponsorship of us as a member of Coosa Country Club. She will be presented with a beautiful bird house at the next possible opportunity. Caroline was attending to her husband, Roy, who was recovering in Atlanta.



Garden Club of Georgia President, Diane Hunter, addressed the group with many accolades to our active and supportive clubs. In gratitude to Laurel District, she presented Marshall Forest Land Trust a donation of \$200. Laurel District thanked Diane and honored her with a \$100 donation to the Garden Club of Georgia Scholarship Fund.



THE GARDEN CLUB OF GEORGIA, INC.  
RECOGNIZES

*Merrell Holden*

**LAUREL DISTRICT DIRECTOR**

**FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE  
A DONATION OF \$200  
WILL BE MADE TO  
MARSHALL FOREST LAND TRUST  
IN YOUR HONOR**

*Diane C. Hunter*

Diane C. Hunter  
PRESIDENT, 2025-2027  
OCTOBER 8, 2025

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Diane announced the many Garden Club of Georgia Scholarships generously supported by Laurel District.



## Laurel Letters- Winter 2025-2026

### *The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.* *Student Scholarships Grant Awards 2025*

*GCG provided \$90,000.00 in grants to 15 students for the 2025-2026 academic term.*

**We are thankful to all who have contributed to the  
GCG Scholarship Program.**

**We received 36 Named Scholarships totaling \$56,660.**

**In addition, we granted \$33,340.00 through Patrons of Scholarships, General Fund  
contributions, along with interest & dividend income from  
Brown Thrasher and Cherokee Rose Investment Accounts.**

*Congratulations to our students on their many achievements. We send our very best wishes as  
they continue their studies and move into their careers.*

### **Laurel District**

The Laurel District Scholarship Established in 2016, this year is presented in honor of Cheryl Briscoe, Laurel District Director 2023-2025. (2 Certificates - 1 for the District - 1 for Cheryl).	\$1,000.00
The Garden Club of Ellijay Scholarship Established in 2022 to honor the service of the club to their community.	\$2,000.00
The James M. (Jim) Grimes Scholarship Established in 2023, given in memory by his family.	\$1,000.00
The Jody Hunter Scholarship Established in 2023 & given in his memory by Diane Hunter.	\$2,000.00

**The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. Patrons of Scholarship May 2024 - April 2025**  
***With appreciation for donations of \$200.00 or more to help us reach our Scholarship goal!***

### **Laurel District**

The Commerce Garden Club  
Fleur de Lis Garden Club  
Carolyn Hawkins in Honor of Deen Day Sanders. (2 Certificates- 1 for Carolyn-1 for Deen)  
Magnolia Garden Club  
Seven Hills Garden Club

***Thank you all for supporting our students and their futures. Scholarship Chairman, Suan Turner,  
will be happy to help you with any questions you have or that any students you may know of may  
have. We will love to receive their applications. Please visit our website and read of our students  
Scholarship grants awarded in 2025. Scholarship information is found under the Member Resources tab.***

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Laurel District executive officers, including our new treasurer, Claudia Bell, gave reports.

In the business meeting, Carol Fey was appointed Chairman of the Nominations Committee for the 2027-2029 Executive Board consisting of the Director, Co-Director, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Marie Purser and Edna McClellan were voted to serve on the committee. Michelle Culberson and Cheryl Briscoe were voted to serve as alternates.



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Throughout the meeting, door prizes donated by the Laurel District Board of Directors were given to the attendees as names were read from the batch. Thank you, Board of Directors, for the thoughtful gifts!



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Our chaplain, Rene Lanier, led the group in a memorial service as we recognized Bobbie Coleman- Mountain View G.C., Mae Alice “Mac” Miller- Stonehenge G.C., Linda Bozich- Flower Garden Club, Janie Peacock- Mountain View G.C., Alden Maier- Seven Hills G.C., Jacquelyn Landers- Jonquil G.C., Doris Rogers- Mountain View G.C., Dr. John Barnett- Three Rivers G.C., Caroline Silcox- Crabapple G.C., Walter M. “Mike” Scott- Magnolia G.C.- Cartersville, Johnnie Berry- G.C.’s in Laurel, Redbud and Dogwood Districts, Patricia Redwine- Green Thumb, Camellia, Betty Williard- Soque G.C., Annie Wood- Amicalola G.C., Barbara Vaunt- Fleur De Lis G.C., Judy Manning- Laurel Heritage G.C. and Dean Guinn- Three Rivers G.C.



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Rene blessed lunch and everyone served their plate with delicious food and dessert. Laurel District merchandise was displayed and tickets were sold for the raffle baskets.



Laurel District thanks the following clubs for the contributions  
to our successful 2025 raffle basket fund raiser!

RAFFLE BASKETS

Townview Garden Club- Rome

Mountain View Garden Club- Rome

Seven Hills Garden Club- Rome

Three Rivers Garden Club- Rome

Marietta Daisies Garden Club- Marietta

The Commons Garden Club- Marietta

Magnolia Garden Club- Cartersville

Stonehedge Garden Club- Buford

Laurel Garden Club- Canton

Mystery Garden Club (Basket #10: Gardener's Basket: Picnic  
bag, plant food, earthworm casting, yard art, small gardening  
tools, flower seeds & bulbs, socks, apron, pad and gloves-*please*

*let us know who you are so we may thank you!)*

Anetsa-Ga-Da Garden Club- Ball Ground

Garden Club of Elijay

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**\$50 DONATIONS**

Flower Garden Club- Marietta

Honeysuckle Garden Club- Marietta

Marietta Council of Garden Clubs

Creative Study Club- Marietta

Fleur De Lis Garden Club- Gainesville

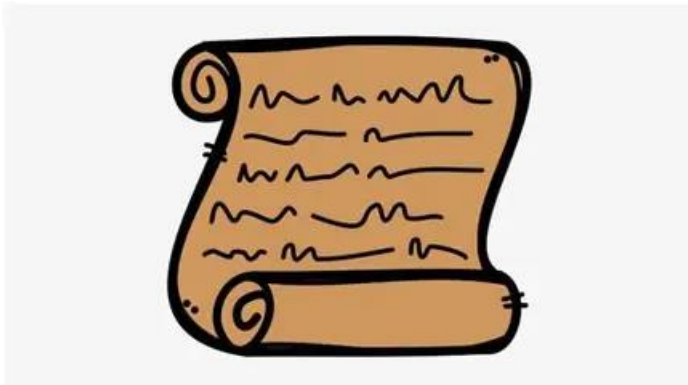
Hiawasseee Garden Club

Lavender View Garden Club- Rome

Amicalola Garden Club- Tate

Chattooga Garden Club- Summerville

After lunch, Mayor Pro-Tem, Jim Bojo,  
welcomed all to the City of Rome and  
presented and read a proclamation from  
the city.



# *City of Rome*

## *Georgia*

### *Proclamation*

**WHEREAS**, the Laurel District Meeting for Rome Federated Garden Clubs embraces the theme "Let's Get Out There and Have Fun!" with the meeting theme, "Between the Rivers," highlighting the spirit of community and the rich history of the Rome area; and

**WHEREAS**, the Laurel District spans 30 counties across the northern portion of the state, encompassing 59 clubs, and has made invaluable contributions through its mission of beautification, conservation, and education—fostering a lifelong passion for gardening and environmental stewardship in communities throughout the region; and

**WHEREAS**, the Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. recently celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and many clubs throughout the state, including the Laurel District, are commemorating their own centennial milestones, recognizing a century of cultivating beauty, promoting conservation, and enhancing education in Georgia's communities; and

**WHEREAS**, the work of the Garden Clubs of Georgia fosters vital environmental awareness and promotes the importance of gardening, with members across the state participating in national initiatives such as Plant America in Red, White, and Blue, and continuing to inspire communities in promoting conservation and sustainable living through their collective efforts.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that I, Mayor Craig McDaniel, along with the Rome City Commission, do hereby recognize the Laurel District Fall Meeting and extend my appreciation for their dedication to advancing the causes of beautification, education, and conservation in our community. I further recognize the valuable contributions of garden clubs across the state and their commitment to cultivating a greener, more sustainable future for Georgia.

Given my hand and seal this twenty-second day of October in the year of our Lord, two thousand twenty-five.



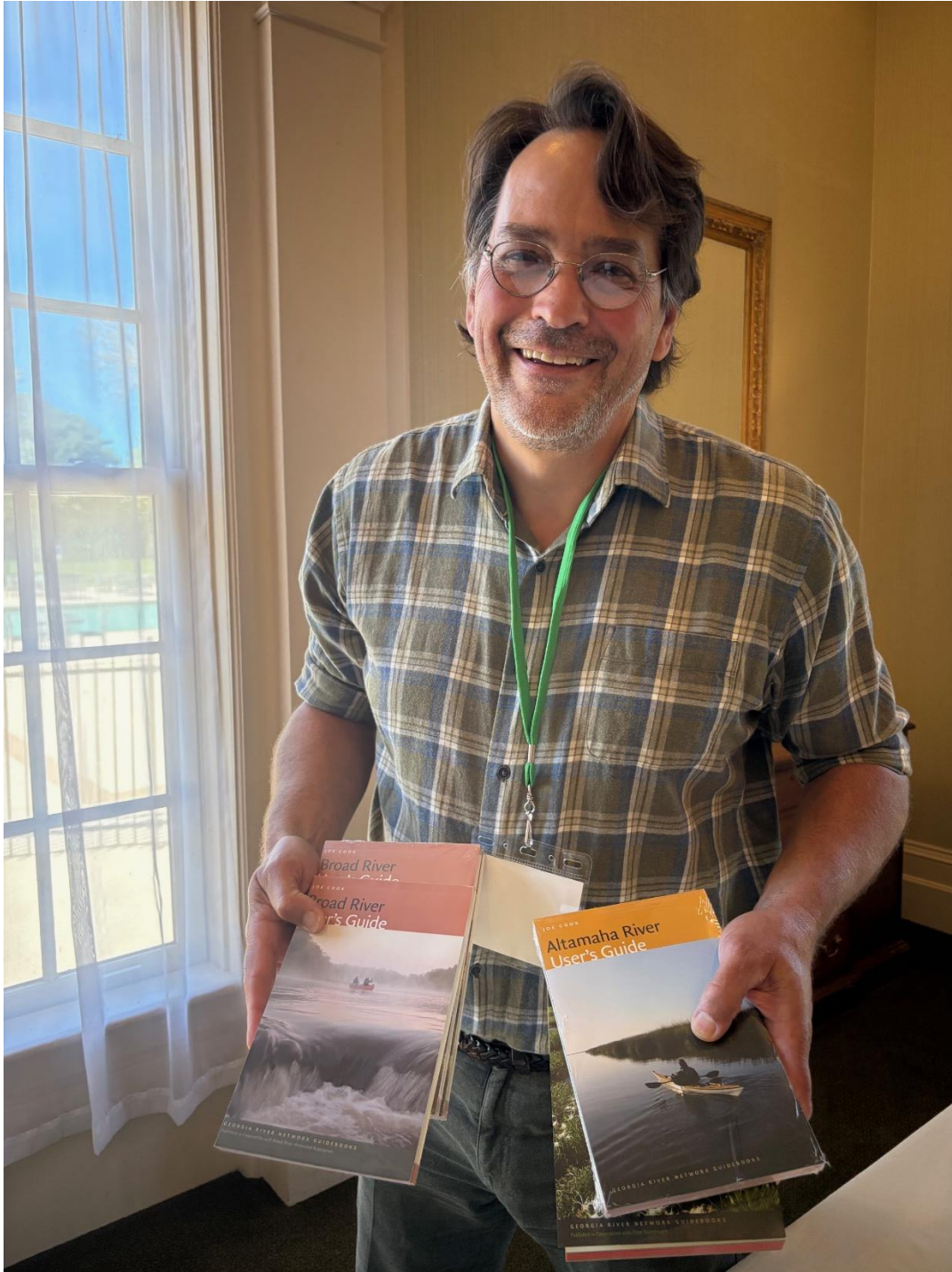
**ROME CITY COMMISSION**

  
Craig McDaniel, Mayor

October 22, 2025  
Date

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Anita Bridges, Laurel District Recording Secretary, introduced the featured speaker, Joe Cook, Paddle Georgia Coordinator and Guidebook Author, who carried us through Georgia on the subject of rivers with very interesting and unfamiliar information.



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Awards were given for clubs and councils receiving Standard of Excellence from The Garden Club of Georgia. 15 clubs and 2 councils from Laurel District received this honor. Who were they? Well, here they are:

01-015 ANETSA-GA-DA, 01-023 GARDEN CLUB OF ELLIJAY, 01-025 STONEHEDGE, 01-050 TRAYLETAH, 01-060 MAGNOLIA (Cartersville), 01-115 CUMMING, 01-225 HIAWASSEE, 01-245 LAWRENCEVILLE, 01-295 FLOWER GARDEN CLUB OF MARIETTA, 01-352 MARIETTA DAISIES, 01-460 SEVEN HILLS, 01-475 THREE RIVERS, 01-500 JONQUIL, 01-525 CHATTOOGA and 01-535 AMICALOLA



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MARIETTA COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS, INC. AND  
ROME FEDERATED GARDEN CLUBS, INC.  
are councils earning standards of excellence.



Laurel District Club of the Year 2024 is Magnolia Garden Club-  
Cartersville.

Laurel District Council of the Year 2024 is Rome Federated  
Garden Clubs, Inc.

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Awards of \$25 for club with the highest percentage attendance to the Laurel District Annual Meeting 2025 were Laurel Garden Club of Canton for small clubs, Magnolia Garden Club-Cartersville for medium clubs and Hiawassee Garden Club for large clubs.



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Announcements were made from Garden Club of Georgia and Laurel District Board Members.



The meeting was adjourned following the raffle prizes drawings.

# Who is on our board?



First Name	Last Name	Board Position	Garden Club
Merrell	Holden	Director	Magnolia- Cartersville
Mikel	Vann	Co-Director	Magnolia- Marietta
Anita	Bridges	Recording Secretary	Three Rivers- Rome
Claudia	Bell	Treasurer	Stonehedge- Buford
Jean	Ray	Corresponding Secretary	Laurel- Canton
Cheryl	Briscoe	Parliamentarian and Advisor	English Laurel and The Commons- Marietta
Caroline	Alford	Advisor	Mountain View- Rome
Edna	McClellan	Advisor	Garden Club of Ellijay
Marie	Purser	Advisor	Magnolia- Cartersville
Victoria	Chandler	Blue Star and Gold Star Markers Chairperson	Soque- Cleveland
Rene	Lanier	Chaplain	Flower- Marietta
Deborah	Paul	Cherokee Garden Library Chairperson	Sope Creek- Marietta
Inday	Bauer	Community Wildlife Project Chairperson	Stonehedge- Buford
Judy	Patterson	Flower Show Coordinator	Magnolia- Cartersville
Madeline	Chandler	Four and Five Star Members Chairperson	Garden Club of Ellijay
Joyce	Laben	Garden Therapy Chairperson	Stonehedge- Buford
Deanna	Slone	GCG 2027 Convention Chairperson	Marietta Daisies
Karen	Hawkins	GCG 2027 Convention Co-Chairperson	Anetsa-Ga-Da- Ball Ground
Jill	Denlea	GCG 2027 Convention Co-Chairperson	Cumming Garden Club
Elaine	Williams	GCG 2027 Convention Co-Chairperson	Hiawassee Garden Club
Maye	Suddeth	Grants Chairperson	Flower- Marietta
Mickey	Carlton	Legislation Chairperson	Magnolia- Cartersville
Caroline	Alford	Marshall Forest Land Trust Chairperson	Mountain View- Rome
Lynn	Fronk	Merchandise Chairperson	Stonehedge- Buford
Joyce	Crider	Merchandise Co-Chairperson	Stonehedge- Buford
Virginia	Hunter	Pull-A-Tab for Ronald McDonald Chairperson	Seven Hills- Rome
		Scholarships Chairperson	
		Social Media Chairperson	
Kathy	Donahue	Youth Contest Coordinator for Poetry & Posters	Townview- Rome
		Youth Programs Chairperson	
Jean	Ray	Garden Council of Cherokee County President	Laurel- Canton
Kathryn	Coffee	Marietta Council of Garden Clubs, Inc. President	Daisies- Marietta
Kathy	Cooper	Rome Federated Garden Clubs, Inc. Co-President	Seven Hills- Rome
Linda	Easterwood	Rome Federated Garden Clubs, Inc. Co-President	Three Rivers- Rome

***We have open board positions.***

*Please let me know at  
[laureldistrictdirector@gardenclubofgeorgia.org](mailto:laureldistrictdirector@gardenclubofgeorgia.org) if you  
know someone interested in these initiatives.*

**Scholarships Chairperson**

Promotes and recognizes donations to The Garden Club of Georgia scholarships.

**Social Media Chairperson**

This chairman serves as photographer and promoter of Laurel District using social media outlets in conjunction with GCG.

**Youth Programs Chairperson**

Facilitates GCG youth programs and awards in the district.



## **Laurel District Winter Board Meeting 2026**

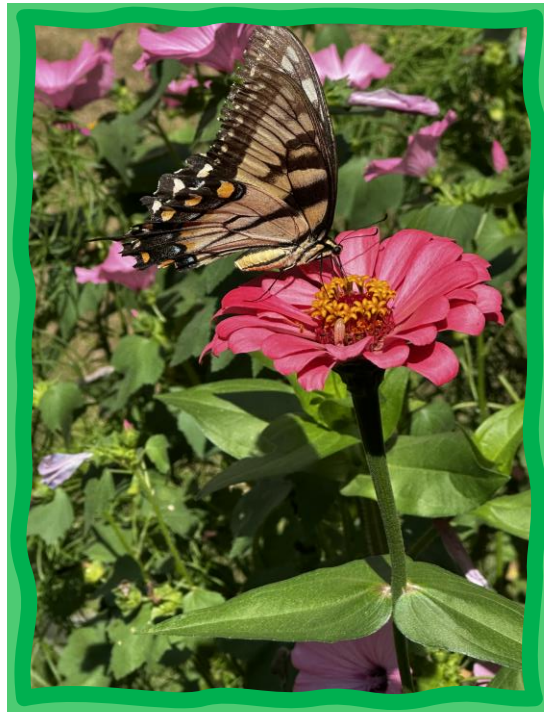
February 26, 2026 @ 11:00 am - 2:00 pm  
Thursday, February 26th at 11:00am in Cartersville

Hosted by Magnolia Garden Club – Details TBA

CWP is a joint project with the Garden Club of Georgia and the Department of Natural Resources. Its goal is to protect wildlife in our own backyards. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A MEMBER OF A GARDEN CLUB TO ATTEND!

RSVP by text to 770-312-6478

SPONSORED BY THE MARIETTA  
MAGNOLIA GARDEN CLUB



January 22, 2026 [9:30-11:00]

Marietta Educational Garden Center  
505 Kennesaw Ave, Marietta, 30060



**The Soque Garden Club**  
**9th Annual Garden Extravaganza (GE)**  
**A PLANT AND GARDEN SALE,**  
**SATURDAY, MAY 2, 2026, 8AM - 3PM**  
**White County Agri-Science Center**  
**Hwy 129 North at Claude Sims Road,**  
**Cleveland, GA**  
**FREE ADMISSION - RAFFLE - FOOD AVAILABLE**



**The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. - 1928 to 2028**  
**"Celebrating a Century of Beautification, Conservation & Education"**



Logo designed by Samatha Lund Jones - Southern Lily Garden Club, Valdosta

We will be having many events during 2028 to celebrate our centennial - and we hope you will join us.

The 100th Anniversary Committee will need funds to pay for the following:

- Traveling Exhibits - Statewide
- Exhibits within each of the Districts - at libraries and other public places
- Century Club Member Lapel Pin for individual members (see below) showing our logo and a Century Club banner

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- Help defray the costs of our celebrations in 2028. People who attend various functions will still need to pay something to register for bus tours in Athens, the reception itself in June at HQ, or other events TBD - in order to make a commitment that they are coming. The funds we raise in advance will lower the 'ticket' price of everything that year.
- 100 Year History Book of The Garden Club of Georgia >Prepublication costs.
- Any other events & projects in each District that will be developed by the committee.

Therefore, in order to raise funds to help defray the cost of some of the events planned for our 100th Anniversary Celebration, GCG has established the Century Club. Individual Members who wish to belong to this club and financially support the 100th Celebration may donate \$100 and receive a Century Club lapel pin and certain other benefits

- Beautiful acknowledgement card suitable for framing - featuring watercolor artwork of GCG Headquarters.
- Early seating at certain events
- Recognition in District newsletters & Garden Gateways

Garden Clubs/Councils & Districts can join too! Some clubs were already very generous- so the committee decided to create 4 different levels of membership – see form for details. We welcome the financial support of all of our groups. Their benefits include:

- Recognition at events or in District newsletters & Garden Gateways
- Clubs/Councils/Districts can use the Century Club logo on their website, social media page, in their newsletters and other print materials.
- Clubs receive credit on their President's Report

We are accepting donations **NOW**. Pins for individuals were ordered over the summer and will be distributed at the Fall District Meetings. Wear it with pride!!!! Our fundraising will determine how big our celebrations can be. We appreciate your support.

**JOIN ASAP** to become a Century Club Member.

**Make your check payable to GCG and mail along with the form below to:**

Barbara Bourque, 100th Committee Chairman  
6445 Holland Drive, Cumming, GA 30041-4641  
b.bourque@comcast.net 404-374-2828

[Century Club Form - for individuals](#)

[Century Club Form - for Clubs/Councils/Districts](#)

# Subscribing Memberships

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR A GCG SUBSCRIBING MEMBERSHIP?

- Any individual who is committed to the purposes and objectives of The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. and desires "association" without the necessity of becoming a member of a local garden club.
- They are eligible to participate in all programs/events available to the general membership *without* the privilege of a vote; and *if desired*, receive the quarterly *Garden Gateways* magazine and other informative notices.

**WHO CAN NOMINATE?** An individual can self-nominate or any GCG member can nominate.

**DUES:** \$25 per year with optional annual renewal

**HOW:** Complete the Subscribing Membership Application on the GCG website; submit a \$25 check payable to "The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc." and mail to: GCG Headquarters  
2450 S. Milledge Avenue  
Athens, GA 30605-1674

## SUBSCRIBING MEMBERSHIP(SM) TYPES

### HONORARY

- Speakers/Instructors at a garden club, event or gardening school.
- Local Dignitaries who conduct welcome greetings at annual meetings/conventions, Blue Star/Gold Star dedications. They can make their comments more meaningful when they know more about GCG. They have visibility due to garden club projects on maintaining city fountains, planters, planting trees and participating in Arbor Day, Earth Day, Garden Week in Georgia and National Garden Week events and city proclamations.
- Community Volunteers/Workers who partner financially and physically on garden club projects.

### GIFT

- Former Club Members who are no longer physically able to attend meetings and/or actively participate in club events
- Family Members those loved ones who support us "behind the scenes". They avoid important garden club calendar events; help prepare for meetings; take care of pets while we are on the road; and patiently listen to our garden club stories---the good, the funny and the "what the heck?"
- Friends and Neighbors who support by donating raffle baskets/door prizes; help set up/clean up after events; make copies; decorate tables, etc.

**NOTE:** Using GCG website samples, clubs may send or present the recipient a welcome letter advising of their GCG Subscribing Membership with an attached dated and signed Certificate. District Co-Directors issue renewal reminders as necessary.

*Every Garden Club of The  
Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. has  
a goal of adding at least ONE  
Subscribing Membership to  
their rolls by  
1 JANUARY*

*District Directors and Co-Directors will be advising their  
districts of this Subscribing Membership goal for garden club  
planning and budgeting purposes.*



### BENEFITS



- Subscribing Memberships add members to The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. membership rolls which helps GCG receive scholarships from National Garden Clubs Inc. to deserving Georgia students.
- Once individuals receive a subscribing membership and receive the beautiful *Garden Gateways* magazine, they are the ones who have the biggest potential of being recruited for full club membership with only gentle coaxing.
- Any garden club with at least three (3) subscribing memberships, earns a well-deserved checkmark on the Club President's Activity Report for the calendar year.

## Club News



### Dallas Garden Club Supports Paulding County Schools' Weekend Backpack Program

Dallas Garden Club has an ongoing project to support Paulding County School Weekend Backpack Programs. The Backpack Programs provide food insecure children with a backpack of food to take home on the weekend. DGC partners with local schools to donate food and supplies for backpack distribution.



Helping these children and schools in our local community is one of our favorite projects and promotes the core principles of our club.

Dallas Garden Club will be celebrating 90 years in 2026. Stay tuned for all the good work planned as we approach this important milestone in the history of our club.

*Linda Williamson, Dallas Garden Club*

## Fair Oaks' Family Fun Day: It's an Educational Tradition



On Sunday October 26<sup>th</sup>, the garden clubs of the Marietta Council of Garden Clubs provided snacks, games, and educational activities for children and adults with a theme of “bees” this year! The children received a pumpkin bucket with a few trinkets, learned from a beekeeper, played games, enjoyed a petting zoo, got their faces painted and got to take home a plant for their own gardens!



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The newest attraction this year at the Marietta Educational Garden Center was a “phone photo opp” in the gazebo with two face cutout characters.



About 60 children attended the event; some were returning visitors and some were new to the event. Everyone enjoyed the afternoon and learned a lot about pollinators and gardening!

*Cheryl Briscoe, Marietta Council of Garden Clubs, Inc.*

## Fall Decor & Garden Crafts



Sope Creek Garden Club's own Terry Mason presented



“Fall Decor & Garden Crafts” at our November meeting. She specializes in crafts involving cement, and showed club members how to create pumpkins, leaf molds, and stepping stones with cuttings from our own gardens. It was a very lively meeting with more than thirty in attendance.

*Victoria Rixey, Sope Creek  
Garden Club- Marietta*

## The Commons Garden Club Shining Day!

On November 11, 2025, three members of the new Commons Garden Club drove from Marietta to the Garden Club of Georgia Headquarters in Athens to tour the beautiful home and take away a little tarnish from our treasures! Loaded with aprons, silver polish, gloves and drying cloths, they polished the dining room antique silver pieces and some of the silver in the award cabinets, 20 plus pieces in all. It was a fun time learning about the house, its contents and its wonderful history while providing a service requested by the Headquarters Board of Trustees. Members of the Headquarters Board of Trustees followed up with a day of decorating for Christmas on Monday November 17th so the house is looking extra pretty for the holidays!



The Commons Garden Club members brought back enthusiasm to Marietta to encourage members to visit the house, the Georgia State Botanical Gardens and the Deen Day Sanders Porcelain Museum. What a great field trip for clubs and councils!

Pictured are Carol Ann Martin, Cheryl Brisco and Carole Young.

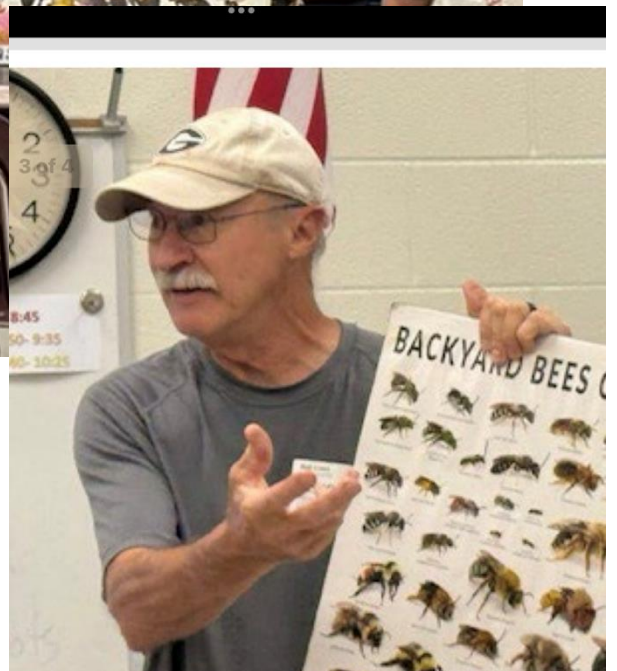
*Cheryl Briscoe, The Commons Garden Club- Marietta*

## The Ball Ground Garden Club Pollinator Census

On August 22 and 23, 2025, Ball Ground Garden Club participated in the Great Southeast Pollinator Census Count. On Friday, we visited 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classes at the Ball Ground Stem Academy teaching about pollinators. We went outdoors with students to look for and count the pollinators on the school grounds.



On Saturday, Ball Ground Garden Club members Theresa Dorfling and Cindy and Mike Lloyd hosted a pollinator census in our City Botanical Garden. The community participated in the count and learned about pollinators and their place in keeping a balanced garden ecosystem. Mike demonstrated how to build a



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carpenter bee habitat which helps bee larvae by protecting them from the elements thereby promoting growth and prolonged helpfulness to the garden.



Due to a rainy day on Saturday, we invited participants back for a butterfly release on Sunday which added another layer of pollinators into the garden. All three days were well attended. The children were very enthusiastic and had a great time. A second release later the following week included butterflies which members, Jean Deese and Cindy and Mike Lloyd, had collected as caterpillars and nurtured until fully grown.

*Joyce Johnson, Ball Ground (Anetsa-Ga-Da) Garden Club*

## Everything happens for a reason.

Last year the Soque Garden Club awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to North Georgia Technical College Horticulture program student, Alina Barrs. It was well deserved as she was a creative hardworking student

Also last year, the club received a sponsor donation from Ben Lucas, proprietor of the Yonah Coffee Co. in Helen, and Yonah Coffee & Café in Demorest. Ben actually bumped up the \$300 donation to \$500. This sponsor donation helped support the club's Garden Extravaganza (GE) event held every year on the first Saturday of May. It is the club's number one fund raiser.

However, that generous extra \$200 came with a little "catch". He needed the clubs help to redesign an unsightly old landscape project in downtown Helen, GA. The club gladly accepted that project.



## BEFORE



And this is where “everything happens for a reason” comes into the picture. One thing led to another and the club members were already busy with a variety of projects so it was decided we would try to convince our talented scholarship winner Alina to jump in and work with Ben on the design and plant material suggestions. Not only did this help Ben, but it also helped Alina. She hopes to have her own landscaping business in the near future.

Photos - The before and after photos speak for themselves. What a difference! Eventually a couple of trellises will be installed for some evergreen flowering vines Alina planted.

## Laurel Letters- Winter 2025-2026

**AFTER**



### Alina's words about herself...

All my life I knew I loved the outdoors and seeing beautiful landscapes on the mountainsides of North GA. My goal at 18 years old was to create my own type of work that involved being outdoors and making a difference locally.

I enrolled in the NGTC Horticulture program and put all my heart into learning everything I needed for success. After graduating, I ventured out further and began working full time doing garden work, landscape design and plant management.

Helping people is really what motivates me most. Knowing that I can give a person a beautiful yard full of flowers is rewarding.

fully believe that flowers and healthy plants around us are healing. Having a bed of flowers can make a huge difference in our lives and I love to bring people's dreams to reality.

Alina Barrs  
706-768-4619  
(Email) [Alina\\_barrs@yahoo.com](mailto:Alina_barrs@yahoo.com)



*LeeAnn Childress, Soque Garden Club- Cleveland*