



Garden Gateways

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



From Georgia
to the World:
William
Bartram's
Botanical Legacy

**Celebrating
America**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
250
ANNIVERSARY

The Tree that
Built America

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• (NO address number—keep it general in nature so no tour buses will come to your house!)
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nilsa.summey@yahoo.com





**Garden Gateways is a publication of
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*Tending the Heart of Georgia: Creating
Community through Beautification,
Conservation and Education*



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*Plant the Deep South with Flowers and
Trees for the Birds and Bees*

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Looking Back, Looking Forward

~ Diane Hunter, GCG President

Happy Birthday, America! You look great at 250! A large part of the reason is the thousands of garden club members who have tended to the heart of this country – its incredible natural beauty.

The clubs and districts of The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. are hard at work planning celebrations throughout the state. Many projects involve commitments to massive plantings of azaleas, dogwoods, laurels and more! Patriotic themed flower shows abound. And every one of us is searching for red, white, and blue plants to remind us of the glory of our nation's history.

This is nothing new for us. Looking back at the 1975–77 term, GCG clubs were at the forefront of Bicentennial celebrations. Our major project was the republication of *Garden History of Georgia, 1773-1933*, the seminal work on gardens in our state. The historic pilgrimage garden tours expanded during the term. GCG members also supported tours to the International Flower Show in Miami and the Chelsea Flower Show in London.

We honored William Bartram by planting *Franklinia alatamaha* trees at the Governor's Mansion and the State Botanical Garden. Red, white, and blue plantings covered the state and a bluebird restoration project was initiated. In 1975 the District's plant collections were donated to the State Botanical Garden; they are thriving today. The Wildflower Awards program entered its second-year awarding groups who worked with state and local authorities to restore wildflowers in public places.

GCG received the Governor's Award in the Arts for Conservation and Civic Beautification. The Georgia Wildlife Federation awarded GCG "Conservation Organization of the Year." Our garden therapy program won the "Valentine Award" from NGC for producing 5,900 Christmas stockings generating \$4,000 to aid regional hospital patients' gardening projects.

So, take a moment to reflect on the hard work, self-sacrifice and perseverance that defines our wonderful state and country. Always remember that what you do today will be part of tomorrow's history.



Carling All Designers and Judges

The North Georgia State Fair Flower Shows will be held from September 24- October 4, 2026. We need state judges to help judge our shows and individuals to enter floral designs in the Design Sections. The theme for the flower show is 'Fair Nights under Stars and Stripes'. The dates of judging are Thursday, Sept. 24 and Wednesday, Sept. 30 from 11:30-4pm. The location is Jim Miller Park in Marietta, GA. The schedules for the 1st and 2nd shows should be available at northgeorgiastatefair.com the beginning of August 2026.

To sign up to be a judge for either or both shows please contact Jo Ann Dorsey at 770-382-7829 or via email at jadorsey39@aim.com. To sign up to do floral designs for either or both shows or for general information, please contact Holly Walquist at 770-424-4664 or via email at hollywalquist@icloud.com. Hope to see you at the Flower Show this year!



The first time I explored the Trustees' Garden in Savannah's historic district, I was confused. "Where is the garden?" I wondered. I expected a lush landscape, but none was to be found. That question sent me searching—back nearly 300 years.

In 1733, when General James Oglethorpe stepped ashore to establish the colony of Georgia, survival was the first priority, with profit a close second. Within a year, just east of the fledgling settlement of Savannah, he set aside ten acres for an ambitious experiment: Trustees' Garden. This space became a laboratory to determine what might grow in the sandy soil and humid, often unforgiving coastal climate.

The Trustees' Garden was not ornamental, as I had imagined. It was strategic. Chartered by the Trustees for the Establishment of the Colony of Georgia in America, the colony was intended to generate new commodities for Britain. The garden functioned as an agricultural testing ground. Mulberries were planted for silk production; grapevines for wine; olives, figs, cotton, and indigo were all tested. The hope was that Georgia might replicate Mediterranean prosperity on new soil.

Some experiments faltered. The most ambitious effort—silkworm cultivation—proved difficult to sustain. Wine production never matched European standards. Yet not all was failure. Peach trees thrived and became entwined with Georgia's agricultural identity. Cotton, though not immediately dominant, would later reshape the South's economy—tragically and irrevocably.

Today, nothing of the original 18th-century garden survives in its initial form. The land evolved—industrial buildings rose, and ironworks replaced cultivation. Yet the name endured. The modern Trustees' Garden district preserves elements of this layered history, marking its significance in Savannah's story. The area where the garden once produced is marked by a plaque in front of the Charles H. Morris Center, 10 E. Broad Street in Savannah.

For gardeners, the legacy resonates. Trustees' Garden was less about beauty than about possibility. It asked a simple question: What will grow here? What belongs in this soil? I often feel that same connection in my own garden, asking, "Will this new hybrid or nativar thrive here?" While beauty still guides me, a desire to support the ecosystem increasingly shapes my choices.

Nearly three centuries later, that same question lives on at the Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens at the Historic Bamboo Farm. There, a thoughtfully designed



replica reimagines the original experiment for modern visitors. The site itself carries its own agricultural history, once serving as a USDA plant introduction station known as the Bamboo Farm. The replica project was initiated by members of the GCA Trustees Garden Club and came into existence in 2015.

The replica interprets the spirit rather than the exact form of the original garden. Visitors encounter plantings reminiscent of those early trials: mulberries recalling silk ambitions, medicinal herbs essential to colonial life, and fruit trees that evoke the orchard culture of the 18th century. Informational signage connects these plantings to the story of the original 1733 garden.

Walking through this space offers a different experience from standing in Savannah's historic district. Downtown, history is architectural—the grid, the squares, the brick. At the Coastal Georgia Botanical Garden, history is alive in leaf and soil. On a recent visit, I noticed fallen Osage oranges and beds of herbs resting in winter dormancy. Having gardened for many years in the Northeast, I sympathize with those would-be colonial gardeners arriving from England to face sandy soil, intense heat, and sudden coastal storms. Unlike them, I have the benefit of accumulated knowledge—extension services, books, and, perhaps most valuably, the wisdom of longtime Georgia gardeners.

The original Trustees' Garden was driven by necessity, commerce, and empire. The modern interpretation is educational and communal. It invites visitors to consider how agriculture shapes not only economies, but identities and landscapes.

Standing among those interpretive beds, one senses the arc of three centuries. The first Trustees sought exportable commodities—silk from mulberries, wine from grapes. Today, the focus has shifted. Modern gardeners seek understanding: of native plants, sustainable practices, and regional ecology. The question is no longer simply what we can profit from, but what we can learn—and how we can grow more thoughtfully... inside our own garden gates.

The Tree That Built America

~ Suzanne H. Finger, RLA

In 1791, William Bartram, the pioneering American naturalist, stepped into a seemingly endless forest and described it as follows:

"We find ourselves on the entrance of a vast plain which extends west sixty or seventy miles... This plain is mostly a forest of the great long-leaved pine, the earth covered with grass, interspersed with an infinite variety of herbaceous plants, and embellished with extensive savannas, always green, sparkling with ponds of water..."

The forest Bartram describes during his travels through Georgia was part of the longleaf forest, one of the most extensive ecosystems in North America. During the time of Bartram's travels, this park-like forest covered what is believed to be up to 90 million acres, sweeping across the South from the east coast to Texas. This expansive forest covered more than two-thirds of the state of Georgia. In the late 1820's, Captain Basil Hall, a British Naval Officer from Scotland, was traveling through the same impressionable landscape and described it as follows:

"For five hundred miles at the least, we traveled, in different parts of the South, over a country of this description, almost everywhere consisting of sand, feebly held together by a short wiry grass, shaded by the endless forest. I don't know exactly what the cause was, but it was a long time before I got quite tired of the scenery of these pine barrens. There was something, I thought, very graceful in the millions upon millions of tall and slender columns, growing up in solitude, not crowded upon one another..."

These early explorers noted both the longleaf pine forest's beautiful aesthetic simplicity and its biological diversity. We now know that a longleaf pine stand maintained by fire is one of the most biologically diverse habitats in the United States. Sadly, less than 3% of this storied landscape still exists, and only a tiny fraction of that is old-growth. So, how did one of the largest and most biologically diverse ecosystems of North America virtually disappear?

The Longleaf Pine (*Pinus palustris*), a bountiful resource for the natives and early settlers of the Southeast, was soon discovered by the growing colonies as a strong, straight, disease-resistant wood perfect for construction. Our burgeoning young nation not only valued the timber but also recognized that the resin from the tree could be tapped to produce valuable naval stores such as turpentine, pitch, and tar. The colonial era saw significant harvesting of the longleaf for these purposes. Still, it was not until the post-Civil War/Industrial Revolution era that millions of acres of the longleaf forest disappeared due to intense harvesting. The longleaf pine was quickly dubbed during this time as "the tree that built America." Historic structures dating from the mid to late 1800's all up and down the East Coast are built of the dense, strong, and straight

Longleaf lumber. Even the beams, decks, and ceilings of the USS Constitution (Old Ironsides) were built of longleaf pine, while the large, curved beams giving strength to the massive hull were made of live oak harvested from St. Simon's Island in 1794.



The longleaf forest that had been "turpented" during the late 1800's was later cleared for farmland and grazing. This, along with the elimination of naturally occurring wildfires, continued on a large scale into the early 20th century. The dwindling forest caught the attention of many naturalists as early as the 1880's, yet large-scale conservation efforts did not begin until the mid-1990's.

Multiple factors hindered the re-establishment and replanting of the longleaf pine forests. Initial conservation efforts were slowed by a lack of understanding of the importance of fire to the health of the longleaf ecosystem and the seed's dependency on fire to germinate. Also, the slow growth and curious grass stage of the longleaf pine, which can last from three to twelve years before height growth, frustrated their efforts to quickly re-establish the forests. The forestry industry turned to replanting with faster-growing loblolly and slash pines instead of longleaf.

Conservationists struggle to make slow progress in preserving and re-establishing the longleaf forest. As part of these preservation efforts, private and public lands are now being managed with prescribed fire. If you are ever lucky enough to visit one of the precious remnants of this storied forest, you, like the early pioneers who were moved by its beauty, will want to grab a pen and paper and try to describe its magic.

Roadside Beautification in Georgia and the Work of Kathryn H. Litton

~ Linda Doiron 3rd VP - Communications

Roadside beautification in Georgia has evolved through a long partnership between The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. (GCG) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). The program began in 1974 under the leadership of Virginia Hand Callaway, chair of the Birds and Wildflowers Committee. Through her efforts GCG launched an initiative to protect and plant roadside wildflowers, establishing a model that is still used today.

One of the most influential leaders in this program has been Kathryn H. Litton, a member of Hiawassee Garden Club, who for more than two decades (2004-2025) helped transform roadside plantings from decorative displays to meaningful landscapes. Through her efforts as Roadside Beautification Chairman, GCG has supported a series of plantings of native flowers and grasses including native pollinator habitats installed across Georgia. The sites were planted to emphasize four season interest with educational signage and QR codes turning these roadside spaces into public classrooms. From winter into early spring, daffodils bloom; from spring into summer, native wildflowers take over; and from summer into fall, cosmos and perennials carry the season.

Mrs. Litton served directly with GDOT advocating for native plant use and sustainable roadside plantings. She authored *Here Come the Natives*, an award-winning booklet on wildflowers suitable for highway plantings that received national recognition. A copy is in the Governor's Library of Georgia authors.

In 2016, the Georgia State Transportation Board formally recognized Mrs. Litton for a lifetime of selfless service to the beautification of Georgia and for transforming roadside planting into a program of lasting environmental and public value. Her contributions and partnerships helped expand the Wildflower Program at that time to encompass 2,560 acres of wildflowers and 1.5 million daffodil bulbs planted around the state.

In the late 2010s, GDOT, The Ray Anderson Foundation (The Ray), and University of Georgia's College of Environment + Design began a research

project at exit 6 on I-85 in West Point, Troup County. Associate Professor Brad Davis and his team researched alternative methods of weed suppression, different varieties of native forbs (flowering plants), and planting techniques to aid in roadside wildflower plantings. The research project was partially funded by a generous \$15,000 grant from GCG in its third and final year of the original 3-year study. Mrs. Litton was an active advocate and supporter, mobilizing GCG's



Source: GADOT

involvement. This project helped shift roadside planting toward pollinator habitats and ecological function setting the stage for what would become the Landscape Lab.

The Landscape Lab is an eighteen mile living laboratory using an experimental approach of native flowering plants and grasses in meadow style plantings. The goal is to replace turf with a self-sustaining ecosystem. Multiple seed mixes and different species combinations were tested with a goal to have flowers blooming from early spring until fall promoting pollinator habitats and public aesthetics. One of the most innovative aspects of the project is its non-chemical approach to weed suppression. A sand and granite blanket layer inhibits weed germination while supporting the successful establishment of wildflowers. Traditional roadsides are mowed three to four times a year, but meadow systems require only a single annual mowing, lowering costs and improving safety for workers. The Landscape Lab reflected a new face of the Litton era, where roadside planting expanded beyond beautification into a research-based approach testing for ecology, performance, and optimization to enhance Georgia's highway landscapes.

Clubs and districts are encouraged to make donations to our Roadside Beautification and Wildflowers program. Honorarium/Memorial donations can also be made in the name of a specific person. You can find more information and make donations through www.gardenclubofgeorgia.org/Projects&Programs or contact Anita Allen- Chairman, Roadside Beautification at wildverbena@gmail.com.

Addressing Food Security Through Community Gardens

~ Moe Hemmings, Atlanta Botanical Garden Community Outreach Manager

The year 2020 shined light on multiple public health crises, including one many in our country don't have to think twice about: where someone's next meal will come from. More specifically, they can access fresh, nutritious food regularly. Oftentimes, individuals assume an incorrect stereotype of who a food insecure person is. The harsh reality is that some of our most vulnerable populations, seniors and children, are also among the most food insecure in society. While there are numerous reasons why a person may be experiencing food insecurity, so too are the solutions to combat it. First, we must define what it means to be food insecure.

The USDA originally coined the terminology "food insecurity without hunger" and "food insecurity with hunger" to categorize this issue. Starting in 2006, they shifted their phrasing to "low food security" and "very low food security." Low food security is defined by reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet but little to no indication of reduced food intake; very low food security is categorized by reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. With these categorizations defined, we can better understand the different levels of food insecurity that people experience.

Food insecurity can be long term or temporary. It's defined as a household level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Many who deal with food insecurity worry that food will run out, that they cannot afford a balanced meal, and that their normal eating patterns will be disrupted because the household lacks money and other resources for food. Neighborhood conditions may affect physical access to food as some living in urban, rural or low-income areas may have limited access to full-service grocery stores or supermarkets. Convenience stores may be the only option in those areas and have higher food prices, less variety and lower-quality food. Access to healthy food is also affected by lack of transportation and long distances between residences and stores. A staggering 23 million people in the US live in areas that are considered food deserts, meaning they are more than 1-10 miles away from a source of fresh produce.

What then would happen if more people had access to fresh nutritious food via their local park, community center, backyards or windowsill? This is one clear solution to combat food deserts and neighborhoods experiencing high rates of food insecurity: community



gardens. At its most basic iteration, a community garden is any outdoor space available for growing vegetables, fruits and flowers. Growing spaces such as raised beds, community gardens, micro farms, and food forests can empower people to address food insecurity, hunger and poverty within their own communities by growing fresh nutritious food. These community garden spaces provide more than just food for the people that benefit from them. They also create jobs, greenspaces that connect neighborhoods (and neighbors) back to nature, and reduce carbon emissions by lowering the distance food travels

from farm to table. Community members can often enjoy fresh produce for little or no financial investment, helping to give back to the local community while also increasing individual fresh produce intake. Compared to commercial farms, community growing spaces often avoid pesticide use and offer a more sustainable and environmentally friendly food source.



Crops that are nutritionally rich, relatively easy to grow, and hardy enough to survive in most moderate climates are an excellent way to begin. Some examples include kale, strawberries, blueberries and radishes. Garden sites do not have to cover acres, blocks, or even lots to be valuable additions to an area. Community gardens can be installed in a broad range of spaces and communities of all sizes. By starting with identifying a space to garden, considering water access and soil quality and creating an easy to access garden design, most communities can begin to grow and harvest nutritious food within weeks. Coming together to plant seeds, weed beds, and pick fresh produce can foster a sense of ownership in the community and care for those who are most vulnerable. There is no right way to build a community garden space. Just start! You might just help reduce food insecurity, improve nutritional intake, and strengthen relationships to each other and the planet.

GCG's Historic Landscape Preservation Fund: 1998 to 2026

~ Cheryl Briscoe

In a year when we are celebrating America's 250th anniversary, it is especially appropriate for GCG's Historic Landscape Preservation Fund Committee to be awarding grants to promote the preservation, enjoyment, continued use, and long-term stewardship of Georgia's historic landscapes! Each year we award up to \$3,000 per applicant in matching grants to support those landscapes in accordance with national standards. This seed money assists organizations and communities in developing sound landscape preservation projects that provide public benefit.

Initiated in 2002 under the direction of Landscape Architect James R. Cothran, FASLA and Susan Hitchcock, National Park Service, a collaboration was forged among several groups including the Historic Preservation Division, GCG, the National Park Service and the Cherokee Garden Library, Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center, for the purpose of conducting a statewide inventory of Georgia's historic gardens. This was completed in 2018 and resulted in the University of Georgia Press book, *Seeking Eden: A Collection of Georgia Historic Gardens* by Staci L. Catron and Mary Ann Eaddy with photographs by James R. Lockhart.

Each of our seven GCG Districts is responsible for hosting an HLP fundraiser every seven years; this year, Erin Garden Club and Camellia District hosted a beautiful tour of homes and historic buildings in Dublin, GA resulting in over \$8,000 for the HLP fund. To qualify to apply for a grant from this fund, eligible historic landscapes must be owned by governmental entities or public, non-profit organizations. Grants to state-owned properties must be received and administered by "Friends of" non-profit entities that are associated with those specific properties. Grant applications are available on the GCG website and are due each year on August 1st. The current HLP Chairman, Cheryl Briscoe administers the grant program with the help of a committee of representatives from each district. From 1998 through 2025, over \$259,000.00 in matching grants was awarded to 103 projects in 45 Georgia counties. For more information, past grant winners, and application procedures, see the Historic Landscape Preservation page on the Projects and Programs tab at gardenclubofgeorgia.org. Celebrate America by applying for a matching grant in 2026!



Magnolia District HLP 2026, Tour of Historic Dublin



A Banner Year for GCG Scholarships

Susan Turner, Scholarship Chairman - glencreet@bellsouth.net

Congratulations to the Classy Camellias as Melodie Smith, Camellia District Director 2025-2027, was crowned Queen of Scholarships at the GCG Annual Convention on April 1, in Peachtree City. All 7 districts participated in this closely contested contest!

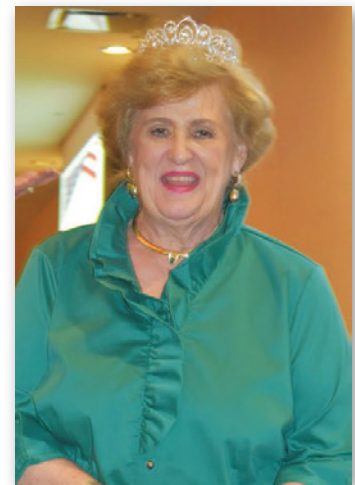
The 2026 combined donations were \$6,014.77.

Since 2016, we have raised \$52,029.43!

GCG members and friends supported Named Scholarships, Patrons of Scholarships, Honors and Memorials, General Fund Contributions, Life Memberships and Dollars Educate Scholars.

Plant Societies are also donating to GCG Scholarships.

Now in our new giving period, let us continue to assist our students financially as we support their future careers. On behalf of the GCG Scholarship Committee, we thank you for being a part of their lives. These young people are dedicated to the same mission as The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc., Beautification, Conservation & Education.



From Georgia to the World: William Bartram's Botanical Legacy

More than two centuries have passed since the publication of *William Bartram's Travels* in 1791. That his book remains in print would be notable enough. But Bartram's work was visionary. It fostered the development of a truly American strain of natural history, ornithology, and botany. His writings transcended scientific boundaries to deeply influence Coleridge, Wordsworth, and other Romantic poets. And his text continues to ignite the imaginations of Southerners who love nature.

One would not expect a Pennsylvania native to be so closely identified with the South. Born in 1739, William was brought up in a family who valued science and the arts. William's father John was a noted botanist with strong connections to the European scientific establishment including prominent members of the Royal Society. In his early teens, William acquired field experience on his father's collecting expeditions in Pennsylvania and New York and worked alongside him in the family's extensive botanical garden.

His first exposure to southern landscapes came in 1765-1766 when he accompanied his father on a botanical expedition traversing coastal South Carolina and Georgia all the way to the headwaters of Florida's St. Johns River. At the trip's conclusion William remained in Florida, where he failed in an attempt to start his own plantation on the St. Johns and nearly lost his life in a shipwreck while working as a surveyor's assistant. He was no more successful in running a mercantile business following his return home.

It was his skills in botany and drawing that would attract the patron he needed to focus on what he did best. In the fall of 1772, Dr. John Fothergill, an English plant collector who knew Bartram's talents well, commissioned him to return to the South to undertake a multi-year expedition, collecting new plants and seeds and drawing all types of natural history subjects. So, one month before his thirty-fourth birthday, William Bartram set off on the travels that would consume him for nearly four years, traveling from The Blue Ridge to the coast to northern Florida and west to the Mississippi River. He returned to Philadelphia early in 1777 and probably did not stray more than a few miles from home for the remaining forty-six years of his life. Resuming his place at his father's gardens, Bartram continued his botanical studies and wrote not just *Travels* but on a wide variety of topics.

Bartram's ability to marry science with poetry ensured *Travels* a worldwide audience across the centuries. What is the source of its staying power? For those interested in natural history, the narrative of his 1773-



~ Dorinda G. Dallmeyer

1777 sojourn in the South marks a baseline for understanding the content of the southern landscape at that time. Bartram's journey was foremost a biological expedition, and thus *Travels* is replete with descriptions of the plants and animals he encountered over the hundreds of miles he traveled. William Bartram was the first person to describe, collect, or illustrate forty-two new species of plants. He found fifteen of those species right here in Georgia. Through Bartram's words, modern readers can visualize the Southern environment of the 1770s. And in keeping with his Quaker upbringing, throughout the book, Bartram reveals a deep spiritual connection to nature as a

manifestation of divine Creation.

Of course, he is best known for his devotion to botany. The Seminoles gave Bartram the name "Puc Puggy," the Flower Seeker, admiring this man who sought plants with the same zeal as the Seminoles hunted animals. All his life, Bartram cultivated an eye for the unusual and the rare. Now take William's hand as you read his delight at the new species of Georgia plants he would introduce to the world. And join him out there on the Bartram Trail.

Coastal Georgia

Cabbage Palm or Sabal Palmetto (*Corypha palma*); Savannah

"Behold yon promontory, projecting far into the great river, beyond the still lagoon, half a mile distance from me, what a magnificent grove arises on its banks! How glorious the Palm!"

Florida Anise (*Illicium parviflorum*); Broughton Island: between Darien and Little St. Simons Island

"How gently flow thy peaceful floods, O Alatomaha! How sublimely rise to view, on thy elevated shores, yon Magnolian groves, from whose tops the surrounding expanse is perfumed, by clouds of incense, blended with the exhaling balm of the Liquid-amber, and odours continually arising from circumambient aromatic groves of *Illicium*, *Myrica*, *Laurus*, and *Bignonia*."

Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*); St. Simons Island
"It rises with a strait, erect stem, about ten or twelve feet high, crowned with a beautiful chaplet of sword or dagger-like leaves, of a perfect green colour, each terminated with a stiff, sharp spur.... This thorny crown is crested with a pyramid of silver white flowers, each resembling a tulip or Lilly."

Florida Leucothoe; (*Agarista populifolia*, formerly *Leucothoe populifolia*) — St. Marys

"I observed growing on the banks of this sequestered river... the great evergreen *Andromeda* of Florida, called

Pipe-stem Wood...to which I gave the name of *Andromeda formosissima*, as it far exceeds in beauty every one of this family."

Hairy Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia hirsuta*); St. Marys

"...the earth covered with grass, interspersed with an infinite variety of herbacious plants, and embellished with extensive savannas, always green, sparkling with ponds of water, and ornamented with clumps of ... *Kalmia*."

Northwest Georgia

Chickasaw Plum (*Prunus angustifolia*); Path to the Great Buffalo Lick, Oglethorpe County, near Philomath

"The Chickasaw plumb..., for though certainly a native of America, yet I never saw it wild in the forests, but always in old deserted Indian plantations: I suppose it to have been brought from the S. W. beyond the Mississippi, by the Chickasaws."

Shoals Spider Lily

(*Hymenocallis coronaria*); Broad River, also found in Chattahoochee River and adjacent rocky shoals at the Fall Line.

"But nothing in vegetable nature was more pleasing than the odoriferous *Pancratium fluitans*, which almost alone possesses the little rocky islets which just appear above the water."



Piedmont Rhododendron

(*Rhododendron minus*) — Banks, Hall, Franklin, and Elbert Counties

"This branch of Broad River is about twelve yards wide, ...and winds through a fertile vale, almost overshadowed on one side by a ridge of high hills, well timbered with Oak, Hickory, and on their rocky summits,... *Rhododendron*."

Flint River and Middle Georgia

St. John's Wort (*Hypericum frondosum*)

"I observed growing on the steep dry banks of this creek, a species of shrub *Hypericum*, of extraordinary shew and beauty. It grows erect, three or four feet high, forming a globular top, representing a perfect little tree; the leaves are large, oblong, firm of texture, smooth and shining; the flowers are very large, their petals broad and conspicuous, which, with their tufts of golden filaments, give the little bushes a very splendid appearance."

Oakleaf Hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*)

"I observed here a very singular and beautiful shrub, which I suppose is a species of *Hydrangia* (*H. quercifolia*.) It grows in coppices or clumps near or on the banks of rivers and creeks; many stems usually arise from a root, spreading itself greatly on all sides by suckers or offsets; the stems grow five or six feet high."

Coastal Plain

Elliott's Plume (*Elliottia racemosa*)

Rare tree found in scattered locations in eastern Georgia: sand ridges, evergreen hammocks, rock outcrops of Altamaha Grit, and on soils atop rare ultramafic rocks.

"A very beautiful shrub, bearing loose spikes of sweet, white flowers."

Altamaha River Basin

Dwarf Pawpaw (*Asimina parviflora*)

"There rises a number of very slender stalks from a root inclining towards the Earth, which produce a great number of large pendant sweet Flowers, fluttering in the wind."

Franklinia and Pinckneya (*Franklinia alatamaha*) and Fevertree (*Pinckneya pubens*), near Ft. Barrington upstream from Darien.

"On drawing near the fort, I was greatly delighted at the appearance of two new beautiful shrubs, in all their blooming graces. One of them appeared to be a species of *Gordonia*, ... but the flowers are larger, and more fragrant.... The other was equally distinguished for beauty and singularity; it grows twelve or fifteen feet high, the branches ascendant and opposite, and terminate with large panicles of pale blue tubular flowers, specked on the inside with crimson; but, what is singular, these panicles are ornamented with a number of ovate large brachtae, as white, and like fine paper, their tops and verges stained with a rose red, which, at a little distance, has the appearance of clusters of roses, at the extremities of the limbs."



Franklinia alatamaha

Ogeechee River Basin

Ogeechee Tupelo (*Nyssa ogeche*). Also known as Ogeechee lime for its citrus-flavored fruit. Its flowers are the source for tupelo honey.

"I saw large, tall trees of the *Nyssa coccinea*, si. Ogeeche, growing on the banks of the river. They grow in the water, near the shore. There is no tree that exhibits a more desirable appearance than this, in the autumn, when their fruit is ripe, and the tree divested of its leaves; for then they look as red as scarlet, with their fruit, which is of that colour also. It is of the shape, but larger than the olive, containing an agreeable acid juice."

Garden clubs across the South were instrumental in erecting Bartram Trail markers along his path to honor the American Bicentennial. They also were instrumental in the founding of the Bartram Trail Conference. The BTC has on its website a map of all the marker locations as well as the text on each one. <https://bartramtrailconference.wildapricot.org/>

War was raging in Europe and Asia as Germany, Italy and Japan moved aggressively to increase their territories. The United States tried to remain neutral. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Hawaii destroying our Pacific fleet and killing nearly 3,000. December 11th both Germany and Italy declared war on the USA. We were suddenly embroiled in a two-front war.

Secretary of Agriculture, Claude Wickard, immediately convened a Victory Garden Conference. He knew that feeding both troops and civilians would require much more food. This meeting focused on how to meet this challenge. Civilians had to be mobilized, organized and trained since most had not grown food. Seed stocks, fertilizers and garden tools needed to be used carefully. Additionally, transportation needed for the military would not be available for civilians. Therefore, food sources must be near civilian populations. The 'Home Front' had to become an arm of the war effort. The committee decided that large cities must be encouraged to create community gardens. Professionals would be assigned to coordinate and assist as it was assumed that urban dwellers would know little about growing food. In Boston eight acres of the Olmsted Park system became Fenway Gardens, 500 community plots which are still used.

Our more rural state required a different approach. The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. was up to the task. President Mrs. Thomas (Cordelia) Brumby urged all clubs to create a Victory Garden Chair. The 300 clubs, 10,000 members strong, were soon organized to join the war effort through work in their communities. Mrs. Brumby felt that one could apply the knowledge of growing perennials and shrubs to growing vegetables and fruits. A few herbs in the perennial garden would no longer suffice. Recognizing that special knowledge would be needed for growing and preserving vegetables, a partnership with the University of Georgia was formed. The annual Garden



Studies program previously focused on flowers and beautifying the landscape was redirected. UGA professors, specialists in soil, seeds, propagation and preservation, gave a new direction to the program. These professionals traveled to eight towns in a loop around Georgia. Ease of access enabled over 1,900 to attend in 1943. Thus, current best practices were soon employed all over the state. Additionally, *Garden Gateways* (monthly at that time) devoted each month an entire page to Mrs. Fletcher Pearson Crown, an established southern author and lecturer on good gardening methods. Her articles always emphasized the importance of good technique and patience in the growing of fruits and vegetables.

"Produce and Conserve" the official Victory Garden slogan for 1943, spurred many garden clubs to sponsor canning programs for their communities. Cherokee Garden Club of Griffin sponsored a canning school 'How to Properly Preserve Ones Bounty.' Afterwards 1700 quarts of food were put up. Rome, Istalenea, Radiance, and Franklinia Garden Clubs reported more than 3,000 quarts canned. Bounty preserved.

Lurline Wallace, a Macon club member and head of the Georgia Extension Service, gave talks all over the state to educate and encourage proper preservation. She also was the chair of the GCG Harvest Garden Show in 1944 which featured home grown produce. This was part of a national effort to celebrate Victory Gardens.

Garden clubs did much more than add food gardens to their homes and communities. Clubs near rehabilitation hospitals, visited weekly with flowers and cheer. Gardens were planted to provide outdoor





areas of peace. Victory Gardens were started at schools to provide fresh edibles to the school food programs. Also, students were trained in proper gardening techniques—how to start seeds, plant and harvest. Many learned to eat new vegetables from their own school garden. The Chattooga Garden Club partnered with Sommerville elementary school to encourage student Victory Gardens by awarding prizes for best produce.

In 1943 the Cherokee Garden Club chair Mrs. Laurie D. Webster, created a Victory Garden at

Egleston Children’s Hospital by terracing a slope, thus, creating an acre designated for growing fruits and vegetables to supplement the diet for its patients.

Carrollton Garden Club won the prestigious William Fisher Garden Center award for the breadth of their programs to wartime service. Purple awards went to Shellman GC, Gainesville GC and Cordele GC. All had in addition to their home Victory Gardens, community service through school gardens, hospital gardens or various ways to support nearby military installations. The entire state worked in so many ways to support the war effort at home that Georgia was awarded a silver medal from the National Green Thumb Victory Garden Contest in 1944.

The countrywide Victory Garden project supplied more than 40% of all the vegetables and fruit consumed in the country. The Victory Garden effort in Georgia, especially through the organization of the garden clubs, enabled good food to be available despite the dislocation caused by the war. This countrywide effort was more successful than Claude Wickard imagined and was vital to winning the war.

New Life Members

*Bess Hartley, 1st Vice President,
Life Membership Chairman*

New State Life Members

#2213 Janis Webb
Magnolia District

#2213 Marilyn Morris
Honored by Cordele Garden Club,
Camellia District

New Deep South Life Members

Bonnie Dudley
Redbud District

Merrell Holden
Laurel District

New National Life Members

10799 Linda Doiron
Dogwood District

#10807 Betty Benner
Oleander District

SAVE THE DATE!

Blue Star Memorial Marker dedication

The Carter Presidential Center

June 30, 2026 at 10am

Garden Club members are invited to join in honoring all who serve, Past, Present and Future, in our US Armed Forces with a special Blue Star Memorial Marker dedication at the Carter Presidential Center, located at 453 Freedom Parkway in Atlanta. This event is hosted by The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. and its seven districts. As far as we know, Georgia is only the second state to place a Blue Star Memorial Marker at a presidential library.

Reservations MUST be made by June 15th. See <https://form.jotform.com/261275848755168>. An official invitation with further details regarding directions and parking will be sent out at a later date.

Growing Endangered Plants. A good idea? Maybe not ~ Laura Martin

Note: In general, growing native plants is a good and useful thing to do. Our native plant species play a critical role in the ecosystem, providing food, protection, and nesting sites for the wealth of organisms that share their home. The following tale of caution only applies to those native plants that are threatened or endangered with extinction.

Georgia is a state with wonderfully rich and diverse ecosystems ranging from coastal dunes to mountain knolls. These unique environments are home to almost 4,000 different species of plants. Unfortunately, almost 20% of these plants are so rare and vulnerable that they are designated as threatened or endangered with extinction.

Many of us are eager to help do something to save our vulnerable Georgia native plants. A seemingly logical solution would be for home gardeners to help by growing and nurturing these plants in their own gardens, offering new and diverse environments. But sometimes what seems logical and straightforward can become extremely complicated, particularly when it comes to Mother Nature.

To learn more about this issue I turned to one of the experts, Jennifer Ceska, a plant conservationist with the State Botanical Garden in Athens, and asked about home – grown endangered plants. “Our goal is to see these vulnerable plants successfully restored in natural areas within their historic range so they can exist on their own,” she said, then added, “Many of Georgia’s plants are in a critical state right now, and although asking gardeners to grow them on their own property seems like a good idea, generally, we just say no.”



Trillium

Understanding the long – term effect of introducing a plant into an ecosystem is a major task for plant conservationists. There are many things that can go wrong, but two are of particular concern: (1) the possible spread of fungus or disease and (2) Inbreeding. Just as it did with the kings and queens of Europe at

one time, inbreeding limits genetic diversity, weakens a population and threatens its long - term survival.

Before a single plant is reintroduced into the wild, years of study, record keeping, and prediction go into the project. Nothing is done haphazardly, and nothing is done hurriedly because introducing a plant into an ecosystem can have unexpected and far - reaching

consequences. So maybe even though growing endangered plants in our own gardens seems to be a good idea, perhaps it’s not.

Plants or seeds from a nursery are probably from a single source. These plants and their offspring will be genetically identical or at least very similar. So, to grow them in our gardens would be to grow genetically identical individuals, which would eventually dilute the complex genetic pool of a species and diminish its adaptability at a time when adaptation equals survival.

The number of individual plants left in a species is not as important as the adaptability of those that are left. And adaptability only comes from a rich and complex gene pool.

It’s impossible to predict the consequences of home – grown endangered plants and my aim here is not so much to keep gardeners from growing plants they may have a passion for, but to encourage all of us to be aware of the vulnerability of these plants. Perhaps it’s time to consider not how they may please us but how we can best protect them for future generations. How you can help:

1. Participate in a plant rescue operation with a group such as the Georgia Native Plant Society.
2. Participate in a work day to remove invasive plants.
3. Support organizations that work on plant conservation.



Morefield's clematis



Pitcherplant

The GCG 2026 Convention Was a Great Success

The Magnolia District, under the leadership of District Director Marilyn Aldrich, Convention Chairman Kay Hagler, Co-Chairman Sybil Willingham, and members of the 2026 Planning Committee, are to be commended for presenting a successful The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. (GCG) 2026 Convention. Held at the Crowne Plaza West in Peachtree City, the convention provided attendees opportunities to learn, fellowship, and celebrate. GCG members were honored by the attendance of National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) President Donna Donnelly during the opening day activities.



Convention speakers were informative and well received. Dr. Jaap de Roode of Emory University shared research on monarch butterflies and honeybees, explaining how parasites affect monarch migration and offering practical recommendations for pollinator-friendly gardens. GCG's Suzanne Finger, a landscape architect with more than 30 years experience, presented an engaging history of kitchen gardens, tracing their evolution from colonial necessity gardens to today's hobby gardens. Dr. Sheri Dorn of the University of Georgia discussed horticultural therapy, and the positive effects gardening can have on mental and physical health.

Concurrent sessions were well attended and featured presenters who graciously repeated their programs three times so attendees could rotate through all sessions. Katherine Kennedy of Concrete Jungle K spoke on alleviating hunger through growing and gleaning produce for food-insecure communities across Georgia. Dr. Emily Coffey of the Atlanta Botanical Garden discussed the important role botanical gardens play in plant and amphibian conservation. Joe Cook presented "200 Years of Georgia River History – From Cotton Barges to Canoes," highlighting the important role rivers have played in Georgia's history and development. Dr. Dorinda Dallmeyer shared William Bartram's lasting botanical legacy and contributions to botanical exploration.

A highlight of the convention was the annual GCG Awards Program, coordinated by Awards Chairman Diana Malone and her committee, recognizing the

~ Gale D. Thomas, 2nd Vice President

accomplishments of GCG clubs, councils, and districts throughout the state. First-place winners posed for photographs with NGC President Donna Donnelly and GCG President Diane Hunter beneath a colorful balloon arch. A complete list of winners will be posted on the GCG website.



This year's convention also featured two sold-out floral design workshops. Anna Burns, NGC Master Flower Show Judge and author of *Guide to the New Petite – Floral Design 12" and Under*, led a mass floral design workshop on opening day. Participants created beautiful mass designs that were later donated as centerpieces for the Awards Program

banquet. The post-convention workshop was led by Lynn Fronk, NGC Master Flower Show Judge and Flower Show Schools instructor. Participants received instruction and design tips while creating creative floral arrangements using identical materials provided for the session. Both workshops received enthusiastic feedback and were considered outstanding successes.



Each evening, members gathered for "Cocktails and Conversations" at The Garden Club, enjoying fellowship, music by GCG's Marci Wilcox and her husband Jim, and the opportunity to reconnect with friends from across the state.

Post-convention surveys reflected high satisfaction with the speakers, educational programs, meals, fellowship opportunities, and hospitality. Special appreciation goes to Convention Chairman Kay Hagler, Co-Chairman Sybil Willingham, District Director Marilyn Aldrich, Diana Malone and the Awards Committee, Registrar Rigby Duncan, Treasurer Ann Purr, and all who worked tirelessly to make the 2026 GCG Convention a tremendous success.

Soque Garden Club's "Hats off to Spring" annual tea party held at the Valhalla Resort in Helen on March 13th was a big success. The 100 tickets for this event sold out quickly with people on a waiting list in hopes of attending. In the end, it was decided to add another table to accommodate the 8 people waiting.

The event included a "Hat Parade" giving information and history about hats throughout the last 75+ years, a centerpiece competition and raffle baskets filled with goodies for pampering dogs, bird lovers, bees, pollinators, kitchen gadgets and more.

Also included were items from the Garden Gift Shop, set up for the annual Garden Extravaganza event held the first Saturday in May. The Garden Gift Shop is a good way to help determine interest for purchases and get feedback from guests. Members and visitors are already talking about and making plans for our next tea party in 2027.



Laurel District 2026 Winter Board Meeting was hosted by the Magnolia Garden Club of Cartersville on February 26th at Heritage Baptist Church. The theme was Plant Red, White and Blue with Us! Janet Martin and her team of Jo Ann Dorsey, Lynn Frye, Judy Patterson, Leann McNeil, Teri Allison, Mia Gilstrap, Amy Peterson and Jeanne Taylor created the table centerpieces. Darri Adams led the team of Vicki Jones (Magnolia- Cartersville club president), Janet Martin, Susan Wilson, Kathleen Clark, Judy Patterson, Dee Anne Wyse, Leann McNeil, and Jan and Le Roy Shepherd who provided wonderful hospitality including a delicious lunch and more beautiful decorations for our board and club presidents.

Laurel Garden Club's Special Project

The Laurel Garden Club of Canton has worked in conjunction with the Cherokee County Family Violence Center for the last 3 years to complete special projects in December, using funds donated by the chapter's members in lieu of exchanging gifts. This year's project was to purchase all supplies and put together birthday cake kits for children who are served by the Cherokee County Family Violence Center program (either in the crisis center or in the supported apartments that may provide shelter). The club purchased 9x13 aluminum pans, various kinds of soda (used in the cakes instead of eggs and oil), 3 flavors of cake mixes, 7 different kinds of frosting, candles, matches, and plastic knives for cutting. They also attached labels to the assembled kits wishing the young recipients a very special day. The total contribution was 42 cake kits, with 6 labeled specifically as gluten-free.



Show off your club! Send in your articles to your District Director!

With the dogwoods, azaleas, and camellias in full bloom, the **Augusta Council of Garden Clubs** sponsored the perfect Annual Spring Luncheon on March 26th. We were honored to welcome Donna Donnelly, President of National Garden Clubs, Inc.; Diane Hunter, President of The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.; and our special speaker, Brie Arthur. One purpose of the Augusta Council of Garden Clubs is to award "Club of the Year" to the most outstanding club based on the annual Presidents' Reports. This year, the Pine Needle Garden Club of Augusta earned that distinction through their exceptional service and dedication.



Their accomplishments include garden therapy at the VA, monthly table arrangements for the Ronald McDonald House, donations to the Fig Leaf Project and Women in Need, and most impressively, their successful fundraising for a Blue Star Marker, to be dedicated at Pendleton King Park on May 16th. In recognition of their outstanding work, the Council proudly presented a \$1,000 contribution to the GCG Scholarship Fund in honor of the Pine Needle Garden Club.



The Lawrenceville Garden Club planted "Red White and Blue" with the residents of Ashton Manor Senior Living on April 10th in celebration of America's 250th

Nancy Hart Garden Club celebrated the upcoming Garden week in Georgia with a tour of the home and gardens of member Lisa Bales on April 14th. The Bales garden is a delightful mini botanical garden consisting of native and specialty trees, plants and budding flowers. We were able to stroll through the pollinators, native plants, their very own grape orchard, as well as various unique trees and shrubs.



Our host Bruce Bales provided a slide show of the design of their gardens giving our members many ideas to for their own gardens. We ended our tour with a delightful box lunch.

Also in honor of our great Country, club members gathered to celebrate the great outdoors along with God's creations. We shared stories of our community, families and times spent in Hart County.



Show off your club! Send in your articles to your District Director

Skidaway Audubon was this year's winner of The Garden Club of Georgia Award of Merit presented at the GCG Convention April 2nd. This award is the highest non-member award offered by GCG. A gold medallion was presented to Dawn Cordo, President of Skidaway Audubon and member of The Landings Garden Club by former club member Stephanie Corley.

Founded in 2007, Skidaway Audubon has provided strong leadership and support for environmental programs while developing impactful community-wide initiatives in partnership with many community organizations on Skidaway Island and The Landings community.

Because of these efforts, residents of The Landings and the surrounding island communities enjoy not only a beautiful place to live, but a community deeply committed to preserving its natural resources for generations to come.



St. Marys Garden Club

Today's youth are the promise of tomorrow. When we cultivate our garden plots, we prepare the soil carefully—enriching it, removing rocks, and creating the best possible conditions for growth. Should we not apply these same principles when nurturing our children?

The St. Marys Garden Club has answered that question through its Earth Angels program. Dedicated volunteers bring lessons in gardening, ecology, and nature to elementary students throughout Camden County. When COVID restrictions made classroom visits impossible, the Earth Angels adapted, moving their programs to local libraries where they continue to offer free, hands-on educational experiences.

Seasonal classes during spring break and summer focus on garden-centered learning for all ages, featuring pollinator and vegetable raised beds. Students engage directly with environmental concepts through activities such as water pollution demonstrations and community clean-up efforts, gaining a clear understanding of how individual actions impact our waterways. They dissect seeds to explore how plants begin and take home seeds to cultivate in their own gardens. In upcoming sessions, students will observe how roots, stems, and leaves develop—transforming into the foods we enjoy every day.

By sharing a passion for nature, the Earth Angels are helping to grow tomorrow's gardeners and environmentally conscious citizens. They teach an essential truth: the earth is an interconnected system, not a limitless resource. Through education and example, they are helping to build a more sustainable future for generations to come.



Show off your club! Send in your articles to your District Director!

Erin Garden Club of Dublin joined the City of Dublin on Arbor Day, March 20th, on the grounds of the Carl Vinson VA Medical Center. As Mayor Joshua Kight signed the Proclamation, a Claudia Wannamaker Magnolia Tree was donated and planted by the City of Dublin. Guest speaker Sgt. Johnny Payne gave excellent examples of how trees and soldiers share structural and functional similarities focused on stability, resilience, and verticality. Erin Garden Club presented a red, white and blue bow for the tree in recognition America's 250th year and to honor all veterans and current military personnel.



Historic Landscape Preservation Fundraiser City of Dublin Mayor Joshua Kight opened the Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Fundraiser with a brief history of the city—from its early growth as a railroad hub to the decline caused by the boll weevil and its later economic recovery through industry.



Guests toured notable homes, including the “Crown Jewel on Bellevue Avenue,” along with Greek Revival architecture, Georgia-style, and bungalow residences, all showcasing beautiful gardens. Audrey Kittila entertained guests with violin and vocals from a front porch setting. Two historic churches also opened their doors: one, more than 200 years old, modeled after Melrose Abbey, and the other recognized as the oldest standing public building in the city. Visitors also explored the city’s oldest cemetery, dating back to the American Revolutionary War, where historians shared stories of those interred, including Thomas McCall. Thanks to the Camellia District and The Garden Club of Georgia for their support in making the event a success.

Greenbriar Garden Club of Warner Robins is off and running after embracing our state’s initiative to honor our nation’s 250th birthday this July. We have begun by piggybacking an ongoing partnership with our local senior center. In the past year we have worked with the center in their efforts to begin a garden of flowers and vegetables. We work with the director to set up and maintain a seed bank, give gardening advice and manage a hands-on project in planting a fledgling garden. We met to renew last year’s entranceway planters with a colorful red, white, and blue mix of perennials and annuals. Here we are below-all windblown and tired L-R Sandra Meadows, Kristi Little, Tammy Arnett, and President Dee Hencely.



Show off your club! Send in your articles to your District Director

Azalea Garden Club of Columbus members brought patriotic spirit and creative flair to life at our April show-&-tell meeting, "Red, White & Bloom." As we begin celebrating our nation's upcoming 250th birthday, the room was filled with color, creativity, and just the right touch of red, white, and blue magic.

Members designed mini bud vase arrangements featuring festive blooms, and wow, did they deliver! Each piece reflected its creator's personality, from classic roses and daisies to unexpected textures and playful embellishments. Tiny flags, ribbons, and star-spangled accents appeared everywhere, proving that even the smallest arrangement can make a big, truly patriotic statement.

What made the event especially memorable was how each member interpreted the theme. Some designs leaned elegant and traditional, while others were whimsical and bold. The creativity on display was as inspiring as it was entertaining.



Camellia Garden Club of Cuthbert helped residents of Joe-Anne Burgin Nursing Home decorate Easter baskets for their rooms. It was a delightful event for everyone! Pictured here are Camellia Garden Club members Martha Corrigan, Patricia Goodman, Cheryl Meadows, Andi Henderson, Judith Howard, and Bobbie Liggett.

Other ongoing projects of the Club include maintenance of the pots and grounds at Carnegie Library, pots at the Welcome Center, the Government Center, and at the intersection of US 82 and US 27 on the square. Maintenance of the plantings at the Iris Gardens statue, and the Historic Cistern Garden are also planned.

Magnolia District Hosts 2026 GCG Convention, "GCG Celebrates America," in honor of the America's 250th anniversary. Patriotic red, white, and blue set the tone from the moment guests arrived at the registration table, adorned with festive bunting and blue bows. A stunning floral design by Magnolia District's Janice Cliett, created to honor special guest National Garden Clubs President Donna Donnelly, beautifully interpreted her theme, "Plant America for the Next 100 Years."

The convention opened with a moving presentation of the flags by the Georgia Society of the Sons of the American Revolution Honor Guard, dressed in authentic 1776 regalia. The head table, draped in red, white, and blue bunting, provided a stately focal point.

At the awards ceremony, tables were decorated with arrangements created during that morning's design class, including contributions from Magnolia's Kay Hagler and Sherry Waller. Members of the Winchester Garden Club of Columbus added a festive touch with chocolate favors wrapped in red, white, and blue purses and firecracker designs. Attendees sparkled in silver, gold, pearls, and patriotic colors—prompting Donna Donnelly to remark that the audience "looked like fireworks" from the head table.

The celebration continued with coordinated décor and a striking balloon arch that provided a perfect backdrop for photographs. The program featured outstanding speakers eligible for Tri-Refresher recertification, along with two floral design classes. Magnolia District also offered navy and white tote bags accented with red ribbons and patriotic lapel pins. Magnolia members worked hard to create a memorable event—and clearly had fun doing it. Special thanks to Chairman Kay Hagler and Co-Chairman Sybil Willingham for their leadership.



Show off your club! Send in your articles to your District Director!

Boxwood Garden Club Celebrates their 90th Anniversary

"A new garden club, happily named the Boxwood Garden Club, has recently been organized in Atlanta, and has a limited membership of enthusiastic young gardeners," The Atlanta Journal, Sunday, June 16, 1935. And with this short notice in the evening newspaper, Boxwood Garden Club (BGC) announced itself! For 90 years, BGC has been meeting, and some of today's members are granddaughters or even great-granddaughters of the original members. The club celebrated with a luncheon at Ansley Golf Club on January 20. President Margaret Mertens welcomed more than 60 attendees and opened the celebration with a toast. Guests enjoyed a program by Staci Catron of the Cherokee Garden Library. The event honored the club's rich history with displays of scrapbooks from the 1930s and 1940s and a slideshow highlighting later decades. A highlight of the afternoon was the presentation of a special award to Linda Fraser, whose contributions as a botanical artist, pianist, speaker, and expert on native flowers—particularly ladyslippers—have long enriched the club. Her enthusiasm and dedication have made her both a representative and an inspiration for Boxwood Garden Club across the years.



Roswell Garden Club Celebrates their 75th Anniversary

The Roswell Garden Club (RGC) began the celebration with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Roswell History Museum, commemorating three-quarters of a century of service and stewardship. The event also featured a special exhibit showcasing the club's archives and rich history of contributions to the Roswell community.



Founded in 1951, RGC is Roswell's oldest garden club and has long been dedicated to preserving the city's natural beauty and history. Over the decades, members have created and maintained gardens at Barrington Hall, Smith Plantation, the Roswell Historic Cemetery, and other notable sites. The club's commitment extends to youth education initiatives and a variety of community beautification projects.

Members past and present joined city leaders including the Mayor and City Council, as well as special guests from The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc., including President Diane Hunter and fellow GCG members, to celebrate this milestone anniversary.



Brookwood Hills Garden Club, led by President Dabney Hollis, made its debut at the Atlanta Botanical Garden Flower Show, themed *Heirloom*.

The club entered two horticulture classes. In Division II, Class 39 (Terrarium), Anna Miller created a miniature landscape in an antique liquor dispenser repurposed as a terrarium earning First Place in its category.

In Division II, Class 24 (Cut Collection in an Heirloom Container), Betsy Crosby and Robin Fischer led the creation of an arrangement displayed in a 70-plus-year-old hand-turned wooden bowl crafted from a tree once part of Woodcrest Avenue's original canopy. Though it did not receive a ribbon, it drew steady admiration from visitors throughout the day. Members also supported the show behind the scenes, gaining valuable insight and strengthening camaraderie. The experience proved both rewarding and inspiring—reinforcing the joy of learning, collaborating, and sharing in the beauty of gardening.



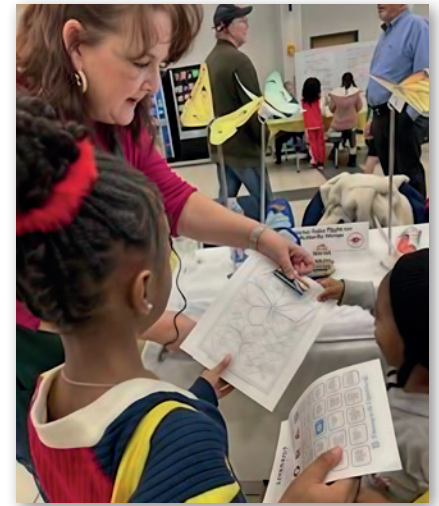
Show off your club! Send in your articles to your District Director

Satsuki Garden Club Joins Literacy Event. The Newton County School System hosted its third annual Literacy Extravaganza on February 7, drawing an estimated 3,500 attendees for a day celebrating literacy.

The Satsuki Garden Club participated for the first time and plans to make it an annual Civic Improvement project. Their exhibit, "Stories Take Flight on Butterfly Wings," featured a trifold display by Beverly Copeland and Reba Wilson highlighting butterfly-themed books, along with a poster promoting the club's free nature book box.

Ten volunteers staffed the booth, distributing 300 children's books, coloring sheets, crayons, and handcrafted origami butterflies. Connie and David Waller engaged children with an interactive butterfly life cycle demonstration, complete with props and costumes.

Volunteers included Connie and David Waller, Sharon Payne, Louise Miller, Adrienne Dettore, Susan and Butch Bozeman, Sandy and Bill Crawford, and co-presidents Carol Fulton and Martha Taylor.



Green Thumb Garden Club and the Upson Historical Society dedicated a Gold Star Memorial at historic Pettigrew-White-Stamps House Museum April 4 in honor of families of service members killed in action. They were joined by a large crowd for the dedication ceremony, which included several local dignitaries. The new marker is the 19th gold marker in the State. Thomaston Mayor J.D. Stallings gave an invocation, after which Upson County Commission Chairman Dan Brue led the Pledge of Allegiance, and the National Anthem was sung by Technical Sgt. Kimberly Gilbert. Jan Thiese, chair of the Gold Star Marker program, gave the backstory of the Gold Star program to those in attendance before City Manager Russell Thompson, resident Mike Greene, and Thomaston Police Chief Mike Richardson unveiled the marker. Following unveiling, Upson-Lee High School band member Brody Moss performed Taps.



Avondale Estates Garden Club Celebrates Arbor Day in Georgia Georgia Arbor Day, the third Friday in February of each year, is a special time for members of the Avondale Estates Garden Club (AEGC). Each year, the club works with the City of Avondale Estates to plant a tree in memory of club members and their spouses who have died during the previous year. In 2026, the tree was planted in memory of longtime garden club member and Avondale Estates resident Sheila Biggs. AEGC contributes \$150 to purchase the tree and works with the city's Greenspace Manager to select the tree and decide where it will be planted. It is an excellent, low-maintenance understory tree for local landscapes, offering striking fall color (yellow, orange, scarlet) and unique smooth, gray, fluted bark. It will provide essential wildlife food for birds and mammals. Planting trees and encouraging conservation are important missions of AEGC.



Show off your club! Send in your articles to your District Director!

Coming Up



June

June - Summer Camp – Georgia Critters

9am - 4pm; State Botanical Garden Education department offers 6 different week-long summer camps for ages 5-10. Each week focuses on a different outdoor theme. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June - Tuesday Tour

2 pm every Tuesday; Porcelain and Decorative Arts Museum Classroom. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June 5 - Our Native Pollinators

9am - 1pm; Georgia Mountain Research and Education Center. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June 6 - Carnivorous Plants of the Southeast U.S.

9am - 1pm; Visitor Center, Classroom 2. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June 10 - Garden Nights: Bubbles & Blooms

6:30pm - 8pm; Flower Garden Lawn \$10 – for Friends of the Garden, \$25 – Non-members. Learn More. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June 14 - Blue/Gold Star Marker Dedication

8am - 5pm; Veterans Memorial Park, Joseph T. Harris American Legion Post, Statham.

June 16 Insect Pollinators in Our Gardens

9am - 1pm; Virtual Lecture – Zoom. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June 16 - Sunflower Concert Series - The Brokenstring Band

7pm - 9pm; Flower Garden Lawn. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June 24 - Think Like an Arborist: Tree Care Prescription in Practice

6pm - 8pm; Visitor Center & Conservatory Adult Classroom. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June 27 - Summer Tree Identification

8am - 12pm; Visitor Center, Classroom 2. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

June 30 - Blue/Gold Star Marker Dedication

10am; The Carter Presidential Center, 453 Freedom Parkway, Atlanta. Hosted by The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. and its seven districts. Reservations MUST be made by June 15. RSVP by emailing jantz0927@gmail.com



July

July 2 - Blue Star Marker Dedication

8am - 5pm; Brook Run Park, Dunwoody

July 8 - Garden Nights

6:30pm - 8pm; Porcelain and Decorative Arts Museum – Classroom \$10 – for Friends of the Garden, \$25 – Non-members. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

July - Natural Communities of Georgia

6pm - 8pm; Every third Saturday of the month, April - August. Virtual Lecture – Zoom. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

July 21 - Sunflower Concert Series - The Original Splitz

7pm - 9pm; Flower Garden Lawn. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.



August

August 4 - Azalea District Executive Committee Meeting

10am - 2pm; GCG Headquarters, Athens

August 6 - Camellia District Summer/Fall Board Meeting 2026

9:30am - 2pm; Eastman. Details to follow.

August 12 - Oleander District Summer Board Meeting 2026

9:30am - 2pm; Further details to be announced.

August 12 - Garden Nights: Butterflies & Bingo

6:30pm - 8pm; Heritage Garden \$10 – for Friends of the Garden, \$25 – Non-members. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

August 14 - Connect to Protect Leadership Workshop

9am - 1pm; Visitor Center, Classroom 2. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

NGC Flower Show School Course 1

August 16; 1pm - 4pm

August 17 8am - 4:30pm

August 18 -8am - 4:30pm

August 19 -8am - 9:30am

Bellmere Garden House, 10777 Bell Rd., Johns Creek. Registration is limited to 30, early registration is recommended. Registration Deadline July 16.

August 18 - Azalea District Summer Board Meeting 2026

9:30am - 2pm; Milledgeville. Details to follow.

August 18 - Sunflower Concert Series - Abbey Road LIVE!

7pm - 9pm; Flower Garden Lawn. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.

August 21 – 22 - Great Southeast Pollinator Census

Garden Clubs are encouraged to participate and will receive a point on the 2026 President's Report of Garden Club Achievements

August 27 - Learning by Leading Information Session

5:30pm - 7:30pm; Gardenside Room. State Botanical Garden, Athens. See botgarden.uga.edu.



The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
State Headquarters
2450 South Milledge Avenue
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For rental information, contact The State Botanical Garden
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sbgrent@uga.edu.

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