



New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

An Online Newsletter

Member of the
New England Garden Clubs
National Garden Clubs, Inc

Lilac Letter

Fall 2025

Volume XXXII, Issue 2



Berkshire Botanical Gardens - August 2025

President's Message

As you read this edition of the Lilac Letter you will realize how important that phrase “thank you” is. This edition is full of information concerning upcoming events in our New Hampshire Federation, the New England Garden Club (NEGC) and the National Garden Club (NGC). Everything you are reading, including the Lilac Letter, is a result of tireless volunteer hours by fellow members of this wonderful organization. You are invited and encouraged to participate in every opportunity offered.

Many newer members may not be aware of the different garden club organizations we belong to as a result of being a NHFGC club. When your club joins the federation you become a member of two other larger organizations and have access to much greater opportunities to grow, learn and network with clubs in the New England Region and the National Garden Club. The National Garden Club is the largest volunteer organization in the country!



President's Message Continued

This edition of the Lilac Letter contains two invitations from the New England Garden Club. All members of federated garden clubs in the six New England States are most welcome to attend and enjoy both activities. The Annual Meeting this year is in Connecticut. Like our NHFGC meetings, the states rotate hosting this event. Connecticut and NEGC have created a wonderful event including expert speakers, interesting activities, good food and a garden trivia game. They have negotiated reduced hotel rates. Take a mini vacation this fall and join the fun. Registration information is in this Lilac Letter.

The second NEGC activity is a photography workshop and a photography contest. All the information you will need to participate is included in this Lilac Letter. NEGC is leading the way with the National Garden Club to create a photography judging component for members interested in this activity. This would be similar to the other judged events such as flower shows!

NHFGC and District One Clubs have created a Gathering On Golden Pond for our New Hampshire Clubs to enjoy. The day includes many choices of activities at a beautiful outdoor venue. We hope many members will come to enjoy the day together at the lake! Many of us know about the wonderful science center, nature trails and gardens. There is also an opportunity to enjoy the lake by guided tour boat. We all think "I would like to do that SOMEDAY". This September 24th is that SOMEDAY!

Again, I repeat, THANK YOU to all the volunteers who have worked to create activities for all of us to enjoy! Remember, if it is not fun we don't want to do it. This is fun!

Fondly,
Winnie Schmidt
NHFGC President

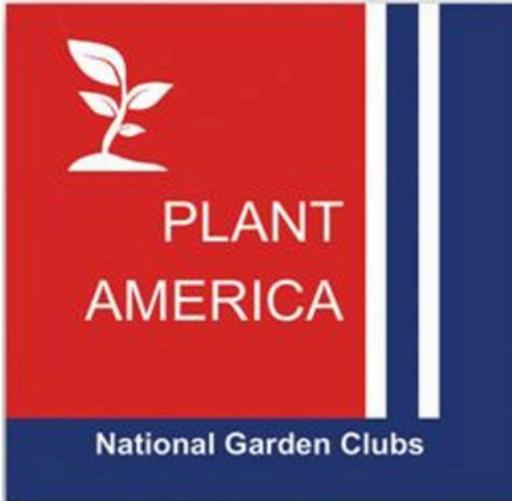


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Plant America Grant

PLANT AMERICA GRANT DEADLINE OCTOBER 15



PLANT AMERICA Community Project Grants help enhance and beautify our public areas and community gardens. Project grants to NGC member clubs help educate adults and children about the joys of gardening and create pride throughout the community. Grants may be used for physical landscaping or environmental projects, or for horticultural or educational opportunities for the community.

Grants have been awarded to NGC member clubs since 2017. More than 250 grants have been awarded, totaling more than \$225,000. Grants are awarded in amounts up to \$2,000 (an increase from past years).

The Plant America program allows clubs to apply for community grants to help with community beautification projects, community and/or school gardens, landscaping for Blue Star Memorials or Habitat for

Humanity homes, or public horticultural or environmental programs or events. Club applications are **due October 15, 2025** with funds awarded in January or February of 2026 and projects completed by February 28, 2027. Final reports are required. Applications are available online at <https://www.gardenclub.org/plant-america-community-project-grants> and easy to fill out. Applications can then be submitted to the web-address on the form. Please remember to follow the form's guidelines, especially with the description, timeline and the judging criteria! **Note** that previous recipients are currently not eligible to apply.

At PLANT AMERICA, we're thrilled to support communities by providing grants to enhance gardens and public spaces throughout the country! Come and join us in creating beauty and fostering connections in our neighborhoods—together, we can grow!



Meet the New National Garden Club President

Donna Donnelly, 2025-2027, NGC President

dmdonnelly@gardenclub.org



A native of Staten Island, New York, Donna and her family moved to a small pecan farm in Elloree, South Carolina, in 2001. Many sacks of pecans were harvested during those first few years, and in her opinion, there is nothing like a fresh-picked buttery pecan! Donna is the mother of three grown sons and Mimi to seven grandchildren. She was a Registered Nurse for thirty-eight years, specializing and RNC Certified in Labor & Delivery and Perinatal Nursing.

For the first half of her adult life, she dedicated 23 years to volunteering at the Staten Island Historical Society. Shortly after relocating to the Southern Hemisphere, she joined the Elloree Garden Club. Donna discovered that being part of a garden club was more than just about gardening; she found it gave her a complete sense of well-being and provided excellent programs. Over the years, Donna has taken advantage of educational opportunities offered by NGC and became an NGC Accredited Master Flower Show Judge, a Landscape Design Consultant, and a member of NFA and CFAA.

She has held several chair positions on the Board of Directors of The Garden Club of South Carolina (GCSC), including District Director and State President in 2017. Donna has served on the South Atlantic Region (SAR) Board of Directors since 2011. Since 2015, she has been part of the National Garden Club's Board of Directors and is currently the 49th NGC President for the 2025-2027 term.

Additionally, Donna is proud to be a certified South Carolina Wildlife Federation Pro-Birder and a Yellowstone National Park Junior Ranger.

These experiences have enriched her life, and she feels fortunate to have met many talented and knowledgeable individuals from across the United States, including International Affiliates. Where else can you experience such diverse cultural encounters along with all the educational benefits? National Garden Clubs is an incredible and rewarding organization. She is deeply committed to securing the future of NGC and preserving everything that is respected and admired about the organization.



New England Garden Club Annual Meeting



We are thrilled to invite you and all members from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont to the New England Garden Clubs, Inc. 9th Annual Meeting on October 14-15, 2025, at the Sheraton Hartford South Hotel in Rocky Hill, CT. Hosted by The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc., this event brings together our vibrant community to celebrate our shared passion for gardening with these inspiring themes:

- National Garden Clubs, Inc.: “**PLANT AMERICA** – For the Next 100 Years”
- New England Garden Clubs, Inc.: “**We Grow Gardens & Gardeners**”
- The Federated Garden Clubs of CT, Inc.: “**BEE RESILIENT** – Garden for Nature”

Event Highlights:

- **Tuesday, October 14:** Unique vendor shopping, State Presidents’ themed NEGC Photography Show, a reception honoring Polly Brooks, NEGC Director, and her guests Donna Donnelly, NGC President, and Susan Miner, NGC 3rd Vice President, followed by a delicious dinner banquet and an intriguing conservation program by Susan Quincy, CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection.
- **Wednesday, October 15:** Roundtable focus groups, a captivating presentation by renowned floral artist and educator Michael Derouin, engaging and interactive “Garden Jeopardy” with horticulturist Renée Marsh, the NEGC Achievement Awards Ceremony, and exciting raffle drawings.

ANNUAL MEETING EVENT REGISTRATION, Oct. 14-15, 2025

Please complete and submit via the attached registration link by September 30, 2025.

- Registration Fee: \$65 (required)
- Dinner Banquet on Oct. 14th: \$60
- Buffet Lunch on Oct. 15th: \$45
- Late Fee: \$10 applies after September 30, 2025
-

ZOOM BUSINESS MEETING REGISTRATION, Oct. 9, 2025

There will be an NEGC Annual Meeting “Business Meeting” by Zoom on Thursday, October 9th, 10:00 am. Please register via the attached registration link by September 30, 2025.

- There is no Registration Fee

A Zoom link will be sent to all registered attendees



Hotel Reservation Information for the NE Garden Club Annual Meeting

HOTEL RESERVATIONS:

Secure your stay at the Sheraton Hartford South Hotel, 100 Capital Boulevard, Rocky Hill, CT 06067, for a special group rate of \$149/night (plus taxes & fees) by September 19, 2025. Call 860-257-6000, and mention the Booking Code FGCFGCH, or use our [Group Rate Online Link](#)

We encourage you to share this invitation through your social media, newsletters, websites, letters, or other marketing channels to spread the word. We have attached a flyer for your convenience.

Use this link to register for the event:

<https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/new-england-garden-clubs-inc-annual-meeting>

If you have any further questions about registration, please contact our registrar, Norma Jean Macauto normajean.macauto@ctgardenclubs.org

We look forward to seeing you in Rocky Hill!

Warm regards,

Nan Merolla
President, The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.
nan.merolla@ctgardenclubs.org
203-216-0884

Polly Brooks
Director, New England Garden Clubs, Inc.
polly.brooks@ctgardenclubs.org
860-459-4279



New England Garden Clubs, Inc.



New England Garden Clubs Photography Group Newsletter



[Here is the link to our NEGC website](#)



July 2025 Photo Newsletter Directors' Message

Polly Brooks
NEGC Director 2025-27
Susan Miner
NEGC Director 2023-25
NGC 3rd Vice President 2025-2027

O-YEZ! O-YEZ! WE NOW OFFER A PILOT PROGRAM For PHOTO JUDGE CERTIFICATION

Arabella Dane has promoted such a program for years. She and we just received permission to offer this 1st ever beta program within New England Garden Clubs.

Who is eligible? –

- Any member who is a NGC student*, accredited, life, master or Emeritus judge (an NGC student* judge has successfully completed 3 Flower Show School Courses- see p. 114, Handbook)
- And now any garden club member who meets the requirements on the attached form is also eligible....

What are the NGC rules now?

***Currently, at our NGC Standard Flower Shows with photography sections, 3 judges are required:**

two of whom are Photography Professionals, Camera Club Judges or Garden Club of America photography judges

and the third may be an accredited or master NGC flower show judge.

But what about YOU???? Here is your chance!

You exhibited, You worked, you served, you wrote, you ran... now here is your chance....

Read the requirements below and click on the link to submit the form to Arabella Dane...





New England Garden Clubs Pilot Program
to certify Photography Judges

As of July, 2025

Any New England GC flower show judge (student, accredited, life, master, emeritus), who is a member of a federated club in the

New England, or garden club member who meets these requirements is eligible to become certified as an NEGC Photography Judge.

Please provide information about sufficient training in Photography as described below:

Requirements:

- **You exhibit successfully in photography shows: won 5 (five) blues, or 5 (five) 90+ or been a finalist in 5 juried shows or any combination of these - in garden club, camera club, community, local, regional, national, international photography competitions.**
- **You worked on or ran 3 photography shows/ photo exhibits/ social media site /photo workshops for your club, camera club, state or other**
- **You served on 3 photography judging panels as a clerk**
- **You served on 3 photography judging panels as a National Garden Club, Inc. flower show judge**
- **You wrote a photography show schedule**
- **You attended 5 photography workshops in person, or via zoom offered by garden clubs, camera clubs, photography groups, photography instructors, National Organizations**
- **You ran or presented photography lectures, programs, workshops at a garden club, camera club, symposium, or other venue**
- **you have attended 2 NGC flower show schools**
- **You submitted the attached form to Arabella Dane arabellasd@aol.com**

For certification, please fill in and *submit this jotform* (or paste this link into your browser) <https://form.jotform.com/250743990362057>



Sign up for The NE Garden Clubs Photography Group Newsletter

All members of New England's federated garden clubs are welcome to participate in the NEGC Photography Group. We will showcase the work of our garden club photographers, in furtherance of the mission and programs of National Garden Clubs.

Our NEGC garden club members will have access to learning about the art and science of photography thru our activities and publications.

Our New England Garden Club members will have access to online and in-person workshops with noted photographers, thru the Photography Group's membership in NECCC - New England Council of Camera Clubs, a member group of the Photography Society of America PSA.

We will provide photographic educational information to our garden club members; opportunities for dialogue and discussion; image critique and evaluation of members' images; information about photography exhibiting opportunities; and information about photography judging.

Additional Photography Links - click on the icons below



Enjoy the NGC photography page! We will be adding photographic tips and articles here; hosting a facebook page and a blog featuring discussions about photography



The New England Camera Club Council (NECCC) is a nonprofit umbrella group for 70 camera clubs and photography groups in the New England states (CT, RI, ME, MA, NH, and VT).



Consider taking advantage of PSA's extensive educational opportunities and free programs that are exclusive to individual members.



This remarkable organization offers its members great opportunities for workshops, lectures and field trips for nature photography. They, like PSA, offer contests too.



NEGC Photography Group Coordinators

Arabella Dane, arabellasd@aol.com, Chair
Susan Miner, Advisor
Suzanne Bushnell, Assistant
Michelle Mensinger, Derry GC
Polly Brooks, New England Garden Clubs, Inc. Director



NHFGC Scholarships

Audrey Vargish

Here it is – September has arrived. As our students return to schools, we need to think ahead to 2026 and the scholarships that are offered by both the NHFGC and the NGC. Time passes quickly, and before we know it the scholarship deadlines will have arrived. All the information is available on the websites of both organizations.



Please make note that applications for the NGC Scholarship need to be submitted by February 1, 2026 and for the NHFGC Scholarships, it is March 31, 2026. I definitely will be reminding you about these dates. Please make a point of telling the students that you know to apply for these scholarships.

NOTE: Club Scholarship Chairman, please remember this is for students who have completed their high school education and are entering their sophomore, junior, senior or graduate year of study.

NHFGC Insurance Program



through our agent



It's almost Insurance Time!!!

We offer Open Enrollment September 1 thru September 30, 2025

Coverage is effective November 1, 2025 thru October 31, 2026.

WHAT IT COVERS: The policy provides General Liability coverage for your club's activities, meeting space, club sales and special events. There is no liquor liability coverage provided by our Policy. It also offers Director & Officers Liability coverage for your club's directors and officers in the event that they are personally sued by other parties, for actual or alleged wrongful acts in managing your club.

Clubs who have questions, need more info, or need a Certificate of Insurance should call Sherry Norman at 603-254-4703 or email "willynorman57@gmail.com with the name and address of the Certificate Holder and how it should be sent with an email address or US Mail.



Landscape Design School

Sherry Norman



National Garden Clubs

The NGC School for Landscape Design does make us all a better gardener and land manager!

This year the School is sponsored by the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, Inc and all classes are done via Zoom.

They are offering Course #4 on October 28 – 30, 2025 from 8:00 AM to 12:45 PM and I encourage you to sign up and enjoy your time with them. The cost is \$110 if you want the credits and would like to take their test. What could happen really but it's all pretty easy. And in my last article you may remember that NHFGC offers continuing education reimbursement for successfully completed course work, upon approval by the NHFGC Executive Board, so this is a win win situation.

Course #4 includes “Contemporary Landscape Design Trends”; “Community Participation in Landscaping Projects”; “History & Development of Community Gardens”; “Guidelines for Evaluating Landscape Designs”; and “Evaluation of Landscape Designs”.

The Course Registrar is Beate Bolen, beatebolen@gmail.com and her tel is 413 306 5454 or 973 985 3947 to sign up.

Also I can email you the course brochure and “Form 6” to sign up as well. My contact info is 603 254 4703 willynorman57@gmail.com.



Youth Contests, Projects and Grants

OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH OF ALL AGES

Now is the time to plan and to contact our schools and youth groups about the wonderful projects, contests and grants available through National Garden Clubs, Inc. NGC provides many educational opportunities through competitions for the youth at the pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school level. Contests for 2025-2026 include:

- **Smokey Bear Poster Contest**
- **Poetry Contest**
- **High School Distinguished Service Project**
- **Youth Pollinator Gardens Grant**
- **Youth Sculpture Contest**

Please consider one of these opportunities when working with the youth in your area. Information regarding each of these opportunities is listed below. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact NHFGC Youth Activities point of contact, Deb Drake (debadnh@comcast.net or youth@nhfgc.org). These children are our future garden club members!

SMOKEY BEAR & WOODSY OWL POSTER CONTEST

Children from first through fifth grade are invited to participate in the National Garden Clubs, Inc Poster Contest! The U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and the National Garden Clubs, Inc., are giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of wildfire prevention and basic environmental conservation principles through original drawings of Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl.

SMOKEY BEAR SAYS: “ONLY YOU CAN PREVENT WILDFIRES!”

Smokey Bear is recognized nationally and internationally as the symbol for fire prevention. The original Smokey Bear appeared in 1944. Smokey’s message, “Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!” encourages personal responsibility for fire prevention. Smokey teaches children and adults to be careful with campfires, barbecues, trash fires and matches.



WOODSY OWL SAYS: LEND A HAND – CARE FOR THE LAND! Woodsy Owl is America’s icon for the conservation of the environment. Since 1971, Woodsy has helped parents and teachers inspire children to observe, explore, and care for the environment. He challenges children to “Lend a Hand, Care for the Land!” and to take an active role in caring for the land through recycling, reusing, and reducing waste, gardening, planting and caring for trees, using resources wisely, and not littering.

NHFGC club members are encouraged to support this very important Youth Project. In many instances this may be the only time these iconic messages are heard. If you would like Smokey or Woodsy to attend an event for the children participating in this program, please let Deb Drake know and we will work on arranging a visit through the Forest Service.

Deb Drake has packets of material to help you get started and items to use as giveaways to the participants. She looks forward to hearing from you and helping with this project. Additional details can be found on the NGC website <http://gardenclub.org> in the “Youth and Scholarships” then “Contests and Scholarships” area.



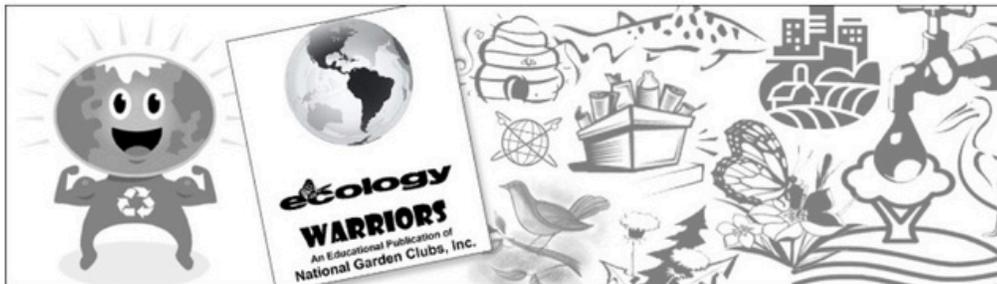
NGC High School Distinguished Service Project Award

Bringing gardening and our youth together is an exciting process and can be fun for parents, grandparents, or other adult friends.

The High School Distinguished Service Project Award along with \$100 for first place and \$50 for second place may be awarded to a high school student, grades 9-12, for an outstanding civic project making a significant improvement for public benefit, e.g. environment, conservation, landscape, horticulture, recycling, horticulture therapy, etc. A single member club, group of member clubs, districts or a state garden club must sponsor the project.

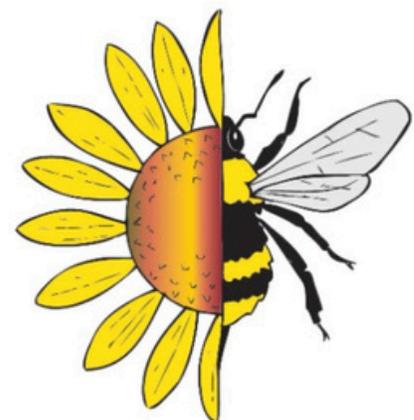
If you know of someone who has done an outstanding civic project consider applying for Award #YW-7, High School Distinguished Service Project under Youth Work Awards.

Details and full award rules can be found on the NGC website <http://gardenclub.org> in the on in the “Youth and Scholarships” then “Contests and Scholarships” area. This is due Dec 1 to the NHFGC Awards Chair.



NGC Youth Pollinator Gardens Grant

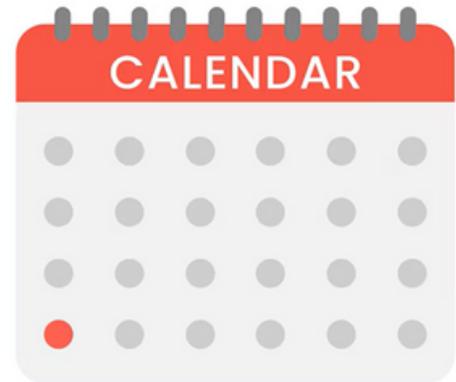
National Garden Clubs, Inc. is excited to provide a grant opportunity for Garden Clubs working with youth clubs or groups planning and planting Pollinator Gardens. Grants, up to \$200, are available for projects that include educational materials on the vital role pollinators play in nature and youth involvement in planning and planting gardens providing nesting and food sources for pollinators. Youth will learn the importance of providing appropriate food sources, nesting areas, shelter, and practicing sustainable gardening practices for pollinators by planning, planting, and maintaining these pollinator gardens.



To apply for a grant, complete an NGC Grant Application, provide detailed information about the project, and submit your request to the NGC Youth Committee Chairman for approval. Details and full contest rules can be found on the NGC website <http://gardenclub.org> in the “Youth and Scholarships” then “Contests and Scholarships” area.



Calendar and Upcoming Events



2025

- September 6 Master Gardener Demo Garden workshops - “Composting: How and Why”
- September 18-19 NGC’S Environmental School Course 4 - Hosted by FGCCT via ZOOM
- September 24 NHFGC Fall Gathering on Golden Pond Squam Lake Science Center
- October 4 Master Gardener Demo Garden Workshops - “Beginning Gardener Series Gardens in the Fall Season”
- October 7 Deadline to submit articles to the Lilac Letter to LLeeditor@nhfgc.org
- October 14 New England Garden Club’s Annual Meeting Sheraton Hartford, Rocky Hill, CT
- October 15 Plant America grant deadline
- October 22 NHFGC Executive Board Meeting, Bow Municipal Building
- October 31 Club Liability Insurance payment due
- November 30 Plant License information due - send club information to the assistant treasurer
- December 1 NGC awards applications due to NHFGC Awards Chairmen Including Flower Show awards
- December 1 Youth Poetry and Youth Sculpture entries are due to NHFGC Awards Chairperson
- December 17 NHFGC Executive Board Meeting

2026

- February 1 NGC Scholarship applications are due to NHFGC Scholarship Chairperson
- February 7 NHFGC Executive Board Meeting

***** Note:** Events listed may need prior registration. This list is for your convenience in planning. More information concerning cost, if any, and registration can be found on the NHFGC website on the Calendar page.



Club News



Ashland Garden Club

Susan Hendricks



Our club started off the rainy month of June with a trip to two beautiful farms in Warner, NH. Our first stop was Bagley Pond Perennials, a certified organic native perennial plant farm. Our second stop was Pumpkin Blossom Farm, a family owned and operated lavender farm that featured over 10,000 lavender plants, products and infused treats. Despite the cold rainy conditions, we had a great time.

In July, our talented floral designers took home several awards at the Newport Flower show. In Class 1 - Courtly Couture - The Frog Prince by Sue Cram won First Place and the Robyn Kauffman Spagnolo Botanical Arts Award. This design conformed to schedule requirements, incorporated principles of design and is of exceptional quality. Linda Pare won the Blue with her contemporary interpretation of Goldilocks and the 3 Bears by adhering to the rule of using 3 containers. Cinderella by Tracey Burhoe won high honors with a 1st Place Blue Ribbon, National Garden Club Award for Best Design in Show, Corinne Clark Award for Best Interpretation, and the Newport Flower Show Award for Best in Show WOW! Congratulations to our extremely talented designers.

On a beautiful cool summer evening in July, the AGC toured Longview Farm in Plymouth, NH. Regina Rinaldo gave us a tour of their 119 acres plus of fields that provide beautiful vegetables to our community. The Shirley Splaine Horticulturist Scholarship Award Winner, Leah Ines, was in attendance along with many other garden clubbers.

Following that, there was an amazing garden tour of Chris Towers's daylily garden in Campton. This year hybridized lilies have popped up for the first time.

We are looking forward to lots more members hosting pop up garden events in August. We are busy planning our club's 40th anniversary celebration in September. Also in September, District 1 hosts the Fall Gathering at Golden Pond. Please register for this event with your club treasurer by August 20.



Longview Farm tour with Regina, owner of Longview Farms



Chris Tower discusses her daylily garden with Fern Doucette



Goldilocks and the Three Bears – by Linda Pare – Winner Newport Flower Show



Atkinson Garden Club

Jeanne Vickery



Like all area gardeners, we at the Atkinson Garden Club are continually rising to the challenge of keeping all our town plantings well weeded, watered and fed, despite the outlandishly high temperatures, dry spells or drenching rain! (It is New England, after all, with the effects of climate change thrown in for good measure!) Kudos to our Civic Beautification Chair, Nicole Cummings and her Committee, and all our club members who participate in this endeavor to maintain the beauty of our town.

We continue to seriously examine our roles in this climate change crisis and consider what we can do to make a difference, both as a garden club and as individuals. Under the capable and impassioned leadership of Michael Hosker Bouley, this committee continues to grow! Meeting topics with documentation handed out to club members, have included the detrimental role of CO 2 in the greenhouse effect, best trees to plant for absorbing CO 2 in New Hampshire, and helping decrease greenhouse gases through composting. Also, abiding by our mission statement of environmental responsibility, we are discussing how we can positively impact our environment by using all non-plastic materials at our club meetings for refreshment related items such as cups, plates, table covers, utensils, etc.

In June, the AGC, community members and members of area garden clubs, were treated to a Frosting and Flowers workshop presented by our members Jim and Kathy Clarke. Professional florists and cake decorators, they provided a cake decorating tutorial, and then provided participants with frosting, decorator bags and tips, and delicious cupcakes and stems of fresh flowers provided by organizer, Estelle Halchak!



AGC member Linda Jette showcases her gorgeous frosted cupcakes adorned with fresh florals at our June Frosting and Flowers Workshop!

Our annual Christmas in July meeting, was a well-attended success, thanks to our co-chairs, Nina Gray and Jeanne Geisser, all the organizers, activity coordinators and the many club members who participated. (We even received a Recognition Certificate at the NHFGC May meeting!) Hundreds of pinecones were wired, festive ball pics, berries and bright bows were made ready for the wreaths, kissing balls, holly trees and centerpieces to be created for our December Greens and Gifts Sale. Nina Gray provided a detailed demonstration on the construction of our handmade holly trees, and Estelle Halchak, Design Chair, demonstrated the use of oasis and its alternatives in creative designs.

Later in the month, Estelle also hosted 3 well attended BOWdacious Workshops at her home for AGC members, each emphasizing a different facet of composing beautiful and unique bows for the Greens Sale.

Ann Grogan, Marnie Finn and Pat Bennett hard at work preparing bows for our Greens Sale at our Christmas in July Workshop!



Some of Estelle Halchak's Bow workshop attendees (l-r) Estelle, Kathy Clarke, Jim Clarke, Marilyn Stewart, Pat Bennett, Judy Siros.



Atkinson Garden Club Continued



The passion and creativity of Atkinson's local gardeners never ceases to amaze! Each of our Garden of the Month Award recipients continues to reveal their talents in unique and inspiring ways. Congratulations to June's recipients, Cassandra and Michael Richeson, and Sheri Turell for July. Many thanks to Janet Snowdon, our Garden of the Month Chair, and her Committee for their stellar selections.



For their eclectic, flowing and richly colorful gardens, our June Garden of the Month recipients, Michael and Cassandra Richeson along with their son Kade and daughter Savvy.



Sheri Turell, AGC member, awarded July Garden of the Month! Many suggested her yard is composed of many rooms, each decorated uniquely with flowers, pots, trees and shrubs.

Realizing how vital it is for all community organizations to support one another, we recently presented the Atkinson Historical Society with a gift of \$1,000 for the restoration of the Center School, Atkinson's last one room school house dating back to 1879!



Garden Club members Jeanne Geisser, Sue Carter, Pat Bennett presenting \$1,000 check to AHS President, Kate Rochford, and Marnie Finn.

Our August Meeting featured bonsai expert Fred McMullen, who shared the fundamentals of the art and science of bonsai.

And last, but not least, an invitation to our October 1 Open Meeting! Local florist and owner of her shop, the Green Griffin, Shannon Nicolosi will share her creative talents with us, designing several floral arrangements to be offered in an Opportunity Drawing at the end of her presentation. Save the Date: October 1 at 1 p.m. Atkinson Community Center, 4 Main Street, Atkinson. Light refreshments provided.



Bow Garden Club

Terin Voisine



The Bow Garden Club kicked off its 2025 season with our first member meeting on April 14th. We were delighted to welcome guest speaker Eric Orff, a longtime wildlife biologist, who shared stories and photos from his remarkable 50 years spent in New Hampshire’s woods. His talk was both entertaining and insightful, and it was thoroughly enjoyed by all in attendance.

On Friday, April 25th, we held our annual Spring Clean-Up Day. This year, we were fortunate to collaborate with Bow High School’s Day of Service. It was a beautiful day and we welcomed 12 enthusiastic students and two dedicated teachers who lent their helping hands. Together, we prepared the Rotary Park Garden, Gazebo Garden, and the Bow Community Center container garden for the season ahead. Their energy and teamwork made a big impact!



Also in April, BGC’s Older Adult Enrichment Committee members, Diane Lowe and Carol Barleon, hosted a community craft class at White Rock Senior Living in Bow. Participants had a wonderful time creating “Pot Heads” – adorable painted pots filled with flower arrangements. It was a fun and creative afternoon, and everyone left with a colorful pot to take home and enjoy.



May was a busy and exciting month for the club. We started on May 8th by co-sponsoring a Vegetable Gardening event with Bow Parks & Recreation. A Master Gardener from the UNH Cooperative Extension shared expert advice with about 20 attendees at the Community Center, helping everyone gear up for a successful growing season.

Just a few days later, on May 12th, we welcomed Mason Hollow Nursery for our monthly meeting and presentation. Their talk on all things hosta, was a hit—and two lucky attendees went home with beautiful hostas donated by the nursery!



Bow Garden Club Continued



The highlight of the month was, of course, our Annual Plant Sale. Despite some rainy weather, we had a wonderful turnout on our new weekend date. It turned out to be one of our most successful sales yet! Many BGC members dedicated their time to make it happen—from Friday night setup to the bustling Saturday sale, their dedication was incredible!



On May 20th, Bow Garden Club members, Terin Voisine and Erika Flewelling, partnered with the Baker Free Library for their monthly Craft Night. Participants enjoyed a fun and creative evening making charming herb garden baskets to take home and grow.



Each year, BGC supports the Bow Rotary Club's Silent Auction by donating a certificate offering at least two hours of gardening help from four or more Garden Club volunteers. On May 23rd, despite chilly weather, members Diane Lowe, Maureen Salo, Carolyn Sprague, Patricia MacNeil, and Beverly Gamlin rolled up their sleeves and spent a productive morning working at the home of this year's auction winners, Stephen and Ellen DeStefano.



Bow Garden Club Continued



In honor of the Town of Bow's Memorial Day service, club member Lisa Richards and her sister Nancy created a beautiful commemorative wreath.



In celebration of National Garden Week, BGC once again partnered with the Bow Baker Free Library to offer a Children's Potting Station. Kids picked up free Potting Kits that included a colorful pot with stickers, a bag of soil, instructions, and a packet of seeds—fun and educational for budding young gardeners!



Our June meeting took place on June 9th at the Bow Old Town Hall. This month's presentation, Monet's Gardens by Jane Oneail, was truly lovely and well-received by both club members and guests from the community.

To close out the month, members gathered on June 28th for our much-loved summer social, Cocktails in the Garden, graciously hosted once again by Marilee Nihan and her husband Bruce Treat at their beautiful home. It was the perfect way to celebrate the season and enjoy time together.



Community Garden Club of Meredith

Sandy Dodds



Another summer is moving quickly towards fall! In Meredith our Weed and Feed group has been busy tending our many local garden areas. Our tasks are split between individual “Adopt a Spots” and areas where members meet for group work sessions.

On Juneteenth members visited St. Gaudens in Cornish, we took advantage of free admission for the holiday. Our hostess with the mostest brought an amazing macaroni salad for all to feast on before the trek home.



In July members visited the “Black Swan Inn” in Tilton for tea and an informative talk about the building and gardens. In August members will convene under the direction of our Outreach group for a hands on card making session.



We’ll finish out our summer at Prescott Farm Environmental Education Center to forage for mushrooms lead by the NH Mushroom Company.

We’ll be looking to elect next year’s board at our annual meeting luncheon in October and then move towards the holiday season with a decoration workshop in November.





The Derry Garden Club members have been keeping busy during the lingering dog days of summer with a variety of projects and activities! Our work at the Boys and Girls Club Garden has been incredibly rewarding, bringing smiles and a sense of fulfillment to all involved.



Boys and Girls Club gardens



Our themed booths at the local farmers market have become a lively hub of conversation, creativity, and curiosity. From pollinator-friendly plants to sustainable watering tips, every month has centered on a new topic, inviting market-goers to pause, learn, and reflect. These booths have helped us raise awareness about vital issues—be it composting, native species, or climate resilience—while fostering lasting connections with neighbors and visitors alike. The market’s hum of voices and vibrant displays echo our club’s commitment to education and engagement.



Booths at local farmerr’s markets



Derry Garden Club Continued



During a recent monthly meeting, we had the privilege of visiting the SELT headquarters to learn about conservation efforts in New Hampshire. This experience underscored the significance of preserving our natural resources for future generations and was truly eye-opening.



Southeast Lant Trust (SELT)



Pictures from club member gardens

Epping Garden Club Eunice Miller



Most gardens are frying with this wonderful, albeit warm, summer we have had. I am so thankful day after day that we invested in large, self-watering containers. Six are loaded with hot pink petunias and 4 are filled with pretty yellow ones.



Fitzwilliam Garden Club

Theresa Robbitts



The Fitzwilliam Garden Club does not meet in June or July in order to allow members to plant items in our gardens which were purchased and maintain and enjoy them.

On August 23rd we held our Fall Plant and Bake Sale at the same time as our Library Book Sale. Mums and asters were featured along with plants dug from our own gardens and houseplants. It was successful, and we enjoyed seeing returning customers and helping people choose the appropriate plants for their properties. All proceeds are used for civic beautification and to provide scholarships for local students.



Fall plant sale



On August 28th, we had a presentation from Aaron Abitz who is the owner of Fassett Farm Nursery in Jaffrey. This nursery specializes in native plants and also provides consultations at local properties and installs and maintains the plants they choose. Aaron spoke about how he designs and chooses species for specific sites and reduces the reliance on lawns. He spoke about the importance of using native plants to feed local insects and sustain wildlife.

In September, we will hold a potluck dinner with Jane Raymond of UNH Cooperative Extension presenting a program on invasive plant species. We will learn how to identify and how to deal with them. We are seeing invasives everywhere, and it is a constant effort to either kill them or prevent their spread.

We will have our annual luncheon in October where we will vote on our budget for next year and install officers for 2026. We will not meet again until February of 2026.



Fremont Garden Club

Leslie Milde



During these very challenging summer months, Fremont Garden Club members have been faithfully weeding and watering town gardens. Our most senior members, Pat Richardson and Cecile Baranowski, have been caring for the town meetinghouse and cemetery gardens diligently.



Pat Richardson and Cecile Baranowski caring for the town meetinghouse and cemetery gardens

At the annual meeting of the New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs in Keene Fremont's Mary Kaltenbach was honored with a lifetime membership in NHFGC.



Mary Kaltenbach receiving a lifetime NHFGC membership



Goffstown Garden Club

Rosalind Spiler



We had a busy July meeting. We met our scholarship recipient, Emmy Melina, and listened to her plans for study at UNH. She received a \$1,000 scholarship. We then welcomed two new members. We are excited that our membership is growing. We spent some time discussing and planning our floral display at the Hillsborough County Fair in September. The remainder of the meeting was member-led by our own Jean Walker. We each made a small teacup arrangement to take home and enjoy or give away.



Our August meeting was held at member, Lori Wiley's, home and gardens. The weather was perfect. Lori gave us a very personal guided tour of her gardens mixed with her views on health and what gardens can do spiritually. It was a lovely meeting followed by some fellowship and more planning for the Fair.



Again, in September, we will display at the Hillsborough Fairgrounds. Our theme this year is "Enjoy our Autumn Backyard." We are looking forward to putting it together on September 4. The Fair runs September 5, 6, 7.



Teacup arrangements members made at the July meeting that they were able to take home with them



Hooksett Garden Club

Carolyn Taylor



The Hooksett Garden Club Plant Sale on June 7th was a great success. The Hooksett Public Library is such a great venue for the sale, as we not only get people going to a plant sale but those who are heading to the library and happen upon a plant sale. We have plenty of space to separate into different areas – perennials, Ask a Master Gardener, vegetables and herbs, houseplants, yard sale and raffle items. And the weather was perfect. We also can owe our success to the people in the community who support us every year.

In the summer the club has gone to doing field trips instead of indoor meetings. Due to excessively hot weather for several days in a row, we had to forego our June field trip to Blue Violet Botanicals in Manchester. We did however have our July 23 field trip to the Big Little Garden in Nashua. Owner Barb Young, who is a professional in landscape design took us on a tour of her outdoor oasis that is a deliberately designed and nurtured refuge full of indigenous plantings. She selects plants that have symbiotic relationships with insects, providing them with a native food source. She is all about restoring the natural balance.

We will finish up our field trips in August with a visit to Bagley Pond Perennials in Warner, NH. and one to Proven Winners in Loudon, NH. In September we go back to regular meetings inside at the Hooksett Congregational Church, usually with a speaker.

Members are caring for our many community beautification projects throughout the summer and our Memorial Bridge flowers look wonderful despite the heat.



Lots of activity at the Hooksett Garden Club Plant sale in June



One of our community beautification projects, Exit 9 is one of two Welcome to Hooksett centers. It is taken care of by Rachel Sweeney, Diana Proulx and Christine Estes



Big Little Garden owner Barb Young discussing some of her plants with HGC member Donna McDowell



Littleton Garden Club Mary Bingman and Terri Perrotta



Our members interacted with dowsing rods during an informative talk in June. Steve Herbert was the speaker. He is a dowsing expert who has worked internationally on water finding projects. He explained the mechanics of dowsing and even the ethical code that is followed.



Surprising dowsing practice!



Cady Falls Botanical Garden

Cady Falls Botanical gardens in Morrisville VT was enjoyed by many members touring there in June. The group appreciated the unusual trees and perennials at this soon to close location.

Our community gardens are dutifully tended by a rotation of volunteers. Espoma organic soil and compost (from the Espoma grant) was used in the Community Center gardens to improve soil quality. Bee balm groupings were added to our triangle gardens off West Main Street. Auto traffic is heavy near those beds; pollinator plants including milkweed have flourished there.

In July we had a fun session on greeting card making by one of our members. The clever design included seed packets. Many cards were donated to be sold at our September fundraiser.



July seed card making



Littleton Garden Club Continued



July's tours included a visit to a convent where volunteers raise vegetables. Their produce is donated to local food pantries. We thoroughly enjoyed member garden tours at four locations including gardens tended by the Twin Mountain Garden Club.

August is our herbal program month. Gracie Phillips of Heartsong Farm in Northumberland, NH will instruct us on herbal tea blends and prepare brews for us. She'll discuss growing and harvesting techniques using common herbs.

Our club is busy preparing for multiple fundraising activities at the popular annual Pie Fest held at the Littleton Community Center.



Littleton Community Center Gardens



Manchester Garden Club

Stephanie Berlo



The Manchester Garden Club does not meet during the months of July and August. However, prior to taking these months off, the club presented to Noah Turner, a Manchester High School Central student, the \$2,000 Claire Stone Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship was presented to Noah by club members Stephanie Berlo and Julie Ramsey.



Noah Turner at the award ceremony



Noah Turner reciving his scholarship award

The club's 2025 season concluded with a delectable lunch in June. The presentation and decorations were done by club members Sherry Richardson and Cindy Walsh. The executive committee contributed the food.



Our June luncheon had a rose garden theme, with games of butterfly bingo, along with great food and desserts.



Manchester Garden Club Continued



In July, the 6th Annual Palace Theater Garden Tour was again a huge success. It is estimated that over 200 tickets were sold. There were seven residential gardens on the tour in addition to the Massabesic Audubon Center. The Garden Tour Committee for the Palace Theater are our members: Elinor Terrell, Fiona McKenna, Pauline Bogaert and Winnie Schmidt. Manchester Garden Club member, Fiona McKenna, was also selected to showcase her beautiful garden. A job well done and congratulations to all.



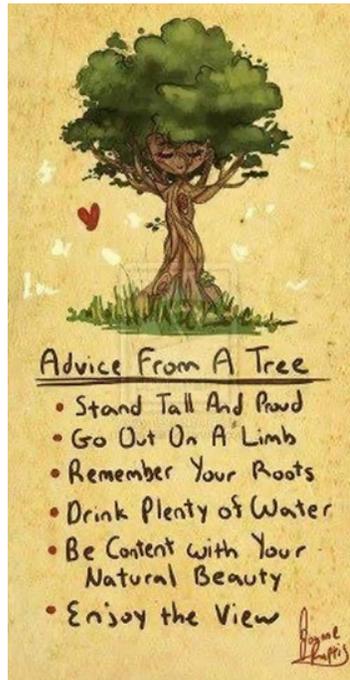
Fiona McKenna showcasing her home during the Palace Theatre Garden Tour



Pictures from the Palace Theatre Garden Tour



Windsor and Luna, the dog, sharing a special moment.



We hope that everyone is having a wonderful summer and looking forward to seeing you at the New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs 3rd Annual Fall Gathering in September.



Mountain Garden Club

Sue Clark



June in the mountains....pure JOY! The birds are back, gardens are growing and the Mountain Garden Club dives into June with garden gloves on and volunteers ready for some special events.

The first week of June found us at our annual planting of all the flowers at Storyland. It is a herculean effort over two days planting 4,900 annuals with over 30 volunteers. Storyland provides all of the plants and we dig! It is one of our major fundraisers receiving \$2,500.00 for our efforts. We do it all over again in the fall and plant mums. The flowers make Storyland beautiful and isn't that what we do as gardeners!



Storyland planting



Storyland planting team

This year we were chosen as a recipient of Cones for a Cause. Trails End ice cream, across from the Intervale overlook donates a percentage of their profits every Wednesday in the summer to a non-profit. We set up shop with our banner and a table of our information. This was a great way to spread the word of our projects in the Mt Washington Valley. We even acquired a few new members! It was a hot day so ice cream sales were brisk!



Cones for a Cause



Mountain Garden Club Continued



Next came our annual plant sale. Every year the first weekend in June is circled on calendars all over the Mt. Washington Valley and beyond. Our reputation year after year is one of beautiful plants, a vast variety, expert knowledge at our Master Gardeners table and helpful volunteers that has people lined up at the door before opening. This year we were sold out in two hours! All plants are organized by shade and sun plus labeled with names and requirements. We thank the folks at the North Conway Community Center for allowing us to have access Friday for set up and Saturday for the sale, free of charge.

What a grand event we had at the end of June held at the White Mountain Hotel which overlooks the mountains in North Conway. We were thrilled and honored to host Winnie Schmidt, NHFGC President, Sue Miner, Third Vice President of the NEGC, Treasurer Sylvia Robert's NHFGC, and Sherry Norman, District One Assistant Director along with Fern Doucette. The occasion was the installation of new officers!! The well-attended day was spectacular with a delicious luncheon served. Our new President is Joan Van Landingham and our Vice President is Wendy Ann Smith. Sue Miner presided over the lovely installation ceremony. She also presented Kathy Legere, our tireless Ways and Means Chair and raffle organizer, with the Silver Seal award. Our Wendy McVey was presented with the Honorary Member award. Wendy has been a member since 2005 and has held every position there is in the Club. She is now the head of our Valley Beautification. A spectacular day was had by all!!



Esteemed guests at our June luncheon



New London Garden Club - Co-Presidents, Suzanne Hammond and Interim Co-President, Terri Steingrebe.

Here's what we've been doing in May, June and July.

MAY

May 13 - "Filler, Spiller, Thriller" - Container Gardening, Isabel Burley is the Greenhouse Manager at the Black Forest Nursery in Boscawen, NH. She gave a lively talk about creative approaches to container gardening.

May 20 - Civic Beauty "Digger Day" - On this day members bring tools and meet at their designated pocket gardens for Spring cleanup.

May 28 - NHFGC District III Annual Meeting, Keene CC

JUNE

June 10 - "Herbs, Herbals, and Herbalists" - Professor Judith Sumner offered an engaging slide-illustrated talk on early herbals and the botanists who wrote them. (*sic*)

JULY

July 8 - "Timesaving, Mighty-Mite Shrubs that Outshine Perennials" - Kerry Ann Mendez is the author of four gardening books, and has given over 400 lectures since 2015. Her business, Perennially Yours, is in Kennebunk, ME. She maintains shrubs that offer months of color and less maintenance!

July 22 - We held our annual Summer Party.

AUGUST

August 14 - 16 - We host our Standard Flower Show, "Weather or Not".

SEPTEMBER

September 9 - "Interesting Personalities in Horticulture," Kevin Bragg, Canterbury Plantation's (as he describes himself) "Proprietor and head H2O applicator." They offer fine gardening services from consultation and design to installation and maintenance, located in Canterbury, NH.

OCTOBER

October 14 - "Mastering the Art of Flower Gardening and My New Favorites" - Matt Mattus is the author of two "how to" books about vegetable and flower gardening. His third generation family property in MA was featured in *Martha Stewart Living*, *Better Homes and Gardens* and was open for The Garden Conservancy's tour for the first time in 2024.



Old Homestead Garden Club

Christina Apjar



As autumn arrives, bringing its characteristic winds of change, our club also finds itself in transition. Several long-time members have recently become inactive due to personal circumstances. At the same time, we are fortunate to welcome new, enthusiastic individuals into our community. We remain deeply proud of our legacy—among us are members who have been active since the early 1980s.

I am continually inspired by the dedication of our members, all of whom embrace and uphold our club's mission and values. With growing attention on climate and the environment, our commitment to these ideals is more relevant than ever. The question of relevance often arises—if the garden club is not relevant, then what is?

To carry our mission forward, we are focusing on deeper connections within the local community, sharing our knowledge and engaging with other groups and individuals. All of this year's programs will feature local presenters, reinforcing our commitment to community engagement. We eagerly anticipate seeing how our new members will help achieve our mission, contribute to community projects, and learn from the wisdom of seasoned members, ensuring the club's bright future.



Old Homestead Garden Club members attending the NHFGC Annual Meeting in Keene, NH. Members new and old share time together, right to left, Nina Phillips, member since 2024, Theresa Murdough, member since 1983, Christina Apgar, member since 2018



Salem Garden Club

Carol Demers



Although the Salem Friendship and Garden Club (SFGC) did not hold monthly member meetings during the summer months, allowing members to focus on their home gardens, members were active and participated in various SFGC activities.

Instead of our monthly Cocktails and Conversation gatherings at local restaurants, SFGC members met bi-weekly for Laughter and Libations at different members' homes during the summer. In addition to exploring our hosts' home gardens, members were encouraged to bring their significant others. These gatherings have been a fantastic opportunity to deepen our friendships and broaden our reach as a friendship club.

Additionally, SFGC members continued to meet each Tuesday morning for walks at the beautiful Mall at Rockingham Park, followed by monthly Coffee and Conversation sessions for non-walkers.

Our Board of Directors has also been busy meeting monthly to finalize budget details, create our annual vision board, and prepare our member directory. SFGC is thrilled to have acquired our gaming license as a non-profit organization. Access to additional funds is a game-changer for our club, allowing us to participate in larger landscaping projects and beautify Salem further. We are also collaborating with the Friends of Salem Recreation to co-host a large-scale Fall Festival.

In September, we will hold our welcome back luncheon. In November, we will host our annual Friendsgiving, and in December, we will have our annual Christmas Luncheon at a local restaurant. Guests are always warmly welcomed at our events and activities, and we look forward to meeting other garden club members at upcoming state events.



Sandown Garden club

Alison Hartung



The Sandown Garden Club has been focusing on updating and mapping our award winning monarch garden. We will be working on identifying the last few plants and establishing a map and photo booklet for members when they are working at the garden. Our map is woefully outdated, the garden is very overgrown, some paths through the garden are almost nonexistent and we will continue to thin/move plants for the next couple of seasons. Of course too many plants are never a bad thing!



Sandown Garden Club Continued



Since we will skip the plant sale next year, we will be offering these excess plants for sale to our members and possibly open the sale to other garden club members. We'll keep you posted!

The Club also hosted a public program at The Laurels Farm in Sandown. The topic was growing plants for tea and was very well attended. Owners Danika and L Villalva presented a good program along with mint and lavender tea, printed recipe handouts and a tour of their farm. The Club looks forward to future collaborations with this certified organic farm.

We are also busy little bees planning next year's programs because here in Sandown, we do more than just get dirty.



Windham Garden Club

Deb Drake



On June 20th the Windham Garden Club (WGC) held its annual end of year Summer Solstice gathering at Searles School and Chapel. This event, attended by members and guests, is a celebration of all that the club has accomplished over the past year. Besides socializing and enjoying wonderful food, the evening's program included recognizing the contributions of club members during the past membership year and installation of the 2025-2027 officers.



Pictured Left to Right 2025 – 27 WGC Officers: Gail Logan – 2nd Vice President, Cassandra Maki – Secretary, Julia Salafia – Treasurer, Joanne Dickie – First Vice President, Deb Drake - President



Deb Drake, WGC President, presenting Golden Trowel Award to Elizabeth Burns

We kicked off the summer in June with our “Coffee/Cocktails in the Garden Series” with members inviting the club to informal gatherings at their homes to enjoy each other’s company and their beautiful gardens. We have held six wonderful gatherings so far with a couple more scheduled before the end of August.



Deb Drake, WGC President, presenting special “Tomato BLVD” signs to our plant sale tomato growers: Jenn Roberts, Siri Kamien, Diane Cushion and Robert Blake.

In June the Plant Sale Committee met and decided on our bare root orders for the 2026 plant sale. Many of our gardeners are already looking and identifying which plants can be split and divided in the spring for the 2026 plant sale. Plans are underway for the start of our membership year with our first meeting on Thursday, Sept 18th, where our speaker will be Heather Peloquin from Back in Thyme Wellness and Herbs in Chester, NH. Heather will speak on how to strengthen and protect your immune system - naturally. As we approach cold and flu season, it's the perfect time to learn how to prepare our bodies with daily practices that promote resilience and vitality. Enjoy the rest of the summer!



Lilac Letter Newsletter Team Notes

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Lilac Letter. Submitted articles are subject to minor editing. The preferred formatting for your submissions is as follows:

- Font Calibri 12
- Single spaced
- Word program or .rtf (rich text format)
- Type or paste your article into your email
- Include the first and last name of the author
- Email photos. **Do not insert them in your text. Photo captions must accompany the photos**
- **Email your submissions to: LEditor@nhfgc.org.**
- Your **Club Name and Lilac Letter** need to be in the subject line of your e-mail to avoid classification as spam which is deleted without being opened.



Deadline to submit articles for the November newsletter is October 7th.



The Lilac Letter is the official publication of the New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

website: (<http://www.nhfgc.org>)

and a member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Winnie Schmidt, President

Donna Donnelly, President, National Garden Clubs, Inc.,

Susan Miner Director, New England Garden Clubs, Inc. and NGC 3rd Vice President

Publication dates

April, July, September, and November.

Deadlines for submission of articles for publication are the 7th of March, June, August, and October.

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Sponsorship

One Issue - Full page \$100, half page \$60, quarter page \$40

Four issues - Full page \$300, half page \$200, Quarter page \$140

Sponsorship materials should be submitted in .jpg format.

