

# Northern Exposure



## Newsletter of the New England Garden Clubs, Inc.



**Connecticut – Maine – Massachusetts  
New Hampshire – Rhode Island - Vermont**

**November 2023**

### **DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**



**National Garden Club President Brenda Moore, from West Virginia, and NEGC Director Sue Miner at the October regional annual meeting in Plymouth.**

Thank you to all members who attended the NEGC Annual Meeting hosted by the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts on October 10 and 11 at the 1620 Hotel in Plymouth, MA. We welcomed NGC President Brenda Moore from West Virginia. It was a wonderful two-day event with several speakers, a short business meeting, and plenty of time for networking, socializing and shopping. Thank you to Carol Harnett, meeting chair; Marjorie Dienhart, GCFM President; and the Massachusetts team for their great planning, smooth implementation, and gracious hospitality.

For those who were unable to attend, below is the director's message I delivered at the meeting:

*It is an honor for me to serve as your Director of New England Garden Clubs. As your director, I represent the 6 New England States on both the NGC Executive Committee and the NGC Scholarship Committee. I also serve on the National Membership Committee. These committees have given me a greater appreciation of the work being done by National to enhance our garden club experiences.*

*My theme for the next two years is GROW GREEN...PLANT AMERICA. This ties into NGC President Brenda Moore's theme of GO GREEN...PLANT AMERICA. I chose this theme to encourage our clubs and members to take on specific horticulture activities that will help support the environment such as planting trees, making pollinator corridors and encouraging home-grown national parks. In support of that, my Director's project is to increase donations to Penny Pines from the clubs and states within the New England Region. With the help of the NGC Penny Pines Chair, we are tracking monthly donations to Penny Pines by state. Hopefully we can increase our participation in this important NGC program over the next 2 years. I would certainly appreciate your support in this endeavor.*

*I have been privileged to visit state meetings in MA, NH and VT and look forward to visiting the rest of our New England state garden club federations to observe and learn more about the wonderful work you all do within your communities and in your schools. I come away from these meetings with so many great ideas to share with others to strengthen our organization. One example is from the Vermont Federation Meeting last week where one club participated in the Hannaford Supermarket's "Bloomin' 4 Good Program" to raise funds. Each month the store leadership selects a different local nonprofit organization to receive a \$1 donation from the purchase of every Bloomin' 4 Good bouquet. This grocery chain is in four of our six states so those local clubs can take advantage of this fundraiser.*

*One area in which I have seen challenges at the club and state level is in finding candidates for the college scholarships that we award. I recently heard of one club that has piloted a program to award a four-year scholarship to encourage more applicants. Others have started to look at community colleges that offer courses in line with our focus of horticulture, conservation and environmental issues. The support of these future leaders and potential garden club members is important to the vitality of our organization.*

*Special thanks to Nancy Atwell from the Garden Club Federation of Maine for resurrecting our newsletter, The Northern Exposure. After a two-year hiatus, our first issue was distributed in August. We are now back on track for four issues a year. In the November issue, you will see the full I submitted to The National Gardener about fall and the holidays in New England. Unfortunately, the article was edited before printing and did not include my information about Maine. I apologize for that omission.*



*In conclusion, thank you for all you do for your state and for your Region. Working together I know we will continue to accomplish great things! Please reach out to me if I can help in any way.*

**Susan Miner**  
**NEGC Director 2023-2025**

## **The Splendor of Fall in New England**

Here is the full article I submitted to *The National Gardener* about fall and the holidays in our New England states with input from the six state presidents. Unfortunately, the article was edited before going to print leaving out several details and it unintentionally deleted the information about Maine. I apologize for that omission and when brought to the editor's attention, she was very apologetic. I hope you enjoy this walk-through New England's unique Fall sites and activities. Susan Miner, NEGC Director



*Autumn during the Monadnock Open Studio Art Tour in Western New Hampshire. Photo by Susan Miner*

Oh, the cool, refreshing weather of our New England autumn welcomes in a new season with so many opportunities to enjoy this beautiful and historic area of the country. With thousands of family farms in our region, fall brings an abundance of farmers markets, pumpkin patches, apple picking festivals, hayrides and corn mazes. This is the season of colorful mums, apple cider and those delicious, fresh cider donuts.

Connecticut celebrates Fall with many varied festivals from the Norwalk Oyster Festival to the Garlic and Harvest Festival in Bethlehem. The list of festivals has something for everyone's interest whether it be food, arts, maritime heritage, music or county fairs.

New England is famous for its Fall Foliage and tourists flock to the region in early October to see nature's splendor. The leaves begin changing in the northern areas of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, slowly working south to Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. With our states so close together and easily traversed, residents can enjoy this display from mid-September until the end of October. The back roads along babbling brooks, through covered bridges and into the mountains make for a relaxing trip.

Five of the six New England States have coastline on the Atlantic Ocean. Rhode Island ranks second in the US by the ratio of length of coastline to acre of land area which makes the fishing and seafood industry important in this smallest of states. Fall is the typical time to enjoy the fruits of the harvest from the sea; hence the many seafood festivals such as the Calamari Festival in Narragansett and the Seafood Festival in Providence.

Did you know cranberries are native to New England? Without New England the world would not know the tart-sweetness of this red fruit. The Pilgrims were introduced to native red berries called Sasumaneash or "sour berries" by the Wampanoag Nation when they arrived in Plymouth which is known as "America's Hometown." Many cranberry farms can be found in the Cape Cod area of Massachusetts where cultivation of this versatile fruit began in the early 1800s. Here you can tour the bogs and participate in a harvest. Each New England state has some wild cranberry bog areas and at least one cranberry farm.

National Vermont Day is celebrated on October 12 every year. Vermonters and garden club members celebrate the memorable day honoring the state's rich culture through fun and educational activities. Vermont was one of the first states to legally abolish the practice of slavery and gain independence from European settlement. And



*Two historically inspired scarecrows welcoming visitors to Chester, New Hampshire. Photo by Susan Miner*

passing down the historical value of independence to the younger generation is immeasurable.

After enjoying scarecrow displays like the one in Chester, New Hampshire, where the town population increases by 10% if you count the scarecrows and the Halloween displays everywhere in October, our focus turns to Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is a favorite holiday that focuses on the triad of Family, Food and Football. We give thanks for all three of these and much more. Visitors can enjoy a classic Thanksgiving dinner at the Plimoth Patuxet Museums in Plymouth, Massachusetts, which

is the heart of this national celebration. The event is based on the menu that was served at the Harvard Club after President Lincoln declared Thanksgiving a National Holiday featuring classic roast turkey and all the traditional New England trimmings.

December is a time to celebrate lights as we approach the shortest day of the year. It seems especially dark here at night with little snow not yet brightening the landscape. So, we provide our own light with festivals and tours. Several botanical gardens explode with light displays such as "Gardens Aglow" now in its ninth season at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay, Maine, and "Night Lights" at the New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill in Boylston, Massachusetts. Historic sites also light up like Connecticut's "Lantern Lights Tours" at Mystic Seaport and the "Candlelight Stroll" at Strawberry Banke Museum in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Historic buildings don their holiday finest. The opulence of Newport Rhode Island's Gilded Age meets the sparkle and magic of Christmas during the "Holidays at the Newport Mansions." Christmas at Hildene, the Lincoln Family Home in Manchester, Vermont, is decorated to evoke Christmas Eve 1912—one of a handful of years that the Lincoln Family spent in residence at their Vermont home. The Garden Club Federation of Maine's Kennebec District is charged with doing decorations for the Blaine House, the Governor's Mansion, which is open to the public for a series of "Christmas teas."

As New Englanders we are blessed with a myriad of activities and celebrations to welcome the bountiful fall harvests, the changing colors of nature and the historical and religious holiday traditions that bring each year to a close. And the distinct seasons that we enjoy welcoming into their own each and every year definitely refresh and renew our hearty New England spirits.

**Susan Miner**  
**NEGC Director 2023-2025**

## **The Blue Garden**

Storer Park, 32 Washington Street  
Newport, Rhode Island 02840  
Email for information or questions  
[svance@thebluegarden.org](mailto:svance@thebluegarden.org)  
[www.thebluegarden.org](http://www.thebluegarden.org)

**The Blue Garden welcomes visitors on Thursdays from June 15 through October 12, 2023. The tours are at 11:00 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. An advance reservation and \$20 ticket purchase for each guest, made online, are required. Groups are limited to 24 visitors.**



*Many Hydrangea varieties are in bloom throughout the Garden. Photo by Sandi Tinyk*

Those familiar with the Gilded Age, particularly as it pertains to Newport's mansions and gardens, will enjoy the many stories and history shared by the staff of this exquisite property. Originally designed, along with countless horticultural treasures by Frederick Law Olmsted, the Blue Garden was unveiled to the public in 1913, when Newport, RI, gained prominence as leaders of industry and finance from New York and elsewhere chose this location to build magnificent summer mansions, what they chose to refer to as "cottages." This summer playground provided the backdrop for the American upper class, all trying to out-do the others, from Vanderbilts and Astors to DuPonts, Rockefellers, Dukes and more. Marble House, the Breakers, Rosecliff and many more took their inspiration from European palaces. With the introduction of federal income tax and World War I, the decline of great fortunes resulted in these architectural treasures' neglect, and in many cases, demolition.



**Blue asters. Sandi Tinyk photo**

The Blue Garden was designed for Arthur Curtiss and Harriet Parsons James, with deep pockets from the mining and railroad industries. They did indeed build a mansion with tennis courts, swimming pools, stables, a carriage house and more, but they made their real place in history with the creation of one of the great private residential landscapes: the Blue Garden, now the largest Gilded Age Garden in Newport. Its primary feature is its monochromatic palette, with flowering plants in all shades of blue and lavender, specified by Harriet James. The many species that she and Olmsted selected included larkspur, cornflowers, hydrangea, lavender, asters, and a very tall variety of ageratum. Many of them appear in the garden today.



**Ageratum. Sandi Tinyk photo**

One is greeted by two large urns containing spectacular plumbago plants. It is also an accredited arboretum which was unveiled to the public in 1913.

The Jameses died within three weeks of each other in 1941 and this high-maintenance property fell into disrepair. They left most of their fortune to hospitals,

universities and non-profits and the Diocese of Providence received the property as a gift in 1951. A 1967 fire destroyed much of the mansion, and weeds overran the place.

It wasn't until 2012 that Dorrance Hamilton, an heiress of the Campbell Soup fortune, built herself a house on acreage adjoining the property. Aware of the garden's history, she is said to have declared "Let's buy it and bring it back to its original glory." Working from its original plans the Blue Garden was restored but using lower maintenance modern plantings. Echoing Mrs. Hamilton, we have all thought about making sure that the beauty and artistry of gardens are sustainable. None of us has an army of gardeners.

**Sandi Tinyk**  
**NEGC Historic & Public Gardens Chairman**



As President and on behalf of the members of Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, I am honored to announce the 2024 NEGC Annual Meeting will be held at the Crowne Plaza in Warwick, RI. Centrally located right off the Rt 95 corridor and a short drive south of Providence, we are only minutes away from TF Greene International Airport and Amtrak Train Stations.

I am originally from NH and no meteorologist, but the weather here is usually warm with a cool breeze off the ocean and the colors of fall still gracing us. Though we are the smallest state we offer a staggering 400 miles of shoreline with spectacular views, walking trails, Newport Mansions, museums, the famous Federal Hill in Providence and a mecca of incredible dining options - truly something for everyone.

Whether you are here only for the meeting or can stay a bit longer, we hope you enjoy everything Little Rhody has to offer. We look forward to seeing you next year.

Judy Gray  
RIFGC President 2023-25

## FUNdamentals of Floral Design

True or false? Every time I attend a demonstration or watch another floral designer at work, I learn something new.

The Pandemic brought most in-person demonstrations and workshops to a halt. Looking forward, Nancy Costa and Judy Morgan, NGC Flower Show Judges and friends from Flower Show School strategized to revive 'Back to Basics' with a new name and new location. The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts supported the launch of 'FUNdamentals of Floral Design' wholeheartedly at the Plymouth Library.

'FUNdamentals' demonstrations are proving to be the cure for a lull in participation.

'Fundamentals of Floral Design' has gathered 79 participants in 2 years' time. We encourage everyone to have FUN while learning the basics of floral design. Demonstrations located at the Plymouth Library, in Plymouth, MA are led by volunteer, experienced floral designers, who are National Garden Club (NGC) Flower Show Judges. 'FUNdamentals' is a series of 3 demonstrations for novices, anyone who wants to recharge skills or pick up tips. The content and presenters are different every session, every year making 'FUNdamentals' a continuous program.

### FUNdamentals of Floral Design:

Instructors teach mechanics of creating a design in an appropriate container. Emphasis on the Principles and Elements of Design. Learn about traditional and creative designs. Understand what Judges look for in a design and how they award ribbons. Gain confidence and insight on how to enter a Flower Show.



Two-hour sessions including time for questions. Cost - \$60 for a series of 3 demonstrations or \$25 per single class. Door prizes - designs created by the instructor. Two-hour sessions including time for questions.

If you are interested in replicating the demonstrations, or want to attend sessions in your

District, ask your Club President or District Director to assist in getting funding and demonstrations started.

Questions? Contact Massachusetts "FUNdamentals of Floral Design" Co-Chairpersons: Nancy Costa, Garden Club of Hyannis, Norwood Evening GC [Nancycosta71@gmail.com](mailto:Nancycosta71@gmail.com) or Judy Morgan, Wareham GC [judjon121@comcast.net](mailto:judjon121@comcast.net)



Ginger King, instructor Spring 2023

True or false? Flower Shows and interest in creating designs for shows is dying out. You be the judge. Yet, we are witnessing a resurgence in people looking for demonstrations, floral design instruction and workshops!

**Editor's Note:** at the NEGC Annual Meeting in Plymouth, I asked Nancy Costa to write about holding the floral design workshops thinking that other garden clubs might want to organize similar workshops. If you have questions about the workshops, budget, how to find a location, etc. please contact Nancy or Judy.

## Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont

From the Green Mountain State -also known as the "tiny little state" - I bring greetings. If you have traveled to Vermont I think you would agree, Vermont's forested natural beauty, majestic green mountains, scenic hiking trails, picturesque wooden covered bridges all set the scene for the garden clubs in Vermont to work, promote, aid in the protection and conservation of our natural resources, encourage civic planting and community beautification.

Lady Bird Johnson said "The environment, after all, is where we all meet, where we all have a mutual interest. It is one thing that all of us share." The theme of the Vermont gardeners is to "Cultivate and Nourish nature...Play Outside."

The Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont held its Annual Meeting in June with a record number of garden club participants attending the installations of new officers. We welcomed a new FGCV club, The Weathersfield Garden Club was greeted into the Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont on June 20, 2023. I had the honor of welcoming 22 of its new members and presented Amy Beth Main, the new president with a FGCV map of clubs and a federation certificate. A press release was written and published in their local paper. The interesting aspect of this club is that over 90% of club members are 50 or younger.

Middlebury Garden Club, one of the oldest clubs in the FGCV, celebrated its end of year Annual banquet in June and honored two lifetime members. One of the members was instrumental in creating their club's logo and their newsletter publication "Garden Thymes." Last week the same club celebrated their 90<sup>th</sup> year of club membership.

**Penny Pines** – A survey was sent to club presidents to determine how many FGCV clubs participate in the National Garden Club program Penny Pines – the partnership with the US Forest Service dedicated to sustaining national and urban forests. We found very few clubs participate. A press release was completed honoring The FGCV and the clubs participating, as well as encouraging other clubs to join in this worthy cause.

**Speakers Bureau Speaker and Topic Listing** – Clubs asked for assistance in finding speakers and topics for monthly meetings. The listing was created and shared which has over 35 speakers and topics.

The FGCV generated a tutorial for helping clubs file for or maintain their 501©3 status and Vermont Secretary of State registration. Included in the document were the three (3) important parts of having a 501(c) (3) status in Vermont.

1. Applying and securing a federal tax identification number.
2. Applying for and receiving tax exempt status with the IRS, keeping your status active and filing a 990N postcard annually.
3. Registering your club with the Vermont Secretary of State as a nonprofit organization. It will be an addendum to our Policy and Procedure manual.

Club Members joined a zoom link with Vera Bowen NGC Awards Committee member to learn more about the award application process.

Our club's Bylaws are in the process of revision.

Club member presidents joined our website designer chat on starting and maintaining their club's website.

The FGCV has completed a history collection of the Blue Star Memorial Markers in Vermont, in addition to raising funds for a new marker in the northwest region of the state.

Communication ties with club presidents is a "Keeping in Touch" brief every other month as well as the state's newsletter *The Leaf* twice a year. A fundraising trip for 2024 is a tour to the Coastal Maine Botanical Garden scheduled for June 2024.

The club's Finance Audit will be completed in November 2023.

**The 2023 FGCV Fall Meeting** was held at Rutland County Club last week with the most members present for several years. The college scholarship of \$1000 was presented to a UVM student. The student joined us at our annual meeting. Publicity with a press release was completed.

**A FGCV Flood Recovery Project with the Barre - Granite Center Garden Club** was held. The club and the north district of the FGCV distributed over 40 potted plants to Main Street businesses whose flowerpots had washed away in the flood as well as over 30 flats of flowers to restore their gardens washed away. A truly humbling and appreciated event.

**Photography Series** – the first state contest for "Fall In its Glory" with orange and yellow photos going on this month.

In closing, Vermonters have been crowned as the fifth happiest residents in the country and the state's Vermont Day is celebrated on October 12 every year and the day honors the state's rich culture through fun and educational activities. Vermont was one of the first states to legally abolish the practice of slavery and gain independence from European settlement. The state's historical value is immeasurable and should be brought to the forefront. The day encourages us to learn some of the locals' traditions in celebrating this day, from museum tours and nature exploration to cooking delicious desserts with Vermont's maple syrup. Fun and learning go hand in hand in celebrating this special holiday as well as the garden club's events of closing flower beds, making holiday wreaths and decorating Christmas trees for town's libraries and municipals offices. We stand proud to be vibrant garden clubs.

**Doris Van Mullen**  
**FGCV President 2023-2025**

## Penny Pines – NGC Program



What began in California in 1941 as a statewide conservation program, Penny Pines has expanded to all 50 U.S. states. It is a partnership with the National Garden Club and the United States Department of Agriculture.

NGC Clubs raise funds for Penny Pines, a program dedicated to sustaining national and urban forests. The conservation effort entails the planting of replacement seedlings that are indigenous (not only pine trees), to forested areas damaged by insects, fires or natural disasters. The resulting tree plantations provide soil and watershed protection, soil stabilization, as well as beauty and shade for recreation.

Garden clubs dig in - to replant disaster-struck forests. Many garden clubs as well as state Federated Garden Clubs participate in the Penny Pines. Each \$68 donation collected will result in the planting of one plantation of replacement seedlings.

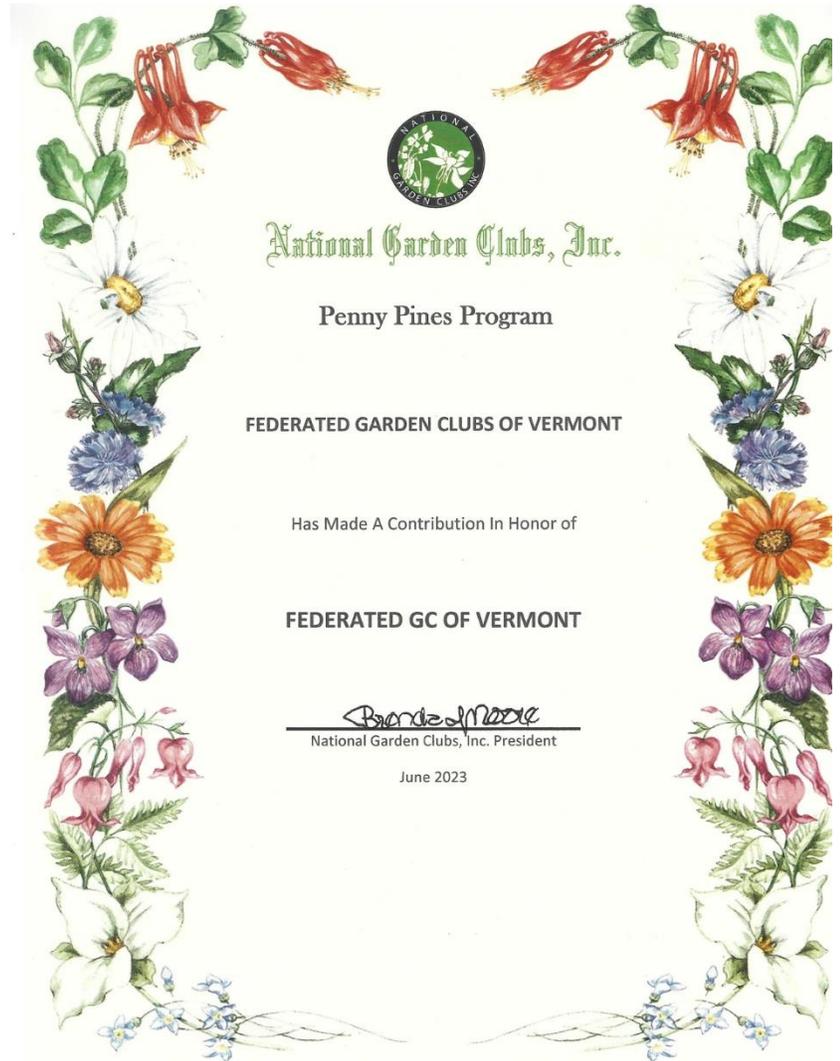
For example, in Vermont, the FGCV completed a survey to find out how many clubs participate in the program. The result allowed for congratulatory notes and a press release to be sent for those participating. In order to let others in the community know of this valuable project.

Just as the Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont made four donations with dedications, you or your club can do that as well.

Garden club members throughout Vermont recognized with gratitude Mable Mayforth, past president of the FGCV (1970's), the founder of the first FGCV scholarship and who influenced our FGCV history. Following this article is a reproduction of the Penny Pines Program certificate.

To learn more about starting this project with your garden club - <https://gardenclub.org/penny-pines>

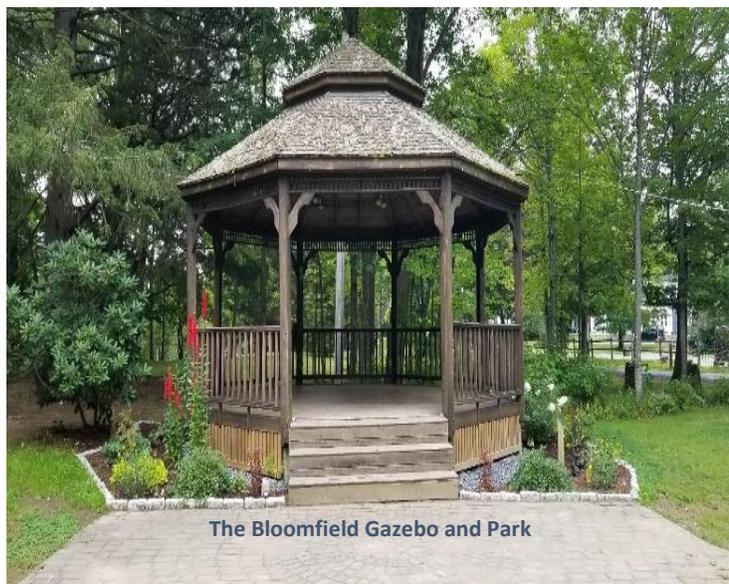
**Doris Van Millen**  
**NEGC Penny Pines Chairperson**



## Garden Club Federation of Maine

It's been a busy, few months here in Maine since our Annual Convention in June. Our clubs are just starting up their new meeting years, but many spent the summer tending their gardens, doing community projects, taking field trips and touring member gardens. We finished Past President Harriet Robinson's Open Gardens project with a visit to her garden, plus that of Former GCFM President Becky Linney. These were very popular and will be continued in the future.

Two clubs received Plant America Grants – Bloomfield Garden Club to create a garden and hardscaping around a community gazebo, and Camden Garden Club to create a native plant



The Bloomfield Gazebo and Park

pollinator friendly plantings. This is NOT about getting rid of the lawn entirely, but about using yard spaces in an environmentally friendly way. We are facing an environmental apocalypse and need to do our part to support the environment, insects and wildlife. This is a very relevant topic and very much in the news today. For an interesting article that talks about what Cornell Botanic Gardens is doing in this area, read the September 24<sup>th</sup> New York Times article found at



Harriet's Garden

pollinator demonstration garden in front of the Camden Post Office.

The Camden, Bar Harbor and Boothbay Region Clubs all conducted very successful public garden tours, despite the rainy weather! My project is *Rethinking the Lawn*, focusing on education about how we can decrease our lawn areas and repurpose with



A great example of no lawn!  
The Camden Garden Tour

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/realestate/native-grass-lawn.html?searchResultPosition=1>.

In the new year we will have two Zoom lectures – 1 on January 24th by Doug Tallamy on *Homegrown National Park*, co-sponsored with Maine Audubon, and one on March 14 by Owen Wormser on *Creating a Meadow*. These will set the tone for my project and provide information on one tool to repurpose the lawn. Other programs will be coming, making use of Zoom as a wonderful educational tool.

Part of increasing GCFM's value to the clubs is increasing the percentage of members who receive our two newsletters, *Thyme to Garden*, and *Maine Grows*. Previously, they were by specific subscription only and only a small portion of our members subscribed (though the newsletters are free to members). Both are now an automatic benefit of membership and sent to all members that we have email addresses for. *Thyme to Garden* focuses on GCFM and club activities, with some horticultural articles as well. *Maine Grows* is now an online flip-book magazine containing articles written by GCFM members on a wide variety of horticultural issues.

Another initiative is reformulation of the Garden Therapy program, now called Therapeutic Gardening, reflecting the national changes in professional certification required for Garden Therapy.

We have had a small increase in membership, and almost weekly receive inquiries about finding a club. A new club has formed, the first in many years! And another club in the wings, waiting to get themselves a bit more organized before joining us. This is exciting news for us and has helped us to continue to grow our membership even as some clubs have lost members.

Moving forward, as I suspect with other state garden clubs in New England, we face the challenges of an aging membership as well as perceived relevancy in today's increasingly digital world. GCFMaine is embracing new technologies, new educational strategies, and new ways to connect to our members. We look forward to what the future will bring!

**Karen Rea**  
**GCFMe President 2023-2025**

## **Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts**

The Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts is a strong supporter of the Penny Pines program and this year our Chairperson, who has a personal passion for this program, decided to run a contest across the state among the clubs. She proposed an award system based on the size of the club to see who would win in each of three categories: small, medium and large size clubs. It was very successful, and it caught on. We netted \$10,948 which earned us second place in highest donations in the country. That's a LOT of pennies! Her goal is to exceed that this year, but she is not running a contest.

We gained another two garden clubs this year with 2-3 more pending, bringing our total count to 172 clubs. Our state membership hovers around 10,550 members and if we gain the additional 3 clubs, we will exceed 11,000 in membership.

Native plants are catching on in our nurseries across the state and many clubs are requesting that local nurseries carry native plants and trees for purchase. We even have members working in the garden club of Home Depot advocating for a native plant section to be introduced as part of their product line. The Pollinators Pathway Program of Cape Cod continues to spread across the state of Massachusetts as other clubs have also adopted this program in various sections of the state. The awareness is happening.

We have had 32 new member inquiries since June from National.

We recharged our Junior GC Program with a new and strong Chairperson. Her focus will be offering webinars on our website to clubs that want to introduce a junior program or for those that have existing programs to expand their project base.

Blue and Gold Star Memorial Marker Program Rejuvenated with 2 new Co-Chairpersons both full of enthusiasm for the program and with ideas to help our garden clubs get started on a program within their club by using the guidelines they are building for our website or to give suggestions on how to help them maintain their memorial garden.

Our Youth Programs Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl Poster contests, the Youth Sculpture and the Poetry contests are in full swing again. For a few years, we had only participated in the poetry contest. We are making them come alive again.

We have a new Editor in Chief for our newsletter, new Communications Secretary, new Office Administrator, new Nominating Chairperson, fairly new Scholarship Chairperson, fairly new Awards Chairperson. And being an installation year, a new Administration. Lots of changes at the helm.

My Theme is Nurture Nature. I am grateful for the GCFM Executive team I can rely on, who do their jobs so well, and who go above and beyond what I ask them to do cheerfully and thoroughly to make me proud.

Recently, we hosted the New England Region conference held in Plymouth and I want to give a huge thank you to those behind the scenes who scurried around and did a lot of prep work, showed up to help out when needed, volunteered their time at the event and made it all happen. We enjoyed Carol Alper and Gary Bowden from Cape Cod speaking about the Pollinator Pathways of Cape Cod with their slide show presentation and native plant tree of plants as well as Bob Whitney, the AIFD floral arranger who humorously kept us entertained with his stories and wit while making wonderful arrangements using natural plantings from the forest and some flowers for color. We were honored to have Brenda Moore, our National President, attend our conference and hear her speak about her own personal journey of Leadership.



**Marjorie Dienhart,  
GCFMa President 2023-2025**

**The following certificates were presented at the NEGC Annual Meeting on October 10<sup>th</sup> recognizing four individuals for their contributions to the New England Region.**

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION**

**Suzanne McCance**, this Certificate of Appreciation is presented in recognition of Suzanne’s dedicated service as Director of the New England Garden Clubs, Inc. from May 2021 to May 2023. During her tenure Suzanne was responsible for transitioning our region, the state federations and our clubs out of the pandemic shutdown mode back to fully meeting in person and pursuing our goals. In Suzanne’s honor and at her request, she was given a gift card to purchase an item to commemorate her term. With sincere gratitude, this certificate is presented to Suzanne for a job well done!



### **CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION**

**Carol Hartnett**, of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, is recognized for her outstanding work as Chairman of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the New England Garden Clubs, Inc., held October 10th and 11th, 2023 at the 1620 Hotel in Plymouth, MA. Her outstanding commitment and devotion in organizing our Region’s premiere event was on full display as she and her fellow members of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts worked together to bring our Annual Meeting to fruition. Her tremendous efforts have made it possible for all those attending from the six New England states to take home with them a renewed spirit of friendship and cooperation. You are to be saluted for your accomplishments.



## CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION

**Arabella Dane**, of the New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, is recognized for her outstanding work as Chairman of the New England Garden Clubs Photography Committee. She continues to promote the love and mastery of photography to clubs and members in the region through programs and newsletters. Her organization and implementation of the Photography Show at the 7th Annual Meeting of the New England Garden Clubs, Inc., held October 10th and 11th, 2023 at the 1620 Hotel in Plymouth, MA, produced beautiful and meaningful results. You are to be saluted for your accomplishments!



## CERTIFICATE OF COMMENDATION

**Joscelyn Variieur**, of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, is recognized for her diligent and attentive work as the Registrar for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the New England Garden Clubs, Inc., held October 10th and 11th, 2023 at the 1620 Hotel in Plymouth, MA. Her attention to detail, as she worked with NEGC Treasurer Judith Tarbox to keep accurate records of those attending from the six New England states, reflected her commitment and devotion to assuring our Region meeting would go off effortlessly. You are to be saluted for your accomplishments.



## With Thanks to Arabella Dane for Providing This Link to Annual Meeting Photos

[conta.cc](#)



You may use the link by clicking on the underlined word with your mouse while clicking your control key. Or paste this into your browser:

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Congratulations-to-all-our-amazing-photographers--Enjoy-their-work--.html?soid=1116099262909&aid=W6cyQfB8J6Q>

And this link about the New England Garden Clubs Photo Group. Click on link or paste address into your browser: <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Congratulations-to-all-our-amazing-photographers--Enjoy-their-work--.html?soid=1116099262909&aid=i6phk849skM>

[Congratulations to all our amazing photographers. Enjoy their work!!](#)

[conta.cc](#)

## New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs

When choosing my theme, I chose *PLANT SEEDS OF FRIENDSHIP* with a subtitle, "If it's not fun I do not want to do it!" Gardening is an individual experience, but when you join a garden club it also becomes a social activity. We all work to make that social experience the best it can be for our members. We place an emphasis on learning and fun.

The business part of the state gatherings has been shortened to provide more time for speakers and for networking. Our members enjoy time to talk and sharing ideas with others. Prompts or talking points are provided and members are given time for group sharing of garden club or gardening ideas. Board-sponsored bus tours are organized to beautiful gardens in our region including the Coastal Maine Botanical Garden, Tower Hill, and the Newport Garden Show. The members enjoy a wonderful day together on the bus and really enjoy the chosen destination!

We have been working to increase membership using Sue Miner's idea of recruiting non-Federated clubs to join us at our Annual Meeting and Fall Gathering. Clubs in the geographic area of the event are invited to send their president and vice president (or plus one) to the event as our guests. Other club members are also welcome to come at

their own expense. We have had as many as eight non-Federated club members attend our Annual Meeting. That group had such a good time they recently came to our Fall Event. We hope they will be joining us in the future as members.

Individual clubs in the Federation have increased membership. Many of our new members are young, active, recently retired women who now have

the time for themselves! I am quite sure many here today can relate to this as women who have joined after raising a family and working many years. To be more available to the different districts of the Federation, we are taking the Board meeting to different geographic areas of New Hampshire and inviting club members to attend the meetings.



**Fells Gathering pavilion.**

Yes, food will be served!

We have many projects in the planning process. The Fall Meeting was changed to a Fall Event this year. We invited members and guests for a field trip to The Fells, historic estate, and gardens of John Hay, that is located on beautiful Lake Sunapee. The day included docent-led tours of the historic home as well as the beautiful gardens. Box lunches were available by advance order. The committee with the help of the Board, supplied coffee, tea and water, and greeted guests with morning treats as they arrived for the day. No money was collected that day. Door prizes were provided just for fun, not to raise more money. The day also included a



**Ann Wallace, Peg Birch, Terri Robbitts, Dian Mathews, Winnie Schmidt District 3 Planning Committee for the Fall Event at The Fells.**

Remembrance Ceremony for club members who had passed on within the last year.

We have not yet met to critique the day formally, but everyone in attendance that day enjoyed the event. We will be deciding about this change soon.

Judges' Council is actively recruiting new judges by renewing their support of a Design Guild. Details of this are still in progress. Photos of the design of the month at their meetings are included in the Lilac Letter, our state newsletter. The group is trying to raise awareness of the Judges' Council.

In the last few years, we have offered group insurance to Federated clubs, as well as state required plant sale licenses and a Federation Zoom account. We continue to investigate ways to make membership even more valuable to both clubs and members. We have found these tools very popular with members and very attractive to non-Federated clubs when discussing the advantages of Federation membership. We continue to look for more ways to make membership attractive and fun.

**Winifred C. Schmidt**  
**NHFGC President 2023-2025**

## **Winner Deanna Mozzochi Creative Design Award 2023**

At the NEGC Annual Meeting Anthony Poitras of the Suburban Garden Club of Cheshire, CT won the Mozzochi Award and \$50 for his grouped mass design at the Connecticut Flower Show.



## **Rhode Island Federated Garden Clubs**

RI is the smallest state in the US, 37 miles wide and 48 miles long. We pack a big punch. We have 24 clubs with roughly 1000 members and three clubs celebrating 85 years or more.

We officially welcomed Hattie Ide Chaffee as a new club. The uniqueness this club brings to the community and federation is it has formed within a nonprofit nursing facility.

National has sent us 9 inquiries for membership, thank you. Community Outreach has been working with a group to establish a new garden club. We are Growing.

Giving back to our membership is vital. Programs consisted of Wet Your Whistle Wednesday, a monthly Zoom meeting. Topics covered included Awards, Insurance, Photography with Arabella Dane and more. Environmental/Education Day offered hands on workshops, educational displays, lectures on Green Burials, Botanical Scarf Making, Tree Conservancy and Floral Design. Design Study Group with three workshops allows designers to learn NGC Design Types and technique. Short Programs were added to our monthly business meetings.

Our annual state NGC Specialty Flower Show had an increase of 20% in ticket sales. 19 designers from RI and 24 Designers from VT, NH, ME, CT, MA and NY participated. Over 100 elementary, middle and Career Tech High School students designed in Youth Botanical Classes and/or worked behind the scenes. We introduced "The Blakely Szosz Award of Sustainability," for the best use of sustainable and/or upcycled components in a design with an emphasis on environmentally friendly components. A new sign-up application for designers to register, enter plant list and statement of intent was implemented. With a few bumps in the road, it was very successful. And a huge time saver.

In April the installation of State officers and Awards Luncheon was held. An Educational Scholarship was awarded to one student. As newly installed President my theme is "Growing Together for a Sustainable Future." Former Pres. Blakely Szosz was awarded the federation's most prestigious award "The Ely Medal of Beauty." This award is given only when merited for outstanding contributions to the federation.

We navigated to The Greenbrier in West Virginia for the NGC Convention. We were honored to be present at the installation of NGC President Brenda Moore, NGC officers and NEGC Director Susan Miner. The ride was that much sweeter going home with awards in hand.

Throughout the summer into the fall clubs have been super busy with beautification projects and fundraising. Kudos to our Little State.

**Judy Gray**  
**RIFGC President 2023-2025**



**“RHODE ISLAND IN BLOOM”**  
**An NGC Design Specialty Flower Show**

Presented by  
Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.  
President Judy Gray

**April 4 – 7 2024**

RI Convention Center  
1 Sabin Street Providence, RI

Please share this announcement with your club's membership

Setup Date will be Wednesday April 3, 2024  
Inquiries: [judy.gray123@gmail.com](mailto:judy.gray123@gmail.com)

*2022 NATIONAL GARDEN CLUB AWARD RECIPIENT*  
Award 16C Design Specialty Flower Show “Our World”

MEMBER OF  
NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.  
NEW ENGLAND GARDEN CLUB, INC.



**RIFGC photos from NEGC Annual Meeting: upper left -Linda Ives, Western Cranston Garden Club, RI NEGC Member Award of Honor; upper right - NEGC Director Susan Miner and Judy Gray, Pres. of RIFGC. Lower photo: Former Pres. Sandi Tinyk, Former Pres. Vera Bowen, Linda Alves, Judy Gray, Pres. of RIFGC, Former Pres. De Feldman, Former Pres. Sheryl McGookin, Debra McCartin**

## Welcome to America's Hometown

Fall in Plymouth, MA proved to be the perfect setting for the 7th Annual New England Garden Club, Inc. Annual Meeting. The meeting was attended by more than 130 members and guests at the Hotel 1620 on Plymouth Bay. Hosting the two day gathering was the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts.

National Garden Clubs President Brenda Moore was in attendance for the evening dinner meeting and the full day meeting on Wednesday October 11. Brenda shared with the group how she worked her way through many positions to become the NGC President. Her accounting of her accomplishments was done with humor and candor.

Tuesday's dinner meeting included a very informative program on pollinators and native plants with suggestions on the best habitats for gardens to promote pollination. It was presented by Carol Alper, founder of the Pollinators Pathways of Cape Cod. Everyone received a beautiful, gift boxed bee pin as a memento of the event.

Wednesday morning members were greeted by Susan Miner, Director of the New England Garden Clubs. A business meeting included the election of officers and a report of state activities by each state President. Bob Whitney, AIFD and forty-year veteran of the floral design industry, presented a hilarious and creative floral demonstration. Four lucky gardeners went home with his dramatic designs by making the highest bids at the silent auction of his designs. Beautiful hand painted shells were given to each attendee which were done by the Hyannis Garden Club.

There were several very appealing vendor tables and many of those in attendance went home with some very special purchases including jewelry, purses, spices, scarves, alpaca wearables, lavender items and the best shovel a gardener can own from Spear Head Shovels.

Raffles were another fun element of the meeting with beautiful items donated by state presidents and others involved with the meeting. The vendors also donated a sale item so that many members went home with a prize.

There were many favorable comments on the beautiful fall decor, the centerpieces made by the Hull, MA garden club and the sunny flowers provided by the Canton, MA garden club. As people were leaving the hotel many were talking about doing this again next year in Rhode Island. Until then, happy gardening!



**Bob Whitney, AIFD**

**Carol Hartnett**  
**NEGC Annual Meeting Chairperson**

## Spreading Our Environmental Knowledge

For my first contribution to the Northern Exposure, I will not be bringing any “new” information to light within the realms of horticulture. What I will focus on is something we all know and do, which is implementing environmentally safe practices that help us to protect our environment.

All clubs within our Federations are willing participants in honoring our Conservation Pledge and are committed to being caretakers of our natural resources, our air, water, forests, land and wildlife. We were reminded of these conservation responsibilities during the NEGC Annual Meeting in Plymouth, MA, with a Program on Pollinator-Pathways, presented by Carol Alper & Gary Bowden. All members within our NGC Organizations are well versed in avoiding pesticides and over fertilizing in order to help protect pollinators and wildlife and using native plants whenever possible, but there is something more that we can do.

While we gardeners “know” what practices are best used to this end, it can be easy to become complacent and assume that everyone is aware. The phrase “grass roots” was used during the program, about the importance of not just doing all of the wonderful projects our clubs bring to their communities, but to consider including other members of the community to join us while we are doing our projects! Educate the residents in your area, let them know you are using these environmentally vital practices and why.

Many clubs are already doing this, by inviting community residents to a club meeting for a program focused on the environment in general or pollinators specifically or inviting them to participate with the developing and planting of your community gardens, and perhaps having a representative from your club participate with other organizations within your community whenever there are environmental issues of concern. There are many ways to get the word out that gardening for the environment is important in any development within your community. Let’s keep the conversation going!

**Barbara Longstaff**  
**NEGC Horticulture**



## **Winner Maria J. Nahom Table Design Award 2023**

At the NEGC Annual Meeting Ginni Donovan of the Suburban Garden Club and Cheshire Garden Club of Cheshire, CT won the Maria J. Nahom Award for her exhibition table at the Connecticut Flower Show.

## **New England Garden Club Awards**

We were so delighted to have all six of the New England states entering awards this year. We had 47 entries which was a record!

The state Awards Chairs all did exceptional jobs. Thank You so much for making my job easier.

Each State sent us the Best of the Best (their state awards winners). Judging was particularly difficult. The award panels had a very tough time. We ended up point scoring and the point margin was very close.

Congratulations to everyone who entered awards. Please enter again next year.

Vera Bowen  
NEGC Awards Chairman

## **Greetings from The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut!**

We and I have enjoyed a very busy summer and fall season! Our Board of Directors meeting convened at Harkness Memorial Park on July 19<sup>th</sup> with an amazing tour by one of their docents, our own Vonice Carr. Connecticut is fortunate to have a number of Historic, Memorial and Public Gardens that welcome The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut to their treasures.

My summer adventures started on July 25<sup>th</sup> at the Maine Open Garden Tour at Harriet Robinson's Little Pond Farm in Otisfield Maine, only an hour and a half from our home in the glorious state of Maine. I have never seen better use of an inground swimming pool. Karen Rea and I would be happy to tell you about it.

FGCCT has been busy planning and executing our schools. Gardening School took place via Zoom on September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. Our Environmental School was also offered via zoom on September 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was amazing to see the number of students from across the country. Those from California certainly had to get up with the chickens. Our Flower Show School Procedure was held via zoom on September 30<sup>th</sup> and the in-person portion the following week.



Our 94<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards Luncheon took place on October 25<sup>th</sup>, at which time we awarded upward of 120 awards to member clubs... with several awards from NGC and NEG! The vendors were great, and the food was delicious.

Our Presidents' Day has been via Zoom for the past two years, but we decided to try an in-person event this year. We were disappointed to host only 34 of our 112 club presidents on September 26<sup>th</sup>. Based on questions at the meeting, we have planned a Zoom Treasurer's Workshop for November 8<sup>th</sup> and an Awards Workshop for January 24<sup>th</sup>. Our most recent Blue Star Memorial was dedicated on October 14, 2023 in Old Saybrook, Connecticut. It was a lovely ceremony.

Now a little of what I have been up to beyond the schools and meetings. My theme is "Care for Our Air" plant a tree. It has been amazing the number of programs that tout just that! On September 15<sup>th</sup> Yale University School of the Environment offered an in-person program on Urban Forests. The speakers were from around the WORLD!

As a former teacher, I was most impressed by the Green School Yards presentation. The American Society of Landscape Architects, an affiliate of FGCCT, presented "Ecological Approaches to Landscape Design & Green Infrastructure" on the University of Connecticut Campus. Following the lectures, I was able to see the changes that have occurred on the UCONN campus since I was a student in the 1970's. Just Amazing!

Coming up on November 4<sup>th</sup> is the SALT (Smaller American Lawns Today Conference) Planting Trees Today for a Greener Future. It is being held at the Connecticut College Arboretum, which is a treat. Check it out!

Our next big project is the Connecticut Flower and Garden Show on February 22-25, 2024, at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford. The schedule for "Bursting into Spring" is on our website, [ctgardenclubs.org](http://ctgardenclubs.org). Classes are filling up fast so if you would like to enter any of the divisions check it out.

**Karin C. Ohr Pyskaty**  
**President FGCCT**



The Federated Garden Clubs of CT, Inc.  
Presents an NGC Standard Flower Show

**Bursting into Spring**

**February 22-25, 2024**

## 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 2023-2024 include:

- Smokey Bear Poster Contest
- Poetry Contest
- Youth Sculpture Contest

Please consider one of these opportunities when working with the youth in your area. Information regarding each is listed below. These children are our future garden club members!

Clubs submit all entries to their state Youth chairmen and the first place winners in each category must be received by the NEGC Youth Chair no later than February 1, 2024. NEGC Youth Chair is Sheryl Hanson McGookin, 3 River Meadow Dr., Hope Valley, RI 02832, 401-639-8952, [sherylmcgookin@gmail.com](mailto:sherylmcgookin@gmail.com).

### Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest

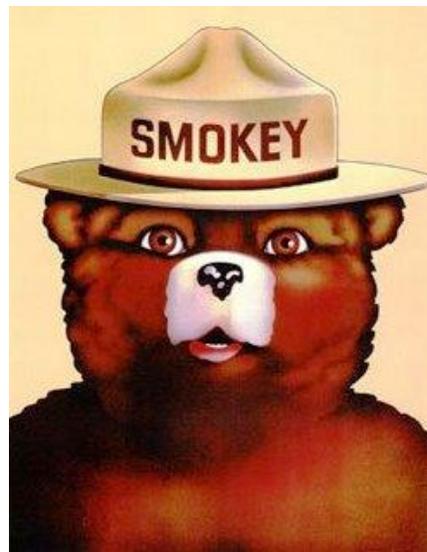
Children from first through fifth grade are invited to participate in the National Garden Clubs, Inc Poster Contest! The 2024 Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl poster contest is dedicated to Smokey Bear's 80th Birthday so **only posters with Smokey Bear will be accepted this year.**

The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Forest Service and the National Garden Clubs, Inc. are giving students the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of wildfire prevention through original drawings of Smokey Bear.

#### **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.

Additional details can be found on the NGC website <http://gardenclub.org> in the "Youth and Scholarships" then "Contests and Activities" area.





# NEGC Calendar

Deadline for the **February 2024** issue of Northern Exposure is **January 25** – please e-mail articles or questions to editor Nancy Atwell at [atwelln@aol.com](mailto:atwelln@aol.com)  
The February issue will cover the months February, March and April 2024.

## National Garden Club Meetings

**June 2-5, 2024** - NGC Annual Convention, Denver, CO.

## Regional Meetings

**October 23 and 24, 2024** – New England Garden Clubs Annual Meeting, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Warwick, RI, hosted by Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs.

## Environmental Schools

**February 2 - 3, 2024** – Course 3, Via Zoom.

**March 18 - 21, 2024** – Course 1, Via Zoom.

## Flower Shows

**Feb 22 - 25, 2024** - Connecticut Flower and Garden Show, CT Convention Center, Hartford, CT

**April 4 -7, 2024** – “Rhode Island in Bloom,” a NGC Design Specialty Flower Show, presented by Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs at RI Convention Center, 1 Sabin St., Providence, RI. Open to all NGC members. To be notified when the schedule is released, please contact Judy Gray, Design Entries Chairperson at [judy.gray123@gmail.com](mailto:judy.gray123@gmail.com)

## Flower Show Schools

**April 10 -12, 2024** - Kellogg Environmental Center, 500 Hawthorne Ave., Derby, CT.

## **Garden Study Schools**

**April 25 - 27, 2024** – Course 2, Chelmsford, MA via Zoom.

## **Landscape Design Schools**

**February 7 -9, 2024** - Course 4, via Zoom.

**March 26 -27, 2024** -Course 2 via Zoom.

## **State Garden Club meetings**

**April 17, 2024** - FGCCT Annual Meeting.

**May 29, 2024** - NHFGC Annual Meeting, Manchester, NH.

**June 11,2024** - FGCVT Annual Meeting.

**June 11,2024** - FGCVT Annual Meeting - Southern District.

## **Other events**

**March 6, 2024** - Environmental Education Day, RI.

**April 25, 2024** - RIFGC Awards Luncheon.

**May 15-23, 2024** - - **RIFGC Tour** - Great Gardens of Southern England including, Chelsea Flower Show.

**June 13, 2024** - GCFMa Annual Conference, Double Tree Hotel, Andover, MA

**June 24-26, 2024** - Bus Trip to Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. All gardeners - friends throughout New England are welcome to join us. Registration on Federation Garden Clubs of Vermont website [www.vermontfgcv.com](http://www.vermontfgcv.com)

**June 20 and 21, 2024** - GCFMe Annual Convention will be at the University of Maine Orono campus.

**October 16, 2024** - Connecticut Annual Awards Meeting.