

Northern Exposure

Newsletter of the New England Garden Clubs, Inc.



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

May 2026

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

What are some ways to follow my Theme that **“We Grow Gardens & Gardeners?”**

The first is straightforward. Attend our schools. One of our Federations, Connecticut, offers all four National Garden Clubs Schools. Unfortunately, four of our Federations offer none.

Environmental, Gardening and Landscape Design Schools are available online and can be taken in any order, for credit if you're a garden club member and take and pass the optional test, or purely for interest. (Actually, these courses are open to the public, but one needs to be a club member to receive NGC credit.)

There is no requirement you must live in the state whose Federation offers the course. Quite the opposite. Your club membership lets you take these courses anywhere in the U.S.A. and lets you transfer those credits should you move. So, everyone is eligible for online courses offered in Connecticut, as well as in other states.

Flower Show School has its Flower Show Procedural element online. The two days of Design and Horticulture instruction are in person.

We cannot free up your time to travel and take courses at a distance from home. We can ask Federation clubs close to Flower Show School locations in Connecticut and Massachusetts to consider hosting students from out of state to offset the costs of hotels.

While it's said Flower Show School courses may be taken in any order, it might be wise to start with Course 1.

Both Connecticut and Massachusetts are finishing up Course 4. Neither has scheduled the start of a new Series. That gives us valuable time to consider this proposal.

New England Garden Clubs, Inc., offers the only pilot Photography Program. Hunt's Photo & Video offers three classes this May at reduced prices to our members. We hope to see this partnership grow as



our members learn through Hunt's. For live link to photo newsletter see page 22.

Fondly,

Polly

Polly Brooks
NEGC Director

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Dear Members of the NEGC Board,

Katie Roth informed me that Massachusetts accepted with regret the letter of resignation of Kim Edwards.

Susan MacPherson will complete the 2025-2027 term of President of the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts..

Please join me in welcoming Susie. Her contact information is

Susan MacPherson

rmacpham@me.com

781-249-8905





FMI use this live link: [2026 NEW ENGLAND GARDEN CLUBS FALL MEETING](#)

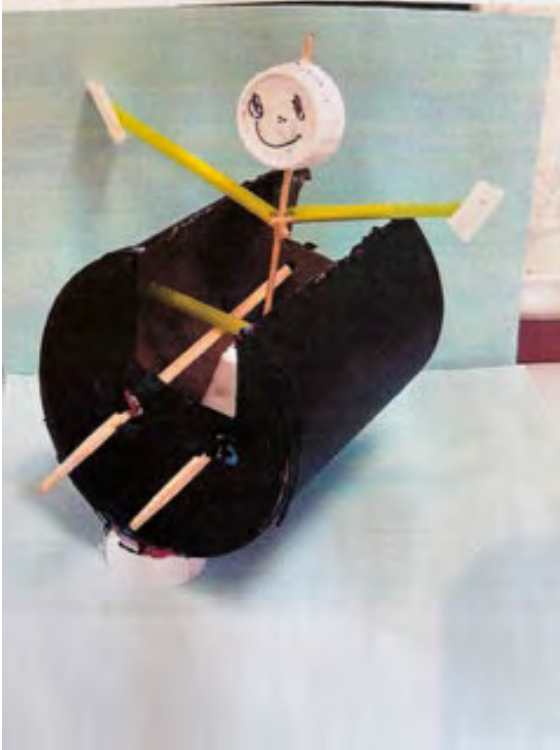
NEGC Youth Contest Winners

I am happy to announce the following winners from the New England Region. The NEGC winners have been forwarded to NGC to become entries in Youth Contests at the national level. The National winners will be announced the first week of May and will be posted on the NGC website.

Each Youth Chairperson in each state will have printable award certificates for contest winners in their states.

Sheryl Hanson
NERGC Youth Contest Chairperson
401-639-8952
sherylmcgookin@gmail.com

Sculpture Contest 2025-26



'Peaceful Rowing'

Ellis Hutchins, Grade 5
Danbury GC, CT

Youth Poetry Contest

Plant America for the Next 100 Years Working Hard to Help Our Earth

We share the hard work,
Together we can show Earth we all care.
We will plant and
Soon flowers will blossom.
And then we can celebrate,
As Spring has arrived.
On we continue planting,
On with no breaks.
Finally, we look around delighted
By what we see,
Knowing we have made
A part of our community.

Rory Imhoff
Age 7, Second Grade, Charles Taylor Elementary School

Hameho Garden Club, RI Federation of Garden Clubs

A seed, tiny as a bead

If I plant America for the next 100 years,
It would start as a seed, tiny as a bead.
It packs hope and courage to grow, planted in soil hand crafted with care,
Soil rich and deep, holds wisdom from the past.

It shoots out of the soil, peeks into the world,
A sapling starts to grow, taller and taller as it goes.

The baby plant turns into a flower, seeking the sun
Ready to bear fruits, for all to share.

Held strongly by the roots, tall and proud it stands
Prepared to help new seeds grow.

If I plant America, this is what I do
Again and again, to help it grow anew.

If I Made a Time Capsule

If I made a time capsule
For the future and dug it deep away,
Would it help the people learn to garden?

And then what would it say?

We could put some fruits in it for our descendants to use the seeds.
We could put in a growing manual so they could plant them and pick weeds.

We could put some soil in it (in case they don't have any.)
We will need a lot of it if the things they grow are many.

Just imagine if there weren't plants, there would be no green.
Instead, there would be just gray with not a color to be seen.

If there were no plants then we would not have much to eat.
If we keep the earth green forever it will be our greatest feat!

Annette Babu

Age 8 , Third Grade, Clintonville Elementary School

North Haven Garden Club, Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.

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Fiona Buckley
Age 9, Fourth Grade, E. Ethel Little School
Sponsored by North Reading Garden Club

The World's Small Garden

The garden wakes in the morning light,
Its leaves are green, their colors are
bright.

It whispers softly "care for me, for every
Root and for every tree".

The water, sings " the tall trees bend, they
Ask our help and care to lend."

With every act, both small and true,
We help the Earth begin to renew.

A greener world is in our hand,
A tiny garden we must defend.

Genesis Marquez
Age 10. Fifth Grade, Barbieri Elementary School
Sponsored by Framingham Garden Club

Our World

When the trees call to flowers and tell them rain is coming the flowers call the bees.

The bees tell the ants and the ants tell the worms.

The worms tell the soil and the soil tells a seed.

The seed tells the embryo and the embryo jumps and sings because soon they will be seeing BRAND NEW LEAVES!

Stevie DeVito
Age 12, Sixth Grade, Bedford Middle School
Sponsor: Westport Garden Club CT

GUESS WHO?

Walking down the street
The spirit of a community
There is lush greenery all around
Families planting in their yards
Neighbors chatting
Birds chirping their melodies.

But will it last forever?
Risky! We have to make it last!

We have to do our part
Plant trees, flowers, and gardens
Reduce , Use, Recycle
Do it now for future communities
Plant, Grow, Harvest
It will last for generations
Experience the beauty forever!

You will walk down the street
You will see loved ones,
You will see innovation,
You will improve life!

Vivian Vigneault
12 years old, Seventh Grade, Barrington Middle School
Barrington Garden Club

RISE UP

In fields where plants grow,
Plant America, strong and known.

Roots that reach a hundred years,
and sprout with water and tears.

Then, from city to city,
Green leaves reach to the sky.

For ours is a world with no time to waste.

Plant America and watch it rise.

Ashlyn Poulos

13 years old, 8th Grade, Westside Middle School Academy
Danbury Garden Club, Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.

RETURN TO OUR ROOTS

100 YEARS PAST.

100 YEARS FUTURE.

PLANTING, CURATING, COLLECTING SEEDS,

REMINDS US OF THE DIVERSITY WE USED TO CHERISH.

FINDING THE SPACE WITHIN AND WITHOUT TO RENEW,
...COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY IN HABITATS AND SEEDS,

IN LIFE

PLANTING THE PAST FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

Adam Guertin

Age 15, 10th Grade, Henry Abbott Technical High School
Danbury Garden Club, Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.

Poster Contest 2025-26

Grade 1: Zoe Psarofagis of Longhill GC, CT. Smokey Bear



Grade 2: Kinsley Plaisted of Mount Blue Area GC, ME

Woodsy Owl



Grade 3: Nivan Adhikari of Burlington GC, VT

Woodsy Owl



Grade 4: Kavin Antony Jeyahar of Longhill GC, CT

Smokey Bear



Grade 5: Vera Vigneault of Barrington GC, RI

Smokey Bear



Let's Go Native

Native plants are the backbone of habitat, for us and for insects, birds, mammals and other organisms. Plants supply the oxygen we breathe, regulate the climate and clean the water. They are the base of the food chain that leads to our own dinner table and the loss of a single plant species can disrupt an intricate web supporting plants and animals. When native plants are imperiled, the entire ecosystem is at risk.

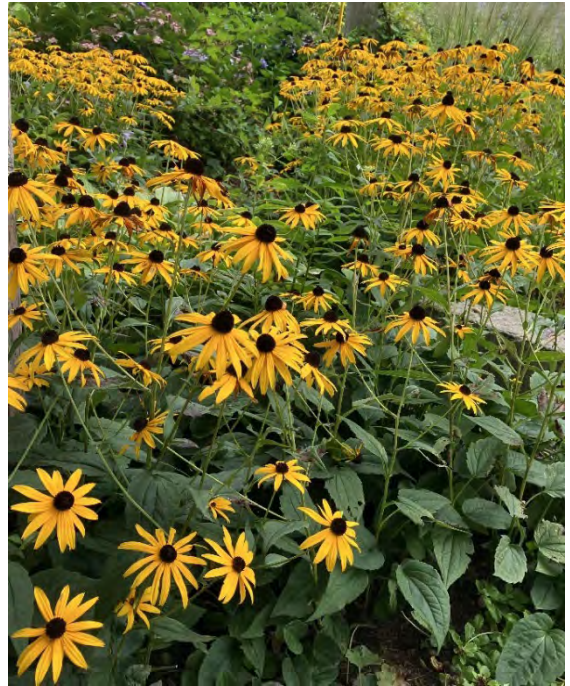
Planting a native garden involves selecting local plants, designing for ecological harmony and maintaining a low-impact, wildlife friendly landscape that thrives year-round.

Start by assessing your garden site. Identify patterns of sunlight, shade and moisture. Consider your soil type and it's condition. Testing soil pH, nutrient content and drainage will help determine which native plants will flourish. Know your hardiness zone. Prepare the soil by adding organic matter such as compost to improve fertility and drainage and avoid chemical fertilizers. Mulching will help suppress weeds and retain moisture.

Map your garden to plan pathways and seating areas. Plant in drifts or masses rather than scattered specimens. Use combinations that provide interest, continuous bloom and seasonal color to attract pollinators from spring to fall. Choose plants indigenous to the New England region, include a variety of trees, shrubs, wildflowers and grasses to provide nectar, seeds, berries and shelter for birds, bees and butterflies.

Some excellent natives include Black-eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower, Butterfly Weed, Eastern Redbud, American Witch-Hazel, Switchgrass for foliage and habitat, and many more. The Audubon Society, the Garden in the Woods and Native Plants Trust are good sources for native plants in our New England area.

Sue Redden
NEGC Horticulture Chairperson



New Hampshire Federation Garden Clubs

New Hampshire BLOOMED in March this year! NHFGC partnered with the Currier Museum of Art in Manchester, NH to create this inaugural event. The museum welcomed over 2,000 visitors to this four day celebration of art and floral design. It was a great success and enjoyed by everyone who attended. All four of our districts were represented by designers and members from all eighteen clubs attended to support this exciting



event. Everyone left with a smile and wonderful comments were heard by all. NHFGC also had a membership information table at the entrance to the gallery. Both individuals and club representatives from non-federated clubs stopped to ask for information about joining! We are ready to begin planning to BLOOM again next year!

Martha Dale, (VT). Becky Gallery and Suzanne Bushnell (ME). Winnie Schmidt and Sue Miner (NH) celebrated the opening of Bloom at Currier Museum of Art.

We are in the final planning stages of planning the Annual Meeting. NHFGC is celebrating the Semi Quincentennial by having that as the theme for this meeting. Decorations will be red, white and blue and the different parts of the program will all be a Salute to Our Country. John Forti, the author of many garden related books and director of BedRock Gardens is our speaker. John has created a program for this event to give a retrospective of gardening from colonial times to the present, titled 'Growing a Nation - Evolution of Gardens in America'.

NHFGC clubs are encouraged to celebrate the semi quincentennial in their different communities by planting red, white and blue and displaying flags and patriotic emblems. Two hundred -fifty years deserves a grand celebration! All eighteen clubs are very involved in civic beautification projects throughout the state. This will help create a united and celebratory event.

We have completed the upgrade of our Standing Rules, Policy and Procedures. The name of the Life Time Member Award has been changed to Member Recognition Award. Criteria for this award remains the same but there was confusion about the meaning of the name. Many felt the name meant you were given free membership for life! The past president pin has also been updated to include an image of New Hampshire as well as the lilac, our state flower. The past president has the choice now of either silver or gold for the pin.



Plans for our fourth annual Fall Gathering are well underway! The committee has secured a lovely venue for our members to enjoy. It is a former perennial garden growing



and retail business that closed many years ago. The owners have created a beautiful event venue by making many gardens and meeting spaces. This is now a very private venue only open to events and weddings. We are delighted to have this as our Fall Gathering space!

Fiona McKenna, 'Peeps' Bogaert, Winnie Schmidt, Carrie Dugan, Joanne Dickie receiving award at BLOOM for their winning designs.



Happy spring and happy planting! Enjoy time together in your gardens and at your garden club meetings and events. "Planting seeds of friendship" is my theme. This is the season to plant!

Winnie Schmidt
New Hampshire Federation
Of Garden Clubs President

The Newport Mansions

Various locations along Bellevue Ave. and 44 Ochre Point Ave., Newport
newportmansions.org.

The Preservation Society of Newport County, 424 Bellevue Ave., Newport 02840
(401) 847-1000

Summer's here and your vacation plans should include a journey to beautiful Newport, RI, where you can stroll the Cliff Walk, with seaside views of the Atlantic Ocean, extraordinary mansions and gardens. Rhode Island's nickname is The Ocean State due to its 400 miles of coastline. Those addicted to "The Gilded Age," the incredibly popular HBO series, should visit the Breakers and feel as if they have walked onto the set of the show, and for good reason: some of the series' filming took place at the Breakers, the grandest of Newport's summer "cottages" and a prime example of the Gilded Age. It is considered

to be the most visited attraction in the Ocean State, and you are advised to visit before the summer season sets in, or after Labor Day.

The lavish mansion was the summer home of Cornelius Vanderbilt II, grandson of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, the steamship and railroad baron who amassed the family fortune. When the original house burned down, Cornelius hired the prestigious architect Richard Morris Hunt to design this grand villa, inspired by Renaissance palaces of northern Italy.

The gardens were designed by a protégé of Frederick Law Olmsted, Ernest Bowditch, who selected many of the rare trees on the property, especially the beeches. Almost all of Newport's estate gardens had to import trees, as the native trees had been removed to make room for sheep farming in the 18th century. Pin oaks, red maples, yew, juniper and hemlock are some of the trees which line the driveway which leads to a formal landscape, enclosed with a beautiful wrought iron fence, reflecting the technological advances in cast iron of the 19th century.

Bowditch's original design for the south parterre garden has been recreated from old photographs in pink and white begonias and blue ageratum. The gardens also feature a variety of classic, old garden roses, including hybrids like Bourbon, Damask and Hybrid Perpetual, and include fragrant varieties and climbing roses which thrive in this oceanside climate. These plantings reflect the opulent, historic character (those existing before 1867 such as Tea Roses).

A lawn terrace on the western side of the mansion contains a fleur-de-lis parterre. Gladys Vanderbilt, the youngest daughter of the family, inherited The Breakers and opened it to the public in 1948 to raise funds for the Preservation Society of Newport County, which later purchased the property and its contents in 1972. The PSNC owns and stewards eleven properties, including The Elms, Marble House and also own Chateau-sur-Mer, Kingscote, Rosecliff (location of the annual Newport Flower Show in June), and others.

Summer reading suggestion: *All the Pretty Places: a novel of the Gilded Age* by Joy Callaway. This historical Gilded Age novel about an early American landscape nursery is a timeless and powerful book about a daring woman who must decide if she will risk everything to follow her passion and find her voice.

In Rye, New York, 1893, Sadie Fremd's dreams hinge on her family's nursery, which has been the supplier of choice for respected landscape architects on the East Coast for decades. Now her small town is in a panic as the economy plummets into a depression, and Sadie's father is pressuring her to secure her future by marrying a wealthy man among her peerage. But rather than seek potential suitors, Sadie pursues new business from her father's most reliable and wealthy clients of the Gilded Age in an attempt to bolster the floundering nursery. But the more time Sadie spends in the secluded gardens of the elite, the more she notices the hopelessness in the eyes of those outside the mansions. The poor, the grieving, the weary. The people with no access to the restorative beauty of nature.

Sadie has always wanted her father to pass his business to her instead of to one of her brothers, but he seems oblivious to her desire and talent—and now to her passion for providing natural beauty to those who can't afford it. When former employee, Sam, shows up unexpectedly, Sadie wonders if their love can be rekindled or if his presence will simply be another reminder of a life she longs for and cannot have.

Joy Callaway illuminates the life of her great-great-grandmother in this captivating story about a daring woman following her passion and finding her voice, while exploring natural beauty and its effect in the lives of those who need it most.

Sandi Tinyk
NEGC Historic and Public Gardens Chairperson

Hello, From Little Rhody

Rhode Island recently hosted an NGC Design Specialty Flower Show titled *"Dearly Beloved..."*, a bridal-themed event that brought creativity and elegance into full bloom. This year's imaginative schedule was inspired by the bridal motif introduced during last April's State Officers' installation ceremony, which has since flourished into a truly engaging floral design experience.

Under the leadership of Flower Show Chairperson Judy Gray, the event was once again a tremendous success. Designers showcased stunning floral interpretations centered around themes such as "something old, something new," as well as love, hope and cherish. The show also featured exquisite table artistry and a unique duo design class, adding depth and variety to the exhibit.

A highlight of this year's show was the Botanical Arts Division. Participants demonstrated remarkable skill and creativity by crafting intricate pieces including a bridal garter, a ring along with its decorative box and a bridal headpiece. The level of detail and artistry in these works was truly impressive. One standout designer, Blakely Szosz, earned top honors across the board with a design that was undeniably deserving of recognition.

This successful event would not have been possible without the dedication of an incredible team of volunteers. From loading trucks and setting up displays to working with youth participants, hostesses and dismantling the exhibit, their efforts were instrumental in bringing the entire show to life.

April also marks our annual banquet and awards ceremony. This year, we are excited to welcome Dennis DeSignore, a highly accomplished and innovative floral designer, event designer/planner and creative director, who will be presenting a demonstration that promises to be both fun and entertaining.

If you know me, you know how much I enjoy recognizing our state clubs and celebrating their creative and meaningful projects. To add an extra element of fun this year, I've invited all attendees to design and wear a fascinator to the luncheon—I can't wait to see the imaginative creations everyone brings!

We look forward to seeing the many plantings completed in celebration of Arbor Day, an important part of RIFGC's commitment to giving back to the community. Each club receives a \$100 donation from RIFGC to support planting a tree within their local area, helping to create a lasting and meaningful impact.

Numerous club plant sales are being planned throughout May as fundraisers for garden clubs across the state. Our June 4th RIFGC monthly membership meeting will feature a Horticulture Show. The last show, held two years ago, was truly fabulous and we look forward to seeing what's growing in Rhode Island's gardens this year.

I am also looking forward to several garden tours hosted by our clubs—fingers crossed for bright, sunny days to enjoy them. In addition, another club will be hosting an *Art in Bloom* event.

I am very much looking forward to the NGC Convention this May. I'm excited to connect with my fellow NEGC presidents and reunite with the new friends I made last year. I've never been to St. Louis, so I'm especially eager for the experience!

Kathleen Damiani
Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs President

The RIFGC "Dearly Beloved..." an NGC Design Specialty Flower Show. April 10-12, 2026



Not planned but great minds: judging day
Left: Judy Gray Flower Show Chairperson
Right: Kathleen Damiani President RIFC



Blakely Szosz Class titled Sparks Flying
The showstopper!



Class 5: Something New
Designer Ann Huntoon



Botanical Arts Bridal Trousseau
Class Something Blue

A Duo Design by designer Linda Pare, NH.

Left picture is class Opposites Attract, Right picture is the other side class Better Together



THE GARDEN CLUB FEDERATION OF MAINE

As Spring slowly makes its presence known in northern New England, we wait for the garden soil to warm and ready itself for our next season of planting. I have my dahlias potted, waiting for them to sprout and for the sunshine in May so they may go into the cutting gardens for summer and fall floral arrangements. I am planning what annuals to add to the perennial beds—red, white and blue flowers are at the top of my list this year. Our clubs and towns are planning activities to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary, with more red, white and blue to brighten our gardens, our porches and the streets of towns.

Spring is for waiting. And planning. The Garden Club Federation of Maine holds an annual convention, hosted by each district of clubs in rotation. The St. Croix District in the greater Mount Desert Island area has been



Dahlias waiting to sprout for Harpswell Club's cutting garden.

working for more than a year to host this year's gathering in Bar Harbor, on June 17 and 18. We will kick off the festivities with a social evening on June 16 to honor our GCFM State Life Members. For the convention itself, speakers have been engaged, vendors are preparing their wares and items for the silent auction are being collected. Several gardens on Mount Desert Island are receiving loving care from their owners, in anticipation of visitors during our convention's garden tour.

Earlier this year, we welcomed our 40th club, Poland Garden Club. The leadership of Terina Dobson was instrumental in bringing over a dozen interested folks together to form the new club. We look forward to having the Poland area well represented in our federation. Already, the club has worked along the roadways in their town to make it more welcoming to those who travel the roads through Poland.

During the winter, GCFM held two programs on Zoom. We heard from Amy Thomas and Zac Smith-Hess. Amy addressed the importance of using native plants in the landscape. She offered lists of "keystone" plants that attract a wide variety of native caterpillars. Those caterpillars in turn are the "baby food" needed to nourish baby birds through their first weeks of life. All of nature works as one to provide food and shelter for our native insects and wildlife. Zac, an entomologist with Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, spoke about pollinators and their dependence on native plants. Maintaining habitats with diverse native plants enriches our lives with the sounds of birds singing, bees buzzing and butterflies fluttering through our gardens. My President's Project in Maine is "Invasives out—Natives In" and our winter Zoom programs helped to encourage each of us to work toward a more diverse habitat in our fields, forests and gardens.

Our clubs and districts meet during the Spring months to re-connect as gardeners. I am planning on spending some time in my car, travelling to each district, learning what our clubs have planned for the coming year. And throughout May, we wait for the weather to warm our soils. We wait to plant and put our plans into action for the red, white and blue days of 2026.

Happy Gardening,

Becky Gallery
Garden Club Federation of Maine President



April 8, at Stroudwater District Meeting with Stroudwater Director Marianne Dodge (photo by Suzanne Bushnell)

Garden Club Federation Of Massachusetts, Inc.

In late March 2026, the GCFM Board accepted the resignation of President Kim Edwards with regret. At that same time, I was nominated to “step up” and assume the position as the Federation’s president. I have assumed the duties of President now for three weeks and am learning quickly as to the expectations of my role. I am honored to have been given this opportunity to be able to work with an outstanding Board as well as with our six District Directors and the leadership of our 168 garden clubs.

Our clubs across the state are blooming with activity now that the promise of spring increases daily. Plant sales and garden tours are planned for May and June as they are major fundraising opportunities for most of our clubs. Our GCFM website has an entire section devoted to event flyers that are submitted by our clubs for broader exposure. Our collective plant sales are highly anticipated by the public with some of them seeing patrons waiting in line for over an hour to get the first access to the plant stock.

One of the highlights for me in late February was a visit to The Weymouth Garden Club’s “Books in Bloom” that was set up at the Tufts Library in Weymouth. Being an avid bibliophile, I was enchanted to see the range of titles selected and then reflected in many varieties of floral designs.



There were 54 entries which included children and members of the library staff. Each entry was truly original and prodded one to consider what magic within the book inspired the floral design. Members of the garden club graciously acted as hostesses to greet the public as they arrived to admire the displays. They also proudly shared that the Books in Bloom had had 100% of their club’s large membership take part in the event in some manner. It was so gratifying to see the result of an entire club’s membership working on all

levels together to ensure the success of this memorable event.

The Lexington Field and Garden Club is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year, preceding our GCFM’s organization by 51 years! What began as a concern for the town’s



poor appearance as the nation's Centennial was a mere year away, a group of dedicated town residents formed an association dedicated to cleaning up Lexington's town center area and naming their group: the Lexington Field and Garden Club. The new club pledged to take over the care of the town's common area, which had been previously dedicated to rubble, hay and grazing cows. The LFGC is still an enormously active club committed to the beauty and historical relevance of the town of Lexington.

The Paxton, MA Garden Club is one of our newer clubs as they were Federated in 2023. They have made a commitment to create and maintain several town perennial gardens by



engaging their own members as well as Paxton residents. They applied for and received official approval in November 2025 to design and construct a Community Garden at Center Field. Their mission is to provide horticulture, environmental and gardening education to residents and young people from their community. The Paxton, MA Garden Club is truly supporting our Federation's mission which is committed to conservation, education, beautification and advancing the "art" of gardening.

Beginning in June there are five flower shows planned. The Thursday Garden Club of Sudbury just had their first club sponsored flower show on April 16, "The 1776 Flower Show" in honor of our nation. "A Tiny Nation Blooms," an NGC Petite Design Specialty show will be held at the Framingham public library on June 12. sponsored by the GCFM Judges' Council. In July, the Southeast District will hold "Oceans Around Us," an NGC standard flower show at the Heritage Museums and Gardens in Sandwich, MA on July 22-24. The South Shore District will host "Roaring 20's" at the Marshfield Fair Grounds on August 21-25. These shows will be followed by the Topsfield Fair Show and Tower Hill in September and October. A very exciting schedule of shows for members to display their creativity in floral design, horticulture, botanical arts and photography! Please refer to our GCFM website (Events) for more detailed information.

Our Federation's 99th Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, June 4 at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Milford, MA. We are thrilled and honored to welcome Donna Donnelly, NGC President, to be with us! Our Annual Meeting Chairpersons have been working for months to insure every detail is addressed. It will be a very full day but one we are all greatly anticipating!

I thank Polly Brooks and the New England Garden Clubs, Inc. presidents for welcoming me into your organization. I look forward to meeting you all in St. Louis and benefiting from your counsel!

Susan E. MacPherson
Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts President

New England Garden Clubs Inc Social Media

Hi everyone,

I am the social media director for the New England Garden Club's Region, as well as the Chairperson of Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut. I represent the New England region on NGC socials two days a month: the 7th & 13th. So, if it involves Plant America, please send it to me and I will post your club's activities on the NGC social sites. I would love to share some of your club's activities on our social pages.

We follow the rules set by National Garden Clubs Inc :

Post activities and programs after they happen.

We don't endorse upcoming events unless it is State or National level

No pictures of tables with poster boards.

We prefer action shots.

No children's faces.

There are two ways I usually pick up a club's pictures:

If you follow us on Facebook or Instagram, I usually take from Instagram. It is much easier to flip them.

You can also email me your information : susan.demuth@ctgardenclubs.org

Our Facebook is [Facebook](#)

Our Instagram is [@NEW_ENGLANDGARDENCLUBSINC](#)

I really look forward to seeing and sharing what all the NEGC have to offer,

Susan Demuth
NEGC Social Media Chairperson



See more from New England
Garden Clubs on [facebook](#)



NEGC
May 2026

New England Garden Clubs Photography Group Newsletter



In May 2026, Hunt's offers our NEGC Photography Group members three discounted classes:

Digital Photography Basics 1 & 2 and Phoneography - Smartphone Photography

If you're just starting out, especially with a DSLR, mirrorless or camera with some manual control, the Digital Photography Basics classes are a great place to start. The Phoneography class will familiarize you with the photography bells and whistles available to you on your phones!

For each of these three courses, a New England Garden Club Photo Group member will pay only \$10 if using the discount code:

Digital Photography Basics 1, May 7, 2026, 7 - 8:15 p.m.

Digital Photography Basics 2, May 14, 7 - 8:15 p.m.

Phoneography May 13, 7 - 8:15 p.m.

These three courses will be on Zoom and will be recorded. You will receive the links to the recording and the handouts to review afterwards at your leisure.

Remember: Use the Discount Code – NEGC

To view the entire Photography Group Newsletter use this live link: [Think Spring!](#)

Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont

The FGCV just completed their annual April District Meetings for all club members throughout Vermont. The Zoom breakout sessions were executive team members moderating discussions on membership challenges, fundraising and finances, programs and events, using social media, state and national awards and photography. It was a very successful turnout.



Saint Albans Museum



Taylor Park

Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont Annual Meeting
Tuesday, June 9, 2026
Saint Albans Museum

MEETING DAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Saint Albans Museum Exhibits OR
- Tour of Historic Taylor Park
- Meeting includes awards and buffet luncheon
- Guest speaker – Kelly Wakefield
- Visit vintage shops – downtown



The Garden Club of Manchester sponsored this special program:

Tovah Martin
Passionate gardener, organic land care professional, writer and author
 PRESENTS
Harnessing Plants to Solve Problems
 Saturday, April 25, 2026 | 1 p.m.
 Manchester Community Library
Open to the public



Learn about:
 Growing medicinal plants | Mitigating drainage issues
 Saving the bees | Share tips | List of resources
 For more information visit tovahmartin.com

Co-hosted by
 The Bennington Garden Club | Garden Club of Manchester




benningtongardenclub.com
gardenclubofmanchester@gmail.com

The Granite Center Garden Club with Jeff Maher as chairperson has been working to gather funds and a location for a new Blue Star Memorial Marker in the Barre community. The marker is planned to be installed in 2026.

The FGCV has completed plans for their 4th annual Garden Club Trip on June 16 and 17, 2026. In June members and guests will be traveling to the NY Hudson River Valley Gardens exploring the Stonecrop Gardens, Innisfree Garden and Beatrix Farrand's Garden.

Doris Van Mullen
Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont President



Springtime Greetings from Connecticut!!

"A Storybook Garden ~ Go into the woods; it is where your story happens!" was the enchanting theme of this year's CT Flower & Garden Show, held at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford, February 19 - 22. It was truly amazing! Featured were 150,000 square feet of expansive live gardens, nonstop free seminars and demonstrations and hundreds of exhibitors displaying and selling all types of items and gifts. This prestigious and well-attended event showcased The Federation's NGC Standard Flower



Larry Huzi, Branford Garden Club, 1st Place,
Nell McGuinness Award, Terry Stoleson
Creative Design Award

Show, which included a remarkable range of magnificent floral designs, botanical arts crafts, photography, educational displays and outstanding horticulture. Participation saw a significant increase, with 36% of our Garden Clubs taking part—up from 20% in 2025. The Horticulture Division featured an impressive 274 exhibits, a notable rise from 188 the previous year, reflecting both the dedication and growing enthusiasm of our members. The Design Division was equally exceptional, with 64 exhibits across 16 classes. In Botanical Arts/Artistic Crafts, creativity and attention to detail were truly inspiring, with 16 exhibits representing 10 garden clubs, including two from out of state.

Photography in the Botanical Arts Division captivated attendees, Arabella Dane traveled from Wisconsin to lead the panel, joined by professional photographer Lisa Cuchara and Jeanette Barrows of the New Milford Garden Club. In addition, ten of our Affiliate organizations presented informative and engaging exhibits and each of our four NGC Schools contributed a display, enriching the educational experience of the show.



Creative interpretations of beloved fairy tales were beautifully woven throughout the exhibit spaces. The show's schedule featured inspired designs based on timeless stories such as *Thumbelina*, *Snow White*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Cinderella*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Hansel and Gretel* and many more.

Additional exhibits drew from classical influences, with Botanical Arts reflecting Greek myths and photography highlighting Greek gods.

Garden clubs from across Connecticut and several from out of state participated with enthusiasm and artistry, earning numerous honors for creativity, design excellence and adherence to the rigorous standards of National Garden Clubs. In the spirit of these enduring tales, good triumphed over evil—and all who attended experienced a truly magical and memorable event.



The People's Choice Design Award in honor of Barbara Bruce
 First place, The West Hartford Garden Club for *The Beauty and the*



April 15th 220 garden club members gathered at The Federation's 97th Annual Meeting and Luncheon, at the lovely Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville. We were thrilled to welcome international award-winning florist, Ace Berry of *Ace in Full Bloom*, (<https://aceinfullbloom.com>) as our keynote speaker. Ace is known for his extraordinary creativity and dynamic presentations. He recently captivated audiences at the Philadelphia Flower Show and at the New York Botanical Garden. Proving that flowers can change a life – from a Texas oil field to the world stage, Ace shared his journey, creative secrets and the belief that anyone with passion, curiosity and a love for flowers can learn the art of floristry. His inspiring and entertaining program, *Turning Passion into Petals*, featured the **live creation of 8 stunning floral designs**, which he generously **donated for our raffle**—a wonderful opportunity for attendees!



Federation Fridays, monthly 90-minute Zoom workshops presented by Federation Board Members and panels of Club Officers, offer attendees a “deep dive” into timely and meaningful topics.

February: *Your Awards Await!* – *The FGCT Awards Application Process*

March: *NGC Youth Contests and Starting a Youth Gardening Program*

April: *BEE RESILIENT ~ Garden for Nature: The President's Project*

Registration information and PDF files of all PowerPoint presentations from these workshops are available on our website.

Our popular **Regional Roundtable** events have continued in 2026. Hosted by local Garden Clubs and moderated by FGCCT Board Members, these in-person gatherings bring together Club Officers and Committee Chairpersons from neighboring towns to exchange ideas, share experiences and explore topics of mutual interest. Participants always leave inspired with fresh ideas to take back to their clubs. Registration is available on our website.



There were two Roundtables in March:

Danbury, hosted by *The Danbury Garden Club*

Old Saybrook, hosted by *The Old Saybrook Garden Club* and *The Duck River Garden Club of Old Lyme*

We have three **NGC Schools** coming up:

Flower Show School, Course IV, June 10 – 12, Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby

Environmental School, Course I, September 17-18, via Zoom

Gardening School, Course III, September 21-22, via Zoom

Information and Registration is on our website.



BEE RESILIENT
Garden for Nature

BEE RESILIENT ~ *Garden for Nature!* my President's theme, based on Sustainable Gardening, encourages Clubs to enhance the beauty of their community and preserve nature in a changing climate by creating small native gardens in a public location with advance funding from The Federation. I'm thrilled to announce that so far we have approved and funded **28 BEE RESILIENT Garden Projects**. Our website has all the details and how to apply for project grants.



There are many plant sales, flower shows and garden tours taking place across Connecticut in the coming months. All are open to the public and can be found on our website calendar. Finally, I wish you a season filled with enjoyable outdoor activities, successful planting and the many pleasures of spring gardening.

Warm regards,

Nan Merolla
President, The Federated Garden Clubs of CT, Inc.
nan.merolla@ctgardenclubs.org
FGCCT Website: <https://ctgardenclubs.org/>

NEGC Calendar

Deadline for the **August** issue of Northern Exposure is July 25 – that issue will cover the months of August, September and October - please e-mail articles or questions to editor Nancy Atwell at atwelln@aol.com

National Garden Clubs

May 4-6 - Convention in St. Louis, MO

New England Garden Clubs

October 13-14 - New England Garden Clubs' Annual Meeting

FGCV is hosting the NEGC Fall Meeting at Killington Ski Resort, 228 East Mountain Rd, Killington, VT 05751. Phone: 802-404-4622

Environmental Schools

September 17 – 18 – Course 1. Derby, CT (Virtual).

Flower Shows

June 19 – 21 - Newport Flower Show, Rosecliff Mansion in Newport, Rhode Island.

Flower Show Schools

June 10 - June 12 – Course 4, Kellogg Environmental Center, 500 Hawthorne Ave., Derby, CT Register: Peggy Townsend. Instructors: Lynn Fronk and Heidi Muschick. Registration form available at [Flower Show School - Federated Garden Clubs of CT](#)

State Conventions and Meetings

May 20 - NHFGC Annual Meeting at Zorrino Vineyard. 226 Main St., Sandown, NH

June 16 -June 18 – Garden Club Federation of Maine Convention, Bar Harbor, Atlantic Oceanside, 119 Eden St. June 16 Life Member event at Garland Farm. Garden tour. Design program by Vince Butera. Bill Cullina, current director at the Arboretum at Penn State, on replacing invasives with native woodies.

October 23 - NHFGC Fall Gathering at Gardens at Uncanoonac Mountain, Goffstown, NH

