

THE GARDENZETTE



The newsletter of the Rock Spring Garden Club, Arlington, VA www.rockspringgardenclub.com
Rock Spring Garden Club is a member of the National Garden Clubs Inc., Central Atlantic Region, National Capital Area Garden Clubs, Inc., District III; and Southern Atlantic Region, Virginia Federated Garden Clubs, Inc., Piedmont District



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General Meeting

Thursday November 16, 2023 – 10:00 am

Little Falls Presbyterian Church

Lower Level Friendship Hall

6025 Little Falls Road

Arlington, VA 22207

Windowsill Art with Nancy Ross Hugo



We are excited to have author, artist, floral designer, and gardener, Nancy Ross Hugo, join us for an inspirational program on the art of creating windowsill floral designs. Nancy's daughter, Kate, floral designer, and entrepreneur who owns the Floral Arranger pop up shop will also join us. She sells an array of unique home accents with a floral design bent. Perhaps you've met Kate who regularly sells her wares at VFGC Piedmont District meetings. We think you'll really enjoy Nancy's program. Since it's holiday shopping season, bring your checkbook! In addition to Floral Arranger's Shop, our Ways and Means folks will also have tools of the trade wares for holiday tea designers and some of Julie Wadsworth's fab stocking stuffers. Be ready to enjoy a wonderful garden club day!

President's Message

November 2023

By Maryam Zolecki

We are two months in, and our garden club season is off to a good start. Last month, we had a terrific field trip to Grateful Gardeners, a farm in Poolesville that not only grows fabulous dahlias of all colors, shapes, and sizes, but also dabbles in some innovative and unique growing practices. As part of my day job, I often administer tests that measure intellectual functioning and a question on one of the tests asks, "Why do students go on field trips?" The answer is that we learn and experience on field trips what we cannot access by simply taking in information in a classroom like setting. We got to experience this last month on the field trip, and this learning will continue with the upcoming hands-on experiences in the near and more distant future that I hope all club

members participate in and take advantage of. The first one coming up is the floral pumpkin design fundraiser that will give all of us a chance to put our designing talents to use and raise funds in the process. The Holiday Tea is coming up, and I am very much looking forward to the festivities and checking out the beautiful designs that will adorn Sandy's home. And of course, the flower show is coming up in May of next year which will give everyone a chance to display their talents and learning through design and horticulture entries, as well as helping with planning, decorating, and organizing. And of course, the monthly activities of our committees are another opportunity to pass along these experiences to our community. What a well-rounded club we are indeed!

No December Board Meeting

Next Meeting

Thursday January 4, 2024 4:30 pm

Attendance options are via Zoom or in-person at Dianne Simmons' home

October 2023 Budget Report

Beginning Balance: \$21,844.93

Revenue: \$0

Expenses: (\$2,894.98)

Net: (2,894.98)

Ending Balance: \$18,949.95



On behalf of all Rock Spring Garden Club members, we would like to extend congratulations to our very own Charlotte Benjamin. VHC Health in Arlington, Virginia debuted a new women's health center named The Charlotte S. Benjamin Center for Women's Health.

Charlotte has been active on the VHC Health Board of Directors for decades and served as its chair. This is a wonderful and well-deserved honor.

For more information, check out the article: <http://bit.ly/3QvNMP8>

Design of the Month

By Connie Richards

Parallel Design

A parallel design consists of three or more groupings of plant material with a placement exhibiting a strong AND overall parallel effect, and in a single container. Groupings do not need to be equidistant from each other, and there may be non-plant components. Multiple containers may be used if combined to appear as one unit and connective(s) may be used at the base of the design. The parallel direction may be vertical, horizontal, or diagonal within the allotted space. See page 75 in the updated NGC Handbook for Flower Shows.

Two examples from the October Chrysanthemum Show in Falls Church are shown here.



Floral Pumpkin Sale on Nov 21

By Dianne Simmons

We will hold a floral pumpkin sale on Tuesday, November 21st at the corner of N. Glebe Rd. and N. 26th Street (in the St. Mary's parking lot) from 3:30-6:30 PM. Imelda Rowe and I, co-chairs, hope for a hearty club participation and strong sales in what will be our single fundraiser this year – to help build up our waning budget. If you have signed up to bring a design(s), please drop them off between 10:00 am – 1:00 PM.

I will hold a workshop, Sunday, November 19th 1:00-4:00 PM for any and all who would like to “party” while we create.

A few tips for making the floral arrangements:

Store your pumpkins in a cool dry place.

Cut the top off wide enough for your arrangement and clean out pumpkin of all seeds and pulp. (Note: please do this before you come to the workshop, too.)

After soaking oasis, fit it into a plastic cup and insert it into the pumpkin.

Condition your flowers a day ahead and use plenty of greens.

Transport your pumpkin(s) in a box, which we can give to the buyers to put into their cars.

November 19th workshop: Please bring some flowers and greens. I will have more of both as well. Thank you for your support!

Youth Activities

By Joyce Fall

The Youth Activities committee met with 12 second graders at Tuckahoe Elementary School on October 24th for our pumpkin floral design project. While the students ate their lunch, the book "The Saved Seed" was read and we learned about saving and planting a pumpkin seed, nurturing it, and watching it grow. Afterwards the students were given pumpkins

with flowers and greens to choose from. They quickly became focused, showing their creative flower arranging skills. (We may have some future garden club members in the making.) At the end they were happy with their results and thrilled that they were able to take their arrangements home. It was as much fun for us as it was for them. Committee members participating were Joyce Fall, Carol Froehlich, Pat Getz, Lynda Martin, and Jane Robinson.



Ways and Means

By Margi Melnick

There will be lots of good things for sale at the Ways and Means table this month – thanks in part to YOU! In addition to Tools of the Trade items, please bring seasonal donations that will appeal to our members. The Ways and Means table can help you prepare for the holidays, and we'll be helping our club treasury as well. Bring your donations around 9:15 to be ready for pricing.

Horticulture

By Christine Wegman

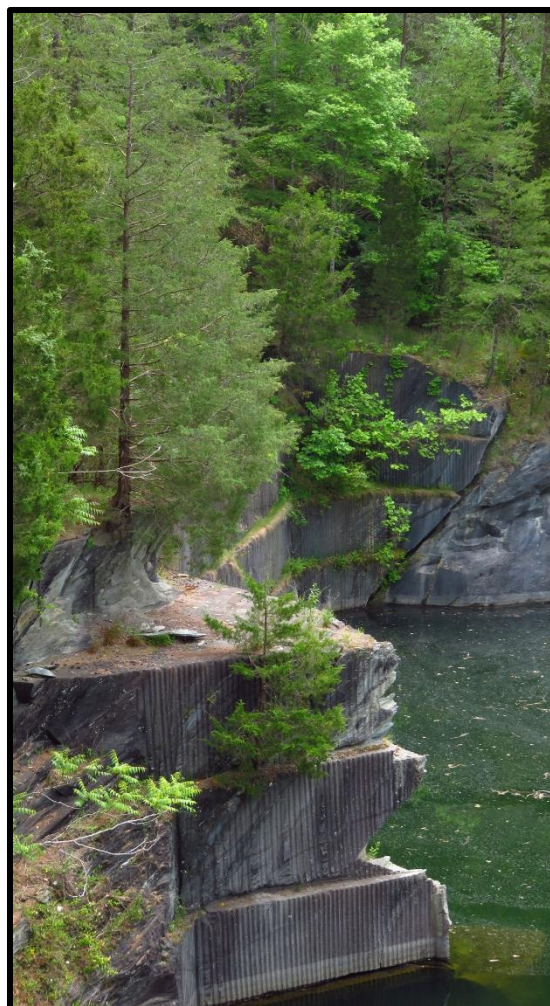
The Quarry Gardens at Schuyler, Virginia

Last Friday Charlie and I, along with two friends, visited a unique public garden in Schuyler (pronounced SKY-ler), Virginia. Schuyler is located about 30 miles south of Charlottesville, and is known for two things. In the beginning of the 20th century the town was founded as the center of a large soapstone mining industry. Soapstone is a unique stone, made of compressed talc and other, harder, minerals. It is a durable, attractive dark gray material used for sinks and kitchen and laboratory countertops. It is impervious to heat and



stains. Today other

materials, such as granite and quartz have eclipsed soapstone, but it is still available and one mining company still operates in Schuyler. Schuyler's other claim to fame is as the home of Earl Hammer, who wrote "The Waltons", and as you come into the town a sign advertises books autographed by John-Boy. Continuing out of town a little, you come upon the Quarry Gardens.



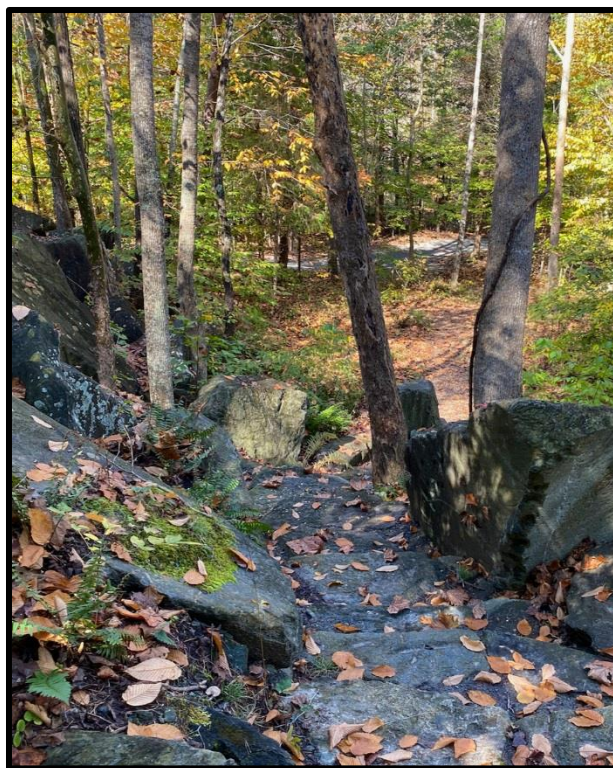
The Gardens are part of a 600-acre property owned by Bernice and Armand Thieblot, pictured below with their dog, Schuylar, in a picture taken by Tom Daly. The Thieblots bought the property in 1991 as a weekend getaway, and the area around which the garden is developed contains five decommissioned soapstone quarries, which have filled with water and are now two separate pools. The site had been used as a dump, and the first few years were dedicated to clearing out the tons of trash heaved over the edge of the quarries. The inspiration for the gardens came from a trip to Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and a visit to the Bucharth Gardens, which is at the site of a former limestone quarry. For those of you who have visited Bucharth Gardens, you will remember it as a glorious flower garden that brings the bedding style to a whole new level. The Quarry Garden could not be more different.

In 2013, after retiring from their education design consulting firm in Baltimore, the Thieblots commissioned a geologic study of the property which revealed that most of the soil is alkaline, due to the underlying soapstone. This alkalinity creates a unique forest environment, which does not support the usual hollies, rhododendron, azaleas, and mountain laurel found in piedmont forests. In their place is a wide variety of magnolia, oak, paw-paw, tupelo, mulberry, dogwood and redbud. The property

contains 550 species of native plants, more than any other botanical garden in Virginia. The Thieblots determined to maintain the natural beauty of the place, and although they have imported a number of plants to enhance the gardens, they have limited their selection to plants within 15 miles of the property, in order to maintain the unique nature of the garden.

The Thieblots placed 400 acres under a conservation easement, which protects the area from future development, and dedicated 40 acres to a public garden, which opened in 2017.

Visit quarrygardensatschuyler.com to make an appointment and plan your tour, which costs a modest \$10 per person or \$5 per child aged 10 or under. As the website advises, “The main trail is just under a mile in length, with no paved surfaces. There is a 60-foot difference in elevation, made somewhat easier to navigate by 163 rock stairs, and no fences—so this is not a place for flimsy shoes, strollers, pets, or loose children.” There is a collection of walking sticks at the start of the tour and I’m glad I opted to take one.



If you are unable to schedule a regular tour and the owners are available, you may be able to schedule a private tour with one of them for \$25 a person. We scheduled a private tour with Armand and were very glad we did so. The tour lasted 3 hours and, even though there were almost no flowers in bloom and little color left on the trees after the first hard frost of the season, the tour was very interesting and our host was a delightful guide. The tour began in the well-appointed visitors center with a history of the soapstone industry in Schuyler. As it turns out, soapstone is a rare material only found in Brazil, Finland, and the seam in the Blue Ridge centered around Schuyler. We then went outside and walked the two-mile trail around the quarries. The diversity of native trees and perennials in such a small

area is really amazing. One site that struck me in the demonstration garden was a small fern growing next to a prickly pear cactus: both growing in the same sunny gravelly soil, both thriving in the same dry exposure. We also saw an additional 14 varieties of fern growing in more traditional moist, shady environments. Altogether it was a pleasant hike around the two pools that have filled the quarries since they were decommissioned, and we plan to go back again sometime in late May or early June when the garden is at its best. We can anticipate seeing trillium, coreopsis, wild geranium, crane fly orchid, mayapple, and Carolina rose, to name only a few.

Floral Outreach By Renee Bayes

Club members AnnMarie Fay and Renee Bayes presented an evening of floral design to the Camelot Garden Club in Annandale on October 11th.



Liaison Report - Mark Your Calendars

11/18/2023 Garden Talk: Gardening with Deer, 10:30 to 11:30 am, fee, must register, Green Spring Gardens <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/greenspring>

11/30-12/3/2023 Holiday Wreath Workshops at Hillwood Estate Museum & Gardens, <https://hillwoodmuseum.org/events>

Garden Therapy

By Pat Getz

The Garden Therapy committee kicked off the new club year on October 12th with the preschoolers at Glebe Elementary School. The program followed our tried and true format of beginning by reading a story, followed by a song, and then a hands-on craft project done by the children. Our October theme was all about pumpkins. Susan Scotti read the story "Seed, Sprout, Pumpkin Pie" by Jill Esbaum and passed around pumpkin seeds for the students to examine. Margi Melnick led everyone in singing "Five Little Pumpkins", incorporating fun movements into the singing, which the children loved. Our craft project was making pumpkin floral arrangements, assisted by the 'garden ladies' and their classroom aides. Each child got a small hollowed-out pumpkin, and then were able to choose a variety of flowers, greens, and stickers to make and decorate their designs. The children were very excited and creative in decorating the pumpkins and proud of their final products, which they were able to take home. In addition to Susan, and Margi, Mary Kudless, Mary Sliwa, and Pat Getz participated in the October program. This year's class has 13 students and is a little larger than previous years when there were usually 9 or 10 students; nevertheless the program was still very manageable. Also, the class has a new teacher this year, Maria Donna Bejerano, who was very welcoming and enthusiastic about continuing the garden therapy program.



Floral Design Workshop

By Kate Abrahams

On October 24th, RSGC members presented a floral design workshop at the Langston-Brown Community Center in Arlington from 11:00 to 12:30. Sheila Moore and AnnMarie Fay demonstrated autumn designs to the audience. Many questions were answered, and ideas shared about using garden plants and roadside finds, as well as topics such as using glycerin to preserve magnolia leaves. The designs that AnnMarie and Sheila created were raffled off at the end of the demonstration to members of the audience.



Small arrangements were given away to all participants at the end of the program. Mary Lunger, Sharon Siems, Janis Gunel, and Imelda Rowe created the arrangements the day before.



Espoma Grant Awarded to Senior Outreach

By Tina Foutz

It was a gorgeous sunny day on October 26, 2023 among fabulous Halloween decorations and a huge pumpkin patch when Rock Spring Garden Club was presented a grant award by Bonnie Satterthwaite, Territory Sales Manager for The Espoma Company, and Bobby Lewis, Vice President of Marketing for locally owned Meadows Farms. In the spring, Senior Outreach requested the grant to help with the installation of the memorial garden at Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residence in honor of Georgia Shaw. A few months went by, then they were informed they received the grant for \$250 of Espoma products!

Mary Marshall Assisted Living Residence provides assisted living housing for low-income seniors (55+) with serious mental illness or intellectual or developmental disabilities. It provides a warm and supportive environment that empowers residents to lead full, rewarding lives. Mary Marshall is operated by Volunteers of America with funding from Arlington County.



Members of the Senior Outreach Committee, AnnMarie Fay and Liddy Schwartz, attended the presentation along with representatives of Mary Marshall. They all shared sentiments of the importance of community projects. Bonnie was especially touched by RSGC's facility selection for our Senior Outreach. Bonnie and Bobby also shared that their family owned businesses especially enjoy working with community focused organizations like ours and look forward to future partnerships. RSGC presented Bonnie with an apron and AnnMarie and Liddy selected the products and our great helpers at Meadows Farms loaded them in the Mary Marshall van. Mary Marshall is graciously storing the products. Senior Outreach will document the use of the products and the site for RSGC's submission of the project for award consideration that is scheduled to be announced at the national convention of NGC in Denver, CO in June 2024. Meadow Farms offers wonderful discounts for Very Important Planters (VIPs). Sign up at <https://www.meadowfarms.com/vip-signup/>





Liaison Focus - Blue & Gold Star Program By Tina Foutz

RSGC is part of such a wonderful and dynamic organization of garden clubs. Being part of both Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs - regionally part of the South Atlantic Region, and National Capital Area Garden Clubs - regionally part of the Central Atlantic Region, all under the National Garden Clubs, Inc (NGC). Some programs and initiatives carry through the national, regional, state, and district programs. I'll focus on one area each month to keep RSGC members in the loop of these exciting topics, their history and new aspects.

This month, in league with Veterans' Day, let's talk about the Blue & Gold Star Programs. The [current list](#) of memorials lists RSGC's past successful applications for Blue Star Memorials through Virginia and the National Capital Area Garden Clubs, one at the former Henry Gate at Fort Myer.

The Blue Star Program honors all who serve in the United States Armed Services. It all began with the planting of 8,000 Dogwood trees (fun that it's Virginia's State flower) by the New Jersey Council of Garden Clubs in 1944 as a living memorial to veterans of World War II. In 1945 NGC adopted the Blue Star Highway system across the USA. **Why Blue Star?** Because it had become an icon in World War II and was seen on flags and banners in homes for sons and daughters away at war as well as in churches and businesses.

NGC clubs also work with Gold Star Families to honor our fallen heroes with Gold Star Markers. Gold Star Families is a non-profit organization created to provide support to those who have lost a loved one in service to our country through the United States Armed Forces. Their mission is to offer honor, hope and healing through remembering fallen heroes by coming together. **Why Gold Star?** Like the Blue Star, Gold Star came from the custom of families of service members hanging a banner called a service flag in the window of their homes. The tribute line on the Gold Star Families Memorial By-Way Marker is: A tribute to All Gold Star Families – Honor – Hope - Healing. Gold Star Families Code – HONOR · HOPE · HEALING



Unfortunately, some of the plaques have been stolen and sold for scrap so bolts must be filed down so it cannot be easily removed.

Currently, Sewah Studios installs all Blue Star and Gold Star Memorials processed through the NGC. It takes approximately 12 weeks for delivery of the plaque from the time the order is received after approval.

When a Blue or Gold Star Memorial is dedicated, typically the NGC President, NGC Blue Star/Gold Star Memorial Chairman, State Blue Star/Gold Star Memorial Chairman, Gold Star Families President for Gold Star Families Markers, State President, District Director, State Executive Board, local garden club members, organizations involved in the project, appropriate city or state officials and veterans groups are invited and attend.

Both programs require that a memorial honors all members of the United States Armed Services and not a specific individual. Also, all memorial markers are produced to specific standards, so you will see the same marker throughout the country.

A highway dedicated as a Blue Star Memorial Highway is the result of a successful application to the state legislature. Blue Star Memorials at a national cemetery must be approved by The Department of Veterans Affairs, National Cemetery System.

How does a garden club get involved? A club, with or without another cooperating organization, raises the funds for the purchase of the plaque (costs is about \$2000), arranges permission for placement, installs the memorial, and arranges maintenance of the site. The State Chairman, State President, and NGC BS & GSF Chairman must approve the application. Examples of the cooperating organizations include local Veterans organizations, i.e. American Legion, VFW, DAV, etc., local high school students, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc., and local Gold Star Families groups to fund Gold Star Markers.

Associated award:

Landscaping of the most outstanding Blue Star OR Gold Star Families Memorial Marker landscaping projects receive Certificates of Merit. The Blue or Gold Star Memorial and landscaping may be part of a highway department rest area maintained by the department. Project may have been continuous, but major landscaping must be completed within two years. Project may be a replacement of a destroyed or long neglected landscape. Awards are given to single member garden club - small club, medium club, large club, group of member clubs councils, districts, groups of clubs, councils, etc., and State Garden Club – small club, medium club, large club.

The program also has the following Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/NationalGardenClubsBlueStarMemorials/>

Photo Gallery

October field trip to Grateful Gardeners Farm from Kate Abrahams





**Old Dominion Chrysanthemum Society
Show, October 28-29, 2023, Falls Church**

From Pat Getz





From Renee Bayes: Scenes from Italy



Brazilian Jasmine, Venice



Olive tree, Florence



Hotel design, Florence



Monterey cypress, American WWII Memorial, outside Florence



**Gardens tended by monks at winery,
in Tuscany**



Sycamore tree, Rome



Umbrella pines, Rome

Central Atlantic Region Conference in Corning NY
From Thea McGinnis





RSGC may sponsor family members and our youth program participants in the contest below. Entries due January 15, 2024. Contact Thea McGinnis for more information.

Youth Poetry Contest 2023-2024 Theme: "I Spy With My Little Eye, Something Green Outside - Celebrating Our Green World"



Excite and encourage our Youth to express and explore their creative thoughts through different types of poetry. NGC's Poetry Contest enables our Youth to embrace their creativity through the art of writing. Be imaginative and join the winners to see your poetry in a booklet.

Only regional winners are considered in the judging for national winners. Contest winners will not be allowed to win two consecutive years. All of the winning entries will be compiled into a booklet, which will be made available to the winners.

Eligibility:

- **Special Education: Kindergarten through Ninth Grade.**
- **English as a second language: Kindergarten through Ninth Grade.**
- **General Education: Kindergarten through Ninth Grade.**

Dates for Submission:

- **Club entries must be sent to Jo Sellers.**
- **State Winners must be sent to Regional Chairman by February 1.**
- **Regional Winners must be sent to National Chairman by March 1.**

Guidelines:

- **All entries must be typed and titled**
- **Include name, address, age, grade, and school of participant on the back of entry.**
- **Sponsoring garden club and state garden club name must also be identified.**
- **Sponsoring garden club may be that of a grandparent.**
- **All entries become the property of National Garden Clubs, Inc.**
- **Poems do not have to rhyme.**
- **Poems may be traditional verse, acrostics, blank verse, cinquains, diamond poems, limerick, or Haiku.**
- **The theme should not be used as the title to any poetry. When judging, the title is worth 10 points.**

Scale of Points Title: 10% Content: 40% Creativity: 30% Style: 20% Total: 100%

For more information, contact: Jo Sellers josellers@cox.net 703 451-7037



NGC President's Project

Planting for Pollinators

National Garden Clubs President Brenda Moore wants to encourage NGC members to make our gardens more than just beautiful. That's why she created the National Garden Clubs Pollinator Garden Certification program. Our gardens can support birds, bees and other insects, and this program provides the incentive to take additional steps to make sure we're providing all the components to help pollinators thrive.

We've created a checklist to make sure you have everything you need to support pollinators:

Food sources Water Source Areas to raise young

You probably already have several plants that provide pollen and nectar. But could you add a few native plants that are perhaps a better source of food? Could you add a shrub that has berries for wintertime nutrition? You don't have to install a pond, but what about a birdbath? Consider adding a heater for fresh water in the winter. Many of us have birdhouses in our gardens, but if not, a small, inconspicuous log or brush pile can provide a safe place for insects to nest.

In addition to providing food, water, and shelter, think about your gardening practices and what you can do better to support pollinators. Naturalists are encouraging us to “leave the leaves” in the fall for insects that overwinter in leaves, and to wait until spring for garden clean up since some insect larvae stay in hollow stems until spring.

We all want to do what we can to support pollinators—their lives depend on us. By making a few tweaks to our gardens we can make them feel right at home!

Apply on line at gardenclub.org (under programs tab) to have your yard recognized as a National Garden Clubs Certified Pollinator Garden! Once approved, you will have the option to order an NGC Certified Pollinator Garden Yard Sign!

Gardening for Wildlife

As garden club members we should be aiming to practice sustainability in our personal landscapes. Habitats are being lost to development and we can hold the key to preserving them for future generations. As development pushes natural habitats further and further back, we can encourage wildlife to co-exist with us in our own landscapes. Biodiversity is a key to successful wildlife habitat. You get to choose the wildlife you want to encourage. It may be only birds, small mammals, and insects. You can provide food, water, cover and places for animals and insects to raise their young. Work to reduce areas of lawn. Make conscious choices when choosing plants for your garden. Look for plants that are native and keep away from invasive species. Good plant choices provide fruit and seeds for native wildlife. Native trees make good choices. Keep a clean water source such as a small fountain or birdbath, or if you have enough property, build a pond. Provide a wood pile or leave a dead tree. Check the NGC website for the application and get YOUR GARDEN registered as a National Garden Club Certified Wildlife Habitat. You will receive a certificate and may purchase a plaque to display in your garden. I am looking forward to seeing these plaques in member gardens across the United States.

Apply on line at gardenclub.org (under programs tab) to have your garden registered as a National Garden Club Certified Wildlife Habitat! Once approved, you will have the option to purchase the NGC signage to display in your garden.