

March 2026 EDITION OF THE VFGC, INC. NEWSLETTER



ROOTED

March 16, Piedmont district meeting
March 19-22 SAR Convention
March 23-26 Flower Show School, Course 2



Dear VFGC members,

I am almost afraid to think it, let alone write it. After all the cold weather with rain, ice and snow, the early daffodils are starting to bloom! The weatherman says the highs today will be in the 70's! Spring?! I know, some of our worst snows have come in March.

Thank you to all Club Presidents who have sent copies of their Annual Report to your District President, to Gail Goodrich Harwood and to me. You and your club members have accomplished so much!

Thank you to Genny Chase and her committee who have worked so hard to make our annual Convention in Williamsburg an event to remember. Celebrating America's inspiring past, having our convention in Williamsburg was a natural choice. Come see the acclaimed spring blooms and walk the historic streets with your fellow garden club members. Who knows who you might see... our NGC President... a founding father... a world-famous floral designer?! More about the convention follows. If you haven't signed up, please send your registration in to Claudia Cosby soon.

Thank you to Frances Thrash and to Glenda Knowles too! Information about upcoming Flower Show School and Landscape Design School are also included in this edition of *Rooted*.

Thank you to Heidi Sage and to all Clubs who applied for an award. The results will be announced at the Convention. I look forward to seeing you there!

Sally

Sally Harrison, VFGC President, 2025-2027



92ND ANNUAL VIRGINIA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS CONVENTION

UPDATE

Time is getting close to the start of the VFGC 92nd Convention, if you haven't made your Williamsburg Lodge hotel reservations, DO IT NOW!! The rooms are filling up quickly. This convention promises to be a "ONE OF A KIND"!!! Use the below link to make your Lodge reservations:

Copy and paste into your browser: <https://book.passkey.com/e/51019193>
The deadline for hotel reservations is **March 25, 2026**. (If rooms are still available)



For just \$27.00 the hotel has given us a special discounted ticket to take in the inspiring past of **Historic Colonial Williamsburg**. The ticket is for your **entire stay, not just one day entrance**, and is available on the registration form that follows.

**TOUR OF HISTORIC GARDENS
AND LUNCH AT SHIELD TAVERN**

There are still a few openings for the guided walking tours at 10:00 AM and 10:30 AM, April 20th. The Horticulture Department of Colonial Williamsburg will conduct the tours of three different social levels of historic Colonial Williamsburg Gardens, followed with lunch at Shields Tavern.



LAVENDER PRESENTATION AND WORKSHOP

UPDATE

Currently the Two Bees Lavender presentation and workshop is full on April 20th. **HOWEVER**, for those who would like to participate, we are **TENTATIVELY** planning a second presentation and workshop on Tuesday, April 21st, at 2:00 PM. Two Bees Lavender a local business born from a passion for lavender and love of community, coming from “Clifton”, their historic farm in Kilmarnock, Virginia for this event. **THIS WORKSHOP WILL NOT INCLUDE LUNCH**, and the price for just the lavender presentation and workshop will be \$25.00 – contact Claudia Cosby, VFGC Convention registrar to put your name on the list, the registration information can be found on the VFGC website.

ATTENTION: If you would like to attend the lunch at Shields Tavern on April 20th, we are opening this lunch to other than garden tour and lavender workshop attendees. Contact Claudia Cosby, VFGC registrar, to make a reservation. (registration information can be found on the VFGC website), Cost for **JUST** the lunch (no tour or workshop) will be \$50.00.



**NEW ZEALAND'S 2025 DESIGNER OF THE YEAR
FRANCINE THOMAS
TO BE FEATURED FLORAL DESIGNER**

Francine Thomas has she just returned from Sydney, Australia after demonstrating and visiting the venue where the upcoming World Flower Show will be held in March of 2027. Mrs. Thomas will be representing New Zealand on stage, exhibiting and competing in the World Flower Show.

What a treat we have during our 92nd Annual Convention, to have Francine as our featured floral demonstrator. She has travelled throughout New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom, Wales and up and down the East Coast of the USA demonstrating, teaching and judging.

Francine will be coming to us LIVE FROM NEW ZEALAND with her fabulous “out of the box deigns”!! This will be an interactive presentation where you - convention attendees - will have the opportunity to ask questions about her designs, New Zealand and the world flower show. She has a very energetic sense of humor which can be contagious and is evident in her floral presentations. **Francine says:**

**“THE FINEST PLEASURES IN LIFE ARE THE UNEXPECTED ONES!”
COME AND EXPERIENCE THE UNEXPECTED AT
THE 2026 CONVENTION!!**

UPDATE

As time is limited for design workshops at our convention, Mrs. Thomas has opened her schedule to offer Zoom Workshops – these workshops will be

interactive where you will create a design, and Francine will critique it live.

Francine will teach a design that is most requested by the participants, either traditional or creative; there will be a choice of two dates on which to participate in these workshops. You may want to incorporate this workshop into one of your garden club meetings. (to make this happen you will need to have access to a computer and screen). A sign-up sheet will be available on the Registration table at convention; cost will be determined by number of participants; if you are interested in receiving more information contact Claudia Cosby, VFGC Convention registrar.

There will be so much more to do, learn and enjoy during this two-day convention. We have set aside a special “meet and greet” time before dinner and design program, on Monday night, April 20th, plan to come and enjoy getting to know and spending time with fellow garden club members discussing the VFGC’s “Bright Future”! Another choice for your afternoon, post-convention after the morning session, on April 21st, along with touring Colonial Williamsburg, with your \$27.00 admission ticket, or signing up for the second lavender workshop, will be the opportunity to take in the Historic Garden Week homes in Williamsburg.

Shopping with vendors on April 20th will include the Native Plant Society of Williamsburg – John Clayton Chapter. They will be available to answer questions and give you the opportunity to purchase native plants. Two Bees Lavender has wonderful lavender based products for sale. Catalpa Lane Pottery, David and Keiko from Ohio, will be bringing their unique “one of a kind” containers – those of you who are participating in the upcoming “Fine Arts and Flowers” at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in October, you might want to take a look to find that special container!! Stephen Dalton will be returning as a vendor bringing his distinctive and innovative Jewelry. Kimberly French will be joining the vendors on April 21 with her beautiful fashions; just to name a few of the vendors.

A very special display has been guided by Kathy Ward incorporating the VFGC six districts. These six district designers have been hard at work bringing their ideas to fruition, for the first of its kind at any VFGC convention, a special presentation of a 3D “**Virginia Landscape Mural**” – this will highlight the uniqueness of each district with a new concept of “showing off” our entire state of Virginia, while honoring all six district members and their district presidents.

Brenda McManaway will be heading up the 50/50 silent auction of floral containers and accessories, if you are downsizing or just need more space bring it to convention and place it for sale. To let Brenda know you will be bringing a piece for this silent auction or for more information contact Brenda at Brendamc@shentel.net.

Submitted by:
VFGC Convention Chairman
Genny Chase

Convention Registration Form -- April 20-21, 2026

“Virginia: Inspiring Past, Bright Future”

Registration: Please complete form; make check payable to “VFGC 2026 Convention” and mail (**postmarked by March 31**) to the convention registrar:

Claudia Cosby, 3015 Mount Hill Drive Midlothian, VA, 23113-3923 cosbych1205@gmail.com; 804-794-7798.

Name _____ Phone (____) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail address _____

Club _____ District _____

Select Your Attendance Options:

(Please select **TIME**)

1 **Monday April 20**, morning Guided Garden Walking Tour and lunch at Shields Tavern \$ _____
\$70.00
10:00 AM _____ **OR** 10:30 AM _____

2 Wreath Workshop and lunch at Shields Tavern 10:00 AM **FULL** _____ \$ _____
LUNCH AT SHIELDS TAVERN 1:00 PM \$
50.00

Monday April 20, evening Reception (Cash Bar) Dinner and Design Program **\$110.00**

Colonial Williamsburg special access ticket for Length of stay **\$27.00** \$ _____

TUESDAY April 21, morning coffee/tea bar, opening of convention with presentation of flag, Memorial Service, Business meeting **\$6.00** \$ _____
****TENTATIVE WREATH WORKSHOP – NO \$25.00**
LUNCH
2:00 PM (IF THERE IS ENOUGH INTEREST)

ALL ATTENDEES MUST Add Registration Fee \$ 18.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

**** NEW ADDITIONS**

VFGC CONVENTION PROGRAM ADS

Clubs, Districts, and business organizations are encouraged to place ads in the 2026 Convention Program. This is a great way to promote an upcoming club or district event, celebrate a milestone, milestone, or honor a special club member.

The program page size will be: 5.5" by 8.5"

Cost: \$50 for half-page ad or \$100 for a full-page ad.

Deadline for ad orders is March 15.

Checks may be made to VFGC (convention ad in memo line) and submitted to Linda Nau, VFGC Treasurer. Indicate Club or other organization and size of ad purchased.

Send to:

Linda Nau

1810 Ethelred Court

Midlothian, VA 23113-3400

Ad copy must be submitted by March 15th in non-pdf format, preferably MS Word. Any photos or graphics work are best submitted as separate jpeg files. Submit to Gail Goodrich Harwood, program designer, at: gailev@aol.com. Gail can help with your ad design if desired.

Sample half-page ad:



MEMBERSHIP:

Over the past five years, the number of VFGC clubs and overall membership has been on a decline. At the President's Forum meeting on February 10th, club leaders shared creative and practical ideas to help recruit new members-and, just as importantly, keep current members engaged and inspired.

Here are some key takeaways from the discussion:

- **Spread the word.** Invite guests to your meeting through social media, local newspapers/newsletters, church bulletins, and community boards.
- **Roll out the welcome mat.** Have a designated greeter to introduce guests and make them feel at home.
- **Keep your social media fresh.** Social media has far-reaching effects - regular updates, photos, and highlights can spark interest and showcase your club's personality.
- **Know what works for your club.** Use surveys, focus groups and open discussions to learn what your members enjoy and what they'd like to see more of.
- **Pair up with a mentor.** A sponsor or mentor for new members helps build friendships and makes the transition into club life easy and welcoming.
- **Set clear expectations.** Make sure your new members understand club's activities, opportunities, and commitments so everyone feels comfortable and informed.
- **Make it personal .** Strong personal connections are the heart of a successful club – take time to connect.
- **Offer engaging programs.** Interesting speakers, hands-on workshops, and meaningful programs and projects keep members excited and involved.
- **Above all: Keep it simple, fun and interesting.** A warm, welcoming club culture is the best invitation of all.

CLUB NEWS:

Rapid Ann Garden Club:

Ten members of the Rapid Ann Garden Club got together on Monday, December 1, to make holiday centerpieces for the Senior Center in Orange, Virginia. Members brought greens from their own yards and member Sharon Mohrmann brought decorations.





Buckingham-Dillwyn Garden Club:

The Buckingham-Dillwyn Garden Club, in between snowstorms, enjoyed their Annual Christmas luncheon at MiPa's Table in Pamplin, where they enjoyed a delicious buffet, after which everyone participated in our annual Christmas ornament exchange.



Seated: Suzanne Vandegrift, Elfreide Wolford, Barbara Kragh, Jeanette Reck, Barbara Knabe
Standing: Pam Murray, Denise Schmitt, Donna McRae-Jones, Pat Howe, Elsie Towler, Pat Husky, Winnie Brown, Marie Baker, Pat Johnson, Jackie Fairbarns, Beverly Edgett, Barbara Wheeler, Kay Carter, Glenda Harris.

LEARNING IS FUN!

Flower Show School and Landscape Design School are open to any garden club member! Whether or not you are considering becoming a Flower Show Judge or certified Landscape Design Consultant, consider signing up for one or both schools. The details follow:

Flower Show School *Course II*

A National Garden Clubs, Inc. School

March 23-26, 2026

Freemason St. Baptist Church

400 E. Freemason Street

Norfolk, VA 23510

757-625-7579

Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs



VFGC President – Sally Harrison

For more information contact:

Flower Show School Chairman – Frances Thrash
2109 Cocoa Circle, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-2213

francesthresh@cox.net

757-481-3484 or 757-478-5791

Flower Show School – Course II

Date: March 23-26, 2026

Location: Freemason Street Baptist Church, 400 E. Freemason St., Norfolk, VA 23510

Design & Flower Show Procedure: Cathy Waitinas

Cathy will teach tables, petites, & flower show procedure.

Horticulture: Jan Griffin

Jan will teach dracaenas with emphasis on sanseverias and daffodils.

Attendance at all Sessions is Required for Credit

Schedule:		
Monday, Mar 23	3:45 – 6 pm	Flower Show Procedure
Tuesday, Mar 24	8:00 – 9:00 am	FSP Exam
	9:15 am – 3:30 pm	Horticulture/Lunch
	3:45 – 5:45 pm	Point Scoring Test
Wed., Mar 25	8:00 – 9:00 am	Horticulture Exam
	9:15 am – 3:30 pm	Design
	3:45 – 5:45 pm	Point Scoring Test
Thursday, Mar 26	9:00 – 10:00 am	Design Examination

Hotel Information: Hotel is on your own, suggest Sleep Inn at Lake Wright, 1521 premium Outlets Blvd, Norfolk, VA 23502, 757-462-6251. (This is near the outlets and Ikea, just off the interstate – 10 minutes at most to the church.)

Required Books to have:

Handbook for Flower Shows, 2017 Edition, NGC Exhibiting & Judging, both available on the NGC Website for purchase or download.

Flower Show Procedure will cover review of Standard & Specialty Flower Show requirements, standard system of awarding, duties of flower show chairman & committee, writing a flower show schedule, and an explanation of Botanical Arts Photography Section & Botanical Arts Photography Award.

Horticulture will cover staging horticulture innovatively, petite horticulture, general requirements for horticulture Top Exhibitor Awards, judging qualities on the point scoring form, and commenting vocabulary,

Design will include table designs with the role of balance, color and texture emphasized, creative staging of tables, petite design and Top Exhibitor Awards for tables and petites, judging qualities on the Point Scoring form, and commenting vocabulary and procedures.

Cathy Waitinas

Flower Show Procedure & Design

Cathy Waitinas is an NGC Master Accredited Flower Show Judge and FSS Design and Flower Show Procedure Instructor. She is a member of Arissa and Garden Guild Garden Clubs, CFAA and the Society of American Florists. Cathy is an NGC Board Member Chairman of the TN Federation of Garden Clubs' State Headquarters. She has taught school and served 30+ years in the nuclear industry in safety and technical writing. Cathy and Jerry have 3 daughters and live out in the county near Oliver Springs where she has a woodworking shop in her basement. Cathy's carpentry projects show up in many of her design structures

Jan Griffin

Horticulture

After moving from the Seattle area to Florida all the plants I knew about would not thrive in Florida's climate. I joined a Garden Club and started my quest for learning about other varied and interesting plants. I became Flower Show Judge. Now I teach Floral Design classes as well as horticulture for Flower Show Schools and have developed several horticulture and design programs for clubs, judges, and civic groups.

Being actively involved in The Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and Florida Flower Show Judges keeps me busy. It has been my honor to serve as horticulture chairman for six state flower shows and several District shows. My interests other than Garden Club are my family, golf, and working in my friend's florist shop. My comment to all my wonderful design friends is that you need great horticulture to create great designs

REGISTRATION FORM: Flower Show School-Course II

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone _____

Club _____ District _____

Credit _____ Non-Credit _____

Full Course with/without exam \$150 _____
 (Includes tuition, two lunches,
 and reserved seating on Front
 rows.)

Flower Show Procedure (Mon.) \$40 _____

Horticulture & Lunch (Tues.) \$75 _____

Design & Lunch (Wed.) \$75 _____

Manual will be e-mailed (free of
 charge)

Printed Manual available at \$10 _____

Registration if preordered.

TOTAL _____

Dietary Restrictions _____

****No refunds after Feb 23, 2026**

Make check payable to **Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.** with **Flower Show Schools** in the memo line and mail to:

Registrar Val Story, 2122 Whithorn Hill, Jeffersonton, VA 22724-1873, 540-272-0975, valstory@aol.com

This course is available to all those having an interest in the beauty and care of our environment through landscaping



LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL

Course 2, Series 30

Monday and Tuesday

April 13, 14, 2026

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

Education Classroom

1800 Lakeside Drive

Richmond, VA 23228-4700

Phone (804) 693-9393

Sponsored by

VIRGINIA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

SCHEDULE

Monday, April 13, 2026		
Time	Activity	Instructor
8:00 – 8:20am – 8:20am	Registration Welcome	

Currently, area hotels cannot offer us a block of rooms.

Suggestion is to call to make your own reservation at the hotel of your choice - they offer discounts if you are a AAA member, as well as other promotional discounts.

8:30am – 9:30am	Overused, Often Invasive and Native Alternatives in Your Area		Laurie Fox
9:40am – 10:40am	Designing for Pollinators and Wildlife		David Pippin
10:50am – 11:50am	Accessible, Enabling and Therapeutic Gardens		Laurie Fox
11:50am – 1:10pm	LUNCH (The Café is convenient)		
1:20pm - 2:20pm	Plants in the Landscape		Laurie Fox
2:30pm – 3:30pm	Supplemental Subject -Art and Nature Appreciation		David Pippin
6:00pm Group Dinner – place to be announced – pay on your own			
Tuesday, April 14, 2026			
8:30am - 9:30am	Landscape Design Process		Neal Beasley
9:40am - 10:40am	Development of North American Landscape Design		Peggy Singlemann
10:50am - 11:50am	Redesign of Areas		Neal Beasley
11:50am - 1:00pm	LUNCH (The Café is convenient)		
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Preservation of Historic Sites and Structures		Peggy Singlemann
2:10pm - 3:10pm	Structures in the Landscape		Neal Beasley
3:15pm	Review – consultants not taking the exam may leave.		
3:30pm	Exam		

INSTRUCTORS

Neal Beasley, ASLA, ISA Certified Arborist

Neal is a Landscape Architect and Certified Arborist with over 25 years of experience in the fields of Horticulture, Arboriculture, Irrigation, Landscape Construction and Public Gardening. Neal studied horticulture at N. C. State University and was formerly the Manager of Horticulture at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden. As an Arborist, he assesses trees during the site analysis to best determine protection strategies or removal. Neal is also on the team of the Timmons Group in Richmond. Neal is the co-author of “Recycling Urban Stormwater: 1050K Street, NW Washington, DC” 2007.

Laurie Fox, Ph.D.

Laurie Fox is a faculty member in the Horticulture department at Virginia Tech and is based at the Hampton Roads Agricultural Research & Extension Center in Virginia Beach, VA where she has extension and research responsibilities. She received her BS & MS degrees in Horticulture from North Carolina State University, with an emphasis on landscape design, ornamental plant production, and weed science, and her Ph.D. from Wageningen University, The Netherlands. Laurie is an author and the publisher of *Best Plants for Hampton Roads - A Landscape and Garden Companion*.

Peggy Singlemann

Peggy Singlemann is nationally known as one of the foremost gardening experts. Her experience in the field is exceeded only by her infectious enthusiasm in sharing knowledge of best practices. She is a familiar figure as the longtime host and co-producer of Virginia’s only TV show, *Virginia Home Grown*, on Virginia Public Media/PBS. Peggy is also prominent in this

field for her transformative role renewing and overseeing the garden and grounds of the historic estate Maymont in Richmond. She holds professional certifications as an arborist, horticulturist, and landscape designer and has greatly expanded knowledge in the gardening/landscape design fields through her national and regional speaking engagements, contributions to publications, and consulting work via her business, RVA Gardener LLC. In 2022, the Virginia General Assembly presented a commendation to Peggy for her outstanding guidance, restoration, and preservation of Maymont’s gardens, grounds, and arboretum over 38 years of service.

David Pippin

David graduated from Virginia Tech in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education. Prior to founding David Pippin, Inc. in 2000, he became known for his knowledge and creative talents in a variety of horticultural and education venues in the Richmond area. In addition to running David Pippin, Inc. he is an adjunct professor in the Hort. Dept, at Reynolds Community College as well as a facilitator and consultant for Virginia Agriculture in the classroom. He is a sought-after designer of inspired floral arrangements, a provider of garden-themed hands-on programs as well as an educator with a wide range of horticultural knowledge and experience.

COURSE REGISTRATION

LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL

Course 2 Series 30 April 13, 14, 2026

Registration Deadline: March 15, 2026

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ VA _____

Zip: _____ + 4 _____ Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Garden Club: _____ District: _____

Check if Refreshing _____ Are you a Master Gardener? yes / no

Is your garden club a member of VFGC? ___Yes ___No

PLEASE CHECK CORRECT BOX

- [] EXAM STUDENT \$100.00
- [] NON-EXAM STUDENT 100.00
- [] SINGLE DAY STUDENT – Monday __ or Tuesday __ 50.00

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

Refunds can be given only for medical emergencies.

LDS will refund all but \$20 if cancellation (other than medical) is within five days of the first class.

Make check payable: **VFGC Landscape Design School**

Mail to: LDS Registrar
Claudia Cosby Phone: 804 794-7798
3015 Mount Hill Drive
Midlothian, VA 23113-3923 E-mail: cosbych1205@gmail.com

LDS Chairman, Glenda Knowles
Email: ggknowles6@gmail.com Phone: 757 651-0401

FLOWER SHOWS, TOURS and EVENTS ARE PLANNED:

For future editions of **ROOTED**, please email your club's announcements to rootedvfgc@gmail.com. There are two announcements in this edition!



Ginter Park Garden Club

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR

12th **SPRING MARKET**

Saturday, April 11, 2026
10 - 3

A Curated Market
featuring
Local Artisans & Vendors

Garden Stuff - Clothing - Jewelry
Unique Artisanal Goods
Bake Sale - White Elephant
Bikini Panini Food Truck

Come shop all things Spring!

St Thomas Episcopal Church
3602 Hawthorne Ave. Richmond VA 23227



From the VFGC Corresponding Secretary –

Please let me know if you have an address, phone number and/or email address change.

Also, if you are not the current Garden Club President, please ask your replacement to provide his or her contact and email information and Club name to me with a copy to Claudia Cosby
Email: cosbych1205@gmail.com for the VFGC Yearbook 2025 - 2027

Thank you,

Dianna Busch
VFGC Corresponding Secretary
Email: diannabusch@comcast.net

THE IDEA EXCHANGE:

While the Old Dominion Gardener (ODG) is published quarterly, **ROOTED** can be sent **monthly when ODG is not**. So please submit articles or information you want to share in **ROOTED** by the 8th of each month to rootedvfgc@gmail.com. **Every club has some news they can share at least once in 2026!**

ODG deadlines are: August 1, November 1, February 1 and May 1. Refer to the back page of ODG for submission instructions.

For either publication, please submit photos as a pdf or in jpeg format. Please submit text in Word format.

Happy almost Spring to All!

Email: rootedvfgc@gmail.com



Taken in the parking lot at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden on Monday, March 2 ...the beginning of thousands of blooms!

