October 2026 EDITION OF THE VFGC, INC. NEWSLETTER



ROOTED



October 7-11 VMFA Fine Arts and Flowers
October 8 Shenandoah District Meeting
October 15 Plant America Grant Deadline
October 15 **ODG Submission Deadline**
October 15 South Central District Meeting
October 19 Piedmont District Meeting
October 24 Southwest District Meeting
October 28 Blue Ridge District Meeting
October 29 Tidewater District Meeting

Dear VFGC members,

Around Virginia, VFGC club members really enjoy getting together for interesting and informative programs and events. Don't miss the section on Club News beginning on page 5. I hope every club will share their news at least once before our VFGC Convention next April.

October is a very busy month for all of us. Members of VFGC clubs from all over Virginia have been invited next week to interpret 38 out of 72 works of art at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts bi-annual Fine Arts and Flowers exhibit in Richmond. VMFA offers several related events to celebrate Fine Arts and Flowers. Just check the VMFA

website https://vmfa.museum. Held every two years, it is always a memorable and inspirational event not to be missed!

All six VFGC District are holding their District meetings in October. I am really looking forward to attending each of them and to seeing so many of you. While the VFGC state awards and SAR regional awards were announced at the Convention in Williamsburg last April, National awards were not announced until the NGC convention in St Louis last May. When I returned, the list of Virginia winners was distributed with a letter to the VFGC Board and Club Presidents on May 11. I will have the distinct honor of presenting a National award to at least one club at each District meeting. Please come to your District meeting to help me congratulate the Award-winning Club members!

The beautiful VFGC ornaments designed by Beacon Designs have arrived! They look great in person…even better than the picture! We have already sold 130 of the 250 originally ordered. As mentioned in ODG, the famous White House ornaments are also designed by Beacon Designs. The order form is included on page 15 of Rooted and in ODG. The preordered ornaments will be distributed at your District meetings this fall. I will have unreserved ornaments for sale at District meetings on a first come basis. I have placed my order. Please place yours. Net proceeds will help fund Scholarships, Awards and other VFGC projects

Thank you for all that you do to support your Club, your District and VFGC!

Very gratefully,

Sally
Sally Harrison, VFGC President, 2025-2027

What Your Yard Is Telling You Before Winter

By Chris White*

October in is a gradual argument about color. It starts in the understory — the dogwoods turning first, then the sourwoods going crimson in the high spots, then the maples coming in waves from the ridges down. The oaks take their time. They always do. By November the whole argument has resolved into bare branches and low-angle light and the particular quiet that comes when the year is winding down.

This is when I like being in people's yards the most. Not because fall is the prettiest season, though it is. Because the things that matter most in a landscape are at their most readable right now.

Look at your trees before the canopy fully drops. You can still see which limbs are pulling away from the trunk, where the bark has cracked along a scaffold limb, where the crown is thinning out ahead of schedule. All of it is right there in front of you, and you have a few weeks of warmth left to schedule any work before the ground hardens. A tree you study in October is a tree you can plan for in winter.

Look at where the water goes when it rains. Standing water after a storm is telling you something honest about your property. It tells you where the clay has compacted, where the grade is moving water toward your foundation, where the soil gives up and ponds. That is the map for what to plant next fall — not a wish list, a map. The yard is drawing it for you every time it rains. You just have to be outside to see it.

Look at what the deer ate and what they didn't. If the beautyberry is intact and the hostas are stripped, the deer have just told you your landscaping preferences for next year. They're consistent. They have opinions, and their opinions are well-informed. A garden designed around what the deer already refuse to eat is a garden that will still be there in March.

Now the doing, before dormancy sets in.

Finish any planting before Thanksgiving. After that, survival rates drop and your window is essentially closed. This is the last honest call of the season — get the roots in while the soil still holds enough warmth to welcome them.

Leave the leaf litter. The leaf layer is the most important wildlife habitat your yard produces. The caterpillars that birds will feed their nestlings on in May are overwintering in those leaves right now. So are native bees, firefly larvae, and dozens of other insects that do work you depend on. Rake the leaves off your lawn if you must — the grass does need to breathe. But leave them in the beds, under the shrubs, in the back corner nobody looks at. A bed that looks untidy in December is a bed that is working.

Leave the seedheads. Coneflowers, black-eyed Susans, native grasses — their seedheads are bird feeders that don't need to be filled. The goldfinches will find them. Cut them in late February if you need to clean up before spring. Let them stand until then. All winter long they are the one reliable food source out there, and the birds know it even if you don't.

Note what needs work in spring. A photo on your phone, a voice memo in the driveway. Memory is optimistic. Notes are honest. Stand in the yard now and write down what you see, because by March you will not remember half of it, and you will remember the wrong half of what you do.

Then let it rest.

The yard is going dormant, and the year has come back around to bare branches and what they reveal. The white oak that Dale has been watering at the drip line is heading

into another winter with better water reserves than it had before. Mrs. Frances's maple has two sealed wounds and one still working on it. The deer are at the edge of Dana's yard, watching the beautyberry, keeping their opinions to themselves for once.
Every yard has a history that goes back further than the house does. The trees were here first. The soil was here first. The animals working through your yard on their seasonal routes were here first. What we've done, when it's worked, is figure out how to work within that history instead of against it.

Pay attention to what your yard is saying in the quiet months. It's saying something.

It always is.

*Chris White is an ISA Certified Arborist from South Carolina with an MS in Horticulture who writes for national and regional publications. He is the author of *The Arborist's Walk* (2026). He speaks to garden clubs, HOA boards, master gardener programs regionally and nationally.

Monarchs are "King" at VDOT

By Connie Sorrel, VFGC Chairman, VA Wildflower Program/ Roadside Beautification

Have you seen one of the many Monarch habitats or pollinator waystations VDOT has developed. One can be found at the Interstate 95 North Dale City Safety Rest Area. This year, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) will be adding 135 acres of Monarch Butterfly and pollinator projects, including 107 acres in Hampton Roads, twenty-two acres in the Richmond area! This means that VDOT will have contributed over 8,000 acres of property for its Wildflower and Pollinator Habitat Program since it started the Program in 2015.

The program started with four planted pollinator waystations in 2015. The plants were specifically chosen to be highly effective in attracting pollinators. Twenty more habitat sites were added the following year. Now, there are hundreds of sites across the Commonwealth covering more than 8,000 acres of VDOT right of way.

After six successful years of the Wildflower and Pollinator Habitat program, VDOT expanded its efforts and joined the Nationwide Monarch Butterfly Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCAA) in 2021. The CCAA is a public- private partnership that commits to conservation activities that benefit monarchs. The network work covers forty-eight states and includes more than forty-five energy and transmission companies and state departments of transportation. These organizations voluntarily commit time, right of way and funding to conduct monarch butterfly-friendly management practices on millions of acres in rights of way.

The Wildflower and Protect Pollinators license plates fund the Pollinator Habitat Program. The plates are available for purchase through the Division of Motor Vehicles.

Plate fees, in addition to registration fees, cost $25.00 annually. For more information about how to procure a plate and support the program can be found at https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/vehicles/license-plates/search/protect-pollinators.





Virginiadot.org/pollinate

https://youtu.be/JXjgzemxXYI?si=G55afzI024j5Qw8D

CLUB NEWS:

Blue Ridge Garden Club of Bedford:

The Blue Ridge Garden Club of Bedford met in September with bud vases and clippers in hand to create designs for shut-ins. Flowers and greenery were provided by members and a local florist. Submitted by Christy Boone



Buckinham-Dillwyn Garden Club:

The Buckingham-Dillwyn Garden Club members met at The Barn in Dillwyn, Va. on Sunday, September 20th to share their knowledge of flower arranging with the local 4-H Group. Their arrangements were then taken and entered into the Five County Fair Floral Design Contest in Farmville, Va. (Permission was given to include photographs of minors). Submitted by Suzanne VanDeGrift





Powhatan Garden Club:

Powhatan Garden club implemented a Pop Up Design Workshop event outside of regular club meetings in the Fall of 2026. We are carrying this into 2027 with two scheduled workshops. Laura Divinski is our chairman and instructor. Her initial focus is to introduce and encourage novice designers to give design a try and to emphasize the types of design and the rules associated in creating them...what are the differences between traditional designs vs creative; what does a judge look for in each design type. Laura covers the basics in purchasing flowers for a specific design type and how to create a design with a specific theme in mind. Each Pop Up Design Workshop focuses on a specific design type. These workshops are also great as a refresher for experienced designers! Submitted by Bonnie Schulkers



Salem Garden Club:

The Salem Garden Club was founded in May 1927 and to kick off our 100th year, we met at historic Preston Place to learn about its Osage Orange tree. Preston Place is the oldest surviving house in Salem, and Preston Place Foundation President Dave Robbins gave us an overview of the structure and history of the house. But the focus of the meeting was the remarkable Osage Orange tree behind the house, the third largest Osage Orange tree in Virginia. Foundation Vice-President Whitney Leeson told the history of Osage Orange trees from Native American bow-making to Thomas Jefferson's role in their popularity in early nineteenth-century America. She also explained the process for measuring and documenting the tree for the Big Trees of Virginia list.

The Preston Place Osage Orange Foundation is raising money to provide professional care to preserve this magnificent tree for generations to come. Donations can be made online at **https://prestonplace.org/donation** or mailed to Preston Place Foundation, P.O. Box 235, Salem VA 24153.
Submitted by Cindy Miller



LEARNING IS FUN!

Flower Show School, Landscape Design School and the Judges Symposium are open to any garden club member! Whether or not you are considering becoming an accredited Flower Show Judge or certified Landscape Design Consultant, consider attending Flower show School (FSS), Landscape Design School (LDS) or Symposium. Flower show School III was held in August. Flower Show School IV is scheduled for next March. Landscape Design School (LDS) was just held at Lewis Ginter. The next LDS will be held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden next April. Details will follow in future editions of Rooted and ODG.

Symposium 2026 will be held in Roanoke this November. Details follow:

SYMPOSIUM

Sponsored by
VIRGINIA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS, INC.
Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.
November 2-3, 2026
Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs

SYMPOSIUM CHAIRMAN
Valerie Story
2122 Whithorn Hill
Jeffersonton, VA 22724
540-272-0975 valstory@aol.com

VFGC CREDENTIALS CHAIRMAN
Rebecca Elston
3332 Mob Neck Road
Heathsville, VA 22473-2307
804-580-6713 elston.marshwood@gmail.com

VFGC SYMPOSIUM REGISTRAR
Dianna Busch
14453 Rillhurst Drive,
Culpeper VA 22701
540-353-9044 diannabusch@comcast.net

Monday, November 2, 2026
7:30 - 8:15am Registration
8:15 - 8:30am Welcome and Announcements
Introduce
8:30 - 9:30am Allied Topics
Flower Show Evaluations
9:30 - 9:45am Early Morning Break
9:45 - 10:45am Botanical Arts Horticulture
10:45 - 11:00am Mid-Morning Break
11:00 - 12:00pm Container grown plants
12:00 - 1:00pm Lunch
1:00 - 3:00pm Practice Point Scoring
3:00 - 3:15pm Afternoon Break
3:15 - 5:15pm Point Scoring Exam

Tuesday, November 3, 2026
7:30 - 8:15am Registration
8:15 - 8:30am Welcome and Announcements
Introduce
8:30 - 9:30am Allied Topics: Design Techniques
9:30 - 9:45am Early Morning Break
9:45 - 10:45am Assemblage Design
10:45 - 11:00am Mid-Morning Break
11:00 - 12:00pm Low –profile Design
12:00 - 1:00pm Lunch
1:00 - 3:00pm Practice Point Scoring
3:00 - 3:15pm Afternoon Break
3:15 - 5:15pm Point Scoring Exam
Seating will be assigned in order of receipt of paid registration form.

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Cell Phone # _____

Email _____

Club_____ District_____

Medical Dietary Restrictions _____

Status: Student ( ) Accredited ( ) Life ( ) Master ( )

Circle one: Testing: Auditing: Neither

Date of Last Certification/Audit _____

Taking Point Scoring Exam: Yes _____ No _____
Master Judge Auditing: Yes _____ No _____

Full course prices includes Monday and Tuesday Lectures and Lunches.

FEES

( ) Full Course $185 _____

Single Event
( ) Horticulture & Lunch (Mon.) $ 95 _____
( ) Design & Lunch (Tues.) $ 95 _____

( ) Manual emailed free of charge **OR**
( ) Printed Manual $ 10 _____
MUST BE PREORDERED-Available at Registration

If postmarked after October 26, 2026 _____
add $30 late fee

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Make checks payable to:
Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.
Write Symposium in memo line and mail to:

Dianna Busch, Registrar
14453 Rillhurst Drive
Culpeper VA 22701
540-353-9044 diannabusch@comcast.net

****DEADLINE: October 26, 2026****

No refunds after this date.

Instructors

Design Instructor: Lynn Fronk is a NGC Master Flower Show Judge, Flower Show Schools and Flower Show Procedure Instructor. She has taught in 42 states, Mexico, Guatemala, Columbia, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Guantanamo, Cuba. She has judged major flower shows in the United States such as the Philadelphia Flower Show, Newport Flower Show and the Rhode Island Flower Show. She has presented for CFAA, several state conventions, NGC Convention and the Deep South Convention. She is the winner of the Mildred-Heter Buckinghm Award for outstanding service for the Garden Club of Ohio and has several designs featured in *Designing by Types.* Lynn is a Past President of Garden Club of Ohio. She is a member of the FSS Committee serving as Symposium Design Chairman for 2025-2027 for NGC, the Symposium Chairman for the Garden Club of Georgia and has recently relocated from Ohio to Flowery Branch, Georgia. She is a member of Stonehedge Garden Clubs, Creative Floral Arrangers of the Americas, The Designer's Club of Georgia and the National Flower Arranger Guild. Lynn is a retired nurse from Columbus Children's Hospital and is active in many community activities such as Buford-Lanier Women's club. She is the author of "Merry Christmas from My House to Yours" A small booklet on Using Natural Materials for Holiday Designs

Horticulture Instructor: Jan Griffin

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 Symposiums 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. She also enjoys golf!! 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

GENERAL INFORMATION

Any interested person is welcome and invited to attend this Symposium, however all attendees must register in advance. You need not be a Judge or a Member of the National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) to attend. Only members of NGC may take this Symposium examination for NGC Credit.

APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL CREDIT

To obtain refresher credit, Judges must attend **ALL** lectures in their entirety, including oral point scoring sessions and get your card punched to show attendance. **You must also bring your Handbook for Flower Shows Rev. 2017 -2nd Edition with all updates.**

Virginia Judges expecting credit for this Symposium must send completed appropriate form, along with required credentials, to the VFGC, Credentials Chairman, Rebecca Elston, at least four(4) weeks before the Symposium (by Oct 5, 2026). The following forms are available online

from the NGC, Inc. website:
Form 13 for use by Accredited Judges
Form 15L for use by Life Judges
Form 15M for use by Master Judges

Out of State Judges expecting credit for this Symposium must send the completed appropriate form, as listed above, to the Credentials Chairman in their own state, before registering for this Symposium. Their Credentials Chairman sends **Form 18** to the Virginia Credentials Chairman
No Credentials will be accepted at the door.

FLOWER SHOWS, TOURS and EVENTS ARE PLANNED:

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

!

A Halloween Spooktacular

An NGC Standard Flower Show



Presented by Tidewater District, VFGC

Hampton Roads Agricultural Research & Extension Center
1444 Diamond Springs Road
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
757-363-3900

October 10, 2026
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Affiliated With:
National Garden Clubs, Inc.
South Atlantic Region
Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs

Open to the Public **Free Admission**


"Seeds of
Inspiration"
VFGC 93rd Convention
April 26-27, 2027
Marriott Short Pump, Richmond
See you there!


WWW.CFAACREATIVEFLORAL.ORG
CFAA
CREATIVE FLORAL ARRANGERS
of the Americas
Transplanted & Growing
June 17 - 19 ~ Old Town Alexandria, VA
SEMINAR 2027
For a limited Time
Early Bird
SPECIAL OFFER
ONLY $300
Register NOW SAVE $75

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 **1st 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.

Enjoy Fall in Virginia!

Email: rootedvfgc@gmail.com

Introducing...

the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs Custom-Designed Ornament

BEACON DESIGN

- Quality Brass Ornament by the designers of the White House ornaments
- Specially designed for VFGC with a beautiful rendering of white dogwood, the Virginia state flower and VFGC symbol
- A lovely any-occasion boxed gift for family, friends, and club members
- Manufactured entirely in the USA
- Ornament sale proceeds will be used to support VFGC scholarhips, grants, and schools.



Dimensions: L to R, 2,65"; Top to Bottom, 3.05"
Depth approximately .5"

ORDER YOURS TODAY

Name _____ **email:** _____

Garden Club _____ **District** _____

Number of Ornaments Ordered _____ **@$25 each** **Total _$**_____

Make personal check payable to VFGC, indicating "ornaments" in the memo line.
Send order form and check to VFGC Treasurer:
Linda Nau
1810 Ethelred Court
Midlothian, VA 23113

Orders will be delivered to Districts at the September VFGC Board Meeting – and subsequently distributed at Fall District Meetings or by other arrangement with your District president.
Questions, contact Linda at naule@aol.com or 804-514-0095.

PLEASE ADD YOUR CELL PHONE NUMBER ON THE FORM!