

The Digest

THIRD DISTRICT FEDERATED GARDEN CLUBS OF NYS, INC.



FEBRUARY 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

COVID 19 Is Still Here	2
The Giving Garden Movement	3
District III Spring Conference	4
Environmental School I	4
Workshop Wednesdays	5
In Our Clubs	6
For the Love of Water	10
Healing Gardens	10

From the Director



Greetings!

Six more weeks of winter, according to prognosticator Punxsutawney Phil. I can readily believe it as I look out on a snow-covered landscape with nary a glimmer of sun to be seen. But there is a beauty to the season. Yesterday, when the sun was shining, I could look out and see intricate shadows created by clumps of willow with curved branches. I could see the disturbance in the snow where an owl or hawk had decided he might find a meal. And, of course, the deer and squirrel tracks as they crisscrossed the yard were unmistakable.

There is also a hope of new growth that we, as gardeners, all know lies beneath the surface. Winter aconite, Siberian squill, hyacinths, all are down in the ground waiting for the right time to pop up to provide us with delight. In the meantime, we can enjoy our indoor plants. My amaryllis (Red Pearl) are magnificent this year.

But any way you look at it, this is a season for sitting quietly, for reflection and meditation, for making plans. The District has been on my mind a lot recently. This is my last Director's Letter to you. My term expires in April when we install our new officers.

It's been an interesting two years and I want to thank everyone on the Board and Executive Committee for their support and encouragement. I also want to thank all the club presidents and officers for their hard work to keep the clubs active and involved. Doing that during the COVID pandemic has been a challenge!

If there is one thing that I regret about my tenure, it is that we didn't bring more people into club and District III committee positions. Volunteers for those positions are the ones who are most qualified to step up into officer positions, both at the club level and in the District. And clubs and the District need those volunteers in order to stay vibrant and strong and active. They bring new ideas to the table. They aren't hampered by the "we did that 20 years ago and it didn't work" mentality. They bring different approaches to issues and concerns. In short, they are the future of our clubs and District.

(continued on page 2)

CLUBS IN DISTRICT III

District Three Clubs, by County

Albany: Blue Creek, Guilderland, Helderview

Columbia: Germantown, The Garden Club of Kinderhook

Dutchess: Tioronda

Greene-Schoharie: Athens Community, Clematis, Schoharie Valley

Rensselaer: Greenbush

Schenectady: The Garden Explorers, Country Garden Club of Clifton Park, Glen Oaks, H. Gilbert Harlow, Hugh Plat, Western Hills

Ulster: Community Garden Club of Marlborough, New Paltz, Saugerties Society of Little Gardens, Shawangunk, Ulster

(from pg. 1)

There will not be a candidate for the Director position on the slate of officers for the term 2021–2023. This is because we don't have any qualified candidates who are willing to stand for election. I hope and pray that this situation will resolve itself by the elections for the 2023–2025 term but the only way that will happen will be if we get qualified candidates. Those qualified candidates must have been an active member of a club for four years, with an elective office or committee chairmanship, and have served one term as a member of the District Board. That last requirement—one term as a member of the District Board—can be fulfilled with a committee chairman position.

So I will take the opportunity of this last Director's Letter to you to ask you to please step up for a committee chairman or co-chairman position at the District level. The work isn't difficult and doesn't take a lot of time. It is a way to meet new people, to get more involved in the Federated Garden Club organization, and it can be fun. If you

have any passions about a particular area of gardening, this is also the way to provide leadership to the District and to clubs and to spread knowledge about that area.

Please, if you have any interest in becoming a committee chairman or co-chairman, get in touch with me. My email address is eawalker2@gmail.com and my telephone number is 845-338-0207.

It has been a pleasure to work with and meet so many people during the course of these past two years. I regret that I didn't get a chance to meet many more of you because of the Covid restrictions but hope that I might get to visit some of your events going forward.

Be well, stay safe, and happy gardening in 2021.

Regards,

Beth Walker

Director, FGCNYS District III



COVID 19 IS STILL HERE!

We're all ready to get back to normal and that includes starting to meet in person again. Unfortunately, the virus is still here and infection rates fluctuate daily, especially following holiday gatherings, birthday parties, sporting events, etc.

If your club is meeting in person, please be sure to follow all the federal and state guidelines, including the restrictions on number of people who may meet together at any given time.

In addition, keep those masks on when in public (including meetings), within 6 feet of other individuals, and when travelling, shopping, taking public transport, etc.

Further steps to help prevent transmission of both Covid and the flu include practicing respiratory etiquette: cover your coughs and sneezes. Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer frequently.



THE GIVING GARDEN MOVEMENT LEAVE NO FOOD BEHIND IN 2021

By Gloria Jean Cestero-Hurd, Germantown Garden Club, Vice President, Chair, Civic Committee

The concept of a Community Garden is well known and highly popular, but if you have your own slice of paradise, enjoy growing edibles and want to support those that are less fortunate, consider a Giving Garden this year.

What is a Giving Garden? A Giving Garden is any garden where gardeners grow food specifically for the purpose of donating it to food pantries and other organizations that feed those in need.

Some may wonder; do food pantries/clients appreciate the produce? “Appreciate” would be an understatement. “Eagerly await” is more like it. Remember that when it comes to perishable food donations, most food banks receive leftovers that food retailers can’t sell to paying customers. So, people really notice when the Giving Garden bins arrive, overflowing with just-picked lettuce, vitamin-rich greens, crunchy green beans, beautiful beets and sweet tomatoes right off the vine. Food pantry clients enjoy some of the healthiest, freshest produce available anywhere, and that is no small thing.

After 36 years of renovating houses, my husband Bill and I created our first edible garden last year at the start of the Covid crisis. We have less than a quarter of an acre of land behind our house and designed a small traditional French Potager Garden with six raised beds. With paper and pencil in hand we developed a simple but productive garden plan that supplied our local food pantry in Hudson, NY with almost 400 lbs. of organic fresh edibles. Imagine the impact that our own local garden club can make with 40 members? Collectively, we would be able to produce and donate 16,000 lbs. of fresh, healthy produce!!!

Produce donations to food banks and pantries have typically involved food enterprises such as farms, supermarkets, restaurants and community food drives and have not generally involved fresh food from home gardens. However, there are over 42 million home and community gardeners in the US (National Gardening Association-2014) that generate an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables; some of this produce is ultimately wasted. Until recently, there were no networks for these individuals to donate the extra produce that is not utilized or given away to family and friends.

The non-profit organization [AmpleHarvest.org](https://www.ampleharvest.org) was launched in 2009 with the goal of creating a resource to direct excess produce grown by America’s gardeners to nearby food pantries. AmpleHarvest helps eliminate food waste and hunger in communities around the United States through education and awareness programs that help gardeners learn how they can donate their food. They also provide a free web-based platform that links home gardeners to nearby pantries that accept fresh garden produce. The organization maintains a free, searchable, online registry of opt-in food pantries, soup kitchens, and other food distribution agencies in all 50 states and provides support to home gardeners seeking to donate their excess garden bounty. AmpleHarvest has a newsletter you can subscribe to and you can also Like them on FaceBook (<https://www.facebook.com/AmpleHarvest.org>).

Let’s leave no food behind in 2021.



Our first edible garden last year at the start of the Covid crisis. We have less than a quarter of an acre of land behind our house and designed a small traditional French Potager Garden with six raised beds.



DISTRICT III ANNUAL SPRING CONFERENCE

Elizabeth Walker, Director,
Third District, Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, Inc.
Warmly invites you to the Spring District Meeting
April 15, 2021



Our annual Spring Conference is scheduled for **Thursday, April 15, 2021**.
At this time, we don't know if we will be able to meet in person or not.
We'll let you know in March whether we will be meeting in person.
Either way, please hold the date
as we may be using Zoom to install our new officers
and to discuss District III business.



ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOOLS COURSE I

The Living Earth

March 1-4, 2021

Zoom Class

By Beth Walker, Director, Third District

FGCNYS District VIII is offering the Environmental Schools (ES) Course, a practical and economical approach to obtaining a basic environmental education. ES is divided into four courses: investigating overall environmental concepts, air, land, and water.

For more information about Environmental Schools, see the National Garden Clubs, Inc.'s website: www.gardenclub.org. Nancy Kalieta is the chairperson of the course and can be reached at 716-826-7462, 716-435-4711, or nancyk212@aol.com.

As a side note, one of the suggested readings is *Nature's Best Hope* by Douglas W. Tallamy. Some of you may have attended his Zoom presentation based on this book last fall. I had a chance to do so and it was wonderful. I've since read the book and heartily recommend it.



Workshop Wednesdays

Presented by Stars from around the Country

This free series of workshops are presented as a benefit of membership to Pacific Region members and their friends (yes, we are considered friends.) Please join us. The headliner will present their 20-minute program followed by a 5–10 minute Membership idea/ tip followed by a 5–10 minute Hot Shot Topic centered on the administrative side of things.

Workshops begin via ZOOM promptly at 9:30 a.m. PST. (12:30 pm ET)

Contact Robin Pokorski, PRGCDirector@gmail.com to get on the link distribution list.

FEBRUARY 24

Presenter: Tina Tuttle

Headliner Topic: Seven Plants that Changed the World

Hot Shot Topic: Motivating Participation presented by Robin Pokorski

MARCH 3

Presenter: Sahshah Middleton

Headliner Topic: Ikebana Decoded

Hot Shot Topic: “Calling for the Question” presented by Robin Pokorski

MARCH 10

Presenter: Frances Thrash

Headliner Topic: DIY Containers & Aspidistra Leaves Are Your Friends!

Hot Shot Topic: “What to Do with the Member that Doesn’t Follow Through”
presented by Robin Pokorski

MARCH 17

Presenter: Dot Yard

Headliner Topic: “The Versatile Daffodil... Something For Everyone”

Hot Shot Topic: “Laying a Motion on the Table” presented by Robin Pokorski

MARCH 24

Presenter: June Ann Hassebroek

Headliner Topic: “Dynamic Dainty Dimensions”

Hot Shot Topic: “Here’s a New Idea—Now What?”
presented by Robin Pokorski

GERMANTOWN GARDEN CLUB

COLUMBIA COUNTY

by Fran Bufi

2020 was a disappointing year for all of us garden club members. One of the most important aspects of belonging to a garden club is the camaraderie and sharing of ideas and the different experiences of gardening. We had only one meeting and that was in February. We did manage to fulfill a few of our scheduled activities. The field trip to a local sustainable farm consisted of only the outdoor tour of their gardens with masks. We held a virtual horticulture flower show and held our annual Adorn-A-Door competition for senior residents at Palatine Manor. The competition was judged by two of our members who wore masks, of course. There is typically no interaction with the residents. We gave out our annual scholarship in June.

In 2020 we lost some of that feeling of fellowship. We are now into 2021 and our club is trying to gauge when an in-person meeting may be possible. With that in mind, we are working on the yearbook. April will be our first meeting for this year if most of us are vaccinated, and just as important, if our venues are open. We are hoping to incorporate some of the speakers that we had scheduled for 2020. It may be possible to have our annual bird walk and a limited plant sale in May. Our annual flower show is scheduled for September and again this is dependent upon the venue being available. If not, we will plan to hold a virtual show again. The scholarship will be awarded in June. I know we are all looking forward to 'normal' times.

ADORN-A-DOOR COMPETITION FEATURED 37 DOORS

Each year, the Germantown Garden Club holds a holiday inspired 'decoration' competition for the seniors at the Germantown senior residence Palatine Manor. This year it was feared that the club would not be able to judge because of Covid 19. After consultation with the director at the residence, it was deemed safe for our judges. There has been no Covid cases reported at the residence. The judging is usually done with no one in the halls and our two club members wore masks and practised social distancing. The Adorn-A-Door competition is one of the club's Senior Citizens outreach projects. Monetary prizes are given based on the following criteria: creative choice of decorations, creative use of decorations, and creative use of space. The senior citizens who reside at the Manor are very enthusiastic about this holiday-spirited competition. This year, 37 apartment doors were decorated and judged. The first place winner was Geraldine Fulling. Second place went to Gloria Vasquez, third place to Peggy Miller and the fourth place winner was Sharon Sheridan. Committee Chairman Elke Crane and fellow committee member Joyce Vale (club treasurer) stated that once again the competition was very close.



The winning doors at this year's Adorn-A-Door contest for the seniors at Palatine Manor.

THE GARDEN EXPLORERS

SCHENECTADY COUNTY

by *Mary Thackeray*

For most of us, our gardens have been our havens during the COVID crises. Our travels and interactions were extremely limited and we escaped to our gardens. We enjoyed a few friends there, masked and socially distanced. We tackled some larger projects, some areas that we let get overgrown or tired looking. Our gardens allowed us to get out of the house and exercise our bodies when gyms were closed to us. They allowed us to turn off the news and all electronic devices and enjoy a meal outside in the sunshine with our family. They reminded us that life continues even through a pandemic and life still has beauty and light.

We were stunned for quite awhile and The Garden Explorers shut down everything, cancelling all our group activities and outings. We pulled off our annual plant auction in May by posting what we had available for members and bidding online. We enjoyed visiting each other's gardens to pick them up and masked conversations with the friends we missed. We enjoyed this so much that we'll do this again next May.

Nothing happened for a while though the Federated Garden Club of NYS had offered to hold Zoom meetings for us and made speakers available for free. We checked up periodically with our friends

and eventually one of our members, Kaye Vosburgh, who was scheduled to do an Ikebana presentation in March, spurred us on to try an informal Zoom get-together to share pictures of our gardens and talk about our summer efforts.

Kaye hosted that first Zoom meeting and now that we've gotten to know how to use this program, we've scheduled presentations every month through April. Two scheduled programs translated easily into Zoom presentations: Renata Filliaci's CBD presentation in November and Holly Ahern from the Lyme Action Network did a presentation in December. In January, FGCNYS speaker, Tony Antes, did a wonderful session on caladiums, getting us psyched for the colors that come in spring. Next month we'll focus on Waterwise Gardens with FGCNYS speaker, Sue Avery.

We were also able to host our own program planning committee meeting this month and are hoping to do many of the activities we missed out on last year. We're hoping that everyone gets vaccinated soon and things get better overall. Longer distance forays, however, might prove problematic if we don't feel comfortable carpooling. But we are resilient and can replace those outings if necessary with Zoom meetings or socially distanced gatherings in our gardens and public parks. We can bring our own lunch if sharing food is not advisable.

THE GARDEN CLUB OF KINDERHOOK

COLUMBIA COUNTY

by *Cynthia Bogardus*

Although unable to meet in person, The Garden Club of Kinderhook has been staying connected through email, as well as by a newsletter from President Sue Sweet that was mailed to all members detailing the work of ongoing committees and projects. In this missive, members were asked to participate in a virtual collage project to encourage the exchange of photos and greetings throughout the holiday season.

Several of the Club's long-standing community projects will continue in late winter and into the spring. Members will be donating personal care items and shelf stable food items to the Teen Food Pantry at Ichabod Crane High School. Cynthia Bogardus is coordinating the effort. The Club has partnered with this pantry for several years to help assist local families in need. As spring begins, Sandi Van Alstynne will be working with her committee to clean up the grounds of the Betty Fisher Memorial and Martin Van Buren statue garden in the Kinderhook Village Square. Once cleaned, the committee will evaluate the condition of the tulips and perennials, deciding what needs attention or replacing. Laurie Kelly leads another group in a similar process at the Martin Van Buren grave site located on Albany Avenue in Kinderhook.

Barbara Irvine will coordinate the efforts of the scholarship committee in accepting and evaluating student applications for scholarships awarded by the Club to those who meet established criteria. Wendy Power Spielmann will help celebrate Earth Day by making and hanging a wreath on the door of the Kinderhook Memorial Library. Wendy will also communicate with library staff in Kinderhook, Chatham, North Chatham and Valatie to arrange for the Club's purchase and donation of gardening related books to these four local libraries.

In mid to late spring, Sue Sweet and her committee will plant annuals in the flower boxes at the Persons of Color Cemetery located on Rothermel Avenue in Kinderhook. They will monitor and prune the plantings throughout the season. Anne Schomaker will begin this year's version of 'From Our Gardens With Love,' asking members to cut flowers from their gardens to share with shut-ins and nursing home residents.

All of our members look forward to working in our gardens again. They also hope the much-anticipated distribution of vaccines will enable us to gather safely before too long.

NEW PALTZ GARDEN CLUB

ULSTER COUNTY

by Margaret McDowell

New Paltz Garden Club wrapped up 2020 with a mixed bag of programming, Zoom meetings, field trips, and a holiday party. We witnessed the COVID pandemic affecting our community and garden club members and their families. We are truly looking forward to a healthy and safe year ahead for our club and the world.

For the 2021, we hope to get back to a more regular year of meetings. We will start with two programs in the Spring (March & April). One related to climate change and the local action underway in the Hudson Valley. The other will focus on the Bee City initiative in New Paltz and their plans and projects. Both of these programs, if need be, can be managed on Zoom. We are planning to make outdoor

garden steps in May and a field trip in June to the Orange County Arboretum. Another change we have made this year is to put some of the Yearbook content online to be e-mailed to members. Notifications of member meetings and board meetings will continue to be through e-mailings.

We are hoping our membership will feel comfortable attending in person meetings as the COVID vaccine program advances. Let's hope for some light at the end of the tunnel so we can retain our membership and continue to grow and thrive as a Garden Club.



Our 'Holiday Snow Trolls' from our November Holiday Workshop.

DID YOU KNOW? GRANT PROGRAM FOR CLUBS AVAILABLE

National Garden Club, Inc.'s grant program with The Ames Companies, Inc. began in 2014. The Ames Companies has generously agreed to extend its in-kind grant program for 2021. Now is the time to apply; the application deadline is March 1, 2021. Take advantage of this benefit of being an NGC member garden club. You may select tools up to a retail value of \$250 for your community garden or garden therapy club project. Details may be found under "Awards & Grants-Ames Tools." Select "Resources and Forms" to find the application and the tool Item Selection List. Many tools are appropriate for children or gardeners who prefer a cushion grip handle.

Garden tools with a total retail value of \$4,500 are available for NGC gardening projects. Gardening programs performed or supported by NGC local member clubs and scheduled to be carried out March 1 through September 30, 2021 are eligible. Projects may be a joint venture with another organization, however the garden club applying must be a member of NGC. Awarded tools will be shipped to the successful applicants in May of this year.

GARDEN CLUBS OF GREENE-SCHOHARIE COUNTIES

by Carole Garvar, Chair

Like all garden clubs, this has been a difficult year. We miss our meetings and each other, but have been doing what we can to plan for 2021. We are all looking forward to getting back to a normal life in the upcoming months. Over this last year, our clubs in Greene-Schoharie Counties did continue with some community outreach programs and will notify members when meetings will resume. Here are some things the club's have been involved with.

ATHENS COMMUNITY GARDEN CLUB

The Athens Community Garden Club was able to have an outdoor meeting and catered luncheon in September in the lovely garden of member Olga Cascione. Past officers of the club will remain unchanged for the 2021–2022 with Lorraine Camurati taking the position of recording secretary.

The byway marker Veterans' Garden was planted prior to Memorial Day. Additionally, community gardens were planted and maintained at five locations throughout the village and holiday swags were hung on public buildings and village entrance signs.

The club awarded its annual scholarship to a graduating senior in June and our 2020 yearbook featured a cover and graphic designs by students from Coxsackie Athens High School. We supported the E.J. Arthur Elementary school with a donation of milkweed seeds to be planted in the therapy garden of Desiree Pacuks' third grade class. The class raises and releases monarch butterflies, which are an endangered species. Desiree is a valued member of the ACGC. The school will participate in the FGCNYS Poetry Contest sponsored by their garden club.

The annual food pantry collection was cancelled, since donations could not be accepted. However, members were encouraged to make financial donations.

The club will be celebrating its 80th anniversary this year. The annual yearbook is in progress. Meetings are planned for March 2021 and forward if deemed safe.

CLEMATIS GARDEN CLUB

The new slate of officers for 2021–2022 were elected. Elected were President Susan Cunningham, 440 CR 405, Greenville, NY 12083-1909, 518-966-4342 and Vice President Terry Buel, 430 Red Mill Road, Freehold, NY 1243-9999, 518-424-4342 .

Club meetings will now be held at American Legion Post 291 located at 54 Maple Ave. Greenville, NY on the third Friday of each month. The club will notify members of upcoming meetings when deemed safe.

Community gardens were planted and maintained and holiday decorations were placed on public buildings. An Annual Scholarship was awarded to a graduating high school student.

The annual yearbook is in progress.

SCHOHARIE VALLEY

Schoharie Valley Gardens have no plans at the present time but will hold an executive meeting to make future plans when it is safe to hold meetings.





Developed in the wake of COVID-19, For the Love of Water is Water for South Sudan's response to the devastation and loss during the past year. They recognize our clubs' commitment to providing clean water to some of the world's most vulnerable people. This day-long event will enable them to connect with us and other supporters live. They will highlight awardees, release special new videos of the people who support South Sudan, and share their love for YOU with special giveaways and prizes.

The goal of this event is to raise at least \$50,000 to ensure their team can continue to implement clean water projects in rural South Sudanese villages. We have already raised \$18,000 (32% of our goal) in sponsorships!

At this event, FGCNYS will receive the Long Walk Award as an organization that has generously supported WFSS for 10 years or more. You can attend this Zoom event here: www.waterforsouthsudan.org/event-registration

The Digest Online is published quarterly in February, May, August, and November. Deadlines for submissions are the 15th of the month before each issue (January, April, July, and October).

Please send news of your club's activities, events, and plans—it's a great way to share what you are doing with other clubs. Unlike print newsletters, there is no prohibitive cost factor for using color, so send in your photos. Articles on various gardening and flower arranging topics are especially welcome.

Material for *The Digest* should be sent to Karin Janson via email at kjanson@aol.com.

To access *The Digest*, go to the State website—fgcnys.com—select District III on the home page and then select Digest Online.

How To Connect with Your Community

National Garden Clubs can provide you and your clubs with more information to help you both achieve a green thumb. They can connect you with people, plants, and programs that provide inspiration and valuable resources.

Many schools are taking place around the country by ZOOM. You can sit in your pj's and take courses. Go to the NGC website for all schools and locations at gardenclub.org



Healing Gardens

by Carcille C. Burchette,
Chairman: Healing Gardens for Hope and Awareness, National Garden Clubs

Healing gardens are spaces to promote recovery from illness, to provide an improvement in overall well-being. These gardens incorporate both the physical and spiritual. This is nothing new. Gardens have been used from ancient times as a place for healing. Now, in the last few years, gardens are being planted at hospitals, nursing homes, and hospices because patients tend to recover faster and require less medication.

Gardens are being planted at schools to allow students with disabilities to socialize with their typically functioning peers. Sensory gardens have a variety of plants that engage the five senses and goes beyond that. With physical limitations in mind, gardens can be designed to help improve motor skills and allow disabled children to play with their peers.

Some gardens are planted to honor persons whose lives have been touched by a specific illness, promoting awareness, and providing information on prevention, detection, and treatments. Other gardens have been planted to provide healing of the heart. The actual planting and caring for the garden by a grieving parent can comfort in a special way, honoring the child while reflecting on happy memories...and hope for a future day.