

# The Digest



THIRD DISTRICT FEDERATED GARDEN CLUBS OF NYS, INC.

FEBRUARY 2016

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## Editor's Note

I think February is one of my least favorite months. While it is the shortest month of the year, it seems to hang on the longest.

I recently came upon this quote from the famous gardener Vita Sackville-West. She made me feel that I had something to look forward to.

"The shortest day has passed, and whatever nastiness of weather we may look forward to in January and February, at least we notice that the days are getting longer. It is imperceptible even as the growth of a child, as you watch it day by day, until the moment comes when with a start of delighted surprise we realize that we can stay out of doors in a twilight lasting for another quarter of a precious hour."

I have enjoyed reading all your stories about what clubs do in District III. It's amazing how garden clubs touch our surroundings. From veterans' memorials to holiday activities, it really is surprising how much our clubs contribute to our towns and communities.

By the way, our District has made a major accomplishment for 2016. We now have a Facebook page. Facebook is a great way to get your club's info out there in this age of social media, especially when traditional print venues are going out of business. It is also a free way to have a presence on the web. Check it out and make sure you 'like' it and 'share' it: [www.facebook.com/ThirdDistrictFGCNYS/](http://www.facebook.com/ThirdDistrictFGCNYS/)

Feel free to give me any feedback on *The Digest* and let me know if you have any ideas to make this newsletter more engaging for you.

Karin Janson, Germantown Garden Club  
[kjanson@aol.com](mailto:kjanson@aol.com)

## From the Director



Happy New Year to everyone!

2016 looks like another exciting year with many events to choose from.

I was pleased that 26 club members were in attendance at the Skills Workshop held on November 19 in Hurley. Topics included information about how to write a Flower Show Schedule, how to apply for awards, how to put together Yearbooks, how to send out Publicity about clubs, and how to put a Press Book together. The best of our

mentors presented: Antoinette Babb, Patricia Blundell, Barbara Campbell, and Fran Heaney. Thank you to everyone who participated. Participants will be able to share this information with their clubs.

As we ease into 2016, I'd like to elicit your ideas again to assist us with the dwindling number of clubs. Some of our challenges to grow membership involve how to include people: who work full-time, are raising families, continuing their education, and caring for older family members. And for our current membership: people with health issues. All of these impact club membership. We all know about this. But what can we do?

Since assuming my role last April, and with my initial theme of 'TEAM—Together/Teaching Everyone Achieves More,' we have made all clubs aware of the benefits of membership in the FGCNYS, Inc.; the NGC, and international garden clubs. WOW! That's an impressive amount of resources for members to access at any time via the computer.

However, we need to reflect on this question, "What do the clubs want from US?" Perhaps, we need to look at this challenging situation differently.

Please forward your thoughts to me at [cpmccomb@yahoo.com](mailto:cpmccomb@yahoo.com) OR send ideas to your club president who can send your ideas to me as soon as possible.

*(cont. on pg. 2)*



*Our November Skills Workshop was a very informative exercise. We learned about Flower Show Schedules, Yearbooks, Awards, and Pressbooks.*

(from pg. 1)

Here are a few of the exciting upcoming events:

**February 19–21**, 'NY in Bloom, 25 Beautiful Years,' New York State Museum, Albany, NY

**March 17**, Third District Board Meeting, Red's Seafood Restaurant, Coxsackie, NY

**March 18–20**, HVCC Garden & Flower Show. Third District members will participate, look for their table.

**April 11–12**, Annual Meeting FGCNYS, Inc., Hyatt Regency Long Island, Hauppauge, NY.

**April 21**, Third District Meeting "Sunny Days Ahead." Kozel's Restaurant Ghent, NY.

**June 7**, Celebrate National Garden Club Week, home of Director Camille McComb, Kinderhook, NY.

**June 21**, FGCNYS, Inc. Board Meeting, Guilderland Public Library, Guilderland, NY.

**June 23**, Third District Board Meeting, location to be announced.

**July 21**, Third District Trip, MacHayden Theater, Chatham, NY.

**September 12–13**, FGCNYS, Inc. Fall Conference, Radisson Hotel, Utica, NY.

**October 20**, "Autumn Moon," Third District Fall Meeting, Pegasus Restaurant, Coxsackie, NY.

**October 23–25**, "Historic Treasures of New York" NGC—CAR 2016 Conference at The Gideon Putnam Hotel, Saratoga Springs, NY. New York State is the Host State!

**October 26–27**, "Everything New" FGCNYS, Inc. 2016 Symposium at The Gideon Putnam Hotel, Saratoga Springs, NY.

Thank you once again for the invitations to your club events, installations, and celebrations! Keep up the outstanding work, this is a true TEAM.

Take care,

Camille McComb, Director



## THIRD DISTRICT IS NOW ON FACEBOOK!

We are now on Facebook! Please 'like' our page to receive great gardening info and happenings in the district. Go to: [www.facebook.com/ThirdDistrictFGCNYS/](http://www.facebook.com/ThirdDistrictFGCNYS/)

Many thanks to Cynthia Bogardus and Karin Janson for collaborating and developing it. You can email Cynthia, who maintains the page, at [cbogardus@nycap.rr.com](mailto:cbogardus@nycap.rr.com) if you have pictures or info you would like to share.

## A REALLY BIG SHOW UPDATE!

The Capital Region Garden and Flower Show will be held at Hudson Valley Community College, 80 Vandenberg Ave (Route 4) Troy, NY 12180

Friday, March 18, 10 am–9 pm

Saturday, March 19, 9 am–7 pm

Sunday, March 29, 10 am–5 pm

Volunteers are needed to staff the information/membership booth for 3-hour shifts, two persons per shift.

Your club's participation is voluntary, and even if you are unable to send a representative to help staff the booth, we will still gladly distribute your club's information. This venue had over 17,000 visitors last year and provides an excellent opportunity to get recognition of Federated Garden Clubs and will hopefully generate some new members for clubs.

Every club president will be sent a form in the mail asking them to provide the following information and return it by February 20:

- Name of the club
- Locale they cover (what towns are their members from?)
- Meeting times (day or night?)
- Contact person (who in the club should be contacted for more information?)

If you have a club brochure or handout, please send one of those also.

We also ask clubs to send 3 to 6 photos for a display of the wonderful projects and activities your club participates in, for example: working with children, garden therapy, civic beautification, blue star memorial, decorating historical buildings, trips, shows, etc.

The photos can be mailed either of 2 ways:

- As an email attachment to: [3rddistrictgarden@gmail.com](mailto:3rddistrictgarden@gmail.com)
- Mail 4" X 6" prints to: Diane Madden, 412 Winter Street Extension, Troy, NY 12180

Please indicate the name of your club and an explanation of what the activity is.

There's just one more important volunteer position that needs to be filled, someone to give a 40-minute program on Friday or Sunday, time to be ascertained. It can be on any subject related to gardening or the environment. Please contact me directly ASAP if you are interested.

For questions or further information, don't hesitate to contact me or co-chair Cathy Fruhauf at [cathyfruhauf@hotmail.com](mailto:cathyfruhauf@hotmail.com).

Thank You,  
Diane Madden  
(518) 283-1067  
[3rddistrictgarden@gmail.com](mailto:3rddistrictgarden@gmail.com)



## SPRING DISTRICT MEETING: *Sunny Days Ahead*

*Camille McComb, Director, Third District, Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, Inc.*  
*Warmly invites you to the Spring District Meeting*  
**April 21, 2016**  
*Kozel's Restaurant, 1006 Rt 9H, Ghent, NY 12075*

**REGISTRATION:** 8:30 a.m.–throughout the day

**BUSINESS MEETING:** 10–11:15 a.m.

**LUNCHEON:** 12:15 p.m.

\$27 (prepaid by April 4th)

Menu: Tossed Salad; Choice of: Chicken Breast with Stuffing, Salmon with Dill Sauce, or Eggplant Parmigiana; Mashed Potatoes; Green Beans; and Ice Cream with Chocolate Sauce.

**VENDORS, BENEFIT TABLE, WAYS AND MEANS, AND EXHIBITS:** from 9 a.m.

**RESERVATIONS:** due April 4. Send names of attendees and menu choice with one check per club to **Yetta Teo, Registrar;** 4193 US Route 9, Hudson, NY 12534. Phone: 518-828-3706. Make checks payable to Third District, FGCNYS, Inc.

**A FUN ACTIVITY AND SOMETHING CREATIVE FOR YOU TO PARTICIPATE IN:**

Wear a topper...hat, fascinator, scarf, or something unusual of your choice. Decorate it with fresh, dried, or silk flowers embellished with beads, feathers, bees, butterflies, birds, OR whatever interests you! Ballot vote, prizes given...pictures taken...let's have a good time!

**PROGRAM:** Dr. George W. Crosby

Dr. George Crosby is a 1975 graduate of Chatham Central School and a 4-year recipient of a Kinderhook Garden Club Scholarship. He earned an AAS degree in Nursery Management from SUNY Alfred, a BS in Horticulture from the University of Georgia, an MA in Biology from SUC Buffalo, and a PhD in Plant and Soil Science from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

A member of the plant science faculty at SUNY Cobleskill, he teaches courses in Botany, Hydroponics, Greenhouse Management, Vegetable Production, and Irrigation. Since 2005, he has been involved with a vegetable production project in Uganda, East Africa that includes growing moringa tree leaves to help combat malnutrition.

**DIRECTIONS:** From the south: I-87 (Thruway) north to Catskill exit 21, left at traffic light. Left onto Rt 23 east across Rip Van Winkle Bridge. Follow 23 east to intersection of Rt 9H and 9. Left onto 9H north to Kozel's approx. 10 miles. Right at restaurant, park in back.

From the north: I-90 east to exit 12. Right onto Rt 9 south to rotary, take second right onto Rt 9H south. Kozel's on left, approx. 10 miles, park in back.

## DISTRICT III UPDATE

### DISTRICT THREE CLUBS, BY COUNTY

**Albany:** Blue Creek, Garden Study Club of Albany, Guilderland, Helderview, Town and Country

**Columbia:** Germantown, Greenport, The Garden Club of Kinderhook

**Dutchess:** Tioranda

**Greene-Schoharie:** Athens, Clematis, Cossackie, Schoharie Valley

**Rensselaer:** Greenbush

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

**Ulster:** Community Garden Club of Marlborough, Hillside Acres, New Paltz, Saugerties Society of Little Gardens, Shawangunk, Ulster, Woodstock



*Gary Barrack, Chairman,  
World Gardening, Third District*

I am pleased to announce that 12 clubs in the Third District have donated a total of \$3,035.00 to the World Gardening Project "Water for South Sudan" for the calendar year 2015. It would not surprise me if this is one of the largest amounts of funds collected of all districts in FGCNYS. At present, over 260 wells have been drilled since 2005. Water for South Sudan just celebrated their 10th Anniversary in Rochester, NY. Check out the FGCNYS website on World Gardening to see a photograph of the newest well. On behalf of our Director, please accept our gratitude for your generosity and continued support.

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN

### Planning the Garden from Winter's View

*by Maryann Weber, District III Landscape Design Chair*

Our Northeastern winters may not strike most people as gardening friendly, but there are important aspects of your landscaping to consider and plan for now, albeit mostly from indoors.

With leaves gone from deciduous trees and shrubs, perennials cut back and nestled in their winter beds and annuals still seeds or greenhouse-sheltered seedlings, you get to see the bones of your landscaping more clearly than you can at any other time of year.

Study the view out various windows in your house. Does that line of plantings look too straight—or perhaps not straight enough? Should that flower bed be expanded—or maybe be made more narrow, for better access? And that area where things you didn't know where else to put have accumulated to form a garden supplies junk yard—might it be a worthwhile project to get it cleaned out and repopulated with a wrought-iron table and a couple of chairs? Or how about a gazebo?

If you don't already have at least a rough layout of your yard on paper, now would be a good time to create one. It will help you determine possibilities and priorities. Factor in your budget and available muscle power, look through the catalogs that keep arriving in your mailbox and online, and you've got a head start on your 2016 garden.



# Winter Blues Buster

by Maria Kolodziej-Zincio, Greenport Garden Club

I happily put the mower away for the winter, packed my garden tools, and gathered as many seeds as I could, labeled them and put them into envelopes. My plant beds are tucked in under deep mulch and I leave the echinacea stems alone for the birds to feed on their seedy heads. I know I have a little down time to sit back and relax and gather as much energy as I will need for the following spring. My mind is already whirling with ideas of what to do, how to transplant or create new beds, as the seed catalogs start to arrive.

Sure, the winter was late in coming this year and I actually have seen bees out a little confused when the weather reaches 50 degrees. Bees don't hibernate but form clusters to keep each other warm, and when temperatures reach fifty degrees they break that cluster to feed on their honey stores and come out of their hives to do cleansing flights. With the mild weather into December my sage and catnip, much to my cat's delight, are still performing.

What I do in the winter to bust the winter blues is read and sketch garden plans. You don't have to be an artist or landscape architect to do this—mapping out your ideas on paper or making a collage of flowers and shrubs is fun and meditative. I typically will go out and



buy a scrapbook and a watercolor set to get started—you can even work with colored pencils. There are plenty of books that can help you move along such as *Botanical Illustration for Beginners—A Step by Step Guide* by Meriel Thurstan. All it takes is enthusiasm and you will soon find yourself with a beautiful botanical art book that you created and can show off to your garden friends.

Another wonderful tool to bump up our creative juices is the art of Zentangle. It is the art of coloring that brings focus, relaxation, increases creativity, and promotes the ability to concentrate. There are many great botanical books that you can choose

from and truly enjoy. I recently purchased *Forest Serenity* along with a box of 48 Prismacolor colored pencils and found myself coloring for hours. This meditative exercise is for those of us who are multi-tasking and trying to keep up with this fast-paced world (that would make the majority of the group right?). Take time for yourself with a meditative exercise to calm and increase your creativity. It's just the perfect prescription for winter blues to boost our creative juices for planting and designing our gardens for the coming spring that will be just around the corner.



## BLUE STAR MEMORIAL UPDATES

The Blue Star Memorial Program honors service men and women by sponsoring plaques

in cemeteries, parks, veteran's facilities, and gardens. Clematis Garden Club was busy this past fall with their Blue Star Memorial markers. Jean Horn, District III Blue Star Chair, reports that they placed wreaths in Greenville and at Coeyman's Hollow, where they also planted daffodil bulbs. They also placed a wreath at Stratton Veterans Hospital.

Carole Garvar, president of Greene County Garden Clubs, along with Anita Benjamin, beautification chair, report that they were honored to have Frederick VanLoan, chaplain of the Athens American Legion and an air force vet, give a brief dedication at their Blue Star Memorial marker at the Veterans Memorial Triangle. The wreath laying event was held on December 9 and Mr. VanLoan honored all veterans in his speech.



Joan Radley from the Clematis Garden Club laying a wreath at the club's Blue Star Marker.



Carole Garver, Anita Benjamin, and Frederick VanLoan at the Veterans Memorial Triangle in Athens.

## GERMANTOWN GARDEN CLUB

COLUMBIA COUNTY

by Fran Bufi

In January, the Germantown Garden Club put together its program of meetings, field trips, and special events. Attending were Yearbook co-chairmen, Fran Bufi and Karin Janson, club vice president, Mattie Gifford, club treasurer, Joyce Vale and club member, Melanie Nelson. This team of members had an initial brainstorming meeting in November to come up with ideas for a 'theme' that can carry throughout the year to make the programs cohesive. By January, the programs and meetings are mostly nailed down. With that in mind, the group came up with the theme for 2016. "Make Every Day Earth Day." This theme is designed to make our club aware of ways to be more in tune with our surrounding environment. This year, some of our programs include a talk by well-known author Tovah Martin, and Mark Adams of Adams Fairacre Farms. Mark Adams will talk about annuals and how to use them to attract 'good' insects. This year the club will hold its annual flower show in September. Also planned are the annual plant sale, tag sale, and bird walk. The first meeting for 2016 is scheduled for February 23.



Left to right: Karin Janson, Mattie Gifford, Joyce Vale, and Melanie Nelson busy at work organizing the club's programs for 2016.

## The Dues Are Due Soon

by Diane Madden

**FGCNYS STATE** dues notices will be sent out later this month. They will be mailed to the designated club president/treasurer along with a list of all their club's members. Amend the list by deleting the names of the resigned or retired members and add the names of the new members. Count up the number of members on the amended list. The STATE dues are \$8 per member payable by April 1. Return the list to the state office in Guilderland with a check payable to FGCNYS, Inc. in the amount of: number of members X \$8.



**THIRD DISTRICT** dues notices will be sent out in March on a form that requests updated club information. THIRD DISTRICT dues are \$2 per member payable by May 1. Return the form in the enclosed envelope with a check payable to "Third District FGCNYS" in the amount of: number of members X \$2. Usually this will be the same number of members as reported to the state. Return the form and check in the enclosed envelope to: Diane Madden, Third District Treasurer, 412 Winter St Ext, Troy, NY 12180

It makes no difference when your club's "year" begins, as the dues are paid to your club when a new member joins. You have already collected what is owed to your individual club, the FGCNYS, and District III in advance.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Diane Madden, Third District Treasurer at 518-283-1067 or ladydiane@nycap.rr.com.

## GREENBUSH GARDEN CLUB

RENSSELAER COUNTY

by Diane Madden

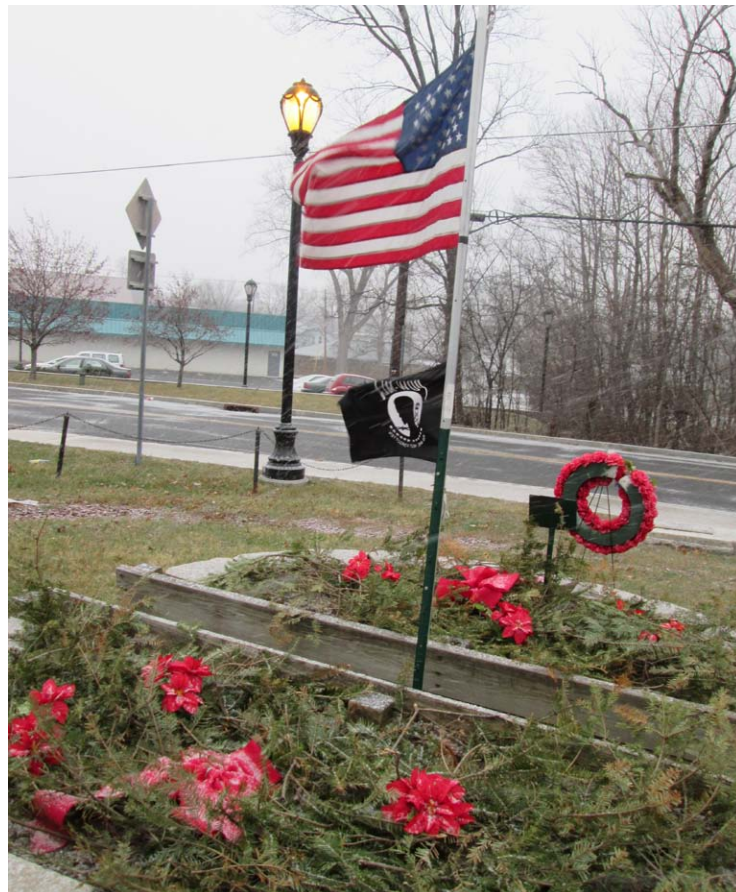
The American Legion Garden that the club maintains in Ben Piersall Park, added a flag pole for an American flag and for a MIA missing in action flag to commemorate the service of our veterans. The addition was at the suggestion of one of our club members. The American Legion paid for and installed it. Red tulip bulbs were planted in the garden and covered with pine boughs as a holiday decoration.

The November 3 meeting of the club featured an outstanding presentation by Kathryn Mohr of the Capital District Iris Society. The program called “Incredible Iris” included some history, the different types of iris, their cultivation, and how to deal with diseases and pests that might be encountered. Her photos were spectacular and the handouts she distributed were awesome, one of the best ever.

On December 4, the club held their annual holiday get together in the community room at President Olive Felio’s apartment complex. The event was catered and the members and their significant others all had a wonderful time.

On December 12, some of the members experienced a very heart-warming garden therapy session with the seniors at Van Rensselaer Manor. Members contributed greens from their gardens (yes, things were still green), holiday containers, made snowman decorations, and the club purchased the red and white flowers for individual arrangements.

On January 5, Diane Madden, garden club member and Rensselaer County Master Gardener, did a presentation on “The Allergy Fighting Garden.” She explained how what you plant, and where you plant it, can affect the severity of your allergy symptoms. Most of the information was from the book *The Allergy-Fighting Garden* by Thomas Ogden, a book recommended in an issue of *The National Gardener*, another benefit of belonging to a Federated Club.



Above: The club’s American Legion Garden got a new flag pole.

Below: Members made holiday containers for the seniors at Van Rensselaer Manor.

## GREENPORT GARDEN CLUB

COLUMBIA COUNTY

by Maria Kolodziej-Zinco

The Greenport Garden Club began its holiday season with a traditional workshop for its members on 'Seasonal Dried Flower Arrangements.' Erin Brady, local award-winning designer, guided members through a hands-on approach in creating their own fall centerpieces using seasonal leaves, seeded eucalyptus, bay leaves, rose hips, wheat shafts, and various greens, that were designed in mason jar containers. Erin also demonstrated how to create a dramatic wreath using old sheet music accented with greens and a Red Cardinal. "We were thrilled to have Erin conduct this workshop for us. Erin was selected to make the signature design for the 2016 New York in Bloom show at the New York State Museum in Albany," stated Yetta Teo.

Following this stimulative workshop, garden club ladies gathered at the home of associate club member Marge Groll, to prepare holiday centerpieces, wreaths, and swags that were delivered to various community centers. Marge has offered her space in her home along with a delicious lunch for the ladies for many years. The ladies look forward to this special time to make sure the clubs efforts and talents can be seen in the community. The ladies also decorated the barrels at the Columbia County Council on the Arts. You can be sure that the entrance to their gallery was the most creative in town.

And when the flowers were delivered, it was time to gather food for homeless children and their families. The Greenport Garden Club, at their Annual Holiday Luncheon, took a collection of non-perishable foods and personal items for local children in need. The boxes of cheer were delivered to Tara McSherry-Wolfe, Hudson Junior High School Social Worker, who coordinates programs for homeless children in the Hudson area. Tara states "The items that the Greenport Garden Club contributed will definitely be appreciated by families living in motel rooms with minimal cooking facilities. Thank you!"

The Greenport Garden Club works to sustain its membership through collaborative workshops and activities, and by maintaining visibility in local papers.



*Above: Erin Brady gives us a workshop on fall centerpieces.*



*Right: Kathy Bucholsky Setting up holiday greens at the Greenport Town Hall.*



*Collecting food for homeless children and families-fill her up!  
Pictured Left to Right: Carolyn West, Doris Moore, and Nancy Westbrook.*

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### Greenport Garden Club Celebrating 40 Years!

The Greenport Garden Club will celebrate their fortieth anniversary this year. Plans are now being made to embrace the club's growth and achievements with the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, and the Third District. The Greenport Garden Club was federated on September 21, 1976 and remains an active club in the prestigious FGCNYS organization. Stay tuned for more information in the next edition of the Digest.

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## GUILDERLAND GARDEN CLUB

ALBANY COUNTY

by Merrill-Lee Lenegar

On December 4-6, the Guilderland Garden Club hosted “Santa’s Workshop” at the historic Mynderse-Frederick House in Guilderland Center. Planning for this event began in September with the decisions on a theme, teams for decorating rooms, and entertainment. Club members worked in October and November to make ornaments and then spent three days before the event decorating inside and outside the house with live greens, making wreaths and arrangements for sale. This year, we also sold a cookbook, *Recipe Favorites*, which is a collection from past and present members to commemorate 50 years of the club. This event was co-sponsored by the Guilderland Historic Society. The show was a great success with over 220 visitors during the three-day period. As a result of the donations and sales, we were able to give \$300 to the Stratton Veterans Medical Center, specifically for the serenity garden at Fisher House, which is a place for families to stay when visiting patients at the VA. We also purchased a brick for the Garden Way at Farnsworth Middle School. The funds raised through the Buy a Brick Program help with the upkeep, maintenance, and purchase of seeds for the school garden.

One of the traditions for the open house is to have a member of the Historic Society model the original wedding gown of Apollonia Frederick. The dress, however, had become deteriorated. Club member Carol Samsonoff volunteered to replicate the original dress so the tradition could continue.

The next meeting of the club is March 14 at 10 a.m. at the Mynderse-Frederick House, 451 Main Street, Guilderland Center (Route 146 West). Marty Teumim, Master Gardener from Cornell Cooperative Extension, will give a presentation on Night Gardens. She will discuss the use of light colored plants that reflect light, plants that have strong scents and garden accents to create a “night garden.” All are welcome. Refreshments will be provided.



Above: Apollonia in the original dress. Right: Donna Crego modeling the replicated dress made by Carol Samsonoff.

Above: Decorations in the Tavern Room done by Carol Samsonoff, Judy and Tom Plummer. Left: Tree with handmade ornaments made by members of the Garden Club.

## HUGH PLAT GARDEN CLUB

SCHENECTADY COUNTY

by Mary Ann DeFonce

Every November, the Hugh Plat Garden Club decorates the Schenectady County Historical Building for their Festival of Trees. Early in November we hold a workshop at the home of our president, Sue Bushman. This year our decorating theme was 'Visions of Sugarplums.' We had so much fun arranging old-fashioned candy treats in apothecary jars and creating greenery arrangements. Then on November 20, we met at the Historical Building to bring our theme to life.

Our December meeting was our Christmas luncheon at the Van Dyke restaurant in Schenectady. Our January meeting was held at the home of President Sue Bushman. We planned our 2016 calendar and conducted our election of officers.

As we end 2015, we would be remiss not to mention the passing of club member Betty Farrar. Betty was a founding member of Hugh Plat, and a dear friend to us all. Betty's daughter Tracey recently decided to join us, and we are thrilled to have her!



Top: Decorating crew: Dolores Krauss, Fran Scrafford (rear), Sue Bushman (middle), Mary Ann De Fonce, Hannah Pavoldi (front).

Left: Christmas luncheon (L to R) Fran Scrafford, Dolores Krauss, Hannah Pavoldi, Norma Maughan, Sue Bushman.

Above: Ready to decorate.

Left: Final Visions of Sugarplums mantle.

## THE GARDEN CLUB OF KINDERHOOK

COLUMBIA COUNTY

by Fran Heaney

The Garden Club of Kinderhook had a busy holiday season. On December 1, the club held their Annual Boxwood Workshop at the McNary Center. Members and guests created boxwood trees, door hangings, and festive arrangements.

The club decorated the Martin Van Buren National Historic Site on Thursday, December 3. This year Lindenwald highlighted Van Buren's Secretary of War and former minister to Mexico, Joel Roberts Poinsett who introduced the poinsettia to the United States in 1825. Over 100 poinsettias were ordered to celebrate the holiday season. Garden Club members and the National Park Service staff met for a delicious breakfast and then decorated the historic house with poinsettias, pine bows, and surprises.

On December 8, the club enjoyed the President's Holiday Tea at Treasurer Geraldine Smith's home. Refreshments were prepared by the Board of Directors.

### Sharing Our Best

by Renee Benenati

Once again, this year, the Garden Club of Kinderhook held a potluck dinner called "Sharing Our Best" for members and spouses or guests. It was held on January 5, 2016 at the home of Renee Benenati who started the tradition in 1995 in conjunction with the publishing of a cookbook. Members created culinary delights that were enjoyed by all who attended. A decorated Christmas tree with 3,000 lights and 1,000 ornaments was a focal point at the gathering. It was an evening of congeniality to welcome the New Year.

### Happy Valentines Day!

by Camille McComb

The Garden Club of Kinderhook had a fun event at their February meeting by creating a Valentine's Day Tablescape for one. Long tables were draped with white lace tablecloths and 24" X 3' sections were marked off with red ribbon. Three categories were used for judging: Playful/Fanciful, Heartwarming, and Lovely/Mysterious. Ballots were distributed to all members to vote on the categories. Seven members participated: Carolyn Beveridge, Camille McComb, Tina Lang, Barbara Irvine, Eileen McHugh Szepessy, Sue Sweet, and Vicki Smith.

Prizes were awarded. This was a fun event. Winners received bottles of wine and candy. Chocolate candy valentines were given to everyone else participating.

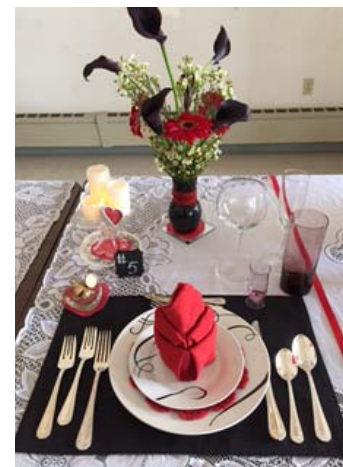


Left: Club members with their arrangements at the club's Annual Boxwood Workshop.

Below: Members and park service staff at Lindenwald.



Above: Renee Benenati's incredible Christmas tree.



Right: Two beautiful tablescapes created by members to celebrate Valentine's Day.



## SHAWANGUNK GARDEN CLUB

ULSTER COUNTY

by Helene Morris

The Shawangunk Garden Club has a meeting open to the public twice a year in the spring and fall with an interesting speaker to encourage attendance. Refreshments are always a draw for the public. Whenever we have an event, such as the Blueberry Festival (thousands of people attend this event in August), we make gardening info available and sell plants and cut flowers, engaging in conversation, sometimes leading to new members joining the club. Our Victorian tea (held at the Terwilliger Museum adjacent to the Ellenville Library) is also orchestrated to glean interest in the club. Refreshments and desserts are also served. We are a fun loving group looking to attract new blood to keep our legacy alive.

### 2016 Shawangunk Garden Club Events:

**April 4.** Open to the public meeting. Barbara Fornal, a certified herbalist, will speak to us on weeds and medicinal herbs.

**April 29.** National Arbor Day. The club donates a flowering tree for a roadside planting in one of our local towns.

**May 7.** Mother's Day Plant Sale. We provide assistance to help customers purchase plants for the proper environment.

**June.** National Garden Week. Floral designs by our members will be placed in various local businesses to raise public awareness.

**Scholarship Awards** to be given to two local high school seniors interested in furthering their education in the fields of environment or conservation.



*Members decorating the Terwilliger Museum. From left to right: Susan Harris, Laura Shank, Fern Schor, Deborah Stack, Lillian Green, Chikako Mori, and Helene Glatt.*

**July 4th.** Ellenville Parade. Members march in the parade giving out flowers to onlookers.

**August 13.** Wild Blueberry Festival. We have a booth where we disseminate gardening info and sell home grown flowers and plants.

**September 6.** Open to the public meeting with Lynn Manto, floral designer and landscaper speaking about creating floral centerpieces for that special event.

**September 17.** Victorian Tea, Terwilliger House Museum, Ellenville, NY. Open to the public. We decorate the museum and serve refreshments.

**November 28.** Decorate the Terwilliger House Museum for the holidays.

**December 3.** Centerpieces are made for the Noonday Senior Citizen Holiday Dinner.

Every month we select a local church to receive food for their parishioners. This has been a wonderful outreach situation to the community.

## TIORONDA GARDEN CLUB

DUTCHESS COUNTY

by Gary Barrack

Members of the Tioronda Garden Club recently purchased new wreaths for the 60 lampposts along Beacon's Main Street. Members prepared the wreaths and added bows and lights to get ready for the Christmas season. In addition, the club's longtime tradition of decorating the historic Madam Brett Homestead was completed in time for the holidays.



*Above left, members Anne Landisi and Joan Domenico pose for the camera with one of the huge wreaths the club made for the lampposts. Above right, members Donna Hardisty, Sandra Moneymaker, and Jean Haight are hard at work embellishing the purchased wreaths to make them more inviting.*



# Fairy Houses

by Diane Madden, Greenbush Garden Club

A fairy is a tiny being in human form, depicted as clever, mischievous, and possessed with magical powers. Diminutive fairies of one kind or another have been recorded for centuries in different cultures. They go by many other names: leprechauns, jinni, nymphs, tree spirits, sprites, gnomes, elves, imps, pixies, and wee folk. They have been celebrated in legend, literature, art, theater, and music. Why, as gardeners, should we be included in this list?

Theosophist, E.L. Gardner (appropriately named) likened fairies to butterflies, whose function was to provide an essential link between the energy of the sun and plants in order to stimulate growth. “That growth of a plant which we regard as the customary and inevitable result of associating the three factors of sun, seed, and soil would never take place if the fairy builders were absent.”

So if we want to have beautiful gardens, we should invite and encourage the presence of fairies in every way possible. The best way to do this is to provide them with tiny houses constructed of natural material in quiet places away from roads or pathways. If you want to turn a fairy’s disposition from mischievous to downright malevolent, just go tromping too close to their domicile. They take great revenge for this offense and you’ll need to make use of protective charms to insure your safety, such as wearing your clothing inside out, carrying a four leaf clover or a cold iron item with you at all times, keeping a piece of stale bread in your pocket, or holding an herb such as St. John’s Wort.

What can we build to please such enchanted and demanding creatures? The basic tenet of human real estate applies to fairy buildings also: location, location, location. They require quiet secluded spots surrounded by nature. That might be in the woods, in a meadow, a hidden spot in the garden, in the base of a tree or up in its branches, behind a sand dune at the beach, or built into an outcropping of rock.

And as to the materials these houses are made of...no engineered wood and plastic moldings from Home Depot or Lowes...no way! They demand only the finest organic natural materials that

Mother Nature can provide: sticks, bark, dry grasses, leaves, pinecones, pebbles, feathers, shells, or seaweed. One important caveat: do not EVER disturb any of nature’s materials that are still living, especially flowers, ferns, mosses, and lichen. Disturbing or destroying anything living in nature will arouse a fairy’s ire. You may wake up the next morning with a tangle of Elf-locks in your hair or discovered you’ve lost your favorite trowel in the garden.

As to the actual construction of the house, there are two trains of thought on the matter. Some “purists” use only blades of dry grass or vines to bind the things together, simply interweave the materials or carefully stack them against one another. The “realists” recognize that a delicately constructed fairy house probably won’t survive as long as one held together with a bit of hot glue or durable adhesive. Sometimes you need do the actual construction in a different location from the placement you’ve chosen and you must transport it. A fairy complaint has never been documented on this issue.

When the building is complete, it should blend into the environment surrounding it, be hidden, and almost invisible. It can be decorated, furnished, and landscaped using found materials such as seed pods, acorns, dried flowers, pebbles, and small shells. Think chandeliers, tables, chairs, beds, tubs, dishes, and swimming pools. Let your imagination run wild.

When it comes to imagination, children have the most prolific ones. Walking through woods or fields with a child, we have the opportunity to teach them about the natural world and the creatures in it. They develop the curiosity to investigate what they have seen or collected—an education without a classroom. Building fairy houses stimulates a child’s creativity and teaches respect for the environment, a plus for us all!

Check out Tracy Kane’s books on how to build fairy houses or do a search on the internet. There are lots of great ideas and photos available.

# Clubs Calendar

## February 19–21, 2016

*New York in Bloom, '25 Beautiful Years.'* New York State Museum, Albany.

## March 17, 2016

*District Board Meeting,* Red's Seafood Restaurant, Coxsackie.

## March 18–20, 2016

*Capital District Garden and Flower Show,* Hudson Valley Community College, Troy.

## April 11–12, 2016

*FGCNYS, Inc. Annual Meeting,* Hyatt Regency Long Island, Hauppauge.

## April 21, 2016

*Third District Spring Meeting, 'Sunny Days Ahead.'* Kozel's Restaurant, Ghent.

## June 7, 2016

*Celebrate Garden Week,* Home of Director Camille McComb, Kinderhook.

## June 21, 2016

*FGCNYS, Inc. Summer Board Meeting,* Guilderland Public Library, Guilderland.

## June 23, 2016

*Third District Board Meeting,* location to be announced.

## July 21, 2016

*District Trip,* Mac-Hayden Theater, Chatham.

## September 12–13, 2016

*FGCNYS, Inc. Fall Conference,* Radisson Hotel, Utica.

## October 20, 2016

*Fall District Meeting, 'Autumn Moon.'* Pegasus Restaurant, Coxsackie.

## October 23–25, 2016

*CAR Fall Meeting and Conference, 'Historic Treasures of NY.'* Gideon Putnam, Saratoga Springs.

## October 26–27, 2016

*FGCNYS, Inc. Fall Symposium, 'Everything New.'* Gideon Putnam, Saratoga Springs.

## CAR Conference in NY!

On October 23–25, the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State (FGCNYS) will host the National Garden Clubs, Central Atlantic Region (NGC-CAR) 2016 Conference in Saratoga Springs, NY. This will certainly be a momentous event, as it only occurs in New York State once every seven years. Therefore, this is your chance to participate in many ways.

Our NGC President, Sandy Robinson, will be our guest, along with the CAR Director, Anne Bucher. FGCNYS will be showing off one of our most scenic areas during the Fall Foliage Spectacular.

Please join us for a fun, educational adventure with On Thai, an outstanding design speaker, and wonderful tours of one of the historic venues of New York.

Help is needed. Your club can participate by placing an ad in the conference program, by donating money to be a patron of the event (with a listing in the program), or by donating your time to help at this momentous event.

For more info go to:

[www.fgcny.com/TheNewsOnline.html](http://www.fgcny.com/TheNewsOnline.html).

*Save the Dates*  
"Historic Treasures of  
New York"



October 23 – 25, 2016  
The Gideon Putnam  
Saratoga Springs, New York

Hosted by the  
Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, Inc.  
For information and registration visit  
[www.ngccar.org](http://www.ngccar.org)/[www.fgcny.com](http://www.fgcny.com)

*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](mailto:kjanson@aol.com).

To access *The Digest*, go to the State website—[fgcnys.com](http://fgcnys.com)—select District III on the home page and then select *Digest Online*.