

Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.
88th Annual State Conference
June 5 – 6th 2019
Beauty and Balance, Earth and Water
Great Wolf Lodge, Traverse City, Michigan

MGC Youth Gardening Activities

Chair Ronnie Dush

2019 Conference Traverse City

For MGC, Inc.

LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT

Plant America: "Grow & Share:"

Michigan
Garden Clubs






Identifying Needs to address with Youth Gardening?

*On June 5, 2018 at our MGC Convention
“Bzzzz Michigan with Leaders”;*

Leadership Development Mini-Conference I chaired three round table sessions with a total of 18 MGC members.

There was discussion on many “Attendees’ Questions”. A major one was; **What does MGC expect from its members to be involved with children?**



Attendees provided several “Suggestions” on youth development programs with our clubs. One because of our members “old age issues” with getting down on the ground with the kids.

It was identified that we only needed to show/explain to kids how to plant and then let them do it. Kids love getting their hands in the (dirt) soil.



This was followed up with their input as to

“What’s Working Well”.

Getting involved with Latch-key kids after school. Utilizing middle/high school honors students work with teachers doing things at their lunch times. Utilizing area libraries to promote studies for kids. Bringing area gardens back to life utilizing kids/students.

Then our focus turned to **“Areas of improvement needed”.**

This was mainly with school teachers and our need to partner with other groups and agencies.



National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC) is an organization dedicated to the protection and conservation of natural resources, as well as the study of gardening, landscape design, environmental issues, floral design, and horticulture. Gardening opens a new world of exploration, awareness, enjoyment, amazement, learning, and service in conjunction with and appreciation of the natural world.

An Important component of this international organization is its dedication to sponsoring and encouraging youth gardening groups, beginning at age three and continuing into the teen years. NGC seeks to inspire a love of gardening and the natural world in our youth, not only to improve and maintain our environment but also to share the sheer fun of “digging in the dirt.” Youth Club organization opportunities exist through garden clubs and councils. Additionally, NGC maintains an extensive scholarship program for deserving students who are pursuing careers in its many gardening associated interest areas.



Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. (MGC) mission is to provide leadership in education, resources and networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, landscape design, civic and environmental responsibility. Membership is open to adult groups of men and women who are interested in promoting the objectives of MGC, Inc. and to Junior Gardening/High School Garden Clubs.

All junior and High School Garden Clubs must be registered with the MGC, Inc. Youth Activities Chairman annually. Applications are available from the Chairman or on the MGC, Inc. website. Contact the Chairman for guidelines on Club organization, programs, project ideas and directions, award information and available resources.

What is MGC's role in youth activities?


Our (MGC) goal is to provide educational opportunities for youth at the pre-school, elementary, middle and high school levels. The purpose is to introduce gardening, conservation, protection of wildlife, recognition of plants, trees, shrubs, basic flower arrangements and a love and appreciation of nature. To help attain these goals MGC provides a chairperson that coordinates and supports all clubs in achieving these educational opportunities as the MGC Youth Gardening Activities Chairperson.



Why get involved with youth?

It is believed that the **adult garden club sponsors and club leaders** provide their charges with an important sense of responsibility for conserving natural resources, protecting the environment, and appreciating and protecting plants and animals.

MGC has recognized that “**Youth are our future**” and is developing an increased interest in developing methods and plans to help our clubs reach out to the community, schools, parents and outside organizations to get children aware of the opportunities gardening offers.



Youth Gardening; What is it about?

It introduces the art and science of gardening using fundamental math, reading and writing skills, as well as practical applications to our youth.

- It increases awareness of the environment, natural resources, ecology, conservation, composting and recycling.
- Helps raise test scores, especially science. Encourages creativity through observing the cycles of life.
- Develops leadership skills.
- Provides opportunities for participation and recognition with nationally sponsored contests.
- May lead to future hobbies and career opportunities.



How can club members, clubs, districts get involved?

Members may work with youth in settings other than a Youth Garden Club. Youth Gardening can be affiliated with a school, church, neighborhood, day care center or established youth organizations such as 4-H, Scouts, Science and Ecology Clubs, Master Gardeners and Future Farmers of America. Gardens for children opens whole new areas of exploration, awareness, enjoyment, amazement and learning. Remember, children are our future, so we need to get them started on the how and why's of gardening. We need to get them involved to spark interest and the love of gardening.



These are the guidelines used when clubs inquire about sponsorship of a Youth Gardening Club.

Must be sponsored by a local adult garden club associated with National Garden Clubs, Inc.

**Must have a minimum of five members and five meetings per year
– no matter what the age of youth.**

Must register the Youth Club annually with Michigan Garden Clubs. They in turn register the club nationally. The application is on the MGC website.

If required, they must pay the ANNUAL registration fee. MI requires a \$10.00/yr. for registering Youth Clubs.

Must keep Youth Clubs informed as to contests and award information and deadlines.



In addition –

The sponsoring club will determine the amount of involvement depending on their abilities, and time commitment. This can be one or two individuals (as most of ours are) or the entire club. In most cases it believed the sponsoring club has some sort of a budget dedicated to the Youth Club but in other cases the Youth Clubs have funding raising projects to sustain their activities. A big factor is also having the support of the parents and members of the community.



What is already happening in MGC?

We currently have four **registered** Youth Garden Clubs in MGC. The “Hillsdale Jr. Garden Club” (IIA), the “Sunflower House Youth Garden Club” (IIB), the “Webberville Junior Garden Club” (IIB) and “Morenci Garden Youth Club”(IIB) . All it takes to join is to fill out an application and send it with \$10.00/yr. to State Youth Activities Chair. I would like to see more youth clubs join in the coming new term.

Also, many clubs do individual activities with the youth in their area with and without developing a formal club. These activities include entering the Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl contest, grades 1-5. High School Essay Contest, High School students only. Youth Sculpture, grades 4-8. Poetry, K-9 Special Education.



2018 was a winning year for MGC Youth Contests.

A total of 1,930 children participated statewide in the poster contest. District I had 6 winners, District IIA had 3 winners, District IIB had 8 winners, District V had 6 winners and District VI had 1 winner. Ten clubs judged 570 posters rendering five winners who went on to win awards at Central Region.

Nancy Smith our **MGC Birds, Bees & Butterflies Chair** has developed a “**new**” **Native Plants Patch**. She is presenting this patch and premiering a curriculum that she developed for this convention.





District IIB has started a group of members from its district clubs. They refer to themselves as “IIB Youth Gardening Interest Group”. The purpose of this group is stated as **“to share ideas and support all the youth gardening activities in District IIB”**. They meet every 4-6 weeks for approx. 2 hrs. The meetings are rotations from IIB club members hosting the meetings. So far to date (6/6/19), we have had **five** meetings. They share what each club is doing and scheduled activities with each other. This has helped those not as involved understand what they could be doing to get involved with children gardening. As MGC Youth Activities Chair I was asked to chair this group to get things going. I hope that other MGC Districts are or would like to start doing the same.



Mason Sycamore Creek Garden Club



- In the spring of 2018, the Sunflower House Learning Center and Youth Garden Club was created as a community outreach garden project for youths in 2nd through 5th grades. The objective of the program is to serve and interact with youth in our community providing practical, vocational, and a life-skills “seed-to-table” gardening, horticulture, environmental conservation, and beautification.
- Learning historical information, participating in community events, engaging in “hands-on” activity sessions with garden tools in the soil, planting, weeding, watering, decorating with annuals, and adding natural garden elements like rocks is the central focus of the program.



District IV; Ferry Elementary Youth Garden Project

TCGC Youth Chairs: Gayle Ruiter and Lynn Smith In early spring 2018, the **Tri-Cities Garden Club (TCGC)** was approached by the Principal of Ferry Elementary School to see if we had any interest in renovating the courtyard garden at the school, which is in Grand Haven, MI. This garden had been created in the mid 1990's to provide an innovative hands-on whole learning environment for students from K-6 th grade. The garden had fallen into disrepair, was weedy, overgrown and unsafe, and was underutilized by students and staff at the school. April of 2018, club members and students began working wonders in the courtyard garden. During 2019, TCGC members and Ferry School students will continue to maintain the gardens, plant annuals, herbs and vegetables in raised beds, and use the garden as an outdoor learning environment. We will also provide the school with a rain barrel for the gardens once the spring growing season begins. The school has plans to host an open house to showcase the gardens to parents and community members in late spring of 2019.

For more details see pg. 6 of Spring 2019 "Through the Garden Gate



District V; Horticulture Intern Program, Juniper Garden Club, Gracey Landis, Student

A spark was lit from a discussion about the best use of our scholarship funds. It quickly switched from college students to Junior and High School students. Why not a garden?

We decided to look to our local youth in the Junior and High Schools in the area. Dee Lynch presented an idea for students to work with a local nursery, at no cost to the nursery. She realized that this might help both a local business and give an opportunity to a student. Juniper Garden Club would pay the intern a stipend, up to \$600, or as allowed by the IRS, to cover transportation and job costs.

Ten youths responded and Gracey Landis, age 14, became the first intern of the new program. Dee Lynch arranged with Kathy Cyman, owner of Cyman Gardens in Bellaire, to mentor Gracey over the summer and into the fall of 2018. At the recent Michigan Garden Club, Inc. District V meeting at Shanty Creek Resort, those in attendance were treated to a presentation by Gracey Landis herself. She shared her experiences with members of the garden clubs, including a poem that she had written about her experience.

For more details see pg. 7 of Spring 2019 "Through the Garden Gate"




From Kent Garden Clubs: Club of Distinction

KGC developed a partnership with Kentwood School District Southwood Elementary and developed a community garden and pollinator garden. KGC also partnered with the Discovery! Program to provide an opportunity for Girl Scouts to earn their MGC Native Plant patch.

--can contact Karen Maupin: karin.maupin.km@gmail.com

Background: Karen contacted me a year ago when she learned that NGC ceased offering the wildflower patch and she had the big event planned with the County Parks and Girl Scouts so MGC designed the Native Plants Patch and the rest is history.



Swan Creek Garden Club, has two programs that they are working on.

Each year we do the Smokey the Bear Poster, and Woody's the Owl poster contest. It is to help bring awareness to the younger kids about the risk and how to prevent forest fires and to be mindful of the environment and not to pollute . The slogan is "give a hoot don't pollute".

We are also offering a college scholarship to a student that will be studying horticulture with their studies.

Webberville Garden Club Hosts Event for Children In conjunction with the Greater Lansing Home and Garden Show

The Webberville Garden Club enjoyed the opportunity to help and inform 143 kids about the importance of feeding our birds in colder months. The club helped kids (of all ages) make pinecone bird feeders out of shortening, cracked corn, and sunflower seeds. They also decorated bags to contain their treasures on the way home. We wished everyone a Happy Spring from the Webberville Garden Club and MGC District IIB. Members who helped with this project were Cassie Bosworth, Jeannie Bosworth, Julie Hath, Ava Modert, Jessica Modert, Jody Royce, Lois Snover-Hanson (Meridian GC), Joan Vogt, and Nancy Webb. It is so important to reach out to youth as they are our future!



Lansing Home and Garden Show Report

This was the case at the Lansing Home and Garden Show, March 14-17, 2019 at booth 3003. Our efforts to make the **Black Swallowtail our Michigan state butterfly gathered 420 signatures of support for our new Senate bill (SB 167)**! The public was very enthusiastic. Some folks even remembered us from last year and remarked, "Isn't this done yet?"

Our friendly staffers took time to talk with the public and answer questions. They distributed hundreds of educational brochures and plant "shopping lists" of host plants and nectar plants to attract butterflies.

Many children came running to our booth followed by their parents, thanks to Mary Reed and Cyndy Brown (Williamston GC) who dressed in butterfly costumes and fluttered their wings at the kids! We ran short of butterfly fans on Saturday morning, made more Saturday night, (Thank you, Anne Davich), and finally distributed **280 fans** to some very happy children.



In the fall of 2018, the Meridian Township Police Department approached the Meridian Garden Club to ask for their assistance to uplift the outside of their buildings by adding a garden.

THIS projects main MISSION was to show the youth the importance of community pride & service, with the servicemen leading by example.

Meridian Garden Club hosted an event on May 18th 2019 from 9am to 12:00 noon where the local high school athletes from Haslett & Okemos including coaches along with area Fire & Police came and install/ dress up the Police and Fire station gardens. More than 60 students & 20 adults volunteered. Started setting up at 8 am (5151 Marsh Rd Okemos MI 48840) ."Many hands made light work" was the statement of the project. Dick VonTersch gave an elaborative demonstration on the proper techniques for planting "Rule #1, Green side up!" was his answer to the question asked to the volunteers. This project would not have been possible without the Capital Area Master Gardeners for their donation & MGC's budgetary allowance, along with many other donations.





Caro Caro Garden Club did a program in conjunction with the library's Curiosity Club.

George Turner, who we don't have a pic for, brought an amazing Arrowhead collection all found in our area, that the kids really enjoyed.

It started at the library quizzing the kids about nature, pollinators, and Native Americans. Of course, they snuck in pitch for the Black swallowtail! We then divided the kids into teams named for the 3 indigenous tribes in our area that had an alliance called: The Ring of Fire. They were the Chippewa, Potawatame, and Ottawa. Our 3 teams walked to the Botanical Garden and began our Nature Treasure Hunt.

The kids loved running all over the Botanical Garden looking for things on our Treasure Hunt List.

Mike Salgat along with his niece, Lynette Smith were our two Native Americans surprise visitors there. Mike told the kids the delightful Chippewa story of how Mackinaw Island was originally called: 'Turtle Island', about how water animals brought it into being. He also showed the kids artifacts that Native Americans used, he demonstrated drumming and concluded with a native dance that the kids got up and engaged in. Very fun and cool for the kids. Mike's great grandpa signed the Chippewa Treaty!

Lynette taught the kids about how they gardened using the 3 Sister's technique using corn with pole beans growing up it and squash on the ground under it to protect soil moisture. She brought us those seeds with templates and instructions. The club will be creating a spot at the Botanical Garden to recreate that. She tends the amazing gardens on the Chippewa reservation in Mt.





High School Essay Contest

Caro Garden Club, District VI, participated in the MGC's 2018/2019 High School Essay Contest. We offered a **\$250 scholarship** to Caro High School students who wished to take part. The theme this year is: **The Impact of Bottled Water on the Environment and the Water Supply.**

Twenty-two students submitted entries. We met with the students and their guidance counselor in the school library. Our two members, MariAnn Saenen and Teresa Trish, who are retired teachers critiqued the entries and chose the winning essay. They awarded certificates to all 22 students who participated. When their names were called, they announced positive highlights to each student about their individual essay. The winning essay was written by Lillian Hessling, a college bound senior.

Our local newspaper ran an article with pictures and The Tuscola Conservation District is publishing Lillian's essay in their February publication featuring conservation and the environment. We will be sending Lillian's essay on to the state for further consideration. I would highly recommend that clubs consider offering a scholarship to their local high schools, as it was a very rewarding experience and excellent way to connect with our youth.



NEXT STEPS!

Communications: While it appears that many clubs are involved with/in Youth Gardening Activities much of it is not shared with ourselves and the general public.


Recognition: Many members are trying to develop and implement activities for our youth. We need to recognize them somehow and encourage others to get involved.

Parents: Starting a youth garden club has been thought of as a “baby sitters” job. It has been found from children garden club sponsors that many of the parents stay with their children during the 1-2 hr. meetings and have told that they enjoy the meetings as much as the kids and have learned much themselves. Talking to them can get new members to consider joining their garden club.

Affiliations: We need our clubs and members to develop a working relationship with them to help our goal of involving our youth in gardening.

QUESTIONS?

Handouts



Horticulture careers in the plant world - we call them "green-collar" careers.

There are at least 121 career fields available to our youth.

If you are interested in filling our tables with food that is safe & nutritious: (19)

If you are interested in preserving native habitats & lessening the impact of climate change: (9)

If you are interested in imagining landscapes & bringing them to life: (15)

If you are interested in tending the landscapes that welcome us home & invite us outdoors to play: (9)

If you are interested in soothing & delighting with bouquets of flowers & gatherings of greens: (6)

If you are interested in experimenting & the wonder of knowing our worlds: (19)

If you are interested in serving & supporting people: (15)

If you are an artist: (7)

If you love technology: (9)

If you love to write: (4)

If you want to be an entrepreneur & own your own business, you might build a business in: (9)

(The breakdown is one of the handouts available)



Where do you find resources to utilize? (Available as handout)

Our own MGC website www.michigangardenclubs.org

Our own NGC website www.gardenclub.org

Our own CR website www.ngccentralregion.org

Movement to promote horticulture and inspire people to pursue careers working with plants
<https://www.seedyourfuture.org/careers>

Gardening Lesson Plans for Hands-on Learning <https://kidsgardening.org/lesson-plans/>

Lesson plans www.scholastic.com/bloom/

Five Steps to a successful schoolyard garden

https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/five_steps_to_a_successful_schoolyard_garden

MSU Gardening With Kids: www.canr.msu.edu/hrt/uploads/534/79846/10-Gardening-with-Children-Norm-Lownds2.pdf

Smokey Bear teachers flip storybook <https://www.symbols.gov/index.php?cPath=126>



Where do you find resources to utilize? Cont.

National Environmental Education Foundation
(<http://eeweek.org/resources/garden>)

Forest Service Wildflowers Kids
<https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/kids/activities/>

NGC Grants & Awards <http://gardenclub.org/awards/youth-awards.aspx>

Grants <https://www.espoma.com/garden-clubs/>

Gardening with Children NGC web: Clubs - HELPFUL INFORMATION AND LINKS

<http://gardenclub.org/youth/ecology-warriors-workbook.aspx>

<http://extension.illinois.edu/gpe/index.cfm>

<https://kidsgardening.org/>

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/kindergarden/index.html>