

CENTRAL REGION GARDEN CLUBS, INC.



“BEE A PETAL PUSHER – PLANT AMERICA”

Spring 2021 ISSUE



CENTRAL REGION DIRECTOR JODI MEYER’S MESSAGE



Hello to all who are reading this final message from this CR Director. Boy, the last two years seem like a blink of an eye. It was in Biloxi, Mississippi that my term began.

A lot has happened in this term, most out of my control or planning. I was thinking of Carol Yee frequently during these last few months as she prepares her Executive Board and Board Chairmen for her term 2021-2023. I wish her and her team all the best of luck and good experiences.

I want to say how proud I am of our Central Region State Presidents; they have done their very best at keeping the wheels of progress turning. I was able to observe and hear some of their accomplishments at the virtual meeting "Care to Share" hosted by the NGC Incoming President Mary Warshauer. It is amazing how the States have embraced the workings of

technology that can benefit the gardening world. It took a pandemic to jump-start that experience but it is here to stay now.

Thank you to the 2019-2021 Central Region Executive Board and Board Chairmen. I appreciate all you have done for the Central Region.

A special Thank You to Central Region Alternate Director Joyce Burlington; always a great listener, adviser, and supporter.

Also, a BIG Thank You to Gloria Notaro, the CR Newsletter Chairman and Website Chairman, she keeps me on my toes.

With much appreciation and Gardening Love,

Jodi Meyer

Jodi Meyer
Central Region Director

Check out the CR website:
www.ngccentralregion.org

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Jodi Meyer
Central Region Director
2400 Taylor Ave., Princeton, IN 47670-3216
812-677- 0155 (C)

lulumeyer1957@gmail.com
www.ngccentralregion.org

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Dates to Remember

NGC virtual Spring meeting (there will be several video presentations, such as awards, and schools,) Please look for those on the NGC website in May

May 17-20, 2021 (NGC President Gay Austin - Opening Welcome Message May 18, 2021)

Central Region Fall Conference, November 1-2, 2021, Essenhaus at Middlebury, Indiana

Check the website for upcoming class information.

New terms start after NGC virtual meeting in May.
The Central Region Director officially starts June 1, 2021.

Central Region Director **2021-2023**

Carol Yee

5224 Grand Ave.

Western Springs, IL **60558-1826**

708-246-6704

708-927-9937 cell

MSCYee@hotmail.com

Theme: Plant America: Sow the Seeds and Keep Growing

NGC President **2021-2023**

Mary Warshauer

57 Buena Vista Ave.

Rumson, New Jersey 07760

732-513-2671

Mwarshauer@gardenclub.org

Theme: Plant America - Play Outdoors

NAN MCCABE, PRESIDENT FEDERATED GARDEN CLUBS OF MISSOURI, INC. 2019-2021

Theme: "Plant America - Keep Missouri Blooming"



Dear Central Region Garden Clubs:

Today I just wrote my last President's Message for our state publication, *The Garden Forum*. I cannot believe that two years have just flown by. Time flies when we are having fun! I am so blessed to have served the Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri, Inc. even though this past year has been difficult. I am so inspired by our Missouri clubs and members. They have persevered during this past year of the pandemic, holding their meetings even though they may have looked differently, and instituting their club projects even if they had to be altered.

Each day when I go out to our mailbox, I can barely open the door and pull out the mail because there are so many Garden Club Yearbooks! Missouri Garden Clubs have hearts steadfast on keeping their clubs together. As I read their yearbooks I am amazed at all they are doing and planning to do in 2021.

Spring brings working in our yards, Community Gardens, Blue and Gold Star Dedications, Arbor Day Celebrations, Habitat for Humanity Landscape Projects, attending NGC Schools, beautifying our communities, working with children growing in them a love of gardening...the list goes on and on. Prayers for those members who have lost family or friends to COVID-19. I will always be keeping you in my prayers, your families, our nation and the world.

Nan McCabe
FGCM/CR Convention Chairman
Missouri President

Scholarships

Central Region will award one \$500 scholarship for the 2021-2022 school year. State Scholarship Chairmen should send their applicant's information to me by March 15, 2021. Applications may be made digitally as well as hard copy. Please include financial aid information as well as other forms your state uses to determine scholarship winners.

My contact information can be found on the Members Only page of the Central Region website.

Anita Bierbaum
CR Scholarship Chairman

Deadline for the July Newsletter is:
June 1, 2021

Please send your article to:
Gloria Notaro-Editor at:
gardenngc@gmail.com

MARILYN KRUEGER, PRESIDENT OF THE GARDEN CLUBS OF ILLINOIS 2019-2021

Theme: "Plant America While Encouraging New Gardeners"

What a year this has been since the COVID-19 virus began! As I looked over last year's Central Region spring newsletter, we were all excitedly looking forward to a new gardening season and trying new ideas in our own gardens, our community gardens and school gardens, too. Our calendars were full and we couldn't wait to go to events that our hard-working fellow gardeners had planned. Some of us even were a part of the planning! We had no idea of what was to come and how our plans would change. But we have made the best of it and we learned how to garden while social distancing, keeping our promises to our communities.



When we couldn't meet in person, we learned how to participate in virtual events. Getting together without having to leave the protection of our own homes is convenient and allows members to attend who can't or find it difficult to travel. What used to take up most of a day, with travel and lunch included, can now be done in an hour or two. Virtual interest groups have formed that previously would never have even been considered due to the distance separating the members. We are learning new ways to raise funds and ways to reduce our spending as we still strive to meet our goals.

We are looking forward to spring and are always encouraging our members to "Plant America" with native trees in support of our national president's challenge, "Each One, Plant One." Our clubs are growing with new members and we find that our outreach to those interested in gardening has reached more people than we anticipated. Our annual State Convention in April will be an afternoon virtual event, but we hope to meet in person for our Summer Meeting in July.

Marilyn Krueger
Illinois President

The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc.

Please check our Website - gardenclubsofillinois.org for updates.

2021 Calendar of Events

March 9 - District IX Annual Meeting (virtual)

March 19 - District II Spring Meeting (virtual)

March 25 - District V Annual Meeting

March 30,31- Landscape Design School,
Course 3, Series 18, Glen Ellyn

March/April ?? - District VII Annual Meeting

April 18 - Annual State Convention (virtual)

April 21 - District III Spring Meeting, Kewanee

May 3 - District VIII Spring Meeting, Pilcher Park

July 19 - Annual Summer Meeting, Champaign

September 17- District II Fall Meeting

BETTY LEVERETT, PRESIDENT OF THE GARDEN CLUB OF INDIANA, INC. 2019-2021



“Plant America with More Members”

With 2020 having closed and 2021 upon us, it's time to start thinking about the months ahead and planning for a new and even better year. Opportunities are sure to present themselves as we move past idle time preparing, and more time doing. TGCI can look forward to a year working on projects, as well as, getting acquainted again in person.

Your Board of Directors and District Directors have been working constantly over the past year looking for ways to bring us back together for meetings, seminars, and conventions. They are here for you, so don't hesitate to use their expertise on how to keep your club doing what they do best, save the environment.

National is still promoting “Plant America.” As it states on the national website (gardenclub.org), “Plant America” is focused on educating, supporting and building America's garden communities. This theme is chosen to help NGC members and the public return to the ‘roots’ of why most members join garden clubs –” to learn about gardening.”

And, here's a thought for the month. Poet Lord Byron once noted, “Letter writing is the only device for combining solitude with good company.” So, with this in mind, as we still look for ways to stay in touch, rekindle the art of letter writing with your members. Exchanging letters or cards is still a wonderful way to use the art of communication.

Look after yourselves, continue to monitor the welfare of our plants and species, and most importantly your members.

Betty Leverett
Indiana President



Check out the Central Region website at: www.ngccentralregion.org/

JANET HICKMAN, PRESIDENT MICHIGAN GARDEN CLUBS, INC. 2019-2021

Theme: Plant America: Grow & Share



I hope this issue of the newsletter finds you all safe and well.

As we look in the rear-view mirror at 2020, I'm sure most everyone would agree that it was a year we are happy to have behind us. There's never anything wrong with a bit of reflection. So, I find myself wondering how much our perception of how bad 2020 was is influenced by our 21st century psyche.

For instance, we tend to think of the Winter Solstice as the beginning of the cold, hard winter. By contrast, the "Ancients" viewed it as the beginning of renewal and the healing of the sun, because the days start getting longer again, immediately after the solstice. I think I like that approach much better. Thus, instead of feeling badly about what we couldn't do this last year, we should celebrate all that our clubs and club members accomplished *in spite of COVID-19!*

Thank you all for your hard work to stay connected with club members, bring some beauty and a bit of brightness to your neighbors and community by maintaining your civic projects and by continuing to plant and register your own native gardens for pollinators.

If you registered your garden, or encouraged a neighbor to plant and register a pollinator garden ([www. millionpollinatorgardens.org](http://www.millionpollinatorgardens.org) and chose NGC as the referring organization), please be sure to let your club president know so they can include your gardens in the President's report which is due March 1st. I am still keeping track for the rest of this term.

I'm really excited that we are just a little over a month away from the spring equinox. Surely, spring is just around the corner! Like you, I am looking forward to all the things I'm going to plant this year.

Janet Hickman
Michigan President



Birds and Butterflies

Spring is arriving soon; now is a great time to get the bird houses ready for our feathered friends. Clean them out, if they need to be painted you can get that done early. Make sure your bird feeders are clean. If you don't have bird feeders or houses, now is a great time to shop for them.

When we feed the birds and have houses or trees for them to nest, you'll enjoy watching them arrive. If you're looking for Butterflies, make sure you have host plants for the Butterflies you want to attract. We have a variety of Butterflies, and a lot of host plants so they'll begin arriving at our home in mid-May.

I'd like to remind everyone, if you wish to have birds and butterflies in your yard, **DO NOT** use chemicals around the area you want to have them visit as it takes a toll on our winged friends.

Marian McNabb
Birds and Butterflies

Conservation

Feathers for Flight

There are approximately 1,000 different species of birds in North America. Birds and their habitat needs are remarkably diverse. Think cavity nesters, waterfowl, forest nesters, ground nesters, etc. Birds are one of our important connections to the natural world.

In September, *Audubon Magazine*, published a very disturbing article concerning a mass bird die-off in the southwestern U.S. They lay scattered by 1,000s in many areas. At that time, sadly there was no clear explanation for the loss of nearly 1 million migratory birds, representing a wide diversity of species. The exact reasons for this unprecedented event are yet to be determined. They are working to establish what factors, including possibly climate change, that may have caused this.

Even before this die-off, many bird species were declining and struggling to exist in our world today. The number of birds in the United States has fallen 29% since 1970. There are 2.9 billion fewer birds than there were 50 years ago. All of this says we need to keep birds in mind in our conservation efforts.

Even more alarming, just when birds need us the most, on January 7, 2020, the outgoing administration changed the legal interpretation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (first established in 1918) as the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service will no longer be able to hold industries accountable for the "incidental" killing of migratory bird species. This includes the oil industry and any oil spills and any companies that may cause chemical, insecticide or water contaminations would also be exempt from any penalties or fees.

We need to be doing much more to protect and conserve birds and their ecosystems, which are so diverse. Maintaining protections that have been in place for decades is only the minimum if we are going to recover populations, so it is critical that these protections are restored.

In repeating the NGC Conservation Pledge, we are reminded that **we as individuals** are needed to take action to protect and conserve birds and their habitat.

Renee Lynch
Conservation Chairman

Endangered Species

NOW'S THE OPPORTUNITY

Nuthatches being reintroduced to the forests of Missouri! These songbirds, which are known for their rubber duck toy like squeak, left Missouri during the early 1900's. According to the Missouri Department of Conservation, the birds originally left the state because of the removal of the shortleaf pine woodland tree. These trees, part of the bird's habitat, were largely removed by human hands.

Sarah Kendrick stated "It's an amazing conservation success story. We've been able to bring back enough of the habitat to also bring back the bird." The variety of organizations assisting in the mission to bring back the beloved bird is plentiful.

The operation to bring back the birds to Missouri is an extensive one. The mission itself began recently at the MU School of Natural Resources. The vision began back in the early 2000's. Professor Thomas Bonnot, of the school stated, "Restoring habitat is a lengthy process and we are now to the point where we have a sizable area of woodland habitat in the Mark Twain National Forest, WOW now's the opportunity."

Those participating in this mission traveled to the Ouachita National Forest in Arkansas to begin trapping birds. The groups spent a few days safely capturing the birds, placing them in transport tubes, They were taken to the airport and flown back to release sites in Missouri. The entire operation is paid by the Missouri Dept. of Conservation and the Mark Twain National Forest team.

50 Birds in total were released in 2020 with 50 more to be released in 2021. The birds will continue to be monitored insuring ultimate success of this mission. Caring participants are striving to solve the plight of threatened & endangered species.

Marjorie Motley **Threatened & Endangered Species**

Credits: Madeline Carter, author of article appearing in the Columbia Daily Tribune, Columbia, Missouri in 2020.

Life Memberships

There is a very lovely way to support scholarships in the seven States of Central Region and remember a loved one. Yes, you can purchase a Life Membership for \$50 and give a gift to a family member, a friend, or a garden club member at the same time. Purchase the Life Membership in honor of your friend, relative, or other people and you will support education at the same time.

The \$50 Life Membership goes to the Central Region Scholarship Fund. Central Region would like to give out many \$500 scholarships. When you buy a Life Membership, you are contributing to the scholarship fund. In addition, you can purchase the Life Membership pin for \$10. If you already have a Life Membership, consider buying a Gold Star for \$25!

Carol Catlin
crcat34@gmail.com

Invasive Plants

You never know where you will spot Japanese knotweed. I discovered a patch in the Katoski Greenbelt Park in Waterloo, IA near a stream. Since that area floods a lot, perhaps knotweed pieces were left by the flooding. Last summer I was driving down a street which has a stream nearby and noticed a large patch in bloom growing along the street in the older residential area. From the size of the patch, it has been there for some time. Perhaps it too is another flood product.



Thanks to German botanist Philipp Franz von Siebold, in 1850, von Siebold shipped a bundle of knotweed plants to Kew Gardens and the rest is history. From there, carried by gardeners, contractors, and floods, knotweed conquered the British Isles. But it didn't stop there; Japanese knotweed has colonized the Northeastern United States, the spine of the Appalachians, the Great Lakes states, and the Pacific Northwest. Infestation is "rapid and devastating," one researcher wrote. A knotweed researcher in New Hampshire found knotweed systems—almost certainly just one plant, connected underground—as large as 32,000 square feet, more than half the size of a football field.

Japanese knotweed a member of the buckwheat family was introduced into the United States from Eastern Asia (Japan, China, and Korea) as an ornamental on estates in the late 1800s. It has also been used as an erosion control plant. By the mid-1890s, it was reported near Philadelphia, PA, Schenectady, NY, and in New Jersey. It had been sold through seed and plant catalogs, but by the late 1930's knotweed was already being viewed as a problematic pest.



Japanese knotweed is an upright, shrub like, herbaceous perennial that can grow from three to 15 feet tall. As with all members of this family, the base of the stem above each joint is surrounded by a membranous sheath. Stems of Japanese knotweed are smooth, stout and swollen at joints where the leaf meets the stem and it has been called Japanese bamboo because of the jointed stem.

Although leaf size may vary, they are normally about 6 inches long by 3 to 4 inches wide, broadly oval to somewhat triangular and pointed at the tip. The minute greenish-white flowers occur in attractive, branched sprays in summer and are followed soon after by small winged fruits. Seeds are triangular, shiny, and very small, about 1/10 inch long.

As with many invasive plants, knotweed thrives in disturbed areas and once established can spread rapidly, creating monoculture stands that threaten native plant areas. Japanese knotweed can tolerate a variety of adverse conditions including full shade, high temperatures, high salinity, and drought. It is found near water sources, such as along streams and rivers, in low-lying areas, waste places, utility rights-of-way, and around old homesteads. It can quickly become an invasive pest in natural areas after escaping from cultivated gardens.

Single young plants can be pulled by hand depending on soil conditions and root development. If all of the root system isn't removed, re-sprouting can occur. For small initial populations beyond single plants, use a grubbing tool to remove all of the roots after cutting back the standing vegetation can be an effective control measure. All parts of the removed plants should be bagged and disposed of in a secure location. It is best if knotweed not be mown or cut with weed trimmers as the pieces of the plant can easily get moved around and re-sprouts, spreading, rather than controlling the plant. For large areas of infestation, you may need to use herbicide treatment. There is no insect, pest, or disease in the United States that can keep it in check.

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Another interesting note about Japanese Knotweed is it's edible. It is also important to remember the tasty invasive weed can only be eaten at certain times of the year. The best times is when the first shoots in spring appear, (April and May) and are about 7 inches in height and tender enough to eat. After that it can become stringy and may need peeling, so just look around for younger shoots. Not recommended to eat the adult plants at other times of the year as it could cause mouth blisters. With a taste similar to a lemony rhubarb, Japanese knotweed can be used in a variety of both sweet and savory recipes, including jams, sauces, fruit compotes, soups, purees, wines and ice creams to name but a few. So even a very pesky invasive weed can have some good qualities!



Japanese Knotweed is on all of the Central Region state invasive plants lists.

References:

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<https://slate.com/technology/2019/05/japanese-knotweed-invasive-plants.html>
<https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/profile/japanese-knotweed>
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<https://environetuk.com/blog/Is-Japanese-knotweed-safe-to-eat>

Jane Buck
Invasive Plants Chairman

National Garden Clubs - Member Services

Do some Online shopping on the shopping site: <http://shopgardenclub.org/shop/>

Now that you are used to shopping online, take a look at the NGC shopping site. It can be accessed on the top of gardenclub.org where there is an icon of a shopping cart.

Flower Show Awards & Supplies
Jewelry
Books
Gifts
Certificates
Calendars



Wilma St. Onge
NGC Member Services Chairman

New Plant Varieties for 2021

Just when I might get depressed right after the holidays, my mailman brings me renewed enthusiasm with the arrival of the first 2021 seed and plant catalogs. Gone are the "mopes" and I immediately start to explore hands-on catalogs and online possibilities.

Our clubs might want to consider sharing these seeds with members as a spring "COVID-19" project.

Options this year look very interesting. I just got started looking through "Seeds 'N Such" when I came across a new YELLOW radish, "Golden Helios." I don't remember seeing that one before, but can surely imagine it surprising all on a veggie tray. 25 days from planting to picking, 1-2 inch bulbs, golden skin on white flesh, this one resists spiciness and bitterness in hot weather. This variety will be a must order for me this spring.

Burpee's catalog always gives me ideas. Keeping with the yellow theme, I spotted "Lemon Drop" summer squash, 3+ stars, pick when the size of a large lemon, sweet and flavorful. That will go well with an old favorite, "Yellow Sunburst," a patty pan variety. Continuing with Burpee's offerings, "Hasta la Pasta" spaghetti squash caught my eye. It's bright orange inside and out, 6-8 inches long and 4-5 inches across, 5 stars, great for small families, and prolific.

Since I'm always on the lookout for something different, there's a really unusual looking parsley, "Green Dream," 4 stars, looks nothing like flat leaf or curly varieties, but purports to have great flavor.

While I'll always grow "Better Boy" tomatoes, and "Jade 2" green beans, I'm open to fun choices. Gone are the days when I grew 62 tomato plants for a family of TWO. "Sweet 100" cherry-type, Sweet Million, Yellow Pear, Pineapple, Early Girl, Cherokee Purple, Black Krim, Mortgage Lifter, Roma, Amish Paste, Mr. Stripecy, Green Zebra, Aunt Ruby's German Green, Sun Gold, Lemon Boy, and more, all indeterminate plants growing 6-8 feet tall in cages, or wired to an iron fencepost, such are the varieties of a plant nut. All were well fertilized, and pruned to eliminate sucker growth. Yes, the neighbors, and the food bank appreciated the bounty.



Back to the new varieties, these annuals look gorgeous and are definitely worth a try. A French-type marigold "Strawberry Blonde," bi-color pastel pink, rose, and yellow, rated 4 stars, 8-10 inch tall plants, vigorous and bushy. The color combination is what draws you in on this one. A very frilly petunia, "Spellbound Dark Purple," with 4-6 inch flowers, and an intriguing pattern in the center, rated 3 + stars, this almost doesn't look like a petunia. A cosmos, "Double Take," a bicolor double pink with a yellow eye is another frilled flower, growing 3-4 feet tall, and would be a butterfly magnet grown as a hedge. All three of these annuals are easy to grow. I'd recommend if you are going to enter new varieties in a flower show, bring the seed catalog with you. The classification chairman, clerks, and judges may not have seen these before, and would appreciate the information.

Two perennials from Burpee's drew my attention. The first is a dianthus, "Georgia Peach Pie," with very large flowers for a dianthus, rated 4 stars, and is very fragrant. The second is a hibiscus, "Pink Swirl," that has a pink, rose, and cranberry edge on a bright white petal. The flowers are 8 inches across, and it is easy to grow.

Please be sure to check out other catalogs as well. I've had great results from Burpee's, Johnny's Select Seeds, Seed Saver's Exchange, Parks Seed, Gurney's, Baker Creek Heirloom, and Botanical Interest. This last one gives a lot of extra information for newer and experienced gardeners.

Here's to a great growing season for 2021. Tell me what varieties grow well for you. If you have questions, send me an email.



Ruth Moorhead
TGCI Horticulture Chairman
ruthtgci@yahoo.com