

CENTRAL REGION GARDEN CLUBS, INC.



“Plant America: Sow the Seeds and Keep Growing”

Spring 2023 ISSUE



CENTRAL REGION DIRECTOR Carol Yee’s MESSAGE



It’s hard to believe that my term is almost up. Lynne Ehnert officially becomes Central Region Director at the end of the NGC Convention May 5, 2023 at the Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia when the CR Director pin is transferred to her.

I’d like to thank everyone – Advisory Chairman Jodi Meyer, the CR Officers, CR State Presidents, and CR Committee Chairs for all your help during this term and for being flexible during COVID surges. I am thankful I’ve gotten to meet you or re-connect with you and it really was such a pleasure working with all of you!

Thank you to The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc. for hosting the 2021 CR Convention. The original plan was to gather at the Essenhaus Inn, but eventually had to convene on Zoom. Thank you, Joyce Bulington, for your flexibility and to Cynthia Wright for being Zoom host. It was an accomplishment to be able to hold a CR Convention during a COVID surge and after we could not meet in 2020.

Thanks to the Federated Garden Clubs of Minnesota for hosting the 2022 89th Annual CR Convention “Plant America: For the Birds and the Bees, the Flowers and the Trees.” All who attended had a wonderful time meeting and reconnecting in person. Thank you, Rene Lynch and your team, for organizing such a successful event.

Thanks to The Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa for hosting the 2023 CR 90th Annual Convention “Hats off to Iowa” October 15-17, 2023. A Botanical Arts Show will be held and workshops and tour will be offered. Hope everyone considers attending and helping make this event a success.

It’s been a great experience for both Laurel DeBoer, Alternate CR Director,” and myself. We’ve enjoyed attending state conventions, meeting many of you, and we truly appreciated the warm hospitality of your members.

And now, I’d like to introduce Lynne Ehnert, who will be your next CR Director and who is very likely familiar to many of you. She has served as Wisconsin Garden Club Federation state president and on several NGC committees through the years (including Youth and Awards) and most recently is chairman of the NGC Member of Honor committee.

She is an NGC Master Flower Show Judge and has attended several garden club activity workshops, meeting and bonding with many people across the United States, and South America. She also is, as many of us know, the daughter of Kitty Larkin, a former WGCF State President, CR Director, and NGC President. (It is Lynne’s destiny : “as you know the apple does not fall far from the tree!”) Lynne’s theme is: “Central Region’s Tree Planting Escapade” – It reflects all garden club activities that have become “a momentum for furthering interest in the environment and which instills the importance of making this a better world for everyone. It is more important than just sowing a seed or planting a tree. It is improving the life of everyone while sharing and caring.” Congratulations, Lynne! Have fun!

Carol Yee
mscyee@hotmail.com

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Carol Yee

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"Sow the Seeds and Keep Growing"

**NGC 2023 Convention
May 2 - 4, 2023
White Sulphur Springs, WV**

Date to Remember

**Central Region Convention
October 15 - 17, 2023
Des Moines, Iowa**

www.ngccentralregion.com

Marilyn Krueger, President of the Garden Clubs of Illinois 2021-2023

Theme: “Plant America . . . Starting at Home”



It has been wonderful to spend time with the Presidents of Central Region states over the last four years. I have learned so much from all of you, as well as other members of your states, and the Central Region Board of Directors. It has been helpful to hear about how our sister states handle the challenges and enjoy the successes, especially as we have navigated the COVID pandemic.

As this article is written, Illinois has 138 clubs and a few affiliate clubs. We have about 6,300 members. We are working on fine-tuning our data base as, at this time, since we give a discount on dues to couples we don't have a way of counting the “plus one.” Our membership count will be more accurate soon.

Our clubs, districts and state have donated \$113,450 in scholarships to 74 students. We continue to participate in NGC's “Plant America with Trees” project and also count the pounds of home-grown produce donated to food pantries.

The Blue/Gold Star Memorial Marker program is important to us. We have 150 Blue Star Memorial Markers, 3 Gold Star Memorial Markers, and more in the planning/ordering stages. This year is the 75 th Anniversary of Blue Star Memorial Markers in Illinois. Each dedication/rededication is well attended, giving respect and gratitude to our military.

I look forward to seeing you at the NGC convention where the new Illinois president, Diane Dawson, will be introduced.

April 16-17: The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc. Annual Meeting and Convention- Naperville

April 27: Blue Star Memorial Marker 50-year rededication- Kankakee

July 10-11: Summer Meeting- Giant City Lodge, Makanda, IL

Fall: Flower Show School- TBA

Please check our website, gardenclubsofillinois.org, for more information and new events.

Linda Houston, State President of Missouri Garden Clubs 2021 - 2023

Theme: “Plant America: Help Your Neighbor”



Dear Garden Club Friends:

Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri will be celebrating their 90th anniversary in St. Louis during the annual convention on April 17-20, 2023. Three tours to explore St. Louis outdoors are being offered.

You are invited to enter a Standard Flower Show and attend several inspiring events. Please contact the convention chair Mary Officer at maryofficer@sbcglobal.net or her mobile phone at (314) 550-1775. We would be so happy to see our garden club friends from neighboring states! We have reached this milestone of 90 years with the support of the Central Region states and hope it will continue.

Another opportunity originating from St. Louis is the Environmental School via Zoom on March 20-23, 2023. Course IV, “Water,” is being offered at the economical price of \$35.00 + \$5.00 for renewal or test. Please contact Jan Conant, Environmental Studies Chair, at djconant@msn.com or home phone (314) 576-7590.

Most of the garden clubs in Missouri will be busy this spring holding plant sales and beautifying community gardens. They are doing an excellent job of making our environment, youth and cities better through the theme:

“Plant America, Help Your Neighbor.”

Keep blooming!

Linda Harkleroad, President of The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc. 2021-2023
“Plant America in Colors of Hope for Cancer Awareness”



“Plant America in Colors of Hope for Cancer Awareness”

Although our geographical location along with climate change make Indiana one of the states in our region less susceptible to the ravages of winter’s ice and snow, many garden clubs in the state take a break from meeting for a few months at the start of a new year. After the holiday parties of December, a few months with no meetings allow for officers to meet and plan programs for the coming year.

On the state level, there is much to look forward to:

- “Bees, Teas, and Pollinators, Please”—Not all of Indiana went into hibernation during the winter. On January 28th the members of the Sullivan County Garden Club hosted a garden fest complete with speakers, vendors, and a tea tasting.
- “Pieces of the Past”—Our state convention will be held April 25-26 in Montgomery, Indiana. TGCI business will be completed, but it will also be a chance to learn about southern Indiana’s history along with reconnecting with friends.
- “Almost Heaven”—A chance to stay at the Greenbrier? Who can resist that? The NGC convention May 1st through 5th promises days filled with meetings, speakers, and a tour of the bunker!
- “Water Is Essential for Life”—The North Central District will host TGCI’s semi-annual September Seminar on September 15th on Lake Wawasee in Syracuse, Indiana. From the scientific to the artistic, speakers will highlight not only the methods in place to keep our lakes and streams clean, but also the paintings that highlight their beauty.

I cannot resist the chance to celebrate the statistic that was revealed at the January Membership Monday meeting. Indiana was named 4th in the nation in total new members and 2nd in the nation when calculating the percentage increase considering total membership. Along with every other state we are struggling with issues of members aging out and recruitment of younger members. However, we continue to focus on attracting new members with interesting programs and beautiful civic plantings.

Linda Harkleroad

Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl

As regional chairman, I received 22 posters from 5 states. State chairmen have been noticing a decrease in the number of posters sent to them due to many issues including schools being more restrictive on volunteers allowed and teachers not having the flexibility to have students do the posters in school. The Central Region first place winners for each grade (1-5) have been sent to the National Chairman. At the National level, one winner from each grade will be selected from all of the NGC Regions and be awarded \$50 each. The grand prize winner will be chosen from those five 1st place winners and will be honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC along with a round-trip, 4-day, 3-night stay for the student and their family.

Cynthia Wright
Central Region Chairman

Monica Taylor, State President of Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. 2021-2023
Theme: "Plant America: Grow, Share, and Connect"

Michigan Highlights....Zoom...Zoom



Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. (MGC) continues to use their Zoom accounts to connect with our members. We continue to offer Member Meetings via Zoom on the first & third Friday of each month. Topics have included Growing Houseplants, Winter Birds at your Feeder, Photography, Insects as Pollinators, Floral Design and many more. All programs are recorded and stored on our website's Member Area for easy access later by individuals or clubs.

Each District Director has a MGC Zoom account and uses it to hold regular President's Meetings. This is an opportunity to share their successes and challenges and really connect with each other. The District Directors also use it to meet with committees as they are in full swing of planning their in-person Spring Leadership Meetings. These round table meetings will bring the club leaders and potential club leaders together to share some of their common issues and ideas to bring success to their club. Common topics include attracting new members, filling leadership positions, program, and field trip ideas. This has been a most successful event.

The 2023 Conference and Annual Meeting, *Hand Picked Just for You, Make the Member Connection*, will be held on June 6 & 7, 2023 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Planning Committee utilizes the MGC Zoom account to hold regular meetings to plan the details.

Other groups such as the Michigan Consultants Council and Michigan Accredited Judges Association use the MGC Zoom account to host their regular meetings. Any MGC Club can contact their District Director to use the MGC District Zoom account as needed.

This has saved all of us time, travel expense and facilitates the MGC business we need to do!

Walt Reemtsma, State President of Garden Clubs of Iowa 2021-2023
Theme: "Together We Will Make it Happen"



Currently two main responsibilities are on my plate that need to be completed in a timely fashion. There were three, but you are reading this contribution to the Central Regional Newsletter. In June, Iowa will be having its annual state convention. In October, Iowa will be hosting the Central Regional Convention in Des Moines, Iowa, October 15,16,17. Circle those dates on your calendars so that you can be a part of this fun and informative event.

The June state meeting will be my last official event as president of the Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa.. My, how the last two years have flown by and I have had so many wonderful experiences. While I will miss serving the gardeners of Iowa I am looking forward to new experiences and serving on a national basis as a member of the national "Vision of Beauty" committee.

Finally our many inches of snow are beginning to disappear from our lawns and even parts of my garden are starting to show their location. This year I want to grow white sunflowers. I have found seeds for purchase on the web and have a friend who owns a greenhouse operation volunteer to start the seeds for me. I am so blessed to have former students who are willing to be a part of their former teacher's life.

White has become my color of passion. Last year I wanted to incorporate white Hosta in my garden. I purchased three plants and now am anxious to see if they survived the winter. My mother loved white geraniums and each year I purchase three plants incorporating them in a planter that reminds me of the days when I was growing up on a farm in northwest Iowa. I also have seen some seeds that will produce white Zinnias. I just might purchase them too.

As we prepare for the spring resurrection in our gardens let us get excited and share that excitement with others around us. Let's have the joy of gardening be contagious.

Laura Skoff, State President of Wisconsin Garden Clubs 2021-2023

Theme: *“Take Flight and Soar with Wisconsin Garden Club Federation”*



The members of Wisconsin Garden Club Federation are anxiously awaiting the new season of growth just around the corner as Spring is upon us!

The state's largest club, Garden Club of Greater Milwaukee, will be taking an educational tour at the Riveredge Nature Center March 28th to learn about maple trees and the process of going from sap to syrup. The sugar maple forest, called the Sugarbush, will be the site for tapping 101 basics such as which trees to tap and how, the gathering of the sap and using the evaporator to boil it down.

Members will discover how climate change is affecting the season. A homemade pancake breakfast in the forest as the grand finale is sure to please everyone!

Our 95th Annual Business Meeting and Convention is being held on May 21 – 23 and the rotation takes us to the Coulee District, our smallest with just 46 members in three clubs. Located in Onalaska, just outside of La Crosse, this area is known as the Driftless area meaning lack of glacial drift which were deposits of silt, gravel and rocks that retreating glaciers would leave behind. This geography is characterized by its steep and rugged landscape with the largest concentration of cold water streams in the world. An interesting fact is the advance of glaciers into Wisconsin created all of our topography except the Driftless Area.

A Mississippi River cruise on the La Crosse River Queen and tour of the Riverside International Gardens is an optional excursion planned for attendees. Program speakers from the National Eagle Center will join us with a special visitor and our state officers will certainly entertain everyone as they compete in a floral design show (none of us being consultants or judges!). Wisconsin will be offering an in-person Environmental School, Course 1 on October 20-21, 2023 in Sheboygan. For information please contact Chairman Karen Merlau (920) 565-3092 kmerlau@tds.net.

Central Region's Director-elect Lynne Ehnert is from Wisconsin and will share her knowledge and experience as she embarks into her new position. Congratulations Lynne and thank-you to outgoing Director Carol Yee for her dedication and service!

Plant America – Moves inside!

In January, the 2023 NGC Plant America grants were given out to 54 clubs nationwide. The amounts ranged from \$300 to \$1,000. Only 11% of the grants were received by Central Region clubs – three grants to Illinois clubs, two grants to Missouri clubs and one grant to a Wisconsin club. Now is the time to start planning for a grant from NGC to assist in a project to benefit your communities. Each year the 2-page grant application is due by October 15 with the funds to be distributed for the next year. We all have projects that could use some additional funding; let's make this the year that Central Region shines! Work with your clubs and communities to make it happen!

As we pop into spring, what are you planting? While outside gardens for us all are a ways off, I'm planting a macadamia nut that I brought back from the NGC Hawaii tour. In theory, five years from now, I will have macadamia nuts on a small house-grown tree. We shall see...

The important thing for us all is to just plant - really doesn't matter what we plant - just that we continue to **“Plant America.”** Aloha!

Terri Ewers
CR Plant America Chairman

Bird and Butterfly report for March 2023

As I write this, we're in the middle of winter storms, had 12 inches of snow last week. The birds are happy to see us every morning. They are going through 80 pounds of sunflower seeds a month plus 12 suet's, but they're happy. What the birds don't eat in the daytime, the deer come through and finish up at night.

Our Central Region bird is the Chickadee. We have Woodpeckers, Chickadees, Finches, two pair of Cardinals, Blue Jays, and 6 Doves along with numerous Sparrows, which includes a leucistic Sparrow that's been here for about 3 years. Keep your feeders clean so the birds don't get a disease.

The butterflies will arrive in May so it's a great time to think about planting to attract butterflies. We planted Marigolds and Zinnia's in the town gardens to attract butterflies. Milkweed will attract the Monarchs as it's their host plant. The Central Region butterfly is the Painted Lady.

You can go on the National Garden Club website and print off a booklet on Attracting Butterflies into your Garden. A very interesting and informative booklet.

Remember not to use herbicides or pesticides in areas you want to attract both birds and butterflies. It will kill them. Think Spring, it will be here shortly.

Marian M. McNabb
Central Region Bird and Butterfly Chairman

Blue Star Memorial/Gold Star Memorial Markers March 2023

Central Region Garden Clubs are continuing with Blue and Gold Star projects started last year, and are also starting new projects. Minnesota garden clubs will be installing one or two Memorial Markers later this year. Wisconsin garden clubs are waiting for markers to arrive.

The Monticello Garden Club of Indiana has a Blue Star By-Way Marker ordered. They plan to place it on a boulder in one of their gardens located in Altherr Park and dedicate it in November.

The Garden Clubs of Illinois' "75th Anniversary of Blue Star Memorials in Illinois" marker has been ordered and will be placed in the I-74 Farmland Rest Area, westbound, with plans for a dedication later this year. Kankakee Valley Garden Club plans to have their marker repainted and rededicated later this spring. Illinois' Lincolnshire Garden Club plans to order a new large marker. Their club placed one of the small 8X12" intermediate markers that became available from NGC in the 1960s for civic planting.

Kathy Rewerts
Blue Star/Gold Star Memorial Markers



Invasive Plants

By Jane Buck

Garlic Mustard

The ground is covered with snow as I write this but spring is around the corner and invasive plants will be showing their pesty heads!

A noticeable springtime invasive is Garlic Mustard, *Alliaria petiolata*. I remember walking through a public park viewing the spring wildflowers and finding it along the trail. My friend and I pulled as much as we could and disposed of it. The ground was moist so we had no trouble pulling the weed. If you don't get the roots, it will come right back.

Garlic Mustard is a non-native species originating from Europe and parts of Asia. It is believed that Garlic Mustard was introduced for medicinal purposes and food. So why is Garlic Mustard a threat?

- Can rapidly take over our native forests
- Forms dense colonies that shade out native wildflowers and tree seedlings
- Can totally dominate a forest floor within 5 -7 years of its introduction
- Seeds become viable within a few days of flowering, allowing for rapid germination
- Has two periods of germination: one in mid-spring and the other in late summer
- Seed remains viable for up to 7 years in the soil

Since Garlic Mustard is a biennial, it has a two-year life cycle. Seed germinates in April and the new leaves are rounded to kidney-shaped with a scalloped edge and develop at ground level during the first growing season. They can be hard to spot. Smelling the Garlic odor when the leaves of the plants have been crushed is a way to identify the plant.

In the second year, the leaves are simple, alternate and largely toothed. Most are heart shaped but some toward the top of the stalk can be more triangular. Leaves reach up to 3 inches wide and the stalk can reach up to 4 feet tall.

Clusters of white, small flowers form at the tops of the stalks. The flowers bloom from late April or early May through early June. The seeds are the sole means of reproduction for Garlic Mustard. Seeds come in a long green pod, that turns light brown/tan when plant dies. Each plant contains hundreds of oblong, black seeds. It can be easily identified as non-native, because no native wildflower reaches this height!

Control Methods for Garlic Mustard.

Control strategies must be applied for eight or more years until the Garlic Mustard seed bank is depleted. Methods may vary over time, especially in woodlands and areas should be monitored each spring to promptly detect new invasions and prevent reoccurrence. Mark areas where plants were found to aid in future monitoring.

- **Hand pulling.** For smaller infestations or where large groups of people are involved, hand pulling or digging Garlic Mustard can be effective. Once flowering has begun, all plants must be bagged. Garlic Mustard seeds can still ripen after plants are uprooted!
- **Cutting plants** a few inches above the soil surface just after the flower stalks have elongated but before the flowers have opened can be effective in preventing seed production and may kill Garlic Mustard plants. However, some plants may send out new flower stalks that require additional cutting. Monitor the site regularly.

Continued from page 8

- **Use herbicides** only when necessary. **ALWAYS** read the entire herbicide label carefully, following all **mixing and application instructions**. Wear recommended protective gear and clothing.
- Another method for spot-killing patches of newly germinated seedlings in spring is to “**flame**” them with a propane weed torch. Flames quickly kill tender seedlings, usually without permanently damaging nearby perennial plants. Use the weed torch cautiously, and only when conditions are wet. **ALWAYS contact your local fire control agency prior to using this method. Burning permits may be required.**
- **Clean shoes**, pockets, pants cuffs and equipment thoroughly after walking or working in infested areas. Garlic Mustard seeds are tiny and are often carried off in clothing, shoes and mud.
- **Survey your area** for green Garlic Mustard plants. Plants can be spotted any time they are not covered by fallen leaves or snow.

Websites

<https://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/forestry/garlicmustard.pdf>

<https://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/terrestrial/plants/garlic-mustard>

https://extension.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/garlic_mustard_managers_infosheet.pdf

Below are photos of Garlic Mustard in first year growth, blooming, and second year seed pods.



Membership

Membership Mondays, hosted by the NGC membership committee, have been held virtually on the second Monday every month, from September through April. There are two left during the current NGC administration.

How do you get invited? Go to <https://www.gardenclub.org> and sign up for The National Gardener on the home page. An invite to MM will be sent via email along with registration for the live sessions. Approximately 800 register with a live attendance of 400+. All the sessions are recorded and are on the NGC website.

Our next MM is March 13 on Landscape Design Schools, the third of a four-part series on NGC Schools. Other MM topics have been how to recruit, retain, and revive your local club members, applying for grants, Plant America, leadership tips, and parliamentary procedure.

Central Region has been very involved and visible. Let's keep this up!! Each registration is coded by state. These are live sessions and they augment content that is on the NGC website, bringing life to the topics. The Chat and Q and A are lively, helpful, and popular.

Please register. See you on March 13th!

Diane Dawson
Central Region Membership

2022 Poetry Winners from Central Region

Central Region received 17 entries from 3 states - Indiana, Missouri, and Wisconsin. 9 entries were sent to NGC for judging. Listed are the winners in each grade. The contest has 3 divisions. K-9 traditional: K-9 special needs: K-9 English as a second language. 2023 theme is **“I spy with my little eye, something green.”** Please look at the NGC website gardenclub.org and look under youth contests- poetry for all of the rules to enter.

1st grade: 1st Ryan F. Indiana - sponsored by Hendricks County Garden Club
2nd Bernadette School Wisconsin - sponsored by Oshkosh Garden Club
3rd Mason Cook Missouri - sponsored by Brentwood Garden Club

2nd grade: 1st Charlie School Wisconsin - sponsored by Oshkosh Garden Club
2nd Elaina Hobratschk Missouri - sponsored by Bittersweet Garden Club
3rd Abigail R. Indiana - sponsored by Hendricks County Garden Club

3rd grade: 1st Ellie Jordan Missouri - sponsored by Jardin Du Lac Garden Club

4th grade: 1st Mitchell M. Indiana - sponsored by the Hobart Garden Club
2nd Kaylee Marshall Missouri - sponsored by Brentwood Garden Club

5th grade: 1st Emma B. Indiana - sponsored by Hendricks County Garden Club
2nd Kenzie Cook Missouri - sponsored by Brentwood Garden Club

6th grade: 1st Max Anderson Missouri - sponsored by Grow And Glow Garden Club
2nd Ella F. Indiana - sponsored by Hendricks County Garden Club

7th grade: 1st Hadassah R. Indiana - sponsored by Hendricks County Garden Club
2nd Maggie Wessing Missouri - sponsored by Bittersweet Garden Club

8th grade: 1st William Fleury Missouri - sponsored by Bittersweet Garden Club

9th grade: 1st Isaac Kelly Missouri - sponsored by Jardin Du Lac Garden Club

James Pavelka - Chairman

Youth Essay, Poetry, Youth Sculpture

Check out the CR website:
www.ngccentralregion.org

NGC Schools Report 03/01/2023

These are the schools currently offered that are listed on the National Garden Clubs, Inc. website. Go to the NGC website to check these out and register if interested.

Gardening School

March 8-9, 2023 Ohio, Zoom

April 13-15, 2023 Chemsford, MA - Zoom

Landscape School

March 28-29, 2023 - Connecticut, Zoom

Mar. 30-31, 2023 - Louisville, OH - Zoom

September 13-15, 2023 - Falmouth, ME - Hybrid

Environmental School

Mar 20-24, 2023 - St. Louis, MO - Zoom

(evenings only)

April 11-12, 2023 - Tampa, FL - Hybrid

Nov. 16-17, 2023 - Ft. Myers, FL - Zoom

Lucy Valitchka NGC Schools

To register, go to www.gardenclub.org/our-schools. Click on 'schools,' choose the school you want, then follow prompts to courses currently offered. You will see Course 1,2,3,4. Click on each one to see what is offered and how to register. Good luck to all and many thanks to the states.

Awards by Susan Cooney

I want to remind all clubs in Central Region that we offer cash awards for most awards on our web site. Go to <https://www.ngccentralregion.com/awards> for the current awards offered.

When your club publicizes the National Garden Club, and Central Region Award they won, the people in your community learn more about your garden club and the commitment to the public garden projects.

You can highlight environmental, garden therapy, youth projects or a project you do now in town. We ask for donors for each award and the awards can change during a new director's term.

The past two years not as many clubs submitted applications for awards, due to COVID, but it was inspiring to see how clubs continued to meet on Zoom, in person or at outdoor venues. They found a way to make a difference. Let people know how your club makes a difference too.