



SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

(Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma & Texas)

The Communicator

2024 VOL. 17— October, 2024

Sarah McReynolds, Director 2023-2025





Message from Our SCR Director...

Plant America – Pollinate South Central”



I am so glad that I have had the opportunity to be your Director. And thank you Arkansas for such a wonderful SCR Convention. I have made so many friends in each state. Each of the states in our region are unique and special in their own way. I enjoyed visiting each state's convention and look forward to being invited to each state convention in 2025. Hopefully, they will be spread out a little further apart, so I will not have all night driving etc, but it has been worth it to go to each convention.

I am pleased that all of you bought all the pollinator merchandise from Heather White our Pollinator Princess of Sales. And thanks to many members that helped along the way with staffing the booth. We plan to bring you some new gifts to chose from, so we can together give a \$1,000 dollar scholarship to each of our states or Arkansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. This has been a rewarding experience. I have tried not to use any of our SCR funds for travel etc. so that I can donate at the end of my term, any extra funds from the scholarship money, back into the SCR funds for our new director.

I have attended all the NGC meetings and had a blast in Colorado and will attend the NGC ZOOM Fall meeting. I am pleased to announce will will have the NGC Spring Convention in Charleston, SC to install our new President, Donna Donnelly. This will be a fun convention to attend.

I would like to congratulate all our states for their hard work with Flower Show Schools, Symposiums, Gardening Schools, Environmental Schools, and Landscape Design Schools. We have an elevated level of education going on in our four states and I am proud of these accomplishments.

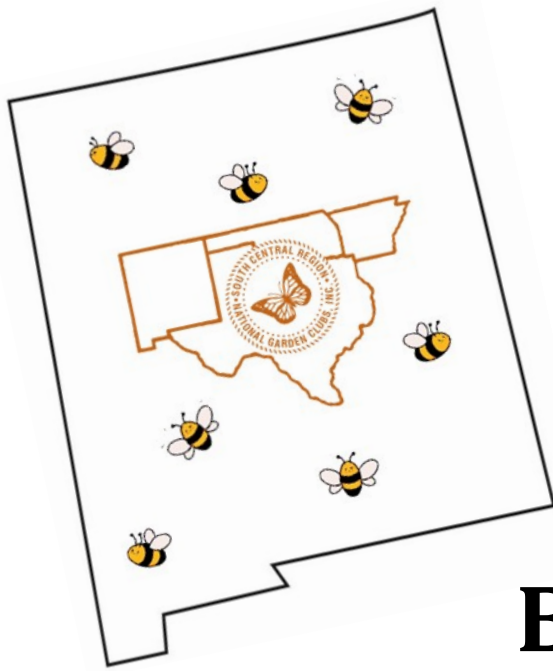
And I think we are leading the nation in Gold Star Markers in the last two years, thanks to New Mexico and Oklahoma. I am proud we are remembering our veterans living and past is such a historical way.

It has been a long sizzling summer, but many of you are gearing up for the new garden club year and I wish all of you lots of success and fun. Invite me to any of your meetings and if possible...I will come.

Hope to see you in Albuquerque at the Spring Convention...we have a skit, and a great installation planned as we crown our New Mexico based SCR Director for 2025-2027.

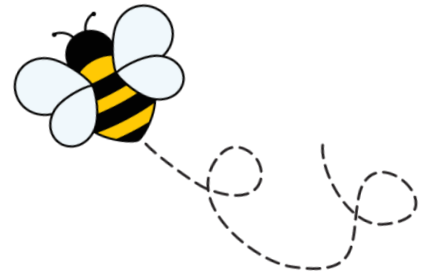
Fondly, Sarah McReynolds





**SAVE THE
DATE**

**Bee
Enchanted
in New Mexico**



**SOUTH CENTRAL REGION CONVENTION
IN
APRIL 16-17, 2025
Embassy Suites
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO**

**We will tour the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center,
Get Up Close and personal with Pollinators of the Night
See a great Pollinator Skit,
Learn all about Bees and Create a Bee House
And Enjoy a fabulous Design program followed by Officer Installation**

DOWN THE GARDEN PATH

BY Gwen DeWitt Garden Consultant

The National Garden Club Garden School is sponsored by District VII, my district, so it's always held at the Garden Center located in the San Antonio Botanical Garden. We have the amazing Dr. Joe Novak from Rice University as our instructor. Always learn so much when I go.

This session was filled with classes on new plant development and how nature, industry (farmers and nursery industry), public programs (Ag Experiment Stations, plant societies and public gardens) and gardeners improve selections we have available.

Natural selection goes on all the time with native plants. It is a slow process but necessary to the evolution of plants.

Modern plant breeding began with the genetic discoveries of Gregor Mendel. He was studying the inheritance of traits in peas in 1860. Genetic engineering is one of many recent developments, but it is only one tool in the process and doesn't have to be a part of plant improvement. Modern plant breeding uses the processes of plant selection and plant hybridization. It is an art as well as science to develop new cultivars. It is up to the breeder to determine the goals and how to proceed to reach that new plant.

Breeders use cross pollination and selection among the offspring. Hybridization is crossing genetically different plants to get new combinations of genes. Selection is then growing the offspring of that cross and selecting the offspring with desirable traits. A trait is a characteristic to that plant and can be a result of genes, environmental factors, or a combination of both. A trait can be flower color or other characteristics.

Breeders are looking to improve disease resistance, improve colors, size, and number of flowers along with many other traits. When it comes to vegetables, breeders look to improve sweetness, remove bitterness, improve texture or tenderness. They are looking to increase heat and cold tolerance, reduce the chance of the plant bolting, tolerance to high or low rainfall. A big effort breeders try to achieve is an increased resistance to pathogens and pests on the plant.

Nature provides a vitally important source of genetic variation but breeders also create new alleles of genes along with new combinations of them. Mutation is a major source of most new gene combinations.

As gardeners, we even have a hand in selection by the plants we choose to add to our gardens. Breeders are always coming up the best new thing, but it is the gardener that decides if it is a success. If we purchase that new plant and it doesn't live up to our expectations, we won't purchase again and definitely won't recommend it. The nursery won't stock it if it doesn't sell and the producer will look to the next new star!

DOWN THE GARDEN PATH, continued.

We covered factors that influence plant growth, houseplants, outdoor container gardens, and native trees and shrubs and had a test after each section. Since I'm a consultant, I don't have to test but I take them anyway just to stay sharp.

My favorite class was the teaching tour of the 38-acre San Antonio Botanical Garden. We started the tour at 8:00 am in a gentle rain – umbrellas were not optional!

The San Antonio Botanical Garden's mission is - "Enriching lives through plants and nature." The Garden is recognized for outstanding horticulture displays, botanical diversity, education, conservation and experiences that connect people to the natural world. It embraces the sense of place that makes San Antonio unique.

Two features that back up that vision of the Garden is the children's section with its children's vegetable garden program, home school days, Storytime in the Garden, and Little Sprouts' Hike and summer camps. The other is the Texas

Native Trail which features the Hill Country/Edwards Plateau, East Texas Pineywoods and South Texas. The soil, weather and topography of each area is distinct and supports completely different ecosystems. Each section has all the plants native to their area of the state. During a recent extreme drought, the citizens of San Antonio would bring gallon jugs of water to keep the pine trees alive in the Pineywoods section. San Antonians love their gardens!

My personal favorite is the Tropical house filled with bromeliads, orchids, ferns, pothos, philodendron, and many of our favorite tropicals growing with abandon. So many orchids and I had to be so good – hands in pockets!

The Garden is hosting an art exhibit that is filled with whimsy – giant rabbits all over the place. The exhibit, five years in the making, is the fantastical – "Huntopia: Bunnies, Birds, and Butterflies." The artist, Hunt Slonem, stated it had been his wish to create the "Huntopia" experience for decades. He wanted to share his deep connection with the animal and natural world. Through his extensive world travels, he was deeply influenced to the power and beauty of the natural world. He stated that the more he paints it, the closer he feels to its divine oneness.

Huntopia is Slonem's first exhibition in a public garden. Katherine Trumble, President and CEO of the gardens, stated that Huntopia represents an exciting new ascension as a notable outdoor museum for original art of the highest caliber.

For the visitor, the beauty of the natural world filled with color and whimsical creatures is a delight to the eye. There was a surprise around every corner waiting to charm and amuse the young and young at heart. I highly recommend you hop over to the San Antonio Botanical Gardens to view "Huntopia." The gardens are beautiful and the exhibit is sure to delight!



Message from Arkansas 2023-2025 President, Pam Ellis

We've reached the unofficial end to the summer with the official end coming in a few weeks on September 22. The farmers are cutting their crops and the next several months will see gardens begin to transition slowly into winter dormancy.

This may also be one of the most striking times, with late bloomers like asters and goldenrods coming into full flower. Some plants will have attractive seed heads while others sport blazing red, gold, and orange colors. The red fruits of the Staghorn Sumac growing wild along our highways are stunning this year.

Arkansas is hosting the second National Garden School on September 27th and 28th at the First United Methodist Church in West Memphis. This is a collaboration between Hughes Town and Country Garden Club and the Crittenden County Master Gardeners. You can get Master Gardener Advanced Training Credit and/or become a Certified Garden Consultant. There is still room to register. We will be studying Garden Pests and Diseases, Lawns and Lawn alternatives, Water and Irrigation, Growing fruits, Growing Vegetables and Basic Floral Design. You can start the series whenever you want because the programs are independent. So, get you're your registrations in and join the fun. We would love to continue offering programs like this, but we can't do it without your support.

Our state District meetings will be starting in October. The districts really know how to throw a party and we always have a lot of fun. The purpose of these meetings is to highlight the clubs and allow them to show off. It is amazing what our clubs can accomplish; even the smallest clubs have projects they are passionate about and make a big impact on their communities.

Stay Safe and Happy Gardening,

Pam Ellis, Arkansas President



Message from New Mexico 2023-2025 President, Debra Sorrell

"Grow Through What You Go Through"

New Mexico Garden Clubs members have been bustling away at the many wonderful things that they do in our state!

The biggest "event" in New Mexico every year is FAIR SEASON! There are multiple county fairs around the state and our garden clubs are well represented at most of them. Sadly, a couple of fairs have decided that garden club takes up too much room and doesn't attract enough people, so they have elected to eliminate a flower show. We are working hard to change their minds. At the NM State Fair in Albuquerque, we hold 4 full flower shows within the 12 days of the fair! It's an amazing feat but the New Mexico members are always up for the challenge! There is a lot of enthusiasm and participation. Judges and competitors from all around the state come to help. And, this year, we had new student judges getting credits!

Flower Show School IV took place in July. We have 10 students, in various levels of completion but, 7 are ready to write their schedules. And, there is one newly accredited judge in the northern part of the state! Each new judge is such a welcomed addition to the group and adds valuable input to our council meetings and flower shows. I believe that, second only to club meetings, flower shows are the best outreach to the public.....for education AND for new members!

On September 23, 2024, the 3rd Gold Star Marker in New Mexico was dedicated in Angel Fire at the National Cemetery there. It was glorious day of celebration for veterans and their families! There are an additional 2 Gold Star markers and a Blue Star marker to be installed in the near future. This is an NGC program that New Mexico Garden Clubs have proudly participated in for many years.



Former New Mexico Garden Clubs State President's Mary Ann Moreno, Shirley Tetreault, Suzy Andrego, Christine Longthorp and current State President, Debra Sorrell at Angel Fire Gold Star Memorial Marker dedication.

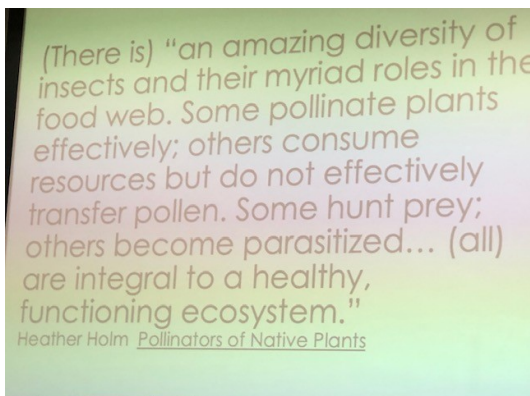
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Many of our clubs are beginning to grow a little. That is a good sign after the years that we all saw declines in membership. Our fastest growing club, however, is in an area that was devastated by fire in July. They were even more critically damaged by the incredible flash floods that followed during the annual monsoon season. Just like many parts of the country, the recovery from such incredible natural disasters is long and slow and garden club is often last on people's priority lists. However, this club gathered those they could and had a club meeting in August! That really speaks to the power of the ties we each make by our participation in garden club! They needed to get together.....to see each other in person and share stories and hugs! ☺

2025 will mark the 75th anniversary of New Mexico Garden Clubs! We will be celebrating that milestone at the annual convention in April 2025 in a big way! It is also New Mexico's turn to host the South Central Region Convention so we'll be doing both conventions back to back. The dates are : April 14-15 (NMGC Convention) and April 16-17 (SCR Convention). Mark your calendars and plan to join us for all four days! I know that there will be people coming from Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas (our region mates) and we will be ready to give each of you a good look at New Mexico fun! There have been several planning meetings and things are well under way. I am certain that everyone will be pleased with the offerings.....with speakers, workshops, field trips, special vendors, animals, actors and who knows what else! It sounds like a circus!! It will be a birthday bash to remember, for sure! I sincerely hope that you will plan this time to come and enjoy the company of other great people who love garden club.

Debra Sorrell, New Mexico Garden Clubs President





Message from Oklahoma 2023-2025 President, Carolyn McCabe

**“Green Grows the Garden—
Plant OK”**

Even though summer is typically a down time for the usual monthly meetings, there is always plenty to do. The gardens all need extra care and water during the heat of the summer months. I'm sure, as I have, you have all been working hard to keep up with the lack of rain and the ever present pests in your gardens. Even though fall has now arrived, there has been no relief in Oklahoma as yet with the drought and intense heat. Better days are in the forecast though and we will all breathe a sigh of relief when cooler, wetter weather finally is here.

The Northeast District hosted the annual State Wildflower Workshop in September just outside of Tulsa and was a great success. The 2025 Workshop will be hosted by the South Central District on April 26th. Watch for information to come. The 2025 State convention will also be hosted by the South Central District in Lawton on April 24th and 25th. Be sure to mark your calendars and make plans to attend.

I attended the NGC board meeting offered on Zoom in September and traveled to Afton, OK to attend the Lakeside Garden Club's annual Anniversary luncheon on September 12th. It was spectacular. Additionally, the Lakeside GC hosted a Gold Star Mothers and Family Memorial Dedication on September 29th at the Veterans Honor Plaza in Langley, OK. Way to Go Lakeside! On October 15th, I attended the Tulsa Garden Club's Anniversary Celebration in Tulsa, OK and then dropped over to congratulate the Green Thumb Garden Club in Bartlesville at their Anniversary Celebration. I also attended the South Central District Board Meeting in Madill on October 17th.

May your gardens grow stronger every day.

Carolyn McCabe



Message from Texas
2023-2025 President,
Lee Taylor

“Choose your path and make a difference “

Happy Fall Y'all...

I certainly hope you are all managing to stay cool!!!
 Temperatures are going down just a bit in Texas. You know it is bad when your weeds are dying. I am just

trying to keep as many plants as I can alive until the temperatures begin to cool down.

The slowdown of summer gives all garden clubs a chance to plan our next year. Clubs are deciding what pilgrimages to take, what community projects will be the best to tackle this year, and which speakers will have the most interesting programs.

My first year has been a challenge getting back on track with our financial position and we are now leveling off. We voted in Abilene at the TGC Spring Convention to maintain ownership of our building and rent it out for garden-related activities. The rental committee that was appointed last fall to make everything ready for garden-related events is going great guns! Headquarters is getting a beautiful facelift, both inside and out thanks to our “Merry Maids” and “Landscapers.” I am so thankful for all the members who are volunteering their time to make this happen.

I addressed the Mayor and City Council of Fort Worth in June about our plans to keep Headquarters and rent out this beautiful facility for weddings and other garden-related activities. Mayor Parker was very receptive to our plans and seemed anxious to work with us. We are proceeding with the idea of holding events very soon. With all of us pulling together, we cannot help but succeed. This is going to be a wonderful experience we will all enjoy!! A new adventure to embark upon.

My second Fall Board Meeting will be held in Fort Worth on October 22-23. It will be great seeing everyone and covering our accomplishments.

National Garden Club Schools are again gearing up to challenge and inform all students... Gardening School, Landscape Design School, Environmental School and Flower Show School. There is always something new to learn each time you attend. Our instructors are top notch. School dates can be found on both the Texas Garden Clubs (texasgardenclubs.org) and National Garden Clubs (gardenclub.org) websites. I will be attending Flower Show III in Houston to refresh, and judging flower shows in Hallettsville and Columbus this fall.

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In November, we have a new Blue Star Marker Dedication in San Augustine, Texas, that I am planning to attend along with our Blue Star State Chair, Bobbie Mason. It always makes your chest swell to honor our military...past, present, and future!! Also, I am planning to attend as many District Fall Conventions as I can squeeze in.

AWARDS are in the forefront again. It is always so interesting to see what ideas the clubs come up with to spread the love of gardening across the State. They are reminded that it is their time to shine!! To brag on themselves and their accomplishments...strut their stuff!! Texas loves to participate in Regional Awards and National Awards as well.

For the *YOUTH AWARDS* this coming year, my Texas Garden Clubs Environmental Poster will be titled "My Favorite Pollinator." Applicants can choose from any pollinator, such as bats, butterflies, bees, hummingbirds, moths, etc. They are limited only by their imagination.

My new booklet "Choose Your Path and Make a Difference" is hot off the presses and available for your reading enjoyment for just \$5 a copy. It is my tribute to Texas Garden Clubs and the honorable members that have helped pave the way for our great organization. I am so honored to be a part of this group.

Wishing each of you a Happy Fall and Blessed Thanksgiving.

Lee Taylor



Do you Sponsor a south Central Region Award?? Its time to start thinking about writing your check for your award sponsorship for 2025.



Interested in Sponsoring a South Central Region Award??? Award Sponsorship is \$25 per award. Get out your check book now, make your check payable to SCR and mail to:

April Pratt, SCR Treasurer

1904 S. Boulevard, Edmond, OK 73013-5148

Have a question, email our SCR AWARDS Chairman, Linda Love, ljflove@aol.com.



Attendees at our Oklahoma SW District Convention.



The Oklahoma Garden Club Throw that was a fund raiser many years ago and was brought back as a fund raiser for Carolyn's term. Beautiful has all our landmarks where the first organizational meeting was held. Pictured also State Bird state Flower very beautiful and was a great fund raiser.

Carolyn McCabe OGC President, Craig Williams, member of the Dahlia Club and Landscape Designer, presented the program and brought lots of plants for sale and give aways. & Melanie Spence, Southwest District President.



Plants Craig brought for the program

Care of Succulents

BOBBIE MASON, ORGANIC CHAIRMAN



1. EXPOSE YOUR PLANT TO REASONABLE SUN (LIGHT), SHADE AND TEMPERATURES.

ALL PLANTS NEED SUNSHINE (PHOTOSYNTHESIS), JUST VARYING LEVELS OF IT. SUCCULENTS ARE FLEXIBLE, THEY DO WELL IN LOTS OF SUNLIGHT & SHADE, BUT THEY WON'T DO WELL IN COMPLETE DARKNESS OR IN SWELTERING DIRECT SUN. (ESPECIALLY IN AUGUST SUMMERS, ADD SOME SHADE). MOVING THE SUCCULENT IN AND OUT OF REASONABLE LEVELS OF SUNLIGHT WILL HELP IT THRIVE. DRY CLIMATES ARE IDEAL, PERFECT TEMPERATURE RANGE 80-90 DEGREES F & PROTECT BELOW 35 DEGREE F.

2. DON'T OVERWATER

WATER ONLY WHEN THE SOIL HAS COMPLETELY DRIED FROM THE PREVIOUS WATERING. SUCCULENTS WON'T QUICKLY DIE FOR LACK OF WATER, BUT THEY DO NEED IT. ALLOWING THE WATER TO DRAIN COMPLETELY THROUGH THE SOIL IS THE BEST WAY TO AVOID ROOT ROT. IF SPRAYING, A ONCE A WEEK SPRAY IS FINE, BUT BEST WAY TO WATER A SUCCULENT PLANT IS SOAKING THE SOIL THOROUGHLY ONCE EVERY 7-10 DAYS. (AGAIN, MAKE SURE THE PLANT DRIES OUT BETWEEN WATERING). WATER LESS IN WINTER MONTHS (ABOUT EVERY TWO WEEKS). AVOID WATERING ON RAINY OVERCAST DAYS.

3. USE LOOSE CACTUS SOIL.

SUCCULENTS NEED TO DRAIN WELL. THEY WON'T SURVIVE IN PURE SAND OR ROCK, OR OTHER SOILS THAT HOLD TOO MUCH MOISTURE (TOPPING WITH MINI ROCKS IS FINE). CACTUS POTTING SOIL IS THE BEST OPTION WHEN REPOTTING YOUR PLANT.

SCR Youth Activities Coordinator, Linda Jean Brown

2024 SCR Youth Award Contests & Guidelines

Our purpose: To teach our youth gardeners to use their eyes to see Horticulture and then grow it; to see Conservation and then practice it; to see our Resources and then conserve them; to see Color and then use it; to see Civic Projects and then adopt one so they may act wisely, ever mindful of the fact that horticulture is the strongest argument for our existence. Lead our youth to carry out our NGC Theme "Plant America."

SCR Youth Activities Coordinator

Linda Jean Brown

30 Waco Dr.

Elkhart TX 75839

(903)478-3264 (h)

(903)724-2656 ©

Ljbrown3264@windstream.net



#19 Bird Contest:

2024 Killdeer Charadrius vociferius

All poster entries are to be submitted to

SCR Bird Chairman,

Linda Lawson 409 NW 41st St Ok City OK 73118-8425 LindaLawson@cox.net

All entries must be sponsored by a local garden club.

Posters must feature the "SCR Bird of the Year".

Eligible students are 4th – 9th grades. Home schooled students are eligible.

Materials may include: crayons, markers, poster paints, watercolors, etc.

Paper choice is decided by the student. The size must be submitted on an 8 ½ x 11 inch page.

Print students name and school and garden club name City and State to the back of your page.

Each club should have entries judged to determine a first-place winner for each grade level.

First Place winners from 4th – 8th graders should be mailed to SCR Bird Chairman. **ONLY ONE FIRST PLACE ENTRY PER GRADE ACCEPTED FROM YOUR STATE AWARDS CHAIRMAN.**

Scale of Points:

Originality	25%
Method	25%
Artwork	25%
Overall Effectiveness of the entry	25%
Total	100%

Copy winning entries as they will not be returned unless a club member attends the SCR Spring Convention.

Posters may include artwork pasted upon a 2nd piece of paper. No 3D allowed.

2024 SCR Youth Award Contests & Guidelines—Continued

#20 Poetry Contest:

2024 “My Garden has Vegetables to Spare that I can Share”

All poetry entries are submitted to

SCR Poetry Chairman,

Sheila Thorne, PO Box 2543 League City, TX 77574 gardenkidskemah@yahoo.com

Eligible to Special Education and English as a Second Language Kindergarten – 9th grades.

All entries must be typed and titled.

Print students name and school and garden club City and State to the back of your paper.

Sponsoring garden club may be that of a grandparent.

All entries become the property of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Poems do not have to rhyme. Poems may be traditional verse, acrostics, blank verse, cinquains, diamond poems, limerick, or Haiku

The theme should not be used as the title to any poetry.

Long longer than 24 lines (including title) maximum 42 letters/spaces per line

Include at least one of the following keywords from the theme: Seeds, Trees, Bees, or Nature.

Scale of Points:

Title	10%
Content	40%
Creativity	30%
Style	20%
Total	100%



#21 Recycle/Sculpture Contest:

ENCOURAGING YOUTH TO KEEP OUR PLANET GREEN

All entries are submitted to

SCR Recycle/Sculpture Chairman,

Linda Jean Brown 30 Waco Dr., Elkhart TX 75839 ljbrown3264@windstream.net

The purpose of this contest is to encourage our youth to keep our planet green and to get involved with saving the environment.

All children in 4th – 8th grades are eligible to enter, with a local garden club sponsor.

Sculptures must consist of recycled, reused, and reduced materials.

The sculpture is limited to a size that will fit sitting on an 8 ½” x11” sheet of paper; height should be proportionate.

A list of materials used, and a brief description of the sculpture should be included on the entry form.

Entry form may be found on NGC website at www.gardenclub.org

Entries will include (2) 4”x6” photographs printed on the back of the entry form.

Chairman should make photos of entries to provide as requested from the NGC website.

Club entries must be sent to your State Chairman by your state’s deadline.

SCR winners will be sent to NGC by March 1.

If your state does not participate in this contest, your entry may be sent directly to the SCR Youth Sculpture Chairman.

Scale of Points

Creative use of materials and self-expression	60%
Description of sculpture and materials used	30%
Craftsmanship and Technique	10%
Total	100%

2024 SCR Youth Award Contests & Guidelines—Continued

#22 Smokey Bear /Woodsy Owl “Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!”

Woodsy Owl

“Lend a Hand Care for the Land”

Rules are the same for either contest – only enter one per year.

SCR Chairman: Jennifer Moreno, 305 Fairmont Park Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87123

Moreno_jen@aps.edu



Students in grades 1st – 5th may enter and must be sponsored by a garden club.

Posters must feature **either** Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl.

Smokey Bear posters must include Smokey’s wildfire prevention message: “Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!”

Woodsy Owl posters must include Woodsy Owl’s message: “Lend a Hand Care for the Land!”

Posters should encourage children to take a personal role in preventing wildfires.

Each entry should be 11”x17” in size.

Materials that can be used include: crayons, markers, poster paints, watercolors, etc.

The child may choose the paper, but it should be 11”x17” in size.

No three-dimensional poster, computer scanned, or electronically generated images will be accepted.

Print Students name, school and garden club name, City and State on the back to the bottom left corner.

Smokey Bear is an official icon: the color of his clothing needs to be accurate. Check the colors on the website www.fs.usda.gov/learn/kids.

Students should be reminded to check spelling. **Posters with spelling errors will be disqualified.**

Any group of children can participate: Scout troops, after school programs, etc. are perfectly appropriate. The child’s grade must be included on the back of the poster so that the participant can compete in the correct age group category.

Scale of Points

Originality	20%
Design	20%
Slogan	20%
Artwork	20%
Overall effectiveness of message	20%
Total	100%



YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES 2024

gardenclub.org/contests-and-activities

Is Recycling Plastics the Answer to Our Plastic Disposal Problem?

Guidelines

- Include name, address, age, grade, school, sponsoring local garden club and state garden club of the essayist on the entry. (Youth privacy is important to NGC, and thus, published winning national essays will only identify the essayist's first name, last name initial, local garden club and state.)
- Essayist's family does not have to be a member of the local sponsoring garden club.
- Essays must be between 600-700 words in length and be the unique and original work of the essayist. *NGC reserves the right to test winning entries for plagiarism and/or AI generation. Essays failing such tests will be disqualified.*
- Essays must be typed and submitted in Microsoft Word, using a font no smaller than 11 point.
- Essayists may submit one photo to accompany their essay. The photo must not show faces of any people included, and the essayist must attest that they have the rights to the photo (or that the photo is free and open source). The photo is not judged, but may be used in the digital booklet.
- When choosing an essay title, please be creative and incorporate the theme: "Is Recycling Plastics the Answer to Our Plastic Disposal Problem?" However, the theme should not be used as the title to any essay. When judging, the title is worth 10%.
- All entries become the property of National Garden Clubs, Inc.
- Sending Region winning entries to NGC: All Region winning entries must be sent to the National Chairperson (James Pavelka, jamespavelka@comcast.net) in Word format via email, and a hard copy mailed for judging.
- National winners will be announced at the NGC 2025 National Convention and the local garden club contact person will be contacted regarding any winning entry.

Submissions and Deadlines

All essays are submitted to a local garden club affiliated with National Garden Clubs, Inc. Local clubs send their winning essays (1 per grade-level in each category) to their State by the published State deadline. State winning essays are sent to their Region Contest by 2/24/2025. Region winners are sent to the National Contest by 3/17/2025. National winning essays are announced in May 2025, and published online in a free digital essay booklet.

Eligibility and Judging Criteria

- Youth in grades 9th-12th compete by grade-level, with one national winner per grade-level and one overall winner who receives \$50.
- Scale of Points: Originality 20%, Central idea of essay is clear and addresses the theme question 20%, Organization of ideas uses a logical structure, clear paragraphs, and appropriate transitions 20%, Vocabulary, grammar and mechanics effectively communicates meaning 20%, Creative title 10%, Conformance to length 10%.





2024 YOUTH ESSAY CONTEST

Is Recycling Plastics the Answer to Our Plastic Disposal Problem?

The National Garden Clubs, Inc. Youth Essay Contest is open to all students in 9th - 12th grade. Essayists submit a 600-700 word essay that addresses the posed question.

Submissions and Deadlines

All essays are submitted to a local garden club affiliated with National Garden Clubs, Inc. Local clubs send their winning essays (1 per grade-level) to their State by the published State deadline. State winning essays are sent to their Region Contest by 2/24/2025. Region winners are sent to the National Contest by 3/17/2025. National winning essays are announced in May 2025, and published online in a free digital essay booklet.



Complete Guidelines
gardenclub.org/contests-and-activities



By Pam Grotts

Recently in a conversation with a few ladies from another club, I learned they are planning a horticulture specialty show. I was excited, it's close enough for me to enter and try to secure ribbons before my next symposium. They were discussing what classes of horticulture they might be putting into the schedule and one of the items they were mulling about was a class of displays. And my ears immediately perked up!

Displays are not a popular class in many small flower shows for a couple of very simple reasons. One, the exhibitor must provide specimens, either cut or container grown that are related by plant family, of one genus, or similar characteristics.

Examples include:

Plant Family – Asteraceae, Liliaceae, or maybe even the Solanaceae

Genus - Begonia, Juniperus, possibly the Quercus

Similar Characteristics - Vines, Succulents, and let's not forget Herbs

Displays are a bit more work for the exhibitor, they require 5 conforming specimens near or at peak of

perfection, and a require a design

element that many horticulturists simply are not interested in. Or like many exhibitors, they realize the odds of securing a ribbon are greater with a greater number of individual entries.

Two, staging displays can take up a lot of space, and many times, once the Educational exhibits are accounted for, the location of the show doesn't always present an area suitable for a full section of Displays. The show committee has to plan for that space and staging which can be a bit difficult to navigate.

Displays are considered an advanced entry as they require special staging in comparison to normal horticulture staging. The Horticulture Entry Chairman will need to work with Classification



(Continued from previous page)



and Placement to ensure the Show is prepared and coordinated to receive and allow the exhibitor to place their exhibits. To further preparation for a class or classes of Displays in the flower show, the club should identify a Displays consultant who is familiar and able to assist with a variety of activities which are listed in the Handbook for Flower Shows on page 17.

Because Judges do not judge Displays as often as they do other horticulture classes, it is important that the Schedule be sent as required by the Handbook for Flower Shows giving your judges time to refresh their skills and be able evaluate confidently.

Knowing that the Club must take a few extra steps to ensure that Displays are a success, what can a club encourage displays in their flower shows? Consider this class for a club competition – see Handbook for Flower Shows page 61. If each team member is responsible for less specimens, and they

work together to design how the display is staged (if the show isn't providing staging) then the display exhibit becomes less work for the individual. Teams mean that you only need two or more exhibitors working together. It does not mean you must have five individuals and there is no maximum!

Are displays eligible for top exhibitor awards? Yes, displays as part of a Section be considered for the Collector's Showcase Award, and it is also eligible for the Club Competition Horticulture Award.

I'm hoping they do decide to incorporate a class of displays – I see it as an opportunity to add an artistic element to the show as a whole. Flower Show traffic Flow or Rhythm is as important in a specialty show as it is in any other flower show. As a show committee, designing the flow of the show so that your patrons are kept looking for what comes next. Remember a flower show, no matter the type, is in fact a design and having a solid rhythm without breakage elevates the show when applying for a Flower Show Achievement Award. What a way to break from one Section to another having a class of displays the end of a class? A great lead in to introduce the Youth horticulture or maybe a brief repose leading to an Education or Garden exhibit?

Pooping, Splooting and Spitting! (How wild animals beat the heat)

By: Karen Taylor

It's been a brutally hot summer and though the temps are dropping, the heat isn't over yet! Here are some ways that our furry friends stay cool during the dog days of summer.

Splooting (also known as frogging or pancaking) - You may not have heard of it, but if you are a dog or cat owner, you most likely have witnessed it! The word splooting was added to the Collins Dictionary in 2021. Scientifically it is referred to as "heat dumping". When splooting, the animal is putting as much of their body surface as possible in contact with a cooler surface, usually concrete or pavement that is in the shade.



Shapeshifting - Research has found that some warm-blooded animals are developing different body shapes to adapt to a hotter climate. Animals are developing larger

beaks, legs and ears to better regulate their body temperatures. One Australian parrot species had an increase in beak size of up to 10% since 1871. This was the biggest shift in appendage size seen in a 2021 study. Also recorded were increases in shrews' tails and bats' wings.



Spitting and Snotting - Some animals in Australia put their bodily fluids to good use in the battle to beat the heat in the outback.

The largest of the marsupials, the red kangaroo, lick their forearms, covering a packed network of blood vessels and capillaries in spit. When the glistening coat of saliva evaporates, it lowers their body temperature.

Echidnas, a small quill-covered mammal also known as spiny anteaters - have been found to blow snot bubbles to help combat overheating. The mucus bubbles are from the tip of their snouts. When the moisture evaporates, it cools a large pool of blood located in a sinus at the beak's tip. *(continued on next pg)*



Pooping, Splooting and Spitting! (*continued from previous page*).



Pooping - A handful of birds are known to excrete liquid onto their legs when they overheat. Storks are one of those birds. The liquid contains feces and urine and evaporates, lowering body temperature in a process much like sweating in humans.

The method, known as urohidrosis, is more common in longer legged birds such as storks, condors and boobies and requires regular access to drinking water.

Birds like pelicans and cormorants, use a technique known as “gular fluttering”. This technique includes opening their mouths and rapidly vibrating their moist throat membranes to cause evaporation.

Understanding how animals regulate heat could help to improve our capacity to make accurate predictions of climate changes impact on biodiversity, and determine how vulnerable some species are to heat stress.



Designed by Bobbie Mason) at 96th Annual TGC Convention in Abilene, Texas.

The Basics of Herb Container Gardening

By Sherie Clarkson, Herb Chairman

The number of container gardeners has grown steadily over the years as people reduce the size of their yards and find they do not have time to cultivate a full size herb garden every year. Many nurseries have started selling completely designed herb gardens that people can just take home and place on their porch or patio and have an immediate garden with none of the work. Even the tried and true gardeners who still maintain large gardens and flower bed have turned to container gardening as another way to increase the beauty of their homes.

Herbal container gardening has so many facets that there's room for everybody. From beautifully shaped topiaries, window boxes or miniature gardens, herbs are the perfect medium for the creativity of herb gardeners. Start with a single, bold specimen in a handsome pot and build from there. Learn to make wonderful combinations of herbs and other plants that mingle with them that highlight their textures, forms and flowers.



The workhorse of containers is the terra-cotta because of its ability to “breathe”, allowing air to reach the plant’s roots. However, this can also be one of its biggest drawbacks. Untreated, the dry red clay wicks water from the soil inside the container, drying the plant’s roots. So, before planting in terra-cotta pots, soak them in water. When the container is completely submerged, you will see tiny bubbles rising to the surface. When the bubbles stop, the container is saturated.

Wooden containers are generally lightweight and come in many sizes and shapes. Their biggest drawback is that eventually they will rot. Several non toxic wood pre-preservedatives may be used to greatly extend the life of wooden containers. Avoid creosote and other preservatives that are toxic to plants.

The Basics of Herb Container Gardening (continued)

Metal containers can be made of steel, iron, brass, lead or copper. A coating of rustproof paint will help to extend the life of steel containers and any used for planting should have drainage holes. Antique cast-iron pots and urns have become very expensive, so reproductions of lightweight fiberglass are being made. These containers are easily moved and withstand freezing temperatures, but like plastic pots, fiberglass pots don't breathe and can heat up in direct sun.

Once a decision is made to the kind of container to be used, now is the time to plant. Here are some basic tips – For too dry potting soil, mix it with water until it is damp and well saturated. This may require overnight soaking. Drippy soil may drown fine plant roots. Roll the plants gently from their small pots and spread their roots out a little. If the plant is root bound – the roots have filled the container – you may wish to straighten them and trim them back by about a third.

Roots need soil, so make sure it completely surrounds them. Allow no airholes around the plant root or elsewhere in the soil. Tamp the soil down lightly but firmly as you fill in around the roots. Place the plants' root balls tightly together for rapid fill-in. Water the plants into the new pot. Gently and thoroughly soak the soil, checking to be sure that the container drains well. Feed your pots with a weak fish emulsion solution about every 10 days.

Be sure and enter your herb container garden in SCR Special Award – Garden with Herbs. This is a special award that may be awarded to a single club for the most creative landscape using herbs as a main element. Include a list of herbs used and their uses. Can be a theme garden or a container garden. This a special award with \$50 for the best garden, and \$50 for the best container garden.

A program from six Mile Garden Club in far East Texas about pollinators, photos submitted by Dana Serafine



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**Four \$1000 scholarships
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SCR LIFE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN,

Mary Ann Holman

The holidays are coming. Maybe you want to remember someone special with a SCR life membership! A very nice way to acknowledge those special Garden Club members. I will mail it or deliver it at the next SCR Convention!!! In Albuquerque next spring.....see you there!!!



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All proceeds from the SCR Life Membership sales now go to the \$1000 SCR Scholarship given in the second year of a term (Which will be 2025).

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BUTTERFLY PAVILION

Sarah McReynolds, SCR Director

The Butterfly Pavilion is located in Westminster, Colorado. It was one of the featured trips available to the National Garden Clubs, Inc. 2024 Spring Convention. The Butterfly Pavilion was opened on July 15, 1995, and was the first stand-alone non-profit insect zoo in the United States. It encompasses 11 acres of plants, butterflies, bees, spiders and insects from all over the world, sea life and other invertebrates in an educational atmosphere.

The Butterfly Pavilion is the world's only stand-alone, AZA-accredited invertebrate zoo. The Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of zoos and aquariums in the areas of conservation, education, science, and recreation. The Butterfly Pavilion exists to foster an appreciation of invertebrates by educating the public about the need to protect and care for threatened habitats globally, while conducting research for solutions in invertebrate conservation.

This conservatory known for its 1500+ butterflies is home to invertebrates from both land & sea.

Science and Conservation for the Butterfly Pavilion has been the goal of the organization since 2016. One scientist has expanded the Butterfly Pavilion's research and conservation programs, in particular working with snails, factors influencing the invertebrate communities, bees and other pollinators, dragonflies, fireflies, butterflies and prairie restoration protection in the U.S and overseas.

A marine biologist with the Butterfly Pavilion is currently leading a number of research and conservation programs related to aquatic invertebrates including the Colorado Dragonfly Monitoring Project and the AZA-Florida Reef Tract Rescue Project.

And of course, one entomologist employed at the Butterfly Pavilion just curates the conservatory's living collections of butterflies.

In keeping in line with the Pollinating SCR objectives, this Butterfly Pavilion included education in reconciliation ecology and creating habitats to help endangered species such as pollinators.

Tagged Butterfly



Photo Heather White, MD

Giraffe Stag Beetle

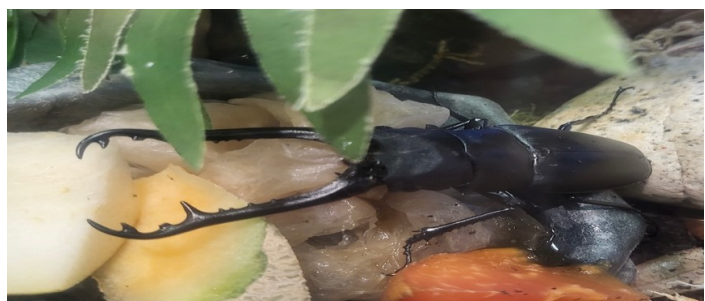


Photo Sarah McReynolds

The giraffe stag beetle is the longest of all stag beetles. This species drink liquids from fruits and flowers, allowing them to pollinate while they eat such for food.

On Friday August 14th, the Rainbow Garden Club North Texas (RGCNT) toured the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) in Fort Worth. We had 16 members attend this event. It was a very educational tour. Our tour guide was very knowledgeable about BRIT, and we were fortunate to have Tina Franklin Rehman, MS, Director of the Herbarium give us a guided tour of her collection of over 2 million specimens of plants collected from around the globe.

They are almost finished digitizing the collection so they researchers can access the information online. You have to make an appointment to tour and the cost is \$100.



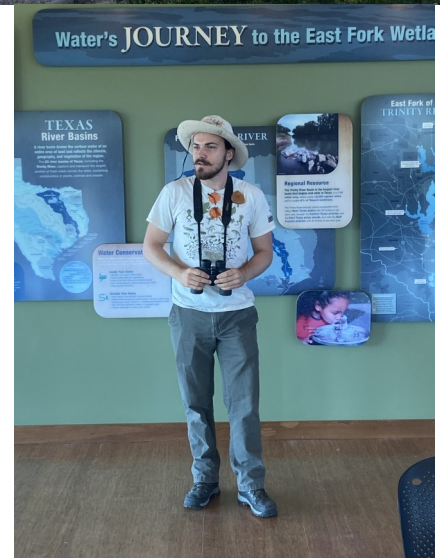
Rainbow Garden Club North Texas visit to John Bunker Sands Wetlands

On Saturday Oct 5th, 2024 members of the Rainbow Garden Club North Texas (RGCNT) toured the John Bunker Sands Wetlands in Combine, Texas. The wetlands are the largest man-made wetlands in the United States covering over 1,800 acres.

Set amid a working cattle ranch and an expansive wetland on the East Fork of the Trinity River, the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center is a nature center, an educational destination for teachers, a birder's paradise and photographer's dream, and a serene escape to nature like no other in North Texas.

Our boardwalk into the wetland and miles of trails allow visitors of all ages to immerse themselves in diverse habitats that host some 300 species of birds, including bald eagles, and scores of native mammals, insects, amphibians and reptiles just 30 miles from downtown Dallas.

It is a partnership between the Rosewood Corporation and the North Texas Water Municipal District filtering water from the Trinity River naturally and then sending the water back via a 43 mile pipeline to Lake Lavon.



Dahlia Garden Club Has Busy Spring

The Dahlia Garden Clubs busy spring has kept us all jumping. We hosted the Southwest District of Oklahoma Garden Clubs Spring Convention, theme "Green and Growing", at the Expo Center in Walters. Forty people registered for this event which included a full day from 9 to 3. The morning began with coffee and an assortment of doughnuts, provided by Daylight Doughnuts of Walters and other sweet treats. Attendees entering items they were asked to bring for the silent auction. More than 100 unique items were provided for the clubs fund raiser, which was a huge success.

The business meeting was called to order by District President, Melanie Spence. She introduced special guests from all over the state including Oklahoma Garden Clubs, State President, Carolyn McCabe, Noble. McCabe made announcements of Flower Shows this spring in OKC and Tulsa. Environmental School being offered on Zoom and Gardening Study School coming on Zoom in the near future.



A delicious catered meal was served at noon provided by Cali Burrito, our newest restaurant in Walters, and the participants gave them a rave review. Following that delicious lunch our program was presented by Craig Williams, owner of Williams Landscape, Lawton. Craig has worked with the Dahlia Garden Club over the years with various projects from casting Wild-flower Seeds on both sides of Hwy 5 from the railroad tracks to I44, planting flowers on the corners of Broadway, planting daffodils around the pocket park downtown, and help with plans and plants in front of the High School Auditorium. His program gave us pointers on what to grow in Southwest Oklahoma that can survive our HOT summers. He brought a lot of plants to tell us about and share at the end of his program.

Large potted flowers were given to State President, Carolyn McCabe and special guests. Small pots of flowers used to decorate the tables were given to each attendee.

Next several members attended the South Central Region meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas. The programs and workshops were educational and entertaining. But the best program was our tour to the Edgemont House an old home completely renovated. Chris Olsen purchased the house in complete disarray and has renewed it from top to bottom. Chris is a landscape designer so the grounds are covered with beautiful flowers, shrubs and trees. Cozy places to sit along the path as you visit the gardens. We also had a delicious lunch while there. 76 people seated indoors and out for lunch in a most beautiful setting!

Our annual Flower Show was open to the public Saturday May 17 at the Expo Center in Walters.. During the day Saturday programs lasting 30 minutes to 1 hour on various garden questions and concerns were presented for the publics enjoyment. AND last but not least the 4-H group had a concession stand with lots of goodies!

Summer and fall activities have included re working flower gardens near the rodeo grounds our Blue Stat Memorial Marker and a similar sized garden dedicated to the Walters, Ok 100 yr birthday. Also continuing the up keep of flower beds in front of the School Auditorium. Another busy year for the Dahlia Garden Club!!!

Blue Star/Gold Star Report, Shirley Tetreault, Chairman

Gardeners Did You Know?

NGC was once named "National Council of State Garden Clubs". In 1944 Mrs. Lewis M. Hull, President of New Jersey GC and future National President, and Mrs. Vance Hood, Roadside Chairman, had an inspired idea. One thousand flowing Dogwood trees would be planted along five miles of highway, that had been designated the Blue Star Drive by the Legislature. This is when National Garden Club became involved.....so.....

1945 Guest Speaker at the New Jersey Annual Convention – Spencer Miller, New Jersey's State Highway Commissioner, helped to implement the New Jersey project, and proposed that the program be adopted by NCSGC.

At the fall board meeting in 1945 the project was approved. A "ribbon of living memorial plantings traversing every single state" called The Blue Star Memorial Highway Program was adopted at the 1946 Annual Meeting in New Orleans.

In 1947, Mrs. Frederick R. Kellogg (NCSGC President 1930-1933) designed a Marker that would identify the highways.

While our National project originally began to honor World War II veterans, it enlarged its mission in 1951 to include all men and women who had served, were serving or would serve in the Armed forces of the United States. The marker states "A tribute to the Armed Forces who have defended the United States of America". The Blue Star Marker honors all veterans, past, present and future and there are no names on the marker.

The Gold Star marker has a different meaning. The Gold Star families have lost a loved one serving our country through the United States Armed Forces. All conflicts and all branches of service are recognized. Their mission is to offer honor, hope and healing through remembering fallen heroes. Many people do not know the significance of the Gold Star banner and its meaning. For instance.... Happy Gold Star Mother's Day. There is no such thing. These families live each day in pain of their loss of a child, however our program with NGC acknowledges that and honors the survivors of these brave men and women.

Keep putting up the Blue and the Gold. NGC has always done a great job in recognizing our men and women in uniform. Continue to support this program and God bless the United States of America.



Stroud Oklahoma Blue Star Memorial Dedication



**BLUE STAR MEMORIAL DEDICATION
ED SMALLEY CENTENNIAL PARK
STROUD, OKLAHOMA
JUNE 14, 2024**

National Garden Clubs, Inc
Oklahoma Garden Clubs, Inc
Cushing Gladiolus Garden Club



Gold Star Installation in Angelfire, NM



Blue Star Installation in Stroud, Oklahoma



**BLUE STAR MEMORIAL DEDICATION
ED SMALLEY CENTENNIAL PARK
STROUD, OKLAHOMA
JUNE 14, 2024**

National Garden Clubs, Inc
Oklahoma Garden Clubs, Inc
Cushing Gladiolus Garden Club

Gold Star Installation in Clovis, NM



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS AROUND THE REGION:

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Did you know that South Central Region has a website with lots of information, upcoming convention information and archived copies of "The Communicator" (The Official tri-annual publication of South Central Region).

Website address: scrgardenclubs.org

Password: FUTURE

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