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President's Message

Greetings Fellow Gardeners,

While we remain in the throes of winter, signs of warmer weather are beginning to emerge. Although I am not a fan of very cold temperatures, I have an appreciation for the stark, yet beautiful, winter landscape, especially after it is draped in new fallen snow. I feel fortunate to live in a climate where I am able to experience all four seasons and the beauty that each offers. My hellebores have just begun to bloom. I am always amazed when their heads appear, on even the coldest days, confirming that spring is not far behind.



Drumthwacket, the New Jersey governor's mansion, was decorated for the holidays by garden clubs from throughout the state. Each club decorated a different room which reflected a holiday theme they had chosen. On December 13th, members of the GCNJ Board of Directors were fortunate to have a private tour of the beautifully decorated mansion that was planned by Chris Endris, GCNJ Drumthwacket Chairman. Thank you, Chris. Tours were also open to the public on designated days.



I want to recognize the six garden clubs that made GCNJ proud, with their creativity and willingness to participate in this project. They are the Allentown Garden Club, Belvidere Garden Club, Garden Club of Long Valley, Keyport Garden Club, Warren Garden Club, and the West Trenton Garden Club.

The Covid-19 pandemic appears to be waning but remains an ever-present concern. The Garden Club of New Jersey continues to put health and safety first with the use of virtual meetings and programs. We adhere to the CDC and New Jersey Department of Health guidelines to ensure that we are following proper protocol. We strongly encourage all affiliated garden clubs to follow the expert advice listed by these organizations to safeguard us all.

At the GCNJ November Board Meeting, two photo releases were approved. The purpose of the photo releases is to allow our organization to use photos of (1) those attending GCNJ events, programs and schools, and (2) photos of our scholarship recipients. These photos may appear on our website, in the News Leaf or in other GCNJ sponsored publications and information. The photo releases will be added to future registrations and applications and will be listed on our website under "Forms". The releases may be formatted for use by affiliated garden clubs.

I wish each of you a happy and healthy 2022!

Warm regards,
Cecelia Millea,
GCNJ President



"Plant trees, invest in the future"



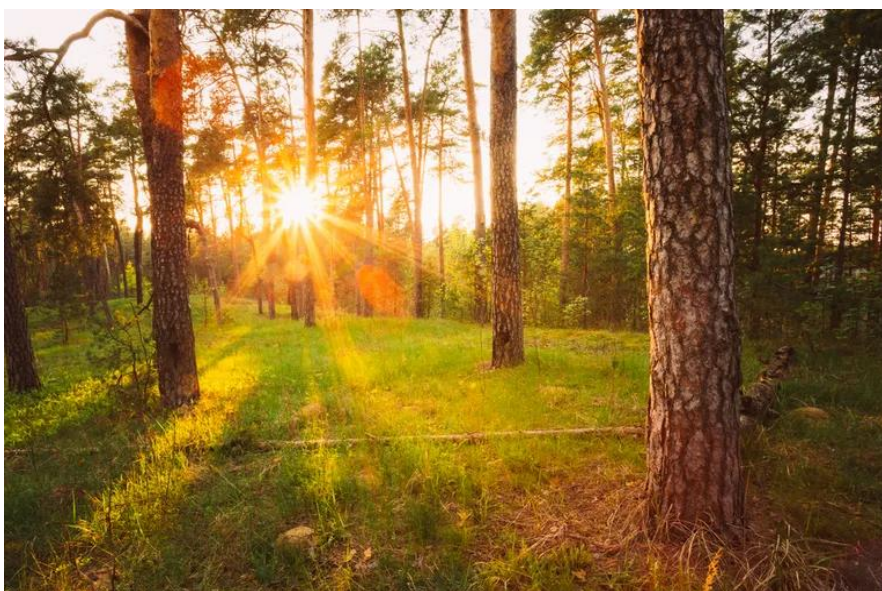
Some Astounding Facts About Trees

It is hard to overstate the importance of trees. Their debut more than 300 million years ago was a turning point for Earth, helping transform its surface into a bustling utopia for land animals. Trees have fed, housed, and otherwise nurtured countless creatures over time — including our own arboreal ancestors.

Modern humans rarely live in trees, but that doesn't mean we can live without them.

About [3 trillion trees](#) currently exist, enriching habitats from old-growth forests to city streets. Yet despite our deep-rooted reliance on trees, we tend to take them for granted.

People clear millions of forested acres every year, often for short-term rewards despite long-term risks like desertification, wildlife declines, and climate change.



Sunbeams pour through the trees in a Russian forest. [Grisha Bruev/Shutterstock](#)

Science is helping us learn to use trees' resources more sustainably, and to protect vulnerable forests more effectively, but we still have a long way to go.

Earth now has [46 percent fewer trees](#) than it did 12,000 years ago, when agriculture was in its infancy. Yet despite all the deforestation since then, humans still can't shake an instinctive fondness for trees. Their mere presence has been shown to make us calmer, happier, and more creative, and often boosts our appraisal of property value. Trees hold deep symbolism in many religions, and cultures around the planet have long appreciated the [benefits of plants](#).

We still periodically pause to honor trees, with holidays like [Arbor Day](#), the International Day of Forests or World Environment Day. In hopes of helping that spirit linger longer throughout the year, here are a few lesser-known facts about these gentle, generous giants:

1. Earth has more than 60,000 known tree species.

Until recently, there was no thorough global census of tree species. But in April 2017, the [results of a "huge scientific effort" were published](#) in the Journal of Sustainable Forestry, along with a searchable online archive called Global Tree Search.

The scientists behind this effort compiled data from museums, botanical gardens, agricultural centers, and other sources, and concluded there are 60,065 tree species currently known to science. These range from *Abarema abbottii*, a vulnerable limestone-bound tree found only in the Dominican Republic, to *Zygophyllum kaschgaricum*, a rare and poorly understood tree native to China and Kyrgyzstan. Next up for this area of research is the Global Tree Assessment, which aims to assess the conservation status of all of the world's tree species.

2. More than half of all tree species exist only in a single country.

Aside from quantifying the biodiversity of trees, the 2017 census also highlighted the need for details about where and how those 60,065 different species live. Nearly 58 percent of all tree species are single-country endemics, the study found, meaning each one naturally occurs only within the borders of a single nation.

The countries that reflect broader plant diversity trends are Brazil, Australia, China or islands like Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, and Indonesia, the study indicated.

3. Trees didn't exist for the first 90 percent of Earth's history.

Earth is 4.5 billion years old, and plants may have colonized land as recently as 470 million years ago, most likely mosses and liverworts without deep roots. Vascular plants followed about 420 million years ago, but even for tens of millions of years after that, no plants grew more than about 3 feet (1 meter) off the ground.

4. Before trees, Earth was home to fungi that grew 26 feet tall.

From about 420 million to 370 million years ago, a mysterious genus of creatures named *Prototaxites* grew large trunks up to 3 feet (1 meter) wide and 26 feet (8 meters) in height. Scientists have long debated whether these were some kind of weird ancient trees, but a 2007 [study concluded they were fungi](#), not plants.

A rendering of *Prototaxites* as it may have looked during the early Devonian Period, approximately 400 million years ago.



Painting by Mary Parrish, National Museum of Natural History.

5. The first known tree was a leafless, fern-like plant from New York.

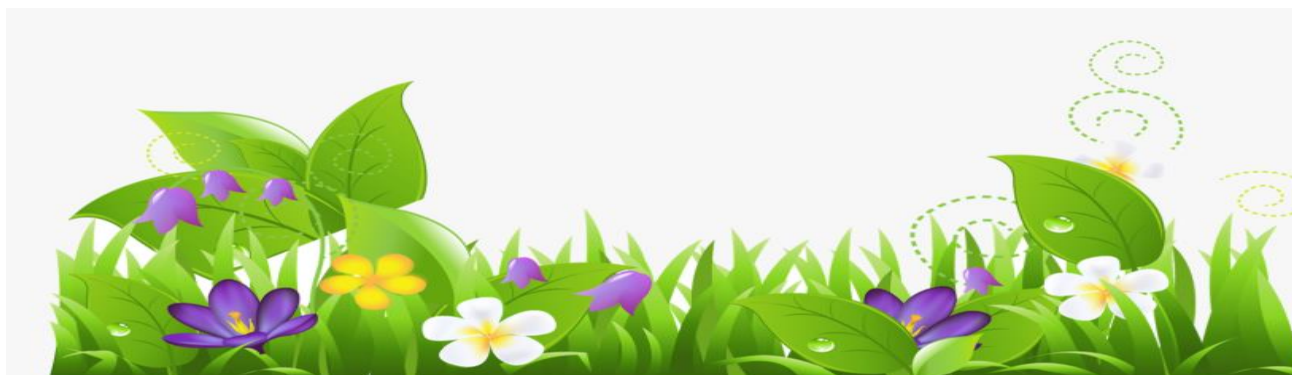
Several kinds of plants have evolved a tree form, or "arborescence," in the past 300 million years or so. It's a tricky step in plant evolution, requiring innovations like sturdy trunks to stay upright and strong vascular systems to pump up water and nutrients from the soil. The extra sunlight is worth it, though, prompting trees to evolve multiple times in history, a phenomenon called [convergent evolution](#).

The earliest known tree is *Wattieza*, identified from 385-million-year-old fossils found in what is now New York. Part of a prehistoric plant family thought to be ancestors of ferns, it stood 26 feet (8 meters) tall and formed the first known forests. It may have lacked leaves. It wasn't closely related to tree ferns, but did share their method of reproducing by spores, not seeds.

In future issues of News Leaf, watch for more astounding facts about trees. It is fascinating!

Information was taken from an article by [Russell McLendon](#) which was updated January 14, 2020.

Upcoming Events



April 22, 2022 - EARTH DAY's theme this year is **Invest in Our Planet** - Now is the time for the unstoppable courage to preserve and protect our health, our families, our livelihoods... **together, we must Invest In Our Planet.** Visit the Earth day site at [Earth Day 2022 | Invest in Our Planet™](https://www.earthday2022.org/).

April 23rd, 2022 – Flower Show School Course III – Procedure. See additional information on Page 7.

April 29th, 2022 - NATIONAL ARBOR DAY - It's all about trees! The Arbor Day Foundation has info at www.arborday.org. This is the 50th Anniversary of the Arbor Day Foundation.

May 4 - 5, 2022 – Flower Show School Course III – Horticulture and Design. See additional information on Page 7.

May 5, 2022 - Garden Club of LBI is holding a Standard Flower Show 2-5PM. Contact Gillian Rozicer at 609-848-9875.

May 15 - 21 2022 - NGC Annual Convention 2022 in Orlando, FL.

May 2022 – April 2023 - Please register your GCNJ YOUTH CLUBS. The Youth Club dues are \$20 per club and the Form can be accessed on the GCNJ Website. For more information contact Sue Berdahl at sue.berdahl@gmail.com

June 5 - 12, 2022 - NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK - Consider planning a Youth garden activity. The National Garden Week poster and proclamation are FREE on the NGC website www.gardenclub.org/national-garden-week.

June 9th, 2022 - GCNJ Annual Meeting. Registration by May 18th, 2022.

June 16th 2022 – Seaweeders Garden Club has a garden tour, “Botanical Boutique”, in Mantaloking, with a lunch at the Bay Head Yacht Club. 10am – 3pm. For more information contact Ann Castagnola at 631-786-7831 or anncastagnola@comcast.net.

October 12 - 13, 2022 - GCNJ Symposium.

November 1 - 4, 2022 - CAR-SGC Conference 2022 at Seven Springs Mountain Resort, Somerset County, PA.

From the Awards Desk



Kudos to the 44 Clubs who submitted Yearbooks for evaluation this fall!! In reading through each, it is truly wonderful to see the creativity and commitment that our GCNJ Clubs are demonstrating as they continue to navigate the tricky times we find ourselves in. Projects that enhance the knowledge of club members and enrich communities abound!!

Certificates of merit await our President's signature and will be distributed at the Districts' Spring meetings, hopefully, in-person. Otherwise, each will be mailed to each Club's President as we did each of the last two years. Additionally we submitted three award applications for National. Again, amazing projects that exemplify the goals and objectives of our National and State organizations.

Our Awards committee will be meeting March 17 to determine this year's Award recipients. Award certificates and the silver trophies (pictures only) will be presented at the Annual meeting, June 9th, at the Bridgewater Marriott. Mark your calendars for this always wonderful event!!! Awards, boutiques, gorgeous floral arrangements, a delicious luncheon and just an amazing way to reconnect with our GCNJ friends. And maybe your club will be walking the "red carpet" this year!!

Club Presidents, thank you for all your submissions and a chance to recognize and celebrate all these wonderful achievements. Five GCNJ Award recipient selections will be forwarded on to CAR-SGC for regional award consideration. Stay warm and safe!!! And Viva!!!

Peggy Morrissey,
Chair GCNJ Awards
peggymorrissey67@yahoo.com



SAVE THE DATES!

HORTICULTURE SPECIALITY FLOWER SHOW

MAY 3, 2022

Holly House, Rutgers Gardens

Want to learn more about Flower Shows? How they are judged?
Want to know what it takes to get a blue ribbon? Are you interested in
growing and showing horticulture? What are the different design types?
Flower Show School has the answers!

FLOWER SHOW SCHOOL, COURSE III

APRIL 23, 2022

Flower Show Procedure via Zoom, Optional FSP Exam Following

MAY 4 & 5, 2022

Optional Exam on May 6, 2022

Design & Horticulture in Person at Holly House, East Brunswick

Horticulture: Narcissus & Combination Plantings

Design: Creative Design Types

All are welcome to attend.

For further information and to obtain a registration form
for the Flower Show School go to The Garden Club of New Jersey website.

Gail Bassolino, Chairman

Carol English, Registrar, overbrook@comcast.net (917)-502-1270

Nominating Committee



NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT, JANUARY 2022

The Nominating Committee presents the following slate for election at the GCNJ Annual Meeting, June 9, 2022

- ✓ **2nd Vice-President:** Ruth Korn
- ✓ **3rd Vice-President:** Vivian Morrison
- ✓ **Treasurer:** Allison Stellita
- ✓ **Assistant Treasurer:** Jane Bianco

District Directors:

- ✓ **District 2:** Julie Morgan
- ✓ **District 4:** Margaret Esposito
- ✓ **District 6:** Dorothy Bukowski
- ✓ **District 8:** Pat Polunas

Nominating Committee:

- ✓ **District 2:** Pam Sutton
- ✓ **District 4:** Marge Peterson
- ✓ **District 6:** Bob Markey
- ✓ **District 8:** Marina Kerber

Headquarters & Environment Committee 2022-2025: Nancy Bigelsen, Vivian DeMarco and Mary Lou Phifer

Nominating Committee Members: Jane Bersch, Chairman, Chris Endris, Ellen Preissler, Gail Bassolino District 1, Julie Morgan District 2, Caron Menger District 3, Teddie Falcone District 4, Margaret Allen District 5, Patricia Scarano District 6, Camille Rainier District 7, Peggy Morrissey District 8

Jane Bersch
Nominating Chair
janebersch@aol.com

YOUTH CORNER



Here is some timely information for those interested in working with youth

YOUTH CONTESTS - Thank you to all who entered the GCNJ YOUTH CONTESTS and to those who judged the entries. Winners will be announced at the June GCNJ Annual Meeting.

GCNJ YOUTH AWARDS - Filling out a YOUTH AWARD APPLICATION is one way to share successful youth projects with others. Thank you to all who work with youth gardening and youth garden projects. This will lead to future gardeners! For more information, go to [Home - The Garden Club of New Jersey](#) Click on the link for the GCNJ Awards Booklet and go to the **Youth Award pages** for details. Follow the instructions on the GCNJ website when submitting Youth Award Applications.

EARTH DAY is April 22, 2022 - This is a day to celebrate ways we can protect the Earth's natural resources and to remind people of things they can do every day to help protect the quality of our environment. Plan an activity to help youth understand the importance of protecting our natural resources.

NATIONAL ARBOR DAY is April 29, 2022 - This is a day to encourage people to plant trees. The Arbor Day Foundation has information at www.arborday.org including benefits trees provide and ways to celebrate Arbor Day while social distancing. This is the 50th Anniversary of the Arbor Day Foundation. Who will plant a tree this Arbor Day?

NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK is June 5 - 12, 2022 - You may download The National Garden Week poster and a Proclamation on the NGC website www.gardenclub.org/national-garden-week.

Registration for GCNJ Youth Garden Clubs will be updated on the GCNJ website with new information for the 2022-2023 membership year. Please check with the President of your sponsoring club for new information as it becomes available.

Diana Dove
Co-Chair of Youth
dianadove13@gmail.com

CRAWFORD'S CORNER

Blue “Eyes” for the Early Spring Garden

February is a fickle month. Some years the month remains tightly bound in winter's grasp, while other years the temperatures moderate allowing the early spring bulbs or geophytes to start their much-anticipated chorus of colorful blooms. Sadly, this group is still not widely grown outside of gardening circles. A cheery blue flowered bulb that more gardeners and non-gardeners alike need to include in their colorful spring symphony, namely, *Chionodoxa* - Glory of the Snow. Unbeknownst to even many horticulturists, most botanists have now merged this geophyte into the genus *Scilla*, under Section *Chionodoxa*, although it will probably take bulb companies years to acknowledge the update!



Regardless of the genus name of choice, *Chionodoxa* is a member of the Asparagus Family, with 5-6 species predominantly found in the countries of Crete, Cyprus and Turkey. The genus name stems from the Greek *Khiōn*, meaning snow and *Doxa* or *Doca*, for glory or expectation. The Swiss botanist and mathematician Pierre Edmond Boissier (1810-1885) crafted this name after he and his younger wife, François Lucile Butini (1822-1849), were ascending the Turkish mountain of Tmolus mons, today known as the Bozdağ, in June of 1842. They often botanized together and as they approached the 7,000 foot mark, they saw a beautiful blue flower emerging through the snow. Its desire to break through the resilient snowpack led to the genus name, while the flower color reminded him of his wife's striking blue eyes. In 1844, he described and published this particular species as *Chionodoxa luciliae*, in honor of his beloved wife!

Chionodoxa luciliae remains the most popular species available today. The flowers consist of an inner ring of 3 petals and an outer ring of 3 modified leaves called sepals. Since they look identical, they are called tepals, a modification that is repeatedly seen in early blooming bulbs. The flowers are typically a very bright blue, with the basal 1/3 of the tepal colored white (as seen in the image to the

left). There is also an attractive all-white form called “Alba” (as seen at the end of the article). The individual flowers are upwards of 1 ½” in diameter and are the largest of the genus, giving rise to a no longer valid, yet still popular, name among retail vendors of *Chionodoxa luciliae* var. *gigantea*. Associating a flower with being larger evidently leads to better sales! The flowers appear on branched stems or racemes reaching 4-8” tall with 2-3 flowers per raceme that cheerfully face upwards towards the viewer. This was considered one distinct difference between *Chionodoxa* and what was long considered a separate genus of *Scilla*, since the flowers of the latter typically face downward (*Scilla siberica* is pictured below). The flowers also differ in the orientation and shape of the six stamens. Those of *Chionodoxa* appear tightly clustered in the center of the flower and the filaments, which are the stems supporting the anthers, are flat. Plants historically known as *Scilla* had round filaments and the stamens reflex outward, away from the center. In addition, the base of the tepals are fused in *Chionodoxa*, while they remain unfused in *Scilla*. Despite the physical

differences, the two are genetically very similar and intergeneric crosses can occur in the wild. Due to the genetic parallels, the Austrian botanist, Franz Speta, suggested reclassifying *Chionodoxa* under *Scilla* in 1971. Obviously, this has not been accepted by everyone, including most nurseries, and the bulbs continued to be listed under their original name.



Another very popular and garden-worthy species is *Chionodoxa sardensis*, commonly known as Lesser Glory of the Snow. From a marketing viewpoint, I personally object to the word “lesser” since this is a great plant! It was discovered by Edward Whittall (1851-1917). Edward and his brother Herbert inherited their grandfather’s very successful trading company of C. Whittall & Co. that, since 1811, had operated out of the ancient Turkish port of Smyrna, now named İzmir. They chiefly exported roots for dyeing of fabrics, dried fruit, cotton, and materials for tanning hides. Herbert was the far more organized of the two brothers and focused intently on the business. This was truly fortunate for Edward, who had a far greater interest in hunting, fishing, and the outdoors in

general rather than office work. His passion also allowed him to understand and navigate the mountainous regions to the east of İzmir, where he started to gather an interest in the flora. His knowledge of the region allowed him to organize a hunt in 1874 with Henry John Elwes (1846-1922). Elwes was renowned for his booming voice and great physical presence. His family’s wealth allowed him to travel at will and in the early 1870’s, he was just beginning his studies of Lepidoptera or butterflies, along with botany. During his excursions with Whittall, not only did he discover a new species of *Galanthus*, which he ever so modestly named *Galanthus elwesii*, but he also influenced Whittall to focus more upon collecting plants and developing a personal garden for himself. With this newfound pursuit, Whittall began to not only take a greater interest in the collecting of new species, but also in hiring local residents to help expand his garden and collect bulbs for export to England-- particularly to Kew Gardens! In fact, *Chionodoxa luciliae*, “Alba”, that is currently in the trade, is very possibly one of the forms that Whittall exported back to England.

During an ascent of Mahmount Dağ, a mountain near Armutlu, he discovered *Chionodoxa sardensis* growing in a site where the plain of Sardis was visible in the distance, influencing the species epithet. Interestingly, the plants’ description by Whittall did not appear in a scientific journal, but in the seed catalogue of Barr and Sugden in 1883; Whittall made the original description, but it was later modified by Peter Barr (1826-1909) prior to entering the catalogue! *Chionodoxa sardensis* (pictured at right) differs dramatically from its cousin, since the tepals are a rich, solid blue and lack the white basal markings. The flowers are also smaller, measuring ½-1” in diameter, yet appear in far greater quantities with upwards of 22 flowers per 6-7” long raceme!



Lastly, the species that is the most widely distributed throughout Turkey is *Chionodoxa forbesii* and once again, it was discovered by Whittall. It typically grows in pine and cedar woodlands on north-facing slopes at elevations below 1,000 feet. Whittall sent many of the bulbs he collected and/or grew in his personal garden to Kew Gardens in England, where they crossed the desk of John Gilbert Baker (1834-1920). Baker held positions at both the herbarium and library at Kew



Gardens from 1866-1899 and in 1870, he described this species. The species epithet honors James Forbes (1773-1861), the gardener to the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey and the author of several books. *Chionodoxa forbesii* has flowers (pictured below) that are intermediary in size between the two previous species, with roughly 10 flowers per raceme that reach upwards of 12" in height. The tepals are slightly more pointed than the other species. Otherwise, the flowers are very similar to *Chionodoxa luciliae* since the tepals have similar white markings at the base. To the untrained eye, they look identical and this has led to much confusion in the trade. Even Baker became confused at one point and personally mislabeled a print in Curtis's Botanical Magazine in 1879!



All members of this genus are easily grown and not exceptionally picky as to their garden location. Regardless of the species, each bulb produces two or three leaves, stretching to four to six inches long that quietly go dormant in early May. Full to partial sun in February through early May, accompanied by well-drained soils mimicking their mountainous origins, are the few simple needs required.



Plant 4-10 bulbs per hole, as seen above left, to provide a more mature appearance from the start. They do well, plugged into lawns or planted under deciduous shrubs such as *Itea virginica* (pictured below), since the appearance of the overarching foliage of the shrubs or the need to start cutting the lawn coincides with the bulb entering dormancy. In fact, this is a very nice way to extend the interest in the shrub garden as, for one, I have yet to hear of anyone rave over the late winter appearance of Lilac stems! Plants will naturalize slowly, and I have found them to be fairly resistant to deer browse and the annoying burrowing of chipmunks!

I have watched *Chionodoxa luciliae* grow since my childhood and unknowingly revel in the beautiful blue shades of François Lucile Butini eyes. More gardeners need to enjoy these carefree mountain gems to enhance their own colorful spring garden symphonies and to share the stories of how these plants came to our gardens!

Bruce Crawford

Manager of Horticulture, Morris County Park Commission

bcrawford@morrisparks.net



Club News

The Bridgewater Garden Club recently sponsored the Montgomery High School Environment Club students in their application for a National Garden Club grant to start a pollinator garden. They were awarded the \$160 grant in December.

The Montgomery High School Environmental Club students will use the grant monies to obtain supplies and materials needed to construct and maintain a pollinator garden. The purpose of the garden is to attract pollinators and to create a positive impact on the environment. The garden will also become a part of the Club's activities and be used for educational purposes at the school.

The pollinator garden will be located in one of the school's courtyards and will be created, built, planted, and maintained by the Club students. They plan to include a variety of different native plants, such as coneflowers, bee balms, milkweeds, and others that will attract bees, butterflies, and birds. Maintenance activities will include amending the soil, watering the plants, weeding, applying fertilizer, deadheading plants, mulching, composting, collecting, and replanting seeds. The garden will utilize sustainable features including rocks, habitat material and a butterfly puddling garden while using no pesticides or herbicides.



Marie Sereno
President
Bridgewater Garden Club

Information for the next issue:

***April 1 is the deadline for articles for
The Summer 2022 News Leaf as well as
listings of upcoming club events.***

Send articles and upcoming events to
Karen Eardley at k.eardley@live.com



Go to the GCNJ website at www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org for more information or check out Facebook for some informative posts: [\(4\) Garden Club of New Jersey | Facebook](#)

Happy Spring!