



### This issue:

President's Letter	1-3
Meet Your Board	4
President's Project	5
Plant America	6
Drumthwacht	7
CAR-SGC Conference	8-10
GCNJ Flashback	11
Upcoming Events	12
Nominating Cmte.	13
Save The Date	13
Flower Show School	14
Scholarship	15
Awards	16
Club News	17-18
Kids' Corner	19
Crawford's Corner	20-23
Next Issue Deadline	23

## President's Message

Dear Garden Club of New Jersey Members,

As we gear up for the holidays and cold weather ahead, I want to express my gratitude to all of you for making 2023 a very good year for your local garden clubs and the Garden Club of New Jersey (GCNJ). Over the past six months, throughout our wonderful state, I've seen flower shows, Blue Star Memorial Markers, plant sales, fundraisers, youth projects, tours, programs, meetings, and much more. Kudos to our members who work tirelessly to make our events successful, interesting, and FUN!



*The Garden Club of Fair Haven held a Small Standard Flower Show in November. I enjoyed my visit to the show and was particularly pleased to see that the community came out to view the Floral Design, Horticulture, Photography Divisions and Education Exhibit. Congratulations to GCFH and all the exhibitors for an outstanding Show.*



*The Floral Design Class "Home for the Holidays" was won by this lovely combination of calla lilies, roses, chrysanthemums, and eucalyptus created by GCFH member Christine Brawland.*

On October 10th, GCNJ held a very informative virtual Fall Leadership Conference for our local garden club presidents. We had a terrific turnout with more than 60 attendees via Zoom. The conference theme was *"The Benefits of Association ...with each other,"* which comprises our federation of 100 clubs, that make up the GCNJ, and our parent organization, the National Garden Club. GCNJ and NGC are non-profit organizations focusing on gardening, education, and the environment. I'm honored to be a part of this amazing group through membership in my local club, the Demarest Garden Club in District 1, and its association with the GCNJ. I hope that you are also excited to be a part of these outstanding organizations through involvement in your local club and its membership in the GCNJ and NGC.

These benefits of association are important offerings for our members and include grants, awards, insurance coverage, and other helpful resources that can lead to the success of your organization. The conference featured a wonderful lineup of speakers that included presentations on technology, the use of AI, social media, the GCNJ Website, youth contests, our District Directors, the President's Project, Flower Show School, Nominating, the CAR Conference to be hosted by NJ in 2024 and a Q&A. It was a jam-packed meeting attended virtually from the comfort of your own home, office, or place of choice! Many thanks to all who participated.



*The "Jersey Girls" gathered for a photo during the 2023 CAR Annual Conference in Corning, NY.*

*L to R: Ellen Preissler, Terry Blake, Jan Warshauer, Cecelia Millea, Mary Warshauer, Beverly Kazickas, Carol English, Florence Leyssene, Judy Bonanno, Sue Berdahl, and Jane Bersch*

Also in October, our members attended the Central Atlantic Region (CAR-SGC) 2023 Annual Conference held this year in Corning, NY. We arrived upstate on a beautiful fall day of bright sunshine and stunning colors with the hillsides ablaze in brilliant shades of red and gold leaves. The conference kept us busy with a variety of workshops, meetings, tours, banquets, and vendor shopping. Our turnout of members from New Jersey enjoyed socializing with each other and the other attendees from the 7 locations that make up the Central Atlantic Region (NJ, NY, PA, DE, MD, OH and DC). I was honored to give my President's Report on behalf of the GCNJ and our federation of clubs. Additionally, a very special thank you to Jan Warshauer of The Garden Club of Fair Haven for creating and exhibiting her FABULOUS floral arrangement. In October 2024, we will host the CAR Annual Conference in Basking Ridge, NJ. Please plan on attending ... all are welcome!





*At CAR, Ellen Preissler, Florence Leyssene, and Jan Warshauer pose next to Jan's floral arrangement created as a tribute to Beverly's presidency.*

There is lots of good info in this issue of the News Leaf so be sure to scan through the newsletter paying careful attention to the reports by the Awards and Scholarship Committee Chairs. Both areas have excellent opportunities to apply for funds and awards. The due dates are coming up and posted on the following pages.

Lastly, please consider applying for my President's Project ... *Plant America: Gardening for a Healthy Mind, Body and Soul*. The deadline to submit your club's application is February 15, 2024. There will be \$6,000 awarded to garden clubs affiliated with GCNJ. An application and additional information are included in this News Leaf and on the GCNJ Website. Please help promote healthy living in your community through a new project or by restoring an existing garden.

I look forward to hearing from you. For now, I wish you all the best as we close out 2023 and kick off the new year ... exciting times are ahead in 2024.

Happy Holidays!

Beverly Kazickas  
GCNJ President  
[Kazickas55@aol.com](mailto:Kazickas55@aol.com)



## Meet Your GCNJ Board Member

**Susan Berdahl: GCNJ 1st Vice President, Shrewsbury Garden Club, District VIII**



Susan Berdahl lives in Shrewsbury, with her husband Barry. Sue has two adult children. She has been a garden club member of the Shrewsbury Garden Club since 1989 and was president of her club a couple of times once in the 1990's and again in 2014. Sue was also the District Leader for District 8 in 2014-2016. She has been on the board since 2010 and has held several positions: Garden Education Day, Membership Chair, member of H & E, and Secretary.

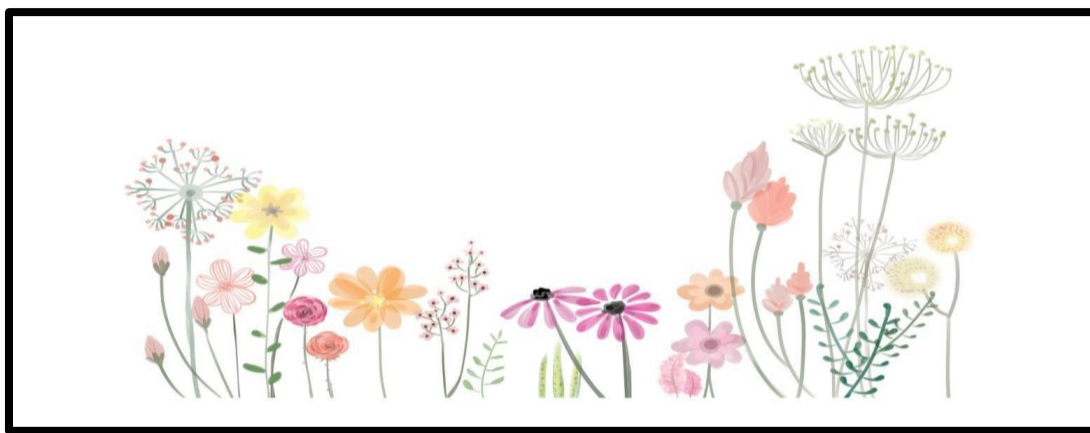
Sue has a degree BA from Pace University in Marketing and Finance. Her work background began with working for Merrill Lynch International and ended when she retired from the Media News Group (formerly Journal Register Company).

Susan's love of gardening began early. She loves all things gardening, from vegetable gardening and native perennials to propagating and starting seeds. She took Landscape Design School twice and several courses on Landscape Design at a local Community College. Presently she is working on becoming a Flower Show Judge.

She looks forward to working with Beverly as her First Vice President.

# PRESIDENT'S PROJECT

2023-2025 President Beverly Kazickas



**President's Theme:** Plant America - Gardening for a Healthy Mind, Body, and Soul

**Description:** Establish a program (or garden) that promotes and encourages the benefits of gardening to support physical and mental health.

**Application:** GCNJ Affiliated Clubs in good standing will apply for a \$1,000 Grant in order to enact the aforementioned program (or garden). Three clubs will be selected per year for two years during 2024 and 2025. Total Grants will be \$6,000.

Gardening can act as a magic elixir for your Mind, Body, and Soul. Some of the benefits of establishing a President's Project in your community are:

**MIND:**

Gardening can be a stress reliever. Being out in nature is proven to improve your mood and create a feeling of peace. Research shows that the microorganisms in soil can help counteract depression and anxiety.

**BODY:**

The act of digging, planting, weeding, and watering is good for your body. Physical exertion can reduce health risks such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and osteoporosis. Gardening builds your strength and stamina while improving flexibility, coordination, and balance.

**SOUL:**

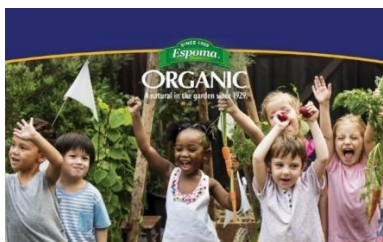
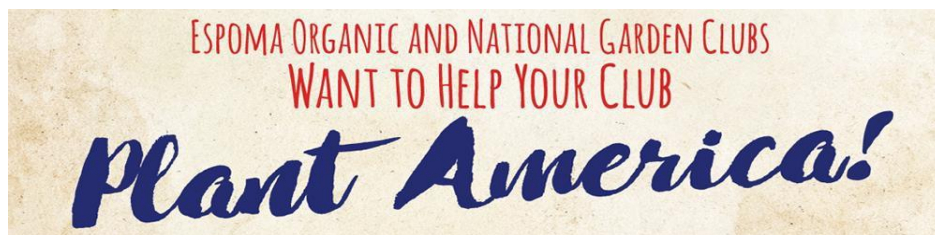
Gardening provides a sense of accomplishment and creates beauty to enjoy both as the gardener and for those in the community who view the results.

For more information and an application, please visit the Garden Club of New Jersey website, and click on “Awards” or navigate directly to <https://www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org/awards>.

**Applications are due by February 15, 2024.** Please also email Peggy Morrissey a copy of the completed application so we can be sure all applications are received.

Jessica Wang  
Chair, President's Project  
[jessica007wang@gmail.com](mailto:jessica007wang@gmail.com)

Peggy Morrissey  
Chair, Awards  
[peggymorrissey67@yahoo.com](mailto:peggymorrissey67@yahoo.com)



Members of National Garden Clubs are passionate about growing with a purpose and The Espoma Company wants to help! Together, we're looking for **NGC Affiliated Garden Clubs** with a vision that can be brought to life. We're selecting up to 20 clubs with projects in 2023-2024 to receive a \$250 grant for Espoma Organic plant foods and potting soils.

#### THE GRANT PROGRAM

Espoma's 'Plant America' Grant Program was announced at the 2017 NGC Annual Convention in Richmond. Grants for \$250 of Espoma products may be awarded to up to 20 NGC clubs annually. Since that time, over 115 grants have been awarded to clubs in 38 states. These creative NGC clubs have used these Espoma resources to beautify their local communities and improve the quality of life for their members, friends, neighbors and communities.

**ATTENTION 2023-24 WINNERS – Send your project update with 5 completed project photos by April 15, 2025. Your club may be the “BEST of the BEST” WINNER of a \$500 cash award from ESPOMA! Sorry, no late project updates accepted. The BOB Winner will be announced at the 2025 Convention!**

#### HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Grant applications for 2023-24 are accepted **October 1, 2023 through May 31, 2024**
- Simply complete the online form at <https://www.espoma.com/garden-clubs/> or on NGC's site
- **Be sure to attach 'before' photos of your site/s and a simple master plan sketch or diagram, plant list, etc. as a WORD document – clubs who do not, stand little chance of winning an Espoma Grant**
- Tell us when your project is scheduled to begin.

#### WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

- NGC / Espoma will select NGC Member Clubs as grant winning recipients
- Selected winning clubs will be directed to a local retailer for their choice of products

#### WHEN THE PROJECT IS COMPLETE

- Send description/photos of the completed project by April 15, 2025 to [grants2023.25ngc@gmail.com](mailto:grants2023.25ngc@gmail.com)
- **Remember, your club could then be selected as the “BEST of the BEST” Winner!**
- Forward local press information so we can send a press release about your club's good work!
- **REMEMBER:** Applications are accepted **October 1, 2023 through May 31, 2024**

#### WHAT WE WILL DO WITH YOUR WINNING SUBMISSIONS

- Share on NGC's social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- Release for publication in *The National Gardener*

#### CLUB PRESIDENTS - APPLY FOR YOUR CLUB!

Questions? Contact Debi Harrington, Espoma Committee Chairman at: [grants2023.25ngc@gmail.com](mailto:grants2023.25ngc@gmail.com) or 505-206- 0930 MT.

Do not contact Espoma directly - except to apply via the link.



## DRUMTHWACKET DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Drumthwacket, the New Jersey Governor's Official Residence in Princeton, will be "decked out" for the holidays, and once again, The Garden Club of New Jersey is participating in the festivities by decorating this historic home.



The participating clubs for 2023 are Allentown Garden Club, Belvidere Garden Club, Keyport Garden Club, Garden Club of Long Valley, Garden Club of Mountain Lakes, Warren Garden Club, and West Trenton Garden Club.

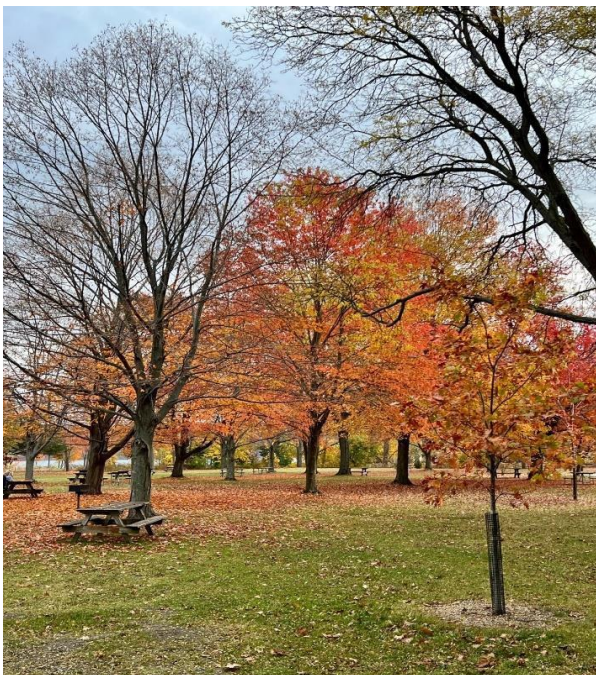


Many clubs have enjoyed the beautiful decorations. If you didn't make it this year, please visit next year! For more information visit - [drumthwacket.org](http://drumthwacket.org) (Photos 2022).

Nancy Bigelsen  
Drumthwacket, Chair  
[snrbig2@gmail.com](mailto:snrbig2@gmail.com)

## CAR-SGC Conference, Corning NY

October 23-26, 2023



*Upstate New York was ablaze with fall color shown here along the shores of Seneca Lake (the largest of the Finger Lakes).*



*Beautiful downtown Corning, NY. (Photo by Judy Bonanno)*

The Federated Garden Clubs of New York invited all Garden Club of New Jersey members to attend the 2023 Central Atlantic Region Conference in Corning, NY, in October. The conference combined workshops, tours, a tri-refresher for Schools, and much more so that attendees had the opportunity to refresh their school credentials while having a great time with fellow members.

Not everyone took the tri-refresher, but everyone was included in the workshops, lectures, bus trip, glassblowing, and a ghost tour in celebration of Halloween. There were also vendors, museums, meetings, and optional activities such as a fun costume event one evening at dinner. The conference was led by CAR Director Monica Hansen and speakers included National Garden Club President Brenda Moore who encouraged participation in youth gardening and environmental activities.

**Please join us in 2024! (See more pictures on the next page.)**





*GCNJ's Jane Bersch presented her report during the CAR-SGC Conference which included an Award Ceremony.*



*Jan Warshauer created a fabulous, towering floral arrangement. Such fun and a perfect holiday tribute in honor of the GCNJ President.*



*Mary Warshauer, Chair of the 2024 CAR Conference to be held in Basking Ridge, NJ, invited the New Jersey CAR delegates to the front of the room to help announce plans for the upcoming meeting.*



*Jersey Girls at the Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs Conference, Corning NY  
October 24, 2023*

*The "Jersey Girls" joined in the fun donning witch's hats, cat ears, and fancy fascinators.*





*On the last day of the conference, a bus tour took participants to Seneca Lake and a local vineyard for lunch. Then it was onto Cornell Botanic Gardens and a nearby organic farm.*



*At Cornell University, colorful signage maps out the extensive Robison York State Herb Garden.*



*Attendees registered for the Tri-Refresher Course, and participated in a class session inside the Botanic Gardens' Lewis Building, followed by a tour of the gardens. The raised beds and ornamental borders overflowed with beautiful plant specimens.*

## GCNJ NEWS LEAF "FLASHBACK"



Over the years, the News Leaf has featured excellent articles, coverage of important events, and humorous photos. While researching our history for the upcoming GCNJ 100th Anniversary being celebrated in 2025, I came across photos that were too good to ignore. Below is a walk down memory lane for many of our members and a first-time look for others. The photos made me smile ... I hope you will enjoy them too. I will share another "flashback" in the next issue of News Leaf.

### News Leaf Flashback to the 2013 Winter Issue

#### "Youth Clubs"

On August 22, 2013, GCNJ's President Barbara Mullin and Youth Chair Bob Markey oversaw the *Great Zucchini Race*. This annual event was established by Bob as part of the Rahway YMCA Summer Camp Gardening Program. Also, in attendance from GCNJ were Jeannie and Bob Geremia and Bruce Crawford, Director of Rutgers Gardens. The photos below (taken by Bob Geremia) were featured as part of a Youth article in the 2013 Winter News Leaf.



A Zucchini Racer



Barbara at the finish line



Bob Markey with the kids at the Race

*Fun was had by all ... even with the entry of a possible "Summer Squash" posing as a Zucchini!*

Beverly Kazickas

President, GCNJ



# Upcoming Events



**December 7, 2023** - HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR CELEBRATES 56 YEARS ON LBI - "Bring two dollars for your ticket and please don't wear spiked heels." Such was the request for the first Garden Club House Tour. For more information please check the website, [thegardencluboflbi.com](http://thegardencluboflbi.com) or contact Gillian Rozicer, at 609-848-9875, or [gillian616@aol.com](mailto:gillian616@aol.com).

**December 20, 2023** – Neshanic Garden Club is having a Youth Program, "Holiday Centerpiece", at the Hillsborough Library located at 379 South Branch Road in Hillsborough. The program starts promptly at 4pm and ends at 4:45. It is open to children in grades 1-4 and is FREE. The Neshanic Garden Club donates all supplies. Please call 908-458-8420 x 4 or register at [Somerset County Library System of New Jersey – Connect, Explore, Share, Discover \(sclsnj.org\)](http://Somerset County Library System of New Jersey – Connect, Explore, Share, Discover (sclsnj.org)) as seats are limited.

## **Flower Show School - Course 1: April 6-11, 2024** (see page 14)

- Flower Show Procedure (FSP) – **April 6, 2024** via Zoom with Barbara May
- Horticulture – **April 9-10, 2024** (In-Person) at the GCNJ Holly House/ Rutgers Gardens, 130 Log Cabin Rd., East Brunswick, NJ
- Design - **April 9-10, 2024** (In-Person) at the GCNJ Holly House/ Rutgers Gardens, 130 Log Cabin Rd., East Brunswick, NJ
- Exam – **April 11, 2024**

**April 6, 2024** - The Women Gardeners of Ridgewood will be presenting Page Dickey, renowned garden designer and author to speak on "Uprooted - A Gardener Reflects on Beginning Again" -- her journey to a more natural, native plant way of gardening. The event will begin at 11:30 AM and will be held at the West Side Presbyterian Church, corner of W. Ridgewood Avenue and Monroe Street, Ridgewood, NJ. For more information, contact Maria Gilosa at [mariagilosa@mindspring.com](mailto:mariagilosa@mindspring.com).

**April 18, 2024** – The Neshanic Garden Club will hold their Spring Luncheon at the Somerville Elks Lodge from 12-4PM at 375 Union Ave, Bridgewater, NJ 08807. The speaker is Tania Gindilis – Sustainable Container Gardening. For tickets call Barbara Devitt at 908-782-6595 or email at [bdevitt42@gmail.com](mailto:bdevitt42@gmail.com).

**October 22-23, 2024** - The CAR 2024 Conference will be held at the Old Mill Inn in Basking Ridge, October 22-23, 2024. "Save the date" cards were distributed at the 2023 conference. See page 13 for more information.

## Nominating Committee News

### Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is pursuing the selection of GCNJ candidates for several positions.

#### ARTICLE XIII Nominations and Elections

Section 7. Second Vice-President, Third Vice-President, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, four District Directors of even numbered districts and four members of the Nominating Committee from even numbered districts shall be elected in even numbered years.

If anyone would like to be considered for any of these positions, please contact:

Mary Warshauer  
GCNJ Nominating Committee Chairman  
[mary@warshauer.com](mailto:mary@warshauer.com)

## Save The Date - CAR-SGC Convention 2024



# Flower Show School

Is Coming to New Jersey on April 9-11, 2024



This is a wonderful opportunity for Garden Club members to learn the basics of flower shows, become Judges, and prepare for the creation of a flower show with your club. Don't miss this opportunity to attend! Registration details will be on the Garden Club of New Jersey Website at <https://www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org>.

Flower Show School is a comprehensive program that teaches all you need to know about judging, entering, competing, and chairing a National Garden Club Flower Show. There are 4 courses, each generally scheduled over a 2–3-day period, and each with a specific curriculum that includes horticulture, design, and flower show procedure (FSP). If you are considering becoming a flower show judge, planning to chair a flower show, or simply want to learn more, your first step is to attend Course I. Subjects are taught by qualified instructors and outlines will be provided. We invite you to join this unique experience and become an active part of flower shows.

Discover how to select, groom, and exhibit your plant while mastering the art of writing a flower show schedule. Learn how exhibits are judged, so you can earn some ribbons. Judith Newman will lead us through Horticulture for Course 1.

Design in Course 1 provides a brief history of European and American Designs, emphasizing the Elements and Principles of Design, and requirements for Awards. Examples of traditional line, line-mass, and mass designs will be exhibited and allow you to learn the basics of how to judge. Frances Thrash will lead us through Design for Course 1.

A flower show is not only a beautiful collection of specimens and designs, but a prime opportunity to capture the wonder and minds of the viewing public and club members. Flower shows stimulate interest in growing and showing horticulture, creating floral designs, and expressing creativity. Plan on attending, check out the special pricing for two club members to attend, embrace the opportunity to learn, help your club learn and help yourself grow. Contact me with questions.

Teddie Falcone  
Flower Show School Chair  
[tfalcone52@gmail.com](mailto:tfalcone52@gmail.com)



## SCHOLARSHIP NEWS

### ~ Spread the Word to Potential Applicants ~

#### PURPOSE OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Garden Club of New Jersey Scholarship Awards provide financial aid to students and promote the study of Horticulture, Floriculture, Landscape Design, Botany, Plant Pathology, Agronomy, Environmental Science, City Planning, Land Management, and related subjects.

APPLICATIONS must be submitted on the required GCNJ Application Form and should be typed or hand printed. All documents specified in the Application Form, plus the Financial Information Form, must be submitted with the Application. These two Forms can be found on the Club's website [www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org](http://www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org).

#### THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ALL DOCUMENTS IS **JANUARY 15th**.

- The materials can be either mailed or emailed.
- If mailed, the materials should be sent in one envelope (if possible) to:
  - Kathleen Mullarkey, Scholarship Chair  
GCNJ Scholarship Awards  
32 Foster Street  
Red Bank, NJ 07701
- If emailed, the materials should be sent in one file (if possible) to: [kmullarkey1130@gmail.com](mailto:kmullarkey1130@gmail.com)
- Scholarships are awarded at the GCNJ's Annual Meeting in the spring.

#### BASIS FOR AWARDS

Academic excellence, evidence of future contribution to the field(s) of study listed above, extracurricular activities, work experience in these fields, academic honors, and financial need.

#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

High School Seniors, Undergraduates, and Graduate Students majoring or preparing to major in a field of study relating to the environment or those listed above AND who are enrolled as a full-time student. High School Seniors must show acceptance to a college or University. Prior Recipients may reapply as long as they continue to be enrolled as a full-time student in the fields noted above.

ALL APPLICANTS MUST HAVE LEGAL RESIDENCY IN NEW JERSEY.

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES MAY BE OUT OF STATE.

Kathleen Mullarkey  
Scholarship Committee Chair  
908-930-4763 or [kmullarkey@verizon.net](mailto:kmullarkey@verizon.net).

## FROM THE AWARDS DESK

A shout-out and kudos to the following Garden Club of New Jersey clubs for their recognition with awards at the recent Central Atlantic Region conference:

1. The Garden Club of Long Beach Island
  - First Place Yearbook Award (100-299 members)
  - Overall winner and \$25 reward for NGC Standard Flower Show Schedule
2. Pinelands Garden Club of Medford
  - Environmental Concern Award -Large Club and \$100 reward
3. Belvidere Garden Club
  - Environmental Concern Award -Small Club and \$100 reward
4. Garden Club of Montclair
  - Overall winner and \$25 reward for NGC Design Specialty Flower Show Schedule
5. Neshanic Garden Club
  - Fourth Place Publicity Press Book-Medium Club



### YOUTH AWARDS:

1. Terra Nova Garden Club
  - Navath Mandala-First Place , Grade 5  
Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl 2023 Poster Contest
  - Lara Fernandez-Fourth Place, Grade 4  
Smokey Bear/ Woodsy Owl 2023 Poster Contest
2. Karen Nash Memorial Butterfly Garden-Garden Club
  - Zoe Voria - Fourth Place, Grade 1  
Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl 2023 Poster Contest

**Again, so many congratulations to these clubs for their outstanding projects and activities!!**

Additionally, some dates to keep in mind:

- **January 25, 2024:** deadline for submission of a Publicity Press Book (Only one copy of the book is required).
- **February 15, 2024:** deadline for submission of Garden Club of New Jersey and Youth Awards.

Please send three copies of each GCNJ and Youth award application. The awards booklet and application are located on the website under Awards.

Send to: Peggy Morrissey  
142 Osborne Avenue  
Bay Head, NJ 08742

## Club News

### GCNJ District 2

The GCNJ District 2 Fall meeting was held on Saturday 18th November at the Freylinghuysen Arboretum. Using greens from the surrounding property, fruits like lemons, limes, clementines, apples and various fresh and/or dried plant materials, District 2 club members were given instruction and created their own unique Williamsburg centerpieces for their Holiday tables. The finished centerpieces were not just beautiful but showcased each person's creativity.



### Green Thumb Garden Club of Cranford

Green Thumb Garden Club of Cranford handcrafts one-of-a-kind porch gnomes, boxwood trees and holiday arrangements for their annual boutique which was held the first weekend in December- Gnome & Garden! (provided by Deb Murphy)





## Scotch Plains Garden Club

Scotch Plains Garden Club had their Design-A-Wreath event which included 3 door prizes!! (Provided by Jeannine Viscardi and Sharon Shiraga)



## Neshanic Garden Club

Flower Pounding taught by Carol Feinstein to the Neshanic Garden Club Members and Guests: It was different and unique – we released a lot of anxiety by hammering the dye from real flower petals onto treated cloth to create some beautiful pictures! (Provided by Robin Shaw)



## NEWS LEAF “KIDS’ CORNER”

### YOUTH CONTESTS

**All Youth Contests are to be submitted to Peggy Morrissey by January 6, 2024  
(See address information below)**



There are contests for all ages in grades 1st through 9th.

Please visit “Youth” on the GCNJ website [www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org](http://www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org) and the NGC website <https://gardenclub.org/contests-and-activities> for information, guidelines, and applications for the following contests.

**NGC Smokey Bear / Woodsy Owl Poster Contest:** Grades 1 - 5

**NGC Poetry Contest:** Grades K – 9

**NGC Sculpture Contest:** Grades 4 – 8

**Reminder:** Each Youth Club may submit up to 3 entries for each of the contests listed. The local club will be responsible for the selection of the contest entries that are sent to GCNJ.

Peggy Morrissey, Chair, GCNJ Awards  
142 Osborne Avenue  
Bay Head, NJ 08742  
Phone: call or text ... (732) 330-3636  
Email: [peggymorrissey67@yahoo.com](mailto:peggymorrissey67@yahoo.com)

### Another Important Reminder to Our Youth Leaders

To **register your Youth Club**, please complete a youth registration form and send it with the \$20 registration fee made payable to GCNJ with Youth Club Dues written in the Subject Line. Forms are found on the GCNJ website [www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org](http://www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org) under “Latest News – Youth Club Registration”

Completed forms and checks should be mailed to GCNJ Membership Chair Sue Berdahl.

Sue Berdahl, Chair, Membership  
72 Beechwood Drive  
Shrewsbury, NJ 07702  
Email: [sue.berdahl@gmail.com](mailto:sue.berdahl@gmail.com)



## CRAWFORD'S CORNER

### An Evergreen No Longer Just for The Birds

Native plants have slowly become increasingly popular with the general gardening public. Many natives such as Goldenrod were once considered weedy or simply undesirable. Fortunately, they are now gaining acceptance as garden worthy plants. However, there remain a few native plants



with great attributes that are simply not receiving the gardening stamp of approval. Of these plants, one of the most ubiquitous yet 'undiscovered' garden worthy plants is *Juniperus virginiana*, commonly called Eastern Red Cedar.

*Juniperus virginiana* is a member of the Cupressaceae or Cypress Family and is native from Maine and Nova Scotia west to South Dakota and south to Texas and Florida. In fact, the common name of Eastern Red Cedar is rather misleading, since I was surprised to see a grove of the plants growing in the Badlands of South Dakota, as pictured in the closing image! *Juniperus* is a large genus, representing between 50-65+ species that are scattered throughout the northern hemisphere from the arctic to the tropics! The genus and this species were named and described by Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) in 1753. The species epithet refers to its affiliation with colonial Virginia, which was significantly larger in the 1700's! *Juniperus* is derived from the combination of the Latin *Junio*, meaning 'young' and *Parere* 'to produce', referring to the 'youthful' or evergreen leaves.

As is true for most Junipers, the evergreen foliage of Eastern Red Cedar is divided into two distinct forms: juvenile and adult. The juvenile foliage (pictured above) is awl-shaped, lighter green and sharp to the touch. Around ¼" long, it appears on plants under 3-4 years of age and on vigorously growing regions of older plants. By contrast, the adult foliage (pictured to the right) has a darker green or bluish-green color and is scale-like. These leaves are a mere 1/16" long and overlap the adjacent leaf while also tightly clasping the stem. The foliage gives the appearance of a swollen green stem! During the winter months, the foliage will vary from dark green, to dark purple to copper, depending upon the plant. The dense foliage and branching habit also provide an important protective habitat for many bird species, such as Saw-Whet owls.







*Juniperus virginiana* is also dioecious, with individual plants bearing only female or male cones. The yellow-brown male cones are approximately  $\frac{1}{8}$ " long and appear at the tips of the branches in spring. The pollen is shed in May, at which point the tree often assumes a yellow cast due to the sheer number of the golden cones! The female cones (pictured above and left) do not resemble

the traditional cones of a conifer. Rather, they are  $\frac{1}{4}$ " round, dark blue berries with a white waxy coating. The female cones are often produced in such abundance that the entire tree assumes an attractive, deep bluish-green appearance starting in September. The fruits are a highly desired food by a variety of birds, including Bluebirds, Turkeys and, above all, Cedar Waxwings. The blue fruits are not only food for wildlife, but aid in winter garden interest, provide attractive accents to Holiday decorations and serve as the flavor in gin!

Contrary to its lack of garden use, Eastern Red Cedar is a very easily grown plant. It is also a pioneer plant, being one of the first trees to populate an open area that was burned or otherwise stripped of vegetation. The plants are very adaptable to pH and soils extremes, growing happily in clay, silt or sandy soils, whether in mountainous regions or at the



shore!

Providing the site basks in full sun and the soil does not pond following rains, plants will thrive and slowly reach 45-60' in height by 10-20' wide. Plants are typically pyramidal in form (as pictured above), with some displaying a more fastigiate nature, making them useful when space is at a premium. Since the coarse root system provides minimal competition when grown in close proximity to one another, they make an excellent barrier or windbreak.



The challenge is growing plants beneath the canopy! The dense canopy produces a very dry rain shadow and the accumulating duff of fallen foliage will slowly raise the soil pH. I have personally had good luck with growing Hellebores (*Helleborus* species, pictured above), Pennsylvania Sedge (*Carex pensylvanica*), Wood Hyacinths (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*) and Summer Snowflake (*Leucojum aestivum* 'Gravetye Giant' pictured at right) beneath the trees, but the palette is certainly limited. *Juniperus virginiana* has also changed the ecology in regions of Central North America that once relied on fire ecology to sustain plant populations. The current focus on reducing fires has allowed this tree to populate and out-compete plants native to the prairies, partially explaining why I saw such a large population in the Badlands.



Despite its cosmopolitan nature, most people fail to recognize the unique and attractive personality it brings to the Gardens. There are numerous forms available, with some such as Emerald Sentinel™ having a decidedly columnar habit.

The bark is an attractive reddish brown that gradually exfoliates in vertical strips (as seen at right) and again adds winter interest. Economically, the heartwood is an attractive mahogany-red and repels moths, making it the lumber of choice for closets and blanket chests. The lumber was also used for pencils and its decay resistance made it opportune for fence posts. In fact, Native American Indians demarked their territory with these posts and supposedly the city of Baton Rouge received its name from vast number of the red posts that were found in the area!



Of course, *Juniperus virginiana* is not perfect! Many forms are more open, stunted or have a form that is not deemed attractive, explaining in part why this plant may not be main stream! Fortunately, there are numerous forms from which improved selections can continue to be made. Without doubt, a great plant for the birds, it is now time for this durable evergreen to become a great plant for the Garden!





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***Information for the next issue:***

***February 1st is the deadline for articles for the Spring 2024 News Leaf as well as listings of upcoming club events and online ads.***

Send articles and upcoming events to Karen Eardley at [k.eardley@live.com](mailto:k.eardley@live.com)

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

