



## **Garden Club of Virginia Common Wealth Award 2023 Finalists**

**The Boxwood Garden Club, The James River Garden Club, Three Chopt Garden Club, and The Tuckahoe Garden Club of Westhampton:**

**The Virginia War Memorial Public Green Space, Richmond**

The Virginia War Memorial pays tribute to nearly 12,000 Virginia veterans from World War II through today's War on Terrorism. The names of these veterans are inscribed on the walls of the Memorial's outdoor pavilions and are listed by county, city, or town.

The Foundation supporting the Memorial is a 501(c)(3) organization, forming a remarkable public/private partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia. The five-acre property in downtown Richmond, on Belvidere at the Lee Bridge is barren. There is no shade. There are no native plantings or pollinators. Appropriate commemorative gardens are severely lacking.

Creation of a public green space closely aligns with GCV's mission of promoting interest in conservation, beautification, horticulture, preservation, and education. The project would be of interest to all Virginians.

The Memorial also is in keeping with GCV's history of support for our military. During WWII, proceeds from fundraising, Historic Garden Week, and individual GCV members helped facilitate many war relief efforts, including "adopting" the village of Ver-sur-Mer in Normandy. GCV paid for the restoration of 10 windows at the Church of St. Martin where there is now a plaque, listing the names of sons of GCV members who lost their lives in the D-Day invasion of Normandy. There is a street named "Rue de Garden Club of Virginia."

**Gabriella Garden Club:**

**HOME Pocket Park: A Perennial Garden Oasis Within Its Urban Setting in Downtown Danville**

During much of the 20th century, Danville was a leading industrial city in Virginia and home to one of the largest textile mills in the South. By the new millennium, those industries had essentially disappeared, leaving the city with high unemployment, neighborhood blight, and dilapidated buildings. For over a decade, Danville has striven to rebuild itself, adopting the moniker, "The Comeback City."

HOME Pocket Park is in a rapidly growing area of Danville's downtown district. The space currently houses the "HOME" sign, which was part of a larger sign for the now-shuttered Dan River Fabrics. In addition to its historical significance, the sign has become a symbol of Danville, frequently photographed and used for marketing materials. The land, however, is under-utilized, lacking appeal and functionality.

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Gabriella Garden Club envisions this to be an interactive and multifunctional space of natural beauty within its urban location. A plan has been developed utilizing a combination of hard and soft scape materials, with perennials providing color throughout the year. It also includes places to gather for outdoor dining, individual reflection, and community events.

Funds from the Common Wealth Award would be used to transform the space into a welcoming and beautiful respite hopefully making all the visitors feel at HOME.

**The Garden Study Club and The Martinsville Garden Club:  
The Nature Garden Along the Smith River Paw Path at the Smith River Sports Complex,  
Martinsville**

In 2015, The Martinsville Garden Club and The Garden Study Club developed the Paw Path conservation project, a trail for pollinator plants along the Smith River and within the Smith River Sports Complex in Martinsville/Henry County.

The Paw Path has been extremely successful with over 30,000 visitors annually, to include becoming a destination for numerous student field trips. In order to enhance and expand the Paw Path and continue the two clubs' goals of conservation, preservation, and education for locals and visitors, a Nature Garden will be established along the Paw Path. The garden will convert an unsightly space full of invasive species into an array of native pollinator plants.

As part of implementing the Nature Garden, native plants such as Virginia bluebell, wild ginger, and crane fly orchid will be identified, protected, and transplanted if needed. Creating a beautiful and serene setting for respite, renewal, and learning, this project will be a living lab and open-air classroom, where people of all ages can become educated about the importance of native pollinators, both in nature and in their own gardens. Funds from the Common Wealth Award will be used for site preparation and plant costs for the Nature Garden.