



President's Message

Dear Garden Club of New Jersey Members,

As gardeners, we are very aware of the changing seasons and extreme weather conditions. So, after a very wet summer, we are now experiencing a very dry autumn and as I write this message the 'Garden State' is under a drought watch. Let's please conserve our water use and when planning garden projects for next year, it is the perfect opportunity to expand the use of native plants in our planting repertoire.

Why natives? They are hardier, don't rely on fertilizers / pesticides to thrive and are tolerant to NJ's weather, including hot, cold, wet or dry conditions. They also benefit our local pollinators. Fall is the perfect time to incorporate native plants into the garden in anticipation of next summer's blooms.

The Garden Club of New Jersey (GCNJ) is also planning ahead. We will hold a virtual Fall Leadership Conference on September 30th for the Presidents of our federation of 100 local clubs. A Zoom link will be emailed to all Club Presidents who have submitted their email address to GCNJ's Membership Chair, Sue Berdahl. The theme of our meeting is "Strengthening Connections" through affiliation with GCNJ, the CAR (Central Atlantic Region) and NGC (National Garden Club).

Then, on October 22-23, the GCNJ will host the 2024 Central Atlantic Region (CAR) Conference at the Olde Mill Inn, Basking Ridge, NJ. Please check out the information in this newsletter and be sure to register to attend. Registration is open to all members of garden clubs affiliated with GCNJ.

Also, thank you to all the clubs that submitted Yearbooks to Awards Chair Peggy Morrissey. It is always wonderful to see the variety of programs and activities the clubs are offering. It is also time to begin spreading the word to students in your community about the GCNJ's Scholarships. Kathleen Mullarkey, Chair of the Scholarship Committee, looks forward to receiving applications again this year from numerous candidates with outstanding credentials.



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Lastly, please consider applying for a GCNJ Award or my President's Project ... Plant America: Gardening for a Healthy Mind, Body and Soul. In 2025, 3 grants will be awarded for a total of \$3,000 to clubs affiliated with the GCNJ. Additional grant and award information is included in this Newsletter and on the GCNJ Website. Let's promote healthy living through a project or garden that will benefit the community.

Cheers,

Beverly

Beverly Kazickas
President, GCNJ



Celebrating 100 Years ~ 100 Clubs

The first meeting of the federation of garden clubs of the State of New Jersey was held in 1925. **On May 14, 2025, The Garden Club of New Jersey will celebrate their 100th Anniversary at their spring Annual Meeting to be held at Navesink Country Club.**

To mark this significant achievement the Garden Club of New Jersey will be publishing a hardcover coffee table style book. **The focus of this book will be to highlight and celebrate the 100 local garden clubs in New Jersey and their contributions to their communities and the state over the decades.**

The book committee is asking all clubs to provide details and photos about their club's activities.

GCNJ looks forward to receiving information from all of the garden clubs in New Jersey to be featured in this wonderful book.

Ann Fahey & Julie Morgan

Co-Chairs, 100th Anniversary Book Committee

“Celebrating 100 Years 100 Clubs”

For more information and / or to submit club info and photos, please email Julie Morgan. We look forward to hearing from ALL club presidents and having your club and members represented in this keep-sake-book.

There is no charge to have your club included in the GCNJ's 100th Anniversary book

Meet Your GCNJ Board Member

Nancy Bigelsen: GCNJ Drumthwacket Chair, Garden Club of Mountain Lakes, District III



I was born and grew up in Ohio with parents who loved gardening, especially their many rose bushes. I have vivid memories of my Dad in the garden with his pesticide sprayer strapped to his shoulder trying to control those pesky aphids! After graduating from Miami University, I began a career as a retail buyer which took me to Chicago where I met my husband, Steve, who was in medical school. We loved our Chicago life but eventually ended up in Steve's home state, New Jersey, for his allergy training and medical practice. We have lived in Basking Ridge and Haddonfield, finally ending up in Mountain Lakes where we've stayed for the last 27 years.

In Mountain Lakes, I was a busy mom, raising our son, Ryan, running my interior design business and volunteering in several organizations. For many years, I was way too intimidated to join the Garden Club – it seemed like it would take so much knowledge and work. Eventually, some friends convinced me to join. What a good choice! I've learned so much and loved the club and its' members ever since.

In addition to garden club, I developed a passion for children in the foster care system, after serving on the board of Roots & Wings for many years. At Roots & Wings, which aids children aging out of the foster system, I learned so much about the incredible struggles these children endure. Last year, I became a CASA volunteer (Court Appointed Special Advocate) where I am assigned to a family of 2 children to monitor their well-being and report my findings to the court for the duration of their time in the DCPD system. It's been a privilege and an honor getting to know this family, understanding their challenges and watching them work to become the family they desire to be.

Over the years, I've also become very involved with the local and state garden clubs. My major roles in the Garden Club of Mountain Lakes, have been Drumthwacket chair for 12 years and President, 2011-2013 (and again next year). On the GCNJ Board, I have served as District 3 Director, a member of the Headquarters and Endowment Committee, and currently, as Chair of Drumthwacket. I love working with the GCNJ clubs for the unveiling of their holiday décor at the governor's mansion. So far, I've chaired Drumthwacket through two gubernatorial administrations and hope to be there for a third!

In our spare time, Steve and I enjoy spending time in NYC and traveling.

GCNJ NEWS LEAF "FLASHBACK"

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 Book and Celebration in spring 2025, I came across photos and articles 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. This photo made me smile ... I hope you enjoy it too.

News Leaf Flashback to Winter 2016 - GCNJ President Susan O'Donnell (2015-2017 ... 2nd from right) with Jeannie Geremia (future GCNJ president 2019-2021 ... center) are shown here promoting the GCNJ's project known as 'Creating Pollinator Centers'. A series of informative signs were created to promote the importance of pollinators and the native plants grown in New Jersey to support them.



Beverly Kazickas
President, GCNJ

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.

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.

If you are interested in applying for a grant, an application is posted on our website at www.gardenclubofnewjersey.org under the Awards section. Applications are due by February 15, 2025. Please email 3 copies to Peggy Morrissey, Awards Chair, at peggymorrissey67@yahoo.com

Awards will be announced and presented at the 2025 GCNJ Annual Meeting on May 14, 2025. If you have any questions, please contact your District Director for additional information.

We hope your club will consider applying for a project!

Jessica Wang
President's Project Chair
jessica007wang@gmail.com

GCNJ 98th Annual Meeting

This summer, the 98th Annual Meeting of the Garden Club of New Jersey, was held on Tuesday, June 18, 2024, under 'The Pavillion' at Rutgers Gardens. The theme of the event was "*Picnic in the Gardens*" and even though a very hot, humid day for holding an outdoor event, the meeting was very well attended with a big turnout of garden club members and guests.

The morning session included committee reports, a vote on bylaw changes, and the presentation of awards to local garden clubs for outstanding projects. Three President's Project Grants of \$1000 each were presented to recipients Shrewsbury Garden Club, The Garden Club of Essex Fells and the Karen Nash Memorial Butterfly Garden Club. In addition, Presidential Citations were awarded for outstanding service to Teresa Blake, Joan Cichalski, Chris Endris, Lois Johan, Kathleen Mullarkey, Jan Warshauer and Rose Wolverton. Beautiful gardening themed Raffle Baskets were generously filled and donated by all 8 Districts. Also, in honor of the garden theme, vendors sold honey, dried lavender products, baked goods, jellies, soaps and much more from their gardens.

There was a buffet luncheon served in the 'Log Cabin' along with the display of an educational exhibit on Archives.

The afternoon included the presentation of the Medal of the Garden Club of New Jersey, its highest honor, to Carole Wehn for service above the call of duty. Followed by the election and installation of new officers to the 2024-2025 GCNJ Board. The installation duties were performed by honored guest Monica Hansen, our CAR Director (Central Atlantic Region 2023-2025).

Special thanks to Registrar Sue Berdahl and her committee, Awards Chair Peggy Morrissey and committee, GCNJ Photographer Amy Richardson, Terry Blake and Ellen Preissler for organizing the Raffle Baskets, and Mary Warshauer who assisted Beverly as Co-Chair of the Annual Meeting, along with the entire committee of volunteers without whose dedication this event could never have been possible.



Medal of The Garden Club of New Jersey

Recipient Carole Wehn received her Award from GCNJ President Beverly Kazickas.

L to R: Beverly Kazickas and Carole Wehn (photo credit: Amy Richardson)



Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs

CAR-SGC Conference 2024
October 22-23, 2024
The Olde Mill Inn, Basking Ridge, NJ 07820
“Wonders of the Garden State”

Come join us in the historic Somerset Hills in autumn!
Speakers-Workshops-Vendors-Trips



Leonard J. Buck Garden in Far Hills

High Line Public Park in NYC

Upcoming Events



September 21, 24-25, 26, 2024: The Garden Club of New Jersey's Flower Show School course II. The 21st will be held via Zoom, on the 24-25th in-person at Rutgers Gardens, and on the 26th the exam will be given.

September 30, 2024: The Garden Club of New Jersey's virtual Fall Leadership Conference for the Presidents of New Jersey's federation of 100 affiliated local garden clubs. Club Presidents will receive the zoom link by email.

October 22-23, 2024: The CAR 2024 Conference hosted by GCNJ will be held in Basking Ridge at the Olde Mill Inn. All GCNJ members are welcome to register to attend. Theme "Wonders of the Garden State" (See page 7 for more information)

December 2024: The Garden Club of New Jersey affiliated clubs decorate Drumthwacket, the NJ Governor's mansion, for the Holidays. Please arrange a tour for your club at the Holiday Open House website.

December 11-12, 2024: The Garden Club of Long Beach Island's 57th Annual Holiday Tour of Homes. Tickets are on sale to attend the event, please visit their website for more information.

February 15, 2025: Deadline for GCNJ Grant and Awards - For more information, contact Awards Chair Peggy Morrissey at peggymorrissey67@yahoo.com

April 29-30, 2025: Flower Show Symposium in Basking Ridge, NJ at the Olde Mill Inn.

May 14, 2025: GCNJ will hold its Annual Meeting with 100th Anniversary Celebration at the Navesink Country Club in Middletown, New Jersey. More information to come in the Spring 2025 News Leaf.

May 19-23, 2025: National Garden Club's Annual Convention in Charleston, S. C.

Club News

GARDEN CLUB HONORED FOR BEAUTIFYING THE CITY

At the downtown Rahway Arts Park Mural Celebration held on May 4th, Rahway Garden Club members were congratulated for their many years helping to beautify Rahway and their support of gardening and horticulture within Rahway and the surrounding communities.

The club was acknowledged for their recent help in guiding the city, with the advice of Rutgers' Michele Bakacs, in the selection of the mural's native flowers and the native plantings that were recently added at Arts Park.

Also attending the Mural Celebration and congratulating the Rahway Garden Club, was Beverly Kazickas, President of the 4,000-member Garden Club of New Jersey.

The Rahway Garden club is one of 100 clubs, under the umbrella of the Garden Club of NJ and an affiliate of the National Garden Clubs.



(above l-r) Bob Markey, Board of Directors of both the Garden Club of NJ and National Garden Clubs, Council Person and MC of the Mural Celebration Dani Newbury, GCNJ President Beverly Kazickas, Mayor of the City of Rahway Ray Giacobbe.

Courtesy photos

Courtesy photos



(above l-r) Councilperson Danni Newbury, Dennis Kirk, Madeline Cron, Wendy Florczak, Karin Napier, Mayor Ray Giacobbe, Andy Mazuric, Bob Markey, Debra Stuart, Selva Villahemosa, James Keane, Councilperson Karla Timmons.

Article Submitted by Rahway Garden Club on behalf of Renna Media, LLC

NGC 2025 YOUTH SCULPTURE CONTEST

SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT TO KEEP OUR PLANET GREEN



PREVIOUS WINNERS!

WHO'S ELIGIBLE?
Grade 4 – Grade 8
General Education, Special Education or English for Speakers of Other Languages
 who are either
NGC Youth Club members or ANY kid when sponsored by a local affiliated NGC garden club


For details go to
www.gardenclub.org
 Youth & Scholarship/Contest & Activities
 OR your state garden club's website!

CLUB ENTRIES MUST BE SENT TO YOUR STATE YOUTH CHAIRPERSON: OBSERVE YOUR STATE DEADLINE

For more information email:
 Terry Critchlow
 NGC Sculpture Contest Chairperson
tcritchlow@aol.com

NGC 2025 YOUTH POETRY CONTEST

MY GARDEN HAS VEGETABLES TO SPARE THAT I CAN SHARE



HELPING FIGHT HUNGER BY SHARING VEGETABLES FROM OUR GARDEN

WHO'S ELIGIBLE?
Grade K– Grade 12
General Education, Special Education or English for Speakers of Other Languages
 who are either
NGC Youth Club members or ANY kid when sponsored by a local affiliated NGC garden club

For details go to
www.gardenclub.org
 Youth & Scholarship/Contest & Activities
 OR your state garden club's website!

CLUB ENTRIES MUST BE SENT TO YOUR STATE YOUTH CHAIRPERSON: OBSERVE YOUR STATE DEADLINE

For more information email:
 James Pavelka, NGC Poetry Contest Chairperson
jamespavelka@comcast.net

National Garden Clubs

Smokey/Woodsey

Poster Contest



For details go to www.gardenclub.org/Youth & Scholarship/Contest & Activities
OR to your state garden club's website!

CLUB ENTRIES MUST BE SENT TO YOUR STATE YOUTH CHAIRMAN:

PLEASE OBSERVE YOUR STATE DEADLINE!

Bob Markey, NGC Youth Coordinator
ngc.youthcoordinator@gmail.com

NEWS LEAF "YOUTH"



Demarest Garden Club hosts its Annual 5th Grade Planting Day (photo credit: Beverly Kazickas)

YOUTH CLUB REGISTRATON - September is the time to be sure all youth clubs are registered for 2024-2025. Print the Youth Club Registration form on the YOUTH LINK of the GCNJ website. Mail the completed form with the \$20 Youth Club Registration fee to Sue Berdahl as indicated on the form (sue.berdahl@gmail.com) Youth Clubs that register, please provide contacts for their Youth Chair and Youth Leaders who are added to the GCNJ Youth Email Announcement list and the GCNJ Youth Directory/Youth Leaders' Roundtable list on the password-protected link of the GCNJ website.

Information for the next issue:

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



Send articles and upcoming events

Go to 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 Fall!