

THE

# *Garden Club of Dearborn*

*June 2025*

## NEWSLETTER

### BOARD MEETING

August 6, 2025  
10:00 a.m.  
McFadden Ross House

### Upcoming Events

English Gardens  
Summer Seminars  
Make & Take Workshops  
Various July-Aug. Dates  
Registration Required  
[www.englishgardens.com](http://www.englishgardens.com)

### July Birthdays:

6 Paulette Baumgart  
13 Mindy Delano  
13 Maximilian Ullrich  
14 Adel Parzianello  
19 Sherry Kammer  
30 Cynthia Jackson

### August Birthdays:

3 Susan Seta  
15 Diane Rebori  
17 Suzen Kingston  
19 Carole Hogg  
24 Shelly Larabell  
24 Helen Ross  
26 Carmen Gudan  
29 Heather Yeaw  
31 Katrina Harris

### Editor:

Mariya Fogarasi

### Chief Photographer:

Otto Baumgart

[www.gardenclubdearborn.org](http://www.gardenclubdearborn.org)



### President's Corner



This is my last message to you as president. It has been an honor and joy to work with all our wonderful members, those who have been around for many years and those who have joined us in the last few years.

In 1915, Clara Ford formed a garden club and 110 years later, we are still the Garden Club of Dearborn with 70+ members. We are living history.

Originally, the group consisted of wives of civic leaders, interested in flower arrangements. They didn't have to work outside of the home. They hosted teas in their gardens, dressed in their best, including hats and gloves. We have evolved into the service organization we are today, awarding scholarships and creating and maintaining places of beauty within our city.

It has been an eventful two years. We made crafts. We went on field trips. We enjoyed informative speakers. We had fundraisers with tradition, success and merriment. We have made a commitment to conservation and sustainability. The Pollinator and Enabling Garden, while not completed, is already a place to relax, renew and contemplate.

We all volunteered and continue to volunteer to accomplish our goals. All give according to their abilities. I truly appreciate each and every one of you. It is because of the support and dedication of our members, that we have managed to do so much.

I have tried to thank individuals throughout my time in office. If I began to name names here, this message would be for all of you. Thank you all for all you have done for the club and continue to do for the club.

I wish you all the success and joy gardening brings to you, our club and our community. Well done!

**Next General Meeting**

**September 8, 2025 - 11:00 a.m.**

**First Presbyterian Church Dearborn  
600 N Brady Rd, Dearborn, MI 48124**



**Welcome Back Potluck**

Mary Spencer: Cook, Instructor & Owner of “Taste: A Cook’s Place”. Self-taught cook teaching classes for over 30 years, Mary will speak about cooking using various culinary herbs found in our gardens. She will share her tips and stories making for an enjoyable learning experience.



Hosts: Nanette Fisher & Paulette Baumgart

There is always something very special about the Garden Club of Dearborn Annual General Meeting in June – and even more so when the board changes over. This is the time to look back over the past two years, honoring those who have served and are stepping down as well as those willing to serve for the coming two years.

A heartfelt thank you goes to our members who went above and beyond, contributing enthusiasm, time, effort and so much more:

Cynthia Casillas, President, also Programs Chair and Holly Berry Brunch Chair (one year each)

Diane Rebori, Recording Secretary

Marietta Lynch, New Member Relations

Karen Marzonie stepped down as Awards Chair (two terms resulting in many applications and awards for our club) but is continuing as Historian.

Jo West, Nominating Chair

Eva Gogola, Web Master

Cynthia Casillas opened the meeting with a warm greeting and the Pledge of Allegiance. We welcomed two guests: Virginia Froehlich, Michigan Garden Club Life Member Achievement Chair, and Gary Crosbie, bringing our total count to thirty-nine. Cynthia also praised the hosts; Linda Johnson and Jean Burns, for the beautiful table settings along with Carol Chrzastek, Diane Rebori and herself.



Before the luncheon, Christine Berryman described the order form for t-shirts and tote bags sporting our new logo, giving members time to look it over and decide what they might wish. The three t-shirt examples were laid out for all to see. While the first order has been finalized, there could be another mid-summer order depending on interest. Please see the June 20th email with order form if you are interested.



Following the invocation by Linda Johnson, Cynthia declared the Park Place buffet open and everyone helped themselves to the famous chicken, Swedish meatballs, pasta, green beans and salad. Cookies and a delicious, decorated cake were offered as dessert. A big thank you to all those that donated a variety of beverages for attendees to enjoy with their meal.



M. Scharf, S. Kammer, R. Wiggle, S. Larabell & A. Parzianello



M. Bankwitz, K. Bankwitz, K. Harris & S. Tambeau

Our club photographer, Otto Baumgart, made his way around the room while everyone dined and chatted, capturing just about everyone looking very happy. Thank you, Otto, for sharing your talent with us and preserving all these moments!



L. Johnson, C. Casillas, M. Calder, J. Burns  
M. Devenport, R Pearson & K. Kovacs-Gucwa



Club Members & Guests Enjoying Lunch

Cynthia's parting president's address was simply wonderful! Listing many activities over the past two years including fundraising and the Meadowbrook outing, she emphasized the increased attendees at our Holly Berry Brunch (and the fun putting together the baskets), all we have done for Dearborn schools and the scouts ("children are the future"), our scholarships, and how we build up Dearborn through our philanthropy, dedication, and fun. She reminded us to keep our eyes open for beautiful bargains which will find their way into the Holly Berry Brunch baskets this coming December, too. And speaking of the HBB....returning club member, Marlene Wojtowicz stepped up to host this year's celebration. Marlene has chaired the HBB in the past and was the one who started the 50/50 raffle at the fundraiser. Let's give Marlene our full support!

She highlighted our new motto, “Blooming with Purpose since 1915”, the first native seed library at our Centennial library, her City Beautiful commission promoting sustainable gardens, and recommended we read up about Clara Ford (which we will, later in this newsletter).



She mentioned our honoring three 90th birthdays over the past two years and emphasized how gardening is good for the body and soul. Our train station beautification, our Blue Star memorial, our Pollinator and Enabling Garden – all found a place in her speech.

Finally, Cynthia called out so many different activities that everyone in the room was standing by the end and we all gave ourselves a good round of applause. It was a speech for the Garden Club history books. “This is what you have all done to make this club a success!” were her final words. Thank you, Cynthia, again, for your leadership and passion leading us!

Following Cynthia’s address, the business meeting continued with Treasurer Laurine Griffin’s financial report; she cautioned her numbers were not final as our fiscal year ends on June 30. As of June 16, our total balance is \$18,639.75.

Terri Bungee, Vice President of External Affairs, shared news from two of the schools to which we donate funds. Nowlin Elementary had the children draw thank you cards which were on display and Long Elementary, which just came on board this spring, is “super excited to have native plants in their garden”.



We then extended a warm welcome to our new Garden Club of Dearborn members! Our club is honored to have you join! Your membership and participation make us stronger and we look forward to getting to know you better.



Our new member relations committee, Marietta Lynch and Rose Wiggle, presented lovely cyclamen plants to **Jean Burns**, **Maiyah Devenport**, **Katrina Harris** (standing in for her husband, James), **Cheryl Singley**, and **Joanne Zatek** while Cynthia read a short paragraph.





K. Kovacs-Gucwa, C. Chrzastek, T. Bungee, R. Wiggle, L. Griffin, R. Pearson & M. Bugeia

The Installation of Officers for the 2025-2027 administrative board followed. Virginia Froehlich was happy to oblige, telling us that ever since she served as the District Director, she has loved coming to Dearborn. Virginia chose to use the “Thriller, Filler, Spiller” rule, a container gardening concept that helps create visually appealing and balanced plant arrangements.

Using the term “thriller”, she described how every flower arrangement has a central flower, a “thriller” with star quality, and bestowed that term on Rose Wiggle, our incoming President. She then installed four more ladies into their positions, describing them as “fillers” - the part of the flower arrangement surrounding and complementing the thriller, making her look good:

- First Vice President of Programs: Kim Kovacs-Gucwa
- Second Vice President of Membership: Carol Chrzastek
- Third Vice Presidents of External Affairs: Terri Bungee & Mary Bugeia

Also contributing their best efforts to the club are the “spillers” which anchor the container and continue the dialogue; they “spread beyond their limits” and soften the edges of the container:

- Treasurer: Laurine Griffin
- Awards Chair: Rachel Pearson
- Parliamentarian: Mary Bugeia

Virginia finalized her installation speech with the words “By the power invested in me”.....and the new board received a heartfelt round of applause.

The meeting was far from over! Virginia had also come to present two Lifetime Achievement awards, describing how the award shows the high esteem in which the recipient's club holds her. New members' names are added to the state's website. When a member is nominated for the award, there is usually a description included and in both awards being presented at our meeting, Virginia emphasized that the elaborate words describing contributions were so long that she needed no further research to make her decision.

Our members receiving this honorable award were Laurine Griffin, member since 2013 and currently serving as Treasurer, and Terri Bungee, member since 2016 and currently serving as Third Vice-President of External Affairs. Bravo to both these ladies for going above and beyond in their work and contributions!



L. Griffin & V. Froelich



T. Bungee & V. Froelich

Cynthia then thanked everyone who had brought cereals for our collective donation to the First Presbyterian Church's Children's Cereal Food Drive. Sherry Kammer came up with the idea of showing our gratitude for the room we rent along with the mailbox and storeroom we can use, not to mention the coffee and tea made available at every meeting. Members' contributions overflowed the shopping cart.



L. Johnson & C. Casillas

To round out the meeting, our Friendship/Sunshine Committee ladies Linda Johnson and Rose Wiggle planned the perfect going-away gift for someone moving the very next day. On behalf of our club, Linda presented Cynthia with a beautiful PVC, weather resistant 20 inch "Hello" art pole to show how much we appreciate all she has done for us over the past two years.

***It was a grand Annual General Meeting!***



Following the meeting, members were invited to tour the newly restored Fair Lane Estate and gardens – a show of generosity by the estate for our annual donation. While the estate has asked that we not show interior photos – as they are not yet open to the public – rest assured that everyone had no lack of praise for the beautifully decorated rooms, not to mention the glorious gardens.



J. Burns &amp; R. Pearson



The Rose Garden



M. Lynch &amp; L. Johnson



L. Johnson, L. Griffin, C. Casillas, M. Fogarasi,  
M. Bugeia, W. Unis Flaim, M. Lynch, J. West & T. Bungee  
(not shown are K. Marzonie, D. Rebori & C. Chrzastek)

On June 4th, our board celebrated the 90th birthday of former two-time President Mary Bugeia with a luncheon at the newly renovated Dearborn Inn's "Clara's Kitchen". The food was delicious and Mary had her very own complimentary birthday sundae for dessert. Club members, along with dining patrons sang a rousing chorus of Happy Birthday. Everyone loved it!

We received sincere thank you notes from the following organizations we support. Thanks to our strong financial status, we can donate to causes near to our hearts and a thank you is always greatly appreciated:

- Fair Lane Estate
- Sunny Fields, inc.
- The Nature Conservancy
- University of Michigan-Dearborn



## A Lady Named Clara



“A Lady Named Clara – Clara Bryant Ford”, excerpt (paraphrased) from a paper by Mrs. Lura M. Chiappetta and Mrs. Beulah Gainor, Garden Club of Dearborn, September 17, 1980, found in our Garden Club archives:

Clara was small boned with delicate features, small to medium height. Her hair was chestnut and her eyes were hazel. Being raised on a farm with two younger sisters and seven brothers, Clara was close to family life, was careful, thrifty, practical, believing firmly in God, church, the richness and bounty of the earth, and the dignity of labor. She loved music, dancing, literature and art.

She disliked the color bright red. Her favorite color was blue. Clara also disliked cats. Being a lover of birds, she felt cats a danger to them and was recorded as saying “Either put bells on them or else get rid of them”. Her one vanity was her feet. A salesman at a shoe store said “she has very pretty feet and ankles and her husband, Henry Ford, likes her to wear dainty slippers. They dance together quite a lot, you know”.

Clara Bryant was born on April 11, 1866 in the “Scotch Settlement” near Dearborn, Michigan. Her father was Melvin Bryant and her mother was Martha Bench from Warwickshire, England. Clara met Henry at her cousin Clarence’s birthday party and later at socials held at Martindale House, the hostelry in Dearborn Village. His pet name for her was Callie. Henry was tall and remained thin throughout his life. His hair was fair and his eyes blue. Henry had an inquisitive and inventive mind and his value systems matched Clara’s. He was the eldest of six children born to Mary Litogot and William Ford of Dearborn on July 30, 1963.

Clara and Henry were married on Clara’s 22nd birthday – April 11, 1888 – at 6:00pm. Henry was 24 years of age. Clara made her own wedding dress. The wedding trip was spent at the tenant’s cabin on the Moir place (previously part of the Ford farm). They lived there for over a year. (Editor’s note: The first house they built together, referred to as “The Square House” was located at Ford Road and what is now Southfield Freeway. It was moved to 29835 Beechmont Avenue in Garden City in 1952 to make way for freeway expansion and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980).

Clara and Henry had many homes, the twelfth of which was Fair Lane, built of Indiana limestone and comprising 1,350 acres. Additionally, they had seasonal homes in a two-story gabled house adjoining Thomas Edison’s property in Fort Myers, Florida, a plantation called “Richmond Hill” near Savannah, Georgia and a bungalow in Dearborn woods for seasonal outings. (Editor’s note: This bungalow no longer exists but was located right near our meeting place, the First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn, and they could motor up the Rouge from their estate.)



The following recipes were taken verbatim from the minutes of the May 14, 1917 meeting of the Garden Club of Dearborn:

PARSNIPS: “Cook parsnips until they are tender, lay them in a dish and sprinkle as much cheese as you like, make a cream sauce and mix, put in the oven and bake about ten minutes, or the cheese may be put in the cream sauce”.

Mrs. Henry Ford

PIE PLANT (rhubarb): “To cook pie plant wash it and leave peeling on when it is young, put in a sirup and put it in the oven and cook”.

Mrs. Henry Ford



Happy 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary to the Garden Club of Dearborn!!!



A big thank you to all for making this past Garden Club of Dearborn a very successful season. Enjoy the summer months, happy gardening and will see you all back in September!!