

THE

# *Garden Club of Dearborn*

*April 2025*

## NEWSLETTER

### BOARD MEETING

May 7, 2025  
10:00 am  
First Presbyterian Church  
North Parlor

### Upcoming Events

DIA – Detroit  
Lecture & Luncheon  
Daniel Santamaria  
Spanish Master Florist  
April 28, 2025  
10:30 a.m.  
\$45/\$90 Regist. Required

Grosse Pointe Garden  
Center, Inc.  
33rd Annual Garden Tour  
June 20 & 21  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Advanced Tickets & Info.:  
[www.gpgardencenters.org](http://www.gpgardencenters.org)

### April Birthdays:

15 Marlene Bankwitz  
20 Marybeth Lynch-Verda  
22 Pat Knoop

### May Birthdays:

9 Claudia Meyer  
11 Phyllis Brim  
21 Marietta Lynch  
21 Carol Chrzastek  
30 Kim Kovacs-Gucwa

### Editor:

Mariya Fogarasi

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Otto Baumgart

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

## President's Corner



More light, longer days and blossoms!

This is spring and I'm so glad it has arrived.

Now hands-on gardening begins.

I've been watching the daily temperature to determine cleaning up my flower beds. When the bees start flying around, this is my indicator to begin.

It doesn't hurt to clean all your tools just to be sure they are disease free. Make it a priority to have sharpened tools. It'll be a lot easier to cut when pruning.

I can get lost in my gardening once I start. It's meditation for me. Being in nature is my happy place.

Enjoy seeking out your favorite plants while strolling down every aisle of the greenhouses. Get out there and breathe in the fresh green scented air.

### **Next General Meeting**

**May 13, 2025 – 6:00 p.m.**

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

**Speaker:** Phil Barraco, Owner Wild Birds Unlimited-Woodhaven

**Topic:** Phil will speak about the migration, habits and habitats needed to sustain the fascinating little but mighty Hummingbird.

**Hosts:** Mary Bugeia & Wanda Unis-Flaim



When our Garden Club met on May 14 and President Cynthia Casillas opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, she greeted a total of 40 attendees including seven guests, a record for our club this year. We were fortunate to have Gary Crosbie, Maiyah Devenport, Donna Kolojeskie, Adrienne Marcath, Thom Oullette, Cheryl Singley, Joanne Zatek, and our wonderful speaker, Janet Macunovich, join us for an upbeat springtime meeting.

It is with sadness and regret that we share the passing of Wendy Palmer, the longtime custodian at the First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn who assisted in setting up our meetings. We have always honored Wendy with an annual thank you gift at Christmas, and Linda Johnson sent a lovely "thinking of you" card late last year. Wendy's son, Jamie, has taken over her duties (which included making the coffee and setting up that refreshment area as well).

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on June 16th at the church, beginning at 11am with a catered luncheon. New officers will be installed for the next two years and outgoing board members will be thanked for their service, realizing the time and effort they have put into making our club very special. Following the luncheon, members will have a chance to tour the Fair Lane estate at either 2pm or 3pm. The Fair Lane tour is a generous gesture of thanks from Fair Lane staff for our annual gift, and Fair Lane garden staff will be in the gardens from 2-4pm to answer any questions. Karen passed around a sign-up sheet at the meeting; if you would like to participate, please email Karen (please note again, this tour is for our members only).



Please note that positions for our incoming board, serving for the next two years, are being filled successfully but that we are still in need of a recording secretary for both the board as well as the general meetings. Taking the minutes is critical for – according to “Robert’s Rules of Order” - recording the attendance, meeting start and finish times, agenda items, and motions made so that everyone knows the subjects which were discussed (additional detail is optional). The position can also be shared by two people and Cynthia has often mentioned how the minutes help keep her on track and remember exactly what happened at each meeting.

It’s time to renew memberships in our club for the 2025-2026 year; membership forms were sent out by email on April 4th and the dues will stay at \$30. You may pay at our June meeting or mail your check to our treasurer Laurine Griffin, who says everyone is also welcome to simply drop the form and check into her mailbox. We are hoping everyone does renew! This year we celebrate our 110th anniversary since our founding by Clara Ford, too. Please note the deadline for renewal is June 30th if you would like to be included in next year’s directory.

The Michigan Garden Club’s 94th conference will take place on June 9 & 10 in Holland, Michigan. “It’s a Shore Way to Connect” registration opened on March 24.

Rose Wiggle's talk on the monthly flower from Diana Wells' book, "100 Flowers and how they got their names" focused on the rhododendron and delved deeply into the history, etymology, and myths surrounding this beautiful flower. The name originates from the Greek words "roden" (meaning "rose") and "dendron" (meaning "tree"), and the flowers or shrubs – which can be deciduous or evergreen - often have leathery leaves and showy clusters of yellow, white, pink, red or purple flowers. Much mythology from the Greek historian Xenophon surrounds this plant such as the belief that three huge plants guard the entrance to the world of the dead, as does a warning about its toxicity for beekeepers who should not place hives in its proximity.



Rhododendrons thrive in acidic soil and, when conditions are favorable, can have a lifespan of several decades, with many species and varieties living for hundreds of years. Because of their toxicity, they have been associated with caution and danger in some cultures, particularly in the Victorian era, but they can also symbolize passion, beauty, wealth, and elegance depending upon the cultural context. Often valued in landscaping for their structure, size, and flowers, they also support wildlife with nectar and shelter. Additionally, some species are researched for their potential medicinal properties like anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial effects.

We were very fortunate to have Janet Macunovich – author, professional gardener, designer, educator, and co-owner of the landscape design company "Perennial Favorites" as our speaker this month. Among other past ventures, Janet has written for the "Detroit Free Press" and kicked her talk off with humor, relaying how – after seeing her photo – readers would suggest she get new glasses, cut her hair or comment "Oh! We thought you were taller!"

With 40 years of experience, Janet's horticultural training is lifelong and ongoing, a combination of "dirty knees" and attending courses of botanical gardens and colleges. She has authored nine books, developed and presented hundreds of seminars and workshops, hosted a weekly radio show, and written weekly gardening columns that have helped gardeners in the U.S., Canada, England, Europe, and Brazil. Janet is recognized for her no-nonsense practicality, humor, and ability to take the mystery out of garden topics and co-founded the Michigan School of Gardening (1996-2008) and the Association of Professional Gardeners.

Janet owned Garden A to Z with horticultural photographer husband, Steven Nikkila, working with clients in Michigan and several other states. Now retired from physical work, they continue as educators through talks, webinars, articles, and their website, "GardenAtoZ.org". Also, the parents of two children, Steve put his career on hold in 1981 to be a full-time parent while Janet began moonlighting in gardening to help make ends meet and to pursue her passion. By 1984, the two were gardening together professionally, each with a child on their back and now, their grandchildren help them as they work with friends and neighbors to make great gardens.



Their website, Janet told us, was created to post and answer repeatedly asked questions (one of the favorites being “when and how do I prune my hydrangeas?”) and to offer a “library” where viewers can look up information.

Janet’s talk for us grew out of another frequently asked question about trees and compromised roots. Hence her catchy title: “When the Roots Aren’t Right” and the importance of root care for successful plant establishment. The word of the day was definitely “flare” as Janet described how so many plants and trees are improperly planted, dooming the plant from the start. The root flare is the area where a tree’s trunk transitions into its root system and the point where the trunk widens and connects to the main roots.



Passing out tiny root balls, Janet instructed each table to arrange the roots in the way we thought they should grow. Perhaps surprisingly, when properly arranged, the roots must be stretched out to the side and are not supposed to extend downward!



Quoting Robert Kourik’s “Understanding Roots: Discover How to Make Your Garden Flourish” and Lead Scientist Emeritus at the Morton Arboretum in Chicago, Gary Watson (who states unequivocally that 80% of landscape problems are below the ground), Janet stressed the need to understand how important it is for the flare roots to be able to extend outward, sometimes even much further than the tree’s height! Very few roots can be found lower than three feet in the ground when planted properly. Woody trees can have up to four to eleven flare roots which should extend outward, and if they are cut, they are compromised and not replaced.

The flare roots need to be near the surface to support the tree and they need to be able to spread out. In fact, for every inch of trunk, there should be at least one foot of flare root. Janet has moved a lot of roots in her 40 years of gardening and relayed some of the challenges she has met and overcome, including moving a ginkgo tree and finding its flare root. Once she succeeded, she was able to follow it and find where to cut and how to move the tree. This can apply to larger perennials, too, such as peonies and hibiscus plants.

Janet expressed disdain for the pots most of us buy at nurseries because most trees and shrubs are planted as cuttings grown in a tube and then sold to retailers. Their roots cannot extend outward in the pot, they simply circle around, having no choice but to get thicker and thicker, pushing out other roots. Twisted roots won't be healthy, the roots won't go anywhere, the tree can't hold itself up, and rot can compromise its health. Sometimes roots can be fixed if they are young but if the tree is older or the roots are in a ball, this is hard to do. Summoned to help a client in cold and rainy 35-degree weather, she relayed how a series of small arbor vitae trees had been improperly planted. Digging them all up and unwinding the roots, she and her assistant were able to save 27 out of the 35 trees.



General poor growth: Check the roots

Lessons learned: if there is no flare, the tree is in trouble! When the center top dries out, it's too late, something is wrong with the roots. Plant it well at the start!

When purchasing pots, we should remove the plant, go through the soil, part the roots and remove all the soil (even power wash them!). Do this so you can locate and diagnose the roots wrapped around each other and then hopefully stretch them out.

One interesting historical question after her talk: were the trees planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1935 to 1942 planted properly? The now 90-year old trees were simply dropped into slits in the ground but they hadn't been grown in pots and they had never been transplanted.

At the conclusion of Janet's talk, the Garden Club's general meeting continued. Meeting hosts, Heather Yeaw and Mariya Fogarasi set out a lovely snack/food table consisting of Heather's delicious home-made pasta salad along with cheese, crackers, cake, fruit and Easter chocolate candies and jellybeans. Once everyone had a snack, Club VP's gave their updates.



S. Kammer, M. Lynch, L. Stechison, T. Bungee, S. Barrick & M. Bugeia





S. Kammer, M. Dietrich, J. West, C. Lashchuk, P. Baumgart, N. Fisher & S. Barrick

Laurine Griffin presented the proposed budget for our upcoming year. Already approved by our board, she asked for comments or questions and following that, our members voted and approved it.

Terri Bungee gave her report on the schools she had hoped to see participate in this year's Smokey Bear Woodsy Owl poster contest. The three schools who participated last year were contacted but while only one, Lindbergh, chose to participate this year, we did have a winner at the state level! On April 15, Terri and Cynthia presented Lucy Horvath with a \$50 gift card and certificate from Michigan Garden Clubs. Our club gave certificates to all participants and prizes to the first (\$35), second (\$25) and third (\$15) place winners. We are all very proud of every student who participated! Terri reported that she had contacted three more schools too as if they are promoting gardening. Nowlin is starting a butterfly garden, while Duval and Bryant have yet to report. If anyone knows of a school that has a garden, Terri could approach them for a potential donation from us (Dearborn schools only).

Teacher Laurie Brown, C. Casillas, T. Bungee & Poster Contest Winners





L. Johnson

Big thanks go to Linda Johnson for drafting, asking for input, and then finalizing our new club logo. Linda has gone one step beyond, having our new logo emblazoned on a hat, t-shirt, and tote bag. Thank you, Linda, for what we know took quite some time and effort. If anyone knows a good quality embroidery company we could use for t-shirt production, please contact Linda.

Linda is also collecting ideas for a club motto. Garden club mottos serve to encapsulate the club's core values and purposes, providing a succinct expression of their mission and spirit. If you have ideas, please send them to Linda. "Gardens, friends, philanthropy, fun" is one idea to date; others include:

"Planting Flowers, Growing Community", "Beauty with Purpose, Roots in Giving", "Blossoms for the Soul, Service for the Heart", and "Rooted in Nature, Growing in Friendship".

Cynthia announced two new club initiatives. The first one, "Garden Buddy", will match an existing club member with a newcomer for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, and a sign-up sheet will be presented in June. This would give our newcomer an instant seatmate and someone who knows the ropes and can explain what we do. The second one, "Ask the Gardener", will be a ten-minute forum at our meetings whereby members can compare how they have tackled various garden challenges and share experiences.

Congratulations go to Anina Bachrach, whose Gulf Coast Garden Club entry won a prize in the Flashback Flower Show at the Bonita Springs public library. Her winning flower was a Triple Cattleya alliance 'Pink Jewel' that she had been growing in her garden for the last three years; it was entered in Division 1 section B class 13. The "Flashback! Remembering Favorites from Times Gone By" show took place on March 22 and 22. Anina, who has been a member of our club for 45 years, also serves as photographer for other flower shows in Florida.



**Sweet Dreams is the  
theme for the 2025  
Festival of Trees**

Because we cannot think of Anina without considering her efforts to bring the Festival of Trees to Dearborn in 2010 and ongoing promotion for many years, here's an advance notice of the "Sweet Dream" theme to get our creative juices flowing. Thank you, Anina, for so many years of dedication and bringing our Garden Club into this most worthwhile and loving endeavor.



A. Bachrack



Our raffle prize winners this month were Kim Kovacs-Gucwa and Nanette Fisher who took home a gardening book donated by Cynthia and a beautiful rose arrangement made by Linda Johnson.

The Snow Woods neighborhood plastic bottle cap collection, “Flip Your Lids for Snow Woods Neighborhood Benches” will end in June; our May meeting will be the last meeting at which we will collect clean plastic tops. Beth Michel, Snow Woods Neighborhood Association president, has been extremely grateful for our donations. Many thanks to all for contributing!



N. Fisher & K. Kovacs-Gucwa

Did you know that Epsom salt, a simple and affordable mineral compound, has surprisingly diverse uses in the garden? Beyond its well-known benefits for relaxing baths, Epsom salt can boost your plants' health and productivity. Click on this link and learn how to harness its power to improve seed germination, enhance soil, deter pests and more.

<https://www.gardenloversclub.com/gardening-hacks/using-epsom-salt-in-the-garden/>



**REMINDER:**  
**Gardening is cheaper than therapy!**



## Michigan Garden Clubs District 1

### **SPRING LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SUMMARY**

*by Linda Johnson, GCD District 1 Representative*



What is a great way to learn from other nearby Michigan Garden Clubs? By attending District 1 Leadership Conferences! These are one-day events that are hosted by clubs throughout the Detroit metropolitan area. The locations range from Taylor and Livonia to Pleasant Ridge and Grosse Pointe.

On Friday, April 11, the Pointe Garden Club based in Grosse Pointe hosted a wonderful District 1 Leadership Conference in the Helm, their city's senior center. Ten Garden Club of Dearborn members attended: Mary Bugeia, Rose Wiggle, Heather Yeaw, Mariya Fogarasi, Rachel Pearson, Carol McGarvey, Linda Johnson, Diane Rebori, *Cynthia Casillas and Laurine Griffin (not pictured)*.

The conference was moderated by Anne Ryan, our outgoing District 1 Director. Our incoming Director, Karen Block, from the Livonia/ Farmington area, was introduced. Nancy Ryan, our current State President (who will be succeeded by Vice President Lisa Robinson) gave a brief talk highlighting recent MGC events. She announced that three new clubs have been added to District 1: The Patterson Park Garden Club in Grosse Pointe Park, the Helm Garden Club in Grosse Pointe, and the reactivated Wyandotte Garden Club.

In other news, once Nancy's term as President has been completed, she will join the State Board. Nancy also highlighted various MGC accomplishments in the areas of Scholarships, Group Liability Insurance, Zooming, Classes, Grow and Share Food Programs and Grants to Disaster Area Restoration. Areas that still need improvement are Better Marketing, Establishing a Stronger State Presence, and Partnering With Other Organizations.

Nancy's talk was followed by one talk featuring incoming President Lisa Robinson. She emphasized that Michigan has four schools going this year: Gardening, Environment, Flowership, and Landscape design. GCM contributes toward members' tuition to make them more affordable. Check the website for more information. Lisa also highlighted other GCM events and encouraged everyone to register for the State Conference in Holland June 9th and 10th. Sheila Kneeshaw from the Southfield Garden Club encouraged everyone to participate in Gardening with a Purpose, a food sharing program that donated 74,000 pounds of food to those in need in 2024.

## SPRING LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SUMMARY – Page 2

The Featured Speaker was Mil Hurley, an Advanced Master Gardener who owns the Southern Gardener store in Grosse Pointe Park. Her presentation was so informative and entertaining that we are looking at having her speak to our group next year. She gave many tips about growing hydrangeas, leaf mulching, and effective weeding. She also demonstrated how to use helpful gardening tools such as a baby chain saw, a sawzall with a pruning blade and a mallet chiseled out of a single piece of wood. Finally, she showed photos she has taken of gardens all over the world.

Mil Hurley's presentation was followed by groups discussing ideas for improving our clubs. Some relevant to our group were the encouragement of hands-on workshops (possibly one in the PEG Garden), the establishment of a "buddy" system to make guests and new members feel more welcome, and having a 10 minute "Ask the Gardener" Q and A segment to address common garden problems in our area. Finally, we discussed ideas for a GCD motto. We also received a very helpful handout full of suggestions for engaging club members from the host committee.

After all of the presentations and discussions, everyone was ready to enjoy the delicious sandwich and fruit lunch with something for every taste. It was the perfect way to end a very productive day!



M. Hurley



N. Ryan & C. Casillas



# Planting Your Spring Garden



## Planting Your Spring Garden

### For The Garden of Your Daily Living

#### Plant Three Rows of peas

1. Peace of Mind
2. Peace of Heart
3. Peace of Soul

#### Plant Four Rows of Squash

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

#### Plant Four Rows of Lettuce

1. Lettuce Be Faithful
2. Lettuce Be Kind
3. Lettuce Be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

#### No Garden is Complete Without Turnips

1. Turnip For Meetings
2. Turnip For Service
3. Turnip To Help One Another

#### To Conclude Our Garden We Must Have Thyme

1. Thyme For Each Other
2. Thyme For Family
3. Thyme For Friends

Water Freely With Patience And Cultivate With Love.  
There Is Much Fruit In Your Garden Because You Reap  
What You Sow. Pass It On!!!