

THE

Garden Club of Dearborn

January 2026

NEWSLETTER

BOARD MEETING

February 4, 2026
10:00 a.m.
McFadden Ross House

Upcoming Events
Beyond the Bloom
Gardening Conference
March 14, 2026
9:00a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
Garden City Highschool
6500 Middlebelt Road
Registration Required:
gcgardenclub.com

January Birthdays:
3 Cynthia Pempeit
3 Marlene Wojtowicz
5 Virginia Russell
8 Wanda Unis Flaim
15 Mary Dietrich
16 Christine Dobrovich
20 Jackie Olinn
20 Beth Brown
20 Rose Wiggle
22 Keith Bankwitz
23 Gary Morgan
24 Sandy Butler
29 Meredith Scharf

February Birthdays:
24 Ron Wiggle

Editor:
Mariya Fogarasi

Chief Photographer:
Otto Baumgart

www.gardenclubdearborn.org

President's Corner



Rose Wiggle

Happy New Year to All.

With another outstanding Holly Berry Brunch behind us I just want to give a very heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended the event and especially to all the wonderful volunteers for all they did to make it a success.

We now look forward to a "Bright and Blooming" 2026. Our February meeting will help shake off those winter blahs as members enjoy a light potluck along with making a lovely little Valentine's Day arrangement sure to brighten the room of an Oakwood Commons resident. Please plan to join us and feel free to bring a friend – it will prove to be a fun afternoon....and as always.....the more the merrier!

In March we are planning to participate in the Arab American National Museum's seed exchange. If you have any bulk seeds you would like to donate, please contact GCD member Mariya Fogarasi.

And speaking of seeds, please don't forget about our flying feathered friends in these winter months. Providing birds with black oil sunflower seeds, safflower, thistle seeds and peanuts along with suet will help get them thru the winter.

Next General Meeting

Valentine's Day Tea & Demo / Workshop

February 9, 2026 – 11:00 am
First Presbyterian Church Dearborn
600 N Brady Rd, Dearborn, MI 48124

Linda Johnson will lead a "Make and Give" Valentine themed floral arrangement workshop. Materials to construct a ***Love in a Cup*** centerpiece will be provided.

Host: Kim Kovacs Gucwa & Jean Burns

When Janet Macunovich speaks for our Garden Club of Dearborn, the word gets around and our January meeting, the first of 2026, was a perfect example of this: forty-four attendees, including nine guests, came to hear Janet on a crisp, sunny day and no one left disappointed. While it would be impossible to describe Janet's enthusiasm, knowledge, and attention to detail in this newsletter, it is possible to give a brief outline of what she told us.

After President Rose Wiggle opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, Katrina Harris read about the primrose from our monthly book, "100 Flowers and How They Got their Names" by Diana Wells. The primrose is the "first rose" of the year. The wild European primroses stood not only for spring but for first love, often half-hidden and growing in unexpected places and were once compared to "newborn yellow ducklings peeking out of their rosette of leaves".

Garden primulas, although of the same family, are different: sophisticates of the flower world and the darling of breeders – some came from China, others were collected in the Alps. By the nineteenth century, florists' societies of specialized breeders, mostly working-class men, met all over England to judge the flowers and winners were named for the breeders, thus conferring horticultural fame on them.

Katrina grows this native plant in her garden and has seeds to share. The flowers come up on a short woody stalk with a candelabra-like structure, they can be three to four feet tall and measure approximately five feet all the way around so you can plant other flowers or plants beneath them.



Janet began her talk after Rose welcomed our guests: Debi Brewis, Kathy Connor, Su Doman, Sadne Sidi El Mahjoub, Leslie Herrick, Gwendolyn Holt, Khadega Mohammed, Katie Sanfilippo, and Nick Speth.

Kim Kovacs- Gucwa, our Vice-President of Programs, then introduced Janet and the title of her talk: "Simplify Gardening – to save time, money and defy age" with a look at what we can do to reduce the work.

Janet is an author, professional gardener, designer, educator, and co-owner of the landscape design company "Perennial Favorites" and has written for the "Detroit Free Press", too. With forty years of experience, Janet's horticultural training is lifelong and ongoing, a culmination 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, all over Europe and in 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 own 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 and to offer a "library" where viewers can look up information.

Before our meeting, Secretary Heather Yeaw sent out a two-page overview of Janet's presentation to all members. If you would like a copy, please let this newsletter editor know and I will resend it. Janet's talk began with advising us to "map out" our garden or yard and have an idea of what we'd like where and how much time various tasks might take, realizing that overall, everything will need more time in the spring than in the summer. Requesting help or gardening hours might be a great idea for a

birthday or holiday gift, too. We should all know our limitations and choose what type of work we like: for example, if we aren't weeders, then we might want to choose compact shrubs over flower beds.

Estimate cost ahead of time. Time can save money: plant small and let it grow. Ground spaces can be filled with mulch but also with wood chips; even a pumpkin's vine and flowers, Pearly Everlasting (note: deer resistant!) with small white flowers or Bishop's weed (recognized as invasive) can be a pretty ground cover and take up space.

Much of the presentation was geared toward older but still enthusiastic gardeners. Why do we still love to garden? We love to get out there, we love to watch things grow, perhaps we love to prune. Remember to keep a good perspective: don't worry if everything doesn't get done. Don't worry if you forget the names of some plants. Change or lower your standards, ask or hire help. You can also shrink your home garden, garden elsewhere with a group (remember our club's Pollinator and Enabling Garden), or volunteer elsewhere in others' gardens. Those of us who can't do everything anymore can still participate and "be part of it".

Promoting sharper tools and persuading us to "roll" instead of carry wherever we can, Janet had much more advice including looking for native plants that are both disease- and drought-resistant. Be smarter in choosing plants, if it doesn't grow well, get rid of it. Thank you, Janet, for returning to enrich our gardening knowledge and giving us your website info for questions and further tips. With every slide, there were more names of flowers and plants

which flowed easily into the presentation; a virtual walking encyclopedia!



K. Kovacs Gucwa, J. Macunovich & R. Wiggle

Our Vice President of External Affairs, Terri Bungee, sent materials to interested schools for the annual Smokey Bear Woodsy Owl poster contest in October and received posters back from both Lindbergh and Duvall elementary schools. Thank you, Terri, for persevering with the schools and encouraging participation in this educational contest! Four beautiful posters have been selected and will advance to the state level:



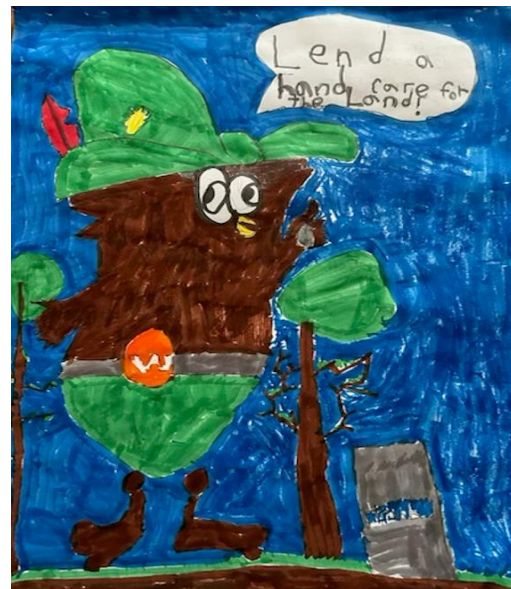
Lucas Tilley, Grade 3, Lindbergh School



Vayda Jaffer, Grade 5, Lindbergh School



Faith Schook, Grade 4, Lindbergh School



Ali Aldarwish, Grade 2, DuVall School

After receiving an email from our Garden Club about classes at the Dearborn libraries, our member Carol McGarvey participated in a mitten-making class at the Centennial library and learned to make upcycled mittens for the charitable organization “Mittens for Detroit”. Since attending the workshop, she has “thrifted” wool sweaters, felted the wool, and created and gifted two pairs of mittens. This photo shows Carol with her first pair of children’s upcycled wool mittens, embroidered with a flower. Thank you, Carol, for pursuing this and also letting us know that our community-related emails have value for members.



C. McGarvey

Linda Johnson’s “Love in a Cup” will be a lovely “make ‘n’ give” Valentine’s project and tea morning. Each participant will get a mug with inserted foam and the tidbits to make a pretty arrangement in the cup. It’s a basic flower arranging lesson using the thriller-filler-spiller theme which Virginia Froehlich taught us about last year. The finished cups will be donated to the Beaumont Commons retirement home while anyone wishing to take their cup

home can do so, recognizing the suggested donation of five dollars. Linda will also need volunteers to take the cups over to Beaumont Commons and she will have the boxes ready. Thank you, Linda, for arranging this workshop, bringing all the materials and arranging the transport to Beaumont Commons, too.

Our Garden Club has cups for the tea – however, anyone wishing to bring their own teacup is welcome to do so. Members are asked to kindly bring only savory finger foods to share, *no desserts*, as a cake will be provided.



“Love in a Cup”

Further details about the upcoming seed swap at the Arab American National Museum will be available by our February meeting and again in that month’s newsletter. The event takes place on March 5th from 5-7pm on the museum’s rooftop garden which was visited by some of our members last year (I would imagine it will move indoors with inclement weather).

The Henry Ford Centennial library will host a free one-hour presentation about Rain Gardens on Saturday, February 21st. Please register on the library’s website “events” site.

“Holly Berry Brunch: Before the Event”

These photos were taken just before our brunch when the gifts were wrapped, transported to the Doubletree Hilton, and carried to the event room for set-up. Almost every gift, unless it is very large, is put into a basket and wrapped with cellophane and a ribbon. We ask members to collect baskets throughout the year – this year, we start all over again and are especially in need of *larger baskets*. *If you are in a thrift store or at a garage sale or any second-hand outlet, please think of our basket inventory so we can have a great collection again in December.* Many thanks to all who helped with so many different aspects of the very successful fundraiser!



S. Kammer



T. Bungee & K. Marzonie



M. Fogarasi, J. Polcyn & J. West



Holly Berry Brunch “Wrappers”

Members' Page

The Bottle Tree by Paulette Baumgart

My friend Barbara and I went to a tree garden tour in Ohio. In the thick of all the trees, pines, etc. was this unique tree! A Bottle Tree! The tour guide said we could grow them and asked if we wanted a seed or two. Barbara and I, of course, said "yes"!

From his pocket he pulled out pieces of colored glass and told us they were Bottle Tree seeds. Well, it took only a few weeks and there it was, a Bottle Tree in Barbara's backyard! My Bottle Tree took five long years to grow!

Otto plays a major role in these Bottle Trees. Thanks to Otto, there are now five of them! All doing well. When Barbara passed, it touched our hearts to know her son and his wife moved the Bottle Tree to their home. The Tree lives on!

As for my tree, it changes color all year. In the winter, it sparkles blues and crystal.



GCD General Meeting January 2026



GCD General Meeting January 2026 (Cont'd)

