



# GROWING TOGETHER

Plantation Lakes Garden Club, Millsboro, Delaware

A Member of National Garden Clubs, Central Atlantic Region of State Garden Clubs, and Delaware Federation of Garden Clubs

## FEBRUARY 2023

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#### *February Celebrations*

7<sup>th</sup> Mary Balasi

19<sup>th</sup> Donna Williams

#### PENNY PINES



*Donate your coins for the National Garden Clubs' Penny Pines project – saving forests \$68 at a time.*

Please contact Mary Balasi, PLGC Chair, to add a name on the “in honor of” or “in memory of” list for our next certificate purchase.

<https://www.gardenclub.org/penny-pines>



#### FIVE MINUTE FLORAL DESIGNS – OH MY!

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2023

10:30 am Doors open at The Landing Flex Room

11:00 am Business meeting

11:30 am A Floral Design Demonstration  
presenters Mary Noel and Carol Johnson

Most of us know how to put flowers purchased at the grocery store in a vase. Learn how to impress your family and friends with a few easy designs that can be put together in five minutes!

At the end of the presentation, several lucky members will be taking home one of these creations.

Mary and Carol are Master Gardeners and members of Spade & Trowel Garden Club.

# Activities

## Birdscaping

Our January program presented by Donna Price at East Coast Garden Center provided much 'food' for thought. 😊 Birdscaping, a term coined by Jan Johnson in her gardening book, *Gardentopia*, is when you plant an array of berried plants in your yard so birds will stop by and feed on them—because berries are a necessary part of their diet. Birdscaping can help your other plants, because birds will also feed on pests in your garden, like beetles and larvae, that would've otherwise caused harm to your blooms. Birds' needs are very similar to ours – food, water and shelter.

For those of you unable to attend, Donna's presentation included many of the things we already knew and many other ideas for consideration.

Native plants play a very important role in providing the food birds need to survive and thrive. Your yard and the plants in it matter more than you might think. Native plants are those that occur naturally in an area. Why are native plants important? In a word – insects! Even seed eating bird species often feed their babies insects to ensure their survival. Insects cannot adapt to eating non-native plants.

This year, East Coast Garden Center is introducing a new tag for their plants that will indicate if they are considered 'native'.

Several types of trees are beneficial for birdscaping including the Eastern Red Cedar, Cherokee Princess (white) Dogwood and Cherokee Brave (pink) Dogwood. The Cherokee Dogwood trees are recommended over the Chinese versions. Other

trees that birds favor are the Maple and the Eastern Redbud.

Birds have a preference for several shrubs including the Northern Bayberry which flourishes in full sun and has a dense deciduous stature and the Chokeberry, an evergreen with a low scape mound and spreading behavior. The Elderberry 'Black Lace' is an excellent shrub to attract wildlife to the garden. It flowers in the spring and produces berries in the fall. Other recommendations for shrubs include the Service Berry, the Winterberry, the Inkberry, the Beach Plum and the Beauty Berry.

Of course, birds also love fruit bearing plants such as the apple tree, the peach tree, the fig tree and the persimmon tree as well as the blackberry bush and the blueberry bush.

And those beautiful grasses that are a favorite for many of us make the birds happy, too! The Big and the Little Bluestem, Switchgrass and the Pink Muhly make lovely additions to our yards and provide shelter from the elements for birds. If it doesn't bother you, wait until spring to cut them back so the birds can hang out in them over the winter months.

Perennials and some annuals attract birds. The seed heads of the Black-Eyed Susan, the Daisy, the Aster and the Cone Flower make wonderful feeding offerings. Nectar-producing favorites are Bea Balm, Cardinal Flower and Penstemom.

Keeping water available for birds is critical. A simple birdbath or a large saucer with some stones will serve the purpose. Moving water enhances the effectiveness of birdbath. A small solar fountain will attract ten times as many birds and will reduce the formation of mosquito larvae.

Thank you, Donna, for all these suggestions!

# News for Members

## OUR COMMITTEES

Committees are essential to garden clubs for sustaining and recruiting members. Programs are the result of committee member ideas and collaboration. Projects are conceived and carried out by members of a committee. Some committees are standing (perennials) and some committees are one-time (annuals). One of the most rewarding experiences of being on a committee is the opportunity to spend time with a few like-minded members in a creative environment.

Among the reasons to join a garden club are that your friends in garden club seem to enjoy the programs, projects and activities they share. Garden club members also care about conservation, community beautification and other issues that impact our surroundings. These types of pursuits are the result of committee teamwork.

Each garden club member has experience, creativity, and wisdom among their many strengths. When members join a committee, their combined talents enable the committee to reach its goals.

Even though someone is named the committee chair, all members of a committee participate equally. With assistance from the committee members, the chair guides the process, schedules committee meetings, develops plans, assigns tasks, answers, or finds answers to questions, and communicates with the committee members.

Committee members work together to select dates, book venues, and, if necessary, make travel arrangements and/or purchase supplies. The success of the endeavor depends on all committee members being prepared and working together.

One expectation of garden club members is to participate in at least one committee. This expectation is to encourage interaction among members, make new friends, share ideas and enjoy the rewarding experience of doing a good job.

In this month's AARP magazine was a quote by Donna Mills (Knot's Landing, etc.), who said "At age 60, 70, and later, you have more to contribute – don't just sit down and say 'I'm done!'" Donna is 81.

Remember that unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.

## CAR-SGC 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

October 24-25, 2023 Conference and Tri-Refresher  
"Seven Strong on a Fall Adventure"  
Radisson Hotel Corning, New York

The annual conference rotates among the seven member entities. Workshops and tours are regular features. Don't miss an opportunity to experience the many facets of garden clubs from our neighboring states as well as going somewhere different!

## DFGC MEETINGS

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023

10:00 a.m. The Executive Banquet and  
Conference Center in Newark

Hosted by: Countryside Garden Club

Program: *The How's and Wows of Longwood*

Presented by Jim Sutton

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023

10:00 a.m. Heritage Shores in Bridgeville

Hosted by: Four Seasons Gardeners Garden Club

Program: TBD



## THIS AND THAT

### How plant healthy is your yard?

Walk through any neighborhood and it seems every yard has a different level of greenness, weeds, and bare spots. What gives? Turns out, yard and garden ecosystems are tricky to diagnose – the answers can be, quite literally, underground. To assess your yard’s health, take this quiz. What you learn might surprise you.

1. How often should you test your soil?
  - a. You can test your soil?
  - b. Every year.
  - c. Every three years.
  - d. B or C, depending.

ANSWER: D. Understanding your soil helps you add the right nutrients. Gretel Anspach, a Massachusetts Horticultural Society trustee, says to test annually until healthy, then every three to five years.



2. What portion of your trees, shrubs and flowers are native to your area?
  - a. Most.
  - b. Some.
  - c. None.
  - d. I don’t know.



Any answer except C is acceptable. But in general, choose native plants. They support an array of native wildlife, which promotes a healthy ecosystem.

3. When you see a few dandelions in your lawn, you:
  - a. Pull them out.
  - b. Bust out the herbicide.
  - c. Enjoy the splash of color.
  - d. Hit them with a golf club.



The only wrong answer is B. “Everything we spray that ends with

‘-cide’ kills something, and that has ripple effects,” Anspach says. Either pull the dandelions or leave them.

4. How do you determine what to plant?
  - a. The amount of sunshine.
  - b. The size of the space.
  - c. The quality of the soil.
  - d. What will look prettiest.

The only wrong answer is D. “if you plant with optimal growing conditions, you’ve taken a huge step forward,” says Julie Weisenhorn, University of Minnesota Extension Service horticulture educator.



5. What depth of mulch do you apply around plants?
  - a. A couple of inches.
  - b. A good 3 to 5 inches.
  - c. Pour it on! 6 to 8 inches.

Answer: B. Too much mulch can keep rain from reaching the soil, and too little won’t inhibit weeds or cool the soil enough, says Jason Graves, a horticulture extension agent at Kansas State University.



6. Do you –
  - a. Avoid pesticides?
  - b. Plant both early- and late-blooming plants?
  - c. Leave plant stems standing through winter?
  - d. Plant flower variety?

The more yeses, the more you’re doing to support pollinating insects, which are “essentially propagating plants by keeping them going.” Weisenhorn says.



Source: AARP The Magazine ~ 2022  
Photos: Microsoft Online Pictures