

# New England Garden Clubs Receive NGC Award of Excellence for Regions!

May 2021

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



As I listen to Andrea Boccelli singing with Sarah Brightman the beautiful duet "*Time to Say Good-bye*", I'm reminded how quickly two years can fly by! While my term was certainly a challenge dealing with the pandemic, I actually had the opportunity to meet some of you – in person -- for the first few months. And learning to work with Zoom and virtual

technology was actually a blessing in disguise. Many of us are already using Zoom for everything from NGC schools to award ceremonies to annual meetings. I'm already planning to get a webcam to try livestreaming an event. Thanks to classes many of us took through the Michigan Garden Clubs, doing something like this doesn't seem so daunting now. But I know ALL of us can't wait till we can see each other in person instead of on a small screen. With most of us having been vaccinated and with warm spring weather having arrived at least a month earlier than normal, the promise of "a new beginning" is on the horizon.

As I wrap up my two-year term, I'm so pleased to announce that New England Garden Clubs has been awarded the National Garden Clubs *Award of Excellence for Regions*!! This is the highest award a Region can receive and is the culmination of so much effort by many of you across all six states to help support my Region Project. Thank you to EVERYONE who contributed to our project of fighting food insecurity.

Since I wrote to you in February, I had two more clubs submit their donation information. We ended up with 18,332 pounds of produce, 1810 added servings of produce and an incredible \$21,461 donated to food banks or spent on providing meals in our communities!! What an accomplishment this has been. I hope many of you and your clubs will continue the fight against hunger here in New England. In addition to a *Certificate of Merit* which I'll be receiving on behalf of our Region, the NGC will be sending along a check for \$500. This will certainly benefit our Region's treasury. I also want to thank the hard-working members of the NEGC Board of Directors who have supported me throughout my term. It truly is a group effort to run a successful Region!

In celebration of the Award and the conclusion of my term, I'll be hosting a **Virtual Cocktail Party on Sunday, May 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m.** I've invited NGC outgoing President Gay Austin to join us, along with my Board of Directors, the incoming Region Director and state presidents, and others who helped with the Region Project during my term. Gay plans to make a special presentation to the Region during the "party." I still have room for more folks to join us, so if you're interested, email me at [smbushnell@comcast.net](mailto:smbushnell@comcast.net). The link will be sent closer to the event. My final duty as Region Director will be to install the newly elected officers of the New Hampshire Federation at Bedrock Gardens in Lee, NH in June. I'm really looking forward to meeting many New Hampshire Federation members in person!

After "retiring" from the Region Director's job, my next assignment is to serve as the Chairman of our **NEGC Annual Meeting, October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> at the Village by the Sea Conference Center in Wells, Maine.** COVID restrictions are still in effect for indoor meetings. But after checking with the event planner at our venue, (who tells me they have 69 events planned already this year), they will be able to accommodate a large group safely in their ballroom with adequate seating distance between attendees. More information and a Registration Form will be sent to all the federations this summer as we finalize plans.

In this issue we feature some wonderful projects our clubs have completed. I hope you'll be inspired to look around your own community and see what you can do, now that we're emerging from the COVID crisis. You'll also see information I'm passing on about plans to celebrate the accomplishments of NGC President Gay Austin's term. A series of presentations will be available for you to see by clicking links on the NGC website. Be sure to check this out beginning May 5<sup>th</sup> at [www.gardenclub.org](http://www.gardenclub.org). It's certainly been my privilege to work with Gay and to serve on her Board.

Before wrapping up my final Director's column, I want to pay tribute to former NGC President Sandy Robinson who tragically passed away recently at the young age of 67. I first met Sandy in Louisville, Kentucky, during the 2015 NGC Convention where she was installed as our National President. I was the new President-elect from Maine arriving at the beautiful Yew Dell Botanical Garden where that evening, the Life

Members Banquet was about to be held. It was a magical setting with a beautiful pavilion strung with twinkling lights and lovely floral arrangements. Sandy was strolling the gardens and invited a few of us to stroll with her – including me, a perfect stranger. She had a way to make even a “newbie” like me feel like an old friend. Like so many others, I will miss seeing her beautiful smile at NGC events.

In closing, thank you again for all you’ve done to make my two years as your Region Director one of the best volunteer jobs I’ve ever held! And please welcome my successor, Suzanne McCance, as your new Region Director from the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts. She will become NEGC Director later this month. My best to all of you as we look ahead to a better tomorrow.

Suzanne Bushnell  
Region Director, NEGC



NEGC ladies showing off Ames garden tools with former NGC President Sandy Robinson at the 2019 NGC Convention in Biloxi, Mississippi. Left to right are Jane Waugh (Connecticut), Joyce Kimball (New Hampshire), Sandy Robinson (Kentucky), Susan Miner (New Hampshire), and Suzanne Bushnell (Maine).

## **Table of Contents**

New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. – pages 4 and 5  
Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont – pages 5 - 7  
Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. – page 7  
Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc. – pages 7 and 8  
Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts – page 9  
Garden Club Federation of Maine – pages 10 and 11  
The Food for All Garden of Clinton, Connecticut – pages 11 - 13  
Bristol Garden Club Rainkeep Project – pages 13 - 15  
Bridge of Flowers Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts – pages 16 and 17  
NGC Member Award of Honor for New England Garden Clubs – pages 17 and 18  
Native Plant . . . Buttonbush – pages 18 and 19  
National Garden Club News – pages 19 and 20  
Save the Date! - pages 21 and 22  
NEGC Calendar – page 23

## **New Hampshire Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.**

The NHFGC Executive Board recently was delighted to announce the availability of an NHFGC Zoom account that our club presidents can use to host virtual meetings. We held two training sessions in February and multiple one-on-one sessions to help everyone to become more comfortable with this great technology. All kinds of meetings are being held on this platform – NGC schools such as Environmental, Gardening and Landscape Design; National, Regional and State board and committee meetings; presentations and tours; social gatherings; floral design groups and club meetings. This tool will continue to be used to connect when travel is difficult and will allow us to include more of our members who cannot be there in person.

I was so pleased to learn that two NH clubs each received 2021 NGC Plant America Community Project Grants of \$1000. Epping Garden Club, our smallest club with only 8 members, received the grant for a children's educational garden to be developed and installed behind their town library. This project includes gardens for pollinators, vegetables and herbs. Old Homestead Garden Club received a grant for their project at the Ashuelot Park and Arboretum in Keene where they will be purchasing shrubs for the Park's beds which need refurbishing. Old Homestead was instrumental in getting the Park started thirty years ago and this grant will fund a necessary update.

The NHFGC Annual Meeting and Installation is normally held at the end of May; however, due to current restrictions, we have changed the traditional one day in-person meeting to a three-part event. The first will be a Zoom meeting on May 26th consisting of an abbreviated business meeting and then a wonderful presentation by Lynn O'Shaughnessy from Michigan on her "Circle Garden" of native pollinator plants. It is a wonderful program that is not to be missed. The second event will be the Club Recognition and NGC/NHFGC Awards presentation via Zoom on June 9th. This will all

culminate with an in-person celebration in June at Bedrock Gardens in Lee which is opening on a Monday just for our private event. Here we will install our officers for the 2021-23 term and then simply enjoy this beautiful garden and some much needed social time with each other. We will be honored to welcome Suzanne Bushnell, NEGC Director 2019-2021, as the installing officer.

Our clubs are busy planning their Spring and Summer plant sales using ideas from last year as well as some new ideas. Our gardens are overflowing with perennials that need dividing and the community is looking forward to acquiring these healthy, happy plants. Some clubs will be holding virtual sales and others will have socially distanced, mask mandated, in-person events. Curbside pickup and delivery are other ways our clubs are keeping these sales a safe fundraiser.

We have two clubs planning to hold flower shows in the fall of 2021. The Atkinson Garden Club had their "Mayflower" SFS planned for August 2020 but postponed it a year in light of the pandemic. Even though the theme was chosen to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Mayflower arrival, they decided to keep the colonial theme. New London Garden Club is planning a flower show with the mindset that any plans can be used at another time if safety issues do not allow for the show this year. They have developed detailed social distancing plans for the event.

I am humbled and honored to be asked by the NHFGC Nominating Committee and other members to accept a second term as NHFGC President and hope to participate in more club and national events in the coming term.

In closing, I would like to thank Suzanne Bushnell for her leadership over the past two years. It has been difficult and she has risen to the challenge of moving onto alternate platforms for gatherings and moving forward with the important mission of our organization.

Susan Miner  
NHFGC President  
"NH Plants for Wildlife"

## Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont

Despite all the Covid-19 restrictions over the last year, many of the Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont have explored new and exciting ways to get together and lift everyone's spirits. The Burlington Garden Club recently took advantage of one of the member's lovely woodsy walks surrounded by the delicate, blue, bell shaped nodding spring flowers . . . Siberian Squill. Practicing safe distancing and wearing masks, members were delighted to just get together! For the last few months this club has continued its commitment to promote



community beautification and advance the art of gardening. Since members were unable to enter the local rehab and health care space, they brought bouquets of flowers to the residents . . . enough to make 60 vases of flowers! The residents were delighted with the cheerful and vibrant flowers that brought a smile to many during this stressful time.

The Springfield Garden Club was also unable to make flower arrangements with their Meals on Wheels clients. Instead, they made up note cards showing pictures of flower arrangements, many of which were photos of their town plantings. A warm message was added, letting the recipients know club members were thinking about them. The club president said that Covid-19 showed them the importance of their community service contributions.



After many months struggling to put together a website, FGCV is proud to announce that we have a site that's up and running with a crisp and colorful look to it! We were the only state without a website, so this was something that needed to be accomplished during this term. Please visit [www.vermontfgcv.com](http://www.vermontfgcv.com)

Other clubs are returning somewhat to a sense of normalcy as spring plant sales, garden tours and a celebration of National Garden Week are becoming a reality. Through all of these past months FGCV members have grown stronger by staying together at least in spirit, if not virtually.

## CELEBRATING NATIONAL GARDEN WEEK JUNE 7 – 12, 2021

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Monday June 7</b> Members donate flower &amp; vegetable plants. Drop off at VT Garden Park 11:00 – 1:00 PM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tuesday June 8</b> Members plant flowers &amp; vegetables in raised beds at Birchwood Health &amp; Rehab 10:00 AM</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Wednesday June 9</b> Work at VT Garden Park Butterfly &amp; Grandma &amp; Grandpa Gardens 12:30 PM Lunch with Sarah Dopp</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thursday June 10</b> Walk to see stone cairns UVM Wheelock Farm 10:00 AM</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Friday June 11</b> Lunch for New Members Vermont Garden Park 11:00 AM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Saturday June 12</b> Flowers &amp; Plants Forward Members take a flower to someone lonely, alone</p>

**Burlington Garden Club**  
Nancy Bell and Mary Scollins – Project Chairpersons

**DETAILS**

**Monday: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM**  
Drop off at VT Garden Park  
Flower & vegetable donations to Birchwood Health & Rehab. There are 4 raised beds used for resident therapy (pruning, weeding, watering). Asking members to donate flats of petunias, zinnia, marigolds, snapdragons, peppers, basil (sun area). Residents will maintain beds.

**Tuesday: 10:00 AM**  
Members will go to Birchwood and plant flowers & vegetables in the raised beds. Bring garden tools.

**Wednesday: 10:00-2:00 PM - Talk at 12:30 PM**  
Bring your garden tools and garden in the Butterfly & Grandma & Grandpa gardens  
Talk by Sarah Dopp, President – South Burlington Land Trust (SBLT) on the history, accomplishments, & challenges of the South Burlington Land Trust. Bring a chair & lunch.

**Thursday: 10:00 AM**  
Walk to the stone cairns at UVM Wheelock Farm led by Nancy Bell & Mary Scollins

**Friday: 11:00 AM**  
Lunch for New Members – VT Garden Park, bring lunch/lawn chair. Come & welcome new members

**Saturday: Anytime – brighten the day for someone**  
Take a flower, plant to a friend, a stranger, someone alone

The past two years have flown by and we continue to be impressed with the creativity, ingenuity and gumption our members have shown during the pandemic. It's been a pleasure to work with such talented people.

Sue Hinkel  
President, FGCV



## **Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.**

It seemed like yesterday that I assumed the presidency of the RIFGC. For the past six years, I have had a wonderful time serving the RIFGC as second vice-president, first vice-president and the final two years as president. During this time, I have met so many wonderful people and have enjoyed traveling to different states and attending New England and National Garden Club meetings and conferences.

My term has been unusual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many events were canceled, but we presented to the clubs opportunities to plant trees and help the National Forestry. The Federation also planted bushes and a tree for a RI Habitat for Humanity home and we were able to give a scholarship to a worthwhile student.

Unfortunately, we had to cancel two flower shows, Design Study and Advanced Design Study classes. I was able in my first year to attend many garden club events, such as luncheons, holiday events, several fundraisers with wonderful people, food and speakers as well as installing new board members on several occasions.

It has been great working with everyone. As have the 47 presidents before me, I feel honored to have had the privilege to lead such a worthwhile organization. On April 22, 2021, the RIFGC 48<sup>th</sup> President will be Sheryl Hanson McGookin a former president of the Edgewood Garden Club.

Our dedicated garden clubs remain strong and continue to give greatly to their communities. I look forward to a better spring and summer in hope for a better coming year of gatherings that we can expect to enjoy so much.

Thank you everyone.

Deb Ort

## **The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.**

That old adage that "the more everything changes, the more it stays the same" still holds. As I write, on Earth Day, Connecticut has very high winds following snow, hail and brrrrisk temperatures, all of which are buffeting the daffs, Amelanchier canadensis, and birds winging their way through.

While it's been a rollercoaster of a year, the weather is exactly what it was a year ago. It is we who are far different from who we were a year ago.

A year ago, we celebrated a successful Hartford Flower and Garden Show in February. While we were unable to see everyone's designs and horticulture this year,

we are already in discussions regarding the wonderful show we anticipate staging in February 2022.

During the twelve months in between, thanks in part to a handful of tech savvy club members, The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut discovered how to Zoom, how to script webinars and that we now have a new tool in our toolbox.

I know Arlene Field wrote about Presidents Day and our Fall Awards Meeting, both of which were virtual, both drew a larger attendance than we would have been able to house in person.

Since the last edition of "Northern Exposure," our Federation hosted a number of first-time events, through Zoom. Our Awards Chairperson Vonice Carr invited clubs to send representatives to a Zoom meeting about Awards and covered a wide array of topics. It was informative for Board members as well as clubs. As a result, some areas on our website may be more navigable and clubs may have a clearer idea what Committee Chairpeople do (and don't) want to see.

Kelle Ruden, our new Social Media Chairperson, and Nan Merolla, now our Second Vice President, formerly our Meetings Chairperson, invited club representatives to a Zoom meeting about fundraising during a pandemic. A handful of clubs have been refreshingly inventive. That meeting was very well attended and well received. When we left, we all felt much more optimistic than we'd been before we attended the meeting.

In March the Federation followed up its virtual Environmental School held last fall with virtual Landscape Design School. Next week we will offer a virtual Gardening School. The challenges faced by the intrepid School Chairpeople and their committees are real. We are enormously proud of them.

Just a week ago, we held our 92<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting via a webinar. We asked Julie Moir Messervy internationally renowned landscape designer to give us a booster shot. We began our meeting with her presentation "Creating Gardens (and Lives) of Beauty and Meaning."

We invited Affiliate Organizations and friends to join member clubs for this treat. We had no registration fee but allowed voluntary donations to our Scholarship Fund. NGC President Gay Austin was able to join us and install our incoming Officers.

Any number of clubs have found socially distanced ways to survive and thrive. Last weekend, for example, the Wilton Garden Club kicked off its Centennial year with a drive through Plant Sale staged at one of the five locations where the club, in partnership with the Kiwanis Club, planted 3 thousand daffodil bulbs last fall.

In the months to come, I look forward to joining clubs celebrating anniversaries this year in creative ways. I am grateful both for the tools which have brought us new ways to connect and the warmer weather (and vaccines) which mean we look forward to seeing each other in person this spring. Halleluiah!

Polly Brooks  
President  
The Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut, Inc.

## Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

For me, spring is the most exciting time of the year. It's a season of growth, renewal and discovery. My favorite pastime is walking through my garden and discovering the tiny plants that have survived the winter and are ready to grow in the warm sun. I feel that the same is true for the garden clubs across the state. We have survived the most-bleak of winters and are now moving forward with hope and lots of stored energy to get back to the things we love.

We have been posting an ever-expanding list of plant sales on our GCFM.org website. Some are online sales, but quite a few clubs are planning live sales this spring. The term *abundance of caution* comes to mind when I hear how these plans are evolving, but there is also a buzz of excitement as clubs work together to organize their events.

One of the biggest challenges this winter has been keeping in contact with our clubs and continuing to offer support to them as they face their own challenges. We have held a series of online lectures since February with the support of our Landscape Design and Gardening Consultants councils. Attendance has been phenomenal, far greater than any live event we have held in recent years. We also held Garden Studies School via Zoom in early April. It was well attended and it was fun to have several out of state students. Virtual meetings have eliminated the geographic challenges we face and opened the events to many people who live in western Mass and on the Cape. Even our board meetings have been well attended! Zoom is here to stay to some extent and I am grateful that we have it.

Our District Directors have also taken advantage of online meetings and have added a number of meetings with their club presidents this year. These meetings have given clubs an opportunity to share ideas and worries with each other and with members of the GCFM Board. These casual meetings have kept us all in touch and have helped me understand where the challenges will be in the coming year.

We made the decision to extend the Native Plant Challenge for another two years. This started as a president's project for Bonnie Rosenthal and generated a lot of interest in the first few months of her administration. Covid stalled the challenge for most of 2020, but happily, Bonnie and a team of talented volunteers have put the Challenge back on track. They are producing a lovely monthly newsletter and are planning a series of native plant garden tours for the summer.

We made the very difficult decision to cancel our usual Annual Meeting for June. Instead, we will be gathering for a virtual meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Uli Lorimer, the Director of Horticulture for the Native Plant Trust in Framingham Massachusetts will be our keynote speaker. Mary Warshauer, the President-elect of NGC, will be joining us to install the new GCFM officers. It should be a very fitting end for a very different year.

Jill Malcolm  
First Vice President  
Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts

## Garden Club Federation of Maine

How time does fly! I can't believe I am nearing the end of my term in office as GCFM President! Saying that it has been a wild ride would be a huge understatement! The first 6 months it was business as usual as one would expect, from then until this very moment, nothing else that has occurred was as anticipated!



I learned a lot about the resilience of our membership, their drive and resolve not to let the Covid crisis get the best of them. Members broke all barriers to continue doing the work they are so passionate about and pushed past "what is" to determine "what can be." We all learned more about technology that has been around for some time but had not previously been tapped as a source for doing business in our gardening environment.

The lessons we have learned over the last year and a half will stay with us for a long time and I do not look at this as entirely negative. We have all found that embracing these new tools and technology actually raises the bar on what we can offer our membership. We have already seen the benefits of holding schools virtually and bringing educational advances to a broader audience. Instead of looking at "having" to hold club meetings in a virtual environment as a negative, I really think it could serve to increase our membership participation and create new options for people previously unable to attend in-person meetings.

The Pandemic has affected not only how we do business as garden clubs, but it also affected one of our most important endeavors, that of granting scholarships. We had very few applicants this year, but are proud to announce that our winner, a very talented individual, went on to win the NGC Cornelia H. Kellogg Scholarship Award, presenting him with a \$4,000.00 Scholarship!

Because most meetings throughout the state were not held in person, I did not get to meet as many of our members as I had hoped which was a big disappointment, as I truly was looking forward to that particular aspect of this position. I was also more than a little disappointed that so many National and Regional meetings were cancelled, but overall, I think NGC and NEGC did a fantastic job of bringing new ideas and information "to us," helping us meet the challenges we and our clubs have been facing.

It is springtime at last! Being able to work and play together outdoors has certainly brightened our spirits and kindled our enthusiasm and imagination for what looks to be a fabulous season in the Garden! Speaking of getting back to the Garden, GCFM has had to re-think the previously planned, three-day convention that was held over from 2020, and have come up with a "Hybrid" version of the GCFM Annual Convention. We will handle the Annual Meeting portion of Convention on day-one virtually, via ZOOM on

June 15th, taking care of all necessary GCFM Business for the coming term. Day-2 of the Convention will take place the following day, on June 16th with "A Celebration in The Garden" to hold an Installation Ceremony for the newly elected 2021-2023 GCFM Officers. The Installation will be an in-person event with all health and safety protocols observed.

We are all hoping for brighter days ahead. With a great deal of optimism most of our clubs, mindful of health and safety protocols, plan to hold their annual plant sales this spring! Many clubs, in addition to their regular annual events, plan to continue with some of the "extra" projects that were created during this pandemic, bringing even more to their communities than ever before.

As this is my last article for Northern Exposure, I have a few personal notes to share. It has been my honor and, indeed, pleasure, to serve as the GCFM President. It has also been an honor to be able to serve and participate in the New England Garden Clubs Region. It has been wonderful to work alongside all of the NEGC State Presidents, each of them sharing their experience and knowledge to help keep us moving forward positively.

NEGC Region Director Suzanne Bushnell has led NEGC with enormous grace and dignity throughout her term. The Pandemic added tougher challenges but, as always, she met each of them with a cool head and imagination, always thinking outside the box! Suzanne continues to wear many hats within GCFM and if these additional positions were not enough to keep her busy, she has volunteered to serve on the NGC Protocol Committee for the new term.

I would also like to thank our Northern Exposure Newsletter Editor Extraordinaire, Nancy Atwell. She accepted the position as Editor many years ago, it is a huge undertaking, one she is dedicated to and continues to produce most professionally! Thank you, Nancy, for all of the hours you have given and continue to give to the newsletter and lastly, thank you for all of the advice you have given and your patience!

Barbara Longstaff  
President  
Garden Club Federation of Maine

## **The Food for All Garden of Clinton, Connecticut**

During my two years as your Region Director, I've received several emails, cards and notes from members across the six New England states. I've enjoyed hearing from all of you who've taken the time to write about a variety of topics. But the most recent email I received was probably one of my favorites – from former New England Region Director Dee Mozzochi of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut - who wanted to express her gratitude for the Region Project of fighting food



insecurity. In Dee's own words, the Project ". . . was certainly a great one with so many families nourished from the efforts of us all." As it turns out, Dee is quite involved herself with a community garden she helped establish. So, in this issue of *NORTHERN EXPOSURE*, I'd like to dedicate this final article on fighting food insecurity to Dee and the many volunteers at the *Food For All Garden*.

In August 2012, a group of dedicated church members from the Episcopal Church of the Holy Advent, watched as a bulldozer cleared the land behind their Parish Hall to create a garden that could serve the community of Clinton, CT. According to Dee, the plot had been overgrown but was the perfect spot for a garden. At the time, it was designated for the purpose of raising vegetables, herbs and even flowers for the local soup kitchens and food pantries. While it has gone through several phases, it is now a 501(c)(3) corporation with the name *Our Community Cares, Inc.* which supports the garden named the *Food For All Garden*. With the help of several other civic organizations, area businesses, other churches, foundations, grants, and individual donations, the volunteers in just the first year were able to produce 3,750 pounds of fresh food for the Clinton Food Pantry. Today, according to their website at [www.foodforallgarden.org](http://www.foodforallgarden.org) the garden is



nearly one acre in size with almost 75 beds, each 30 feet long and 4 feet wide. There are several raised beds, the herb garden and beds for asparagus and garlic. According to the Mission Statement of the garden, everything grown is to benefit people in need on the Connecticut shoreline, and is contributed to a network of soup kitchens and pantries in the towns of Clinton, Madison and Westbrook.

Dee, as a member of the Church of the Holy Advent, was also on the inaugural Design Team and was responsible for planning and plotting the herb garden designed in four separate rectangles with a bird bath in the middle. Each year Dee replaces the plants and tends the herb garden all summer, working alongside at least 100 other volunteers (now socially distanced and working in accordance with pandemic guidelines). In her email Dee says she is especially proud of her herb garden since many people at the local food pantry – when asked what their favorite things from the garden were – answered the fresh herbs! In fact, one of the things that folks look forward to in late summer is *Dee's Herbs for Spaghetti Sauce* which is a collection of basil, thyme, parsley and oregano which are bagged and come with a recipe for "Simple Sauce." Dee notes that the Arbor Garden Club of Clinton has just allocated \$300 for the purchase of seeds for the upcoming year. Another interesting aspect of the garden is that donors may "sponsor a bed." Anyone wishing to donate a plaque for the garden may do so in the spring for a \$250 donation and a plaque with their name is put at the head of one of the garden rows! In just the first six years of the garden, approximately 39,000 pounds of fresh vegetables were grown and donated to local food pantries.

Last year, even with the pandemic, 9,100 pounds of fresh vegetables, flowers and herbs were grown and donated. If you'd like more information on how to get involved or to see photos of the garden, go to their website noted above or to their Facebook page. Thank you to Dee for providing her perspective and much of the information on this wonderful project!

Suzanne Bushnell (Region Director, NEGC) in collaboration with Dee Mozzochi (Former Director, New England Region)



## **The Bristol Garden Club Rainkeep Project**

In 2018 the Bristol Garden Club of Bristol, RI dedicated an innovative rain harvesting sculpture and interpretive signage on town property, the site of an historic garden established over 90 years ago by the club's founder, Mrs. William Perry.

Installed in one of Bristol's most conspicuous town parks, with support and assistance from the town's Parks and Recreation Department, the project was the culmination of 3 years of fund raising, grant writing and town and community support building.

Formerly designated a brown field, the Silver Creek estuary and its surroundings, including the former site of Mrs. Perry's garden, had suffered years of environmental degradation and storm damage. Recent efforts by numerous governmental and private organizations, including the Bristol Garden Club, have largely restored the health and usefulness of the property including the garden.

The artistic rain barrel project, dubbed 'The Rainkeep,' began as a solution to provide a summer water source for Mrs. Perry's Garden which the club currently tends. The resulting water collector and public work of art was designed by Rhode Island artist, Allison Newsome. Ms. Newsome's site-specific rain harvesters have been

exhibited and/or installed internationally as well as locally (for additional information visit [www.rainkeep.com/artist-allison-newsome](http://www.rainkeep.com/artist-allison-newsome)). During the summer droughts of 2018 and 2020, rainwater captured and stored by the Rainkeep was used to successfully maintain most of the needs for the garden.

Long before actual project construction had begun, the list of additional possible benefits for the community had grown. The Rainkeep was also envisioned as a broadly inspirational and educational tool to visibly demonstrate responsible stewardship of one of our most critical natural resources – water. As such, several opportunities are now available for community education, some of which involve future involvement by the Bristol Garden Club as we continue to promote usage of the site. Plans are underway for a program to enlist the artistic talents of community children to create environmentally messaged steppingstones leading from the lawn to the educational signage.

Bristol Parks and Recreation Department's campaign to develop understanding and usage of rain barrel technology for water conservation and environmental improvement will be able to benefit through public events at the garden. School groups can complement STEM curricula by exploring the purpose and function of the Rainkeep as they tour the site and view the educational signage there.



Visual examples of sustainability and conservation practices at the Rainkeep site stimulate learning on additional topics of environmental science and climate change as well. In addition to local school programming, the Rainkeep site is also a resource available to children's groups such as scouts, 4 - H clubs, camps and more.

Interpretive signage at the Rainkeep informs casual visitors as well as organized groups. An environmental resiliency theme traces the cultural and natural history of the site, emphasizing its gradual restoration and hopeful future; and diagrammatic information explains how the Rainkeep functions.

To date, the Rainkeep project has received both state-wide and regional recognition. This includes New England Garden Club's Jean Marie Parks Award for environmentally themed projects in 2019 and the Gorman Conservation Award from the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs in 2020.

In the future the Bristol Garden Club envisions participating with the town of Bristol in an ongoing upgrading of plantings at the park to further promote sustainability. Gradual transitions to more native plants, dense ground covering plantings, and away from routine mulching with bark are currently being explored.

Pam Bishop  
Bristol Garden Club  
Rainkeep Committee Chairperson

Rainkeep Artist with Club Members:  
Pictured (L-R) are Laurel Curtis,  
Grant Applications; Pam Bishop,  
Rainkeep Committee Chairperson;  
Allison Newsome, Rainkeep Designer  
and Project Construction Manager;  
Carol Glanville, 2018 Bristol Garden  
Club President



Cherry Blossoms and Rainkeep at  
Mrs. Perry's Garden, 2018

Rainkeep During Fabrication: Bristol's Rainkeep was built in Warren, Rhode Island by the shipbuilder, Blount Boats. Pictured (L-R) are Pam Bishop, Rainkeep Committee Chairperson; Allison Newsome, Designer and Project Construction Manager; Walter Burke, Bristol Parks and Recreation Director; Laurel Curtis, Grant Applications; Maureen Curry, Rainkeep Committee



## Bridge of Flowers Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts

Touted as “the only one of its kind in the world,” the Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne Falls, MA, is a plant-lovers paradise. This 400-foot long bridge is covered in flowering plants selected to bloom continuously from April to October. Over 500 varieties of flowers, vines and shrubs line the pathway and cascade over the sides of the bridge, which spans the Deerfield River, forming a perfect example of a mixed border. Including the familiar as well as rare and historical varieties, the plants are consistently labeled throughout.

Connecting the towns of Shelburne and Buckland, this bridge was originally constructed in 1908 by the local railway to deliver heavy freight from the Shelburne Falls rail yard to mills across the river. When the railway went bankrupt 15 years later, falling victim to the rise of the automobile, the bridge became overgrown with weeds. Due to the fact that it contained an essential water line between the two towns, it could not be demolished. The determination of a local citizen, Antoinette Burnham, was the



spark that eventually turned this eyesore into the beautiful spot we enjoy today. The local fire department purchased the bridge in 1929 and the Women’s Club took on the task of overseeing its transformation, with the support of the town. With the addition of 80 truckloads of soil and plants donated by local gardeners, this bridge of beauty became a reality.

In 1983, it was completely renovated under the expertise of a local horticulturalist. Today, its upkeep relies on a paid gardener and volunteer help from the Women’s Club. With blooming ornamental trees, clematis and wisteria which form arbors over the bridge, perennials and annuals – poppies, iris, dahlias, peonies and more - it attracts visitors from all over the world.



Sandi Tinyk  
NEGC Historic & Public Gardens Chairman

Bridge of Flowers  
22 Water Street  
Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts  
[www.bridgeofflowers.org](http://www.bridgeofflowers.org)



## **National Garden Clubs Member Award of Honor for New England Garden Clubs**

The 2021 NGC Member Award of Honor Winner representing our New England Region is Cheryl Celeste who has been a member of the Western Cranston Garden Club for the past 29 years. Cheryl has served as the Club's Vice President, Corresponding Secretary, co-chair of Awards 2012 to 2020 and she currently serves as the Awards chairperson for the Rhode Island Federation of Garden Clubs.

Cheryl has organized and chaired many supplemental environmental programs for students in two of Cranston's elementary schools with the teaching activity focused on Special Needs students. Cheryl's skills to entertain highlighting themed details for each seasonal party have been apparent throughout all the events she has either chaired or co-chaired. These include: Holidays Parties, Banquets, Installations and Hospitality. She has participated in the Federation as a hostess and a Flower Show Clerk. She has co-chaired the



Western Cranston Garden Club's award-winning Flower Show for which she designed and built the stage. Her volunteer efforts include but are not limited to Adopt-a-Spot, Civic Beautification, decorating the Sprague Mansion at Christmas time, working on the Newsletter as well as doing publicity for the club.

While developing programs for today's youth, Cheryl's focus is not solely on the activity itself, but the big picture of each activity. More to the point, while creating the lesson for the Special Needs Kindergarten students at Cranston's Garden City Elementary School on planting flowers in the school's front garden, she worked with the Kindergarten teacher in order to prepare these students through conversations about gardening or stories related to this activity. Cheryl organizes teams of volunteers to prep the garden area for the young gardeners with a keen eye to the surrounding areas. She has utilized the State's grant money to plant shrubs, buy mulch, hoses, and when funds allow gloves for the kids to have as a souvenir of their personal gardening experience. Cheryl has expanded these projects to include the Stadium Elementary School – one of Cranston's poorest schools. Congratulations to Cheryl for representing our Region so well!

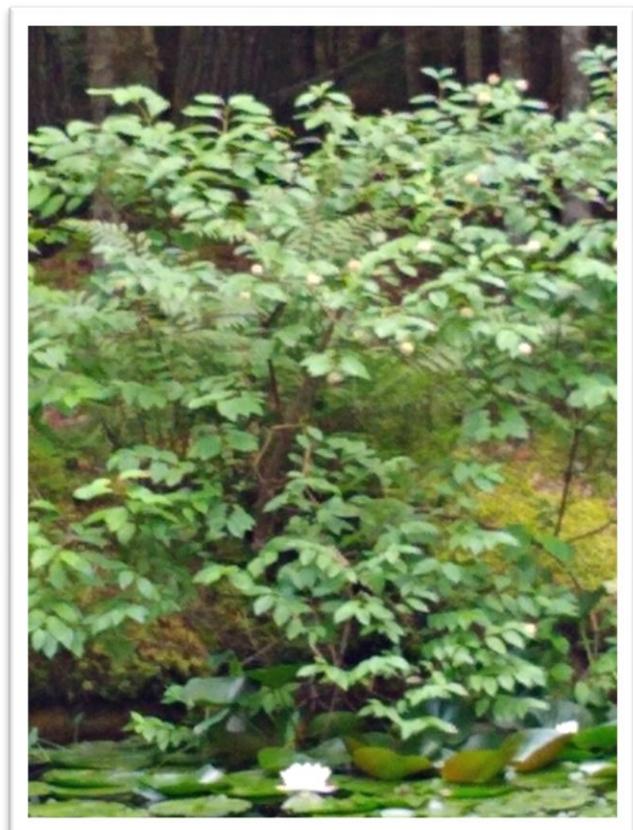
Judy Stallworth  
NEGC Awards Chairman

## **Highlighting a Native Plant . . . Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)**

Buttonbush is a Maine native shrub which is not familiar to many. Its habitat is in swamps and around edges of ponds that often flood, making it difficult to access. So, it is not often seen. We planted it on the edge of our pond where we can walk right next to it and observe its unusual habits.

This is a multi-branched shrub, with many crooked and leaning branches, giving it a rather haphazard look. In a location having plenty of water, it will spread underground with the ability to form a small mangrove. It has an open habit growing up to 9 feet high and wide.

The flowers are especially interesting. They are creamy white, about an inch in diameter and form spherical clusters with a fringe of pistils





protruding from a green core of ovaries, resembling a pincushion. Flowers are very long lasting, usually from late June to September. Then, a hard-round mass of nutlets take their place. These nutlets go from green to brown, and last throughout the winter. In the late fall into early spring, they are consumed by ducks and

other water birds.

Buttonbush has great value due to its attraction to a large number of our native bees. It is also loved by tiger swallowtails and fritillaries.

*Photographs courtesy of Jan McIntyre.*

Jan McIntyre  
Bar Harbor Garden Club Horticulture Chairperson

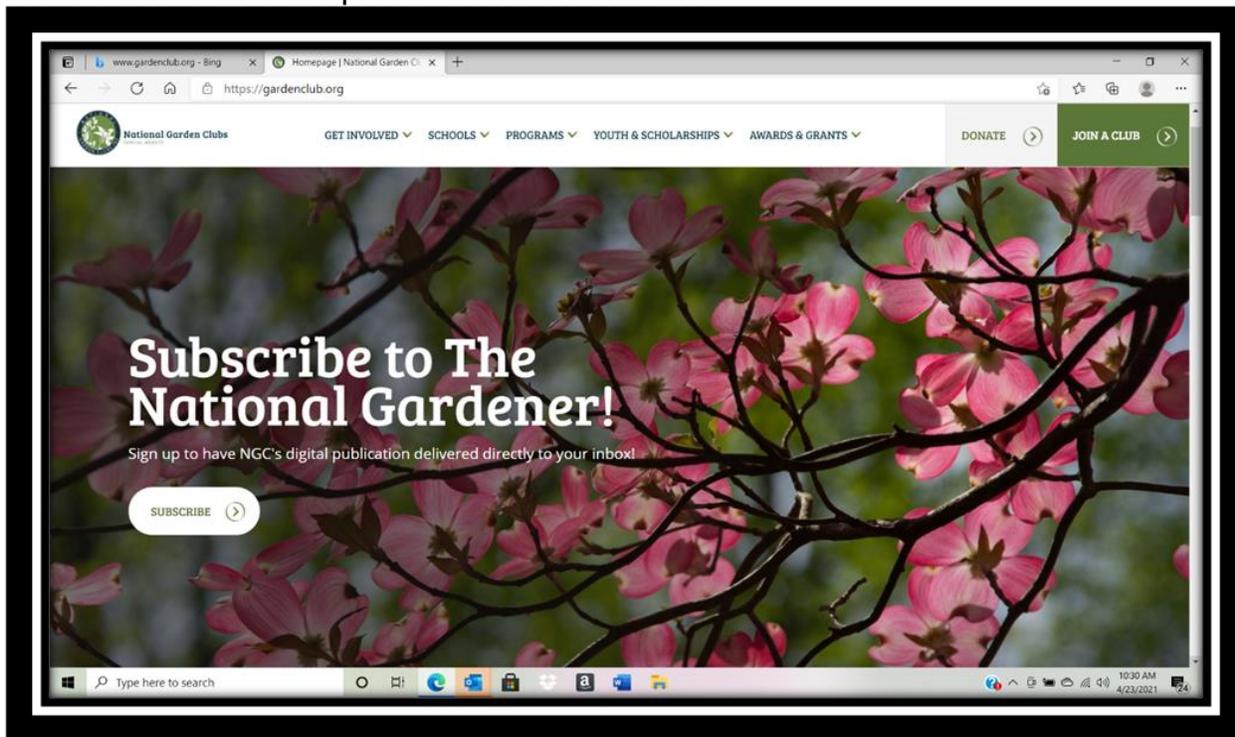


This article was reprinted from the BHGC's newsletter "The Lupine Log," September 2020 Issue.

## **National Garden Club News**

As with our clubs and our Region, change is also coming to the NGC with the installation of Mary Warshauer of New Jersey as our next NGC President. While there will not be the traditional installation that you'd see at a national convention, Mary and outgoing NGC President Gay Austin do have an installation planned which will be made available for all of us to see when it's posted on the NGC website ([www.gardenclub.org](http://www.gardenclub.org)). Along with the installation, NGC plans to post links from the website to presentations on topics such as the *Plant America* program, the Award of Excellence Recipients (our Region's project will be featured here), virtual Flower Show highlights, the Award of Honor Recipients, and even a video produced at the Headquarters in St. Louis. A tentative date of May 5<sup>th</sup> for release of these presentations

is planned. This date could change so be sure to check back to the website if you don't see the link to all these presentations on that date.



Another change coming is that *THE NATIONAL GARDENER* is going to an all-digital format starting with the Summer 2021 issue. If you'd like to have this magazine delivered directly to your inbox, you can now do so by going to the HOME page of the NGC website at [www.gardenclub.org](http://www.gardenclub.org) and click on the link to SUBSCRIBE. You'll see what this page looks like by looking at the screen shot provided with this article. The magazine is already available to see on the website by clicking on the link for MEMBER SERVICES found at the bottom of the HOME page. When you do this, you'll be taken to a new page where you'll see you can click on the link for *THE NATIONAL GARDENER*.

Something else we want to make you aware of is that the NGC has proposed to "retire" several of their awards, including their award for yearbooks. The rationale for this particular decision is that the NGC is seeing more and more clubs decide to go to the digital format to publish club yearbooks. Also, many clubs have their own personal styles they like to use for their yearbooks which don't always conform to the scoring system that the NGC has used for many years. Because the NGC wants to move ahead to the digital age and recognize the changes that many clubs are undergoing, it was decided that they would no longer evaluate yearbooks. They still encourage states and regions to consider continuing with their own award system for this important communication tool. (NOTE: We've received word that the proposed changes will be voted on according to the NGC Standing Rules.)

Suzanne Bushnell  
Director, New England Garden Clubs



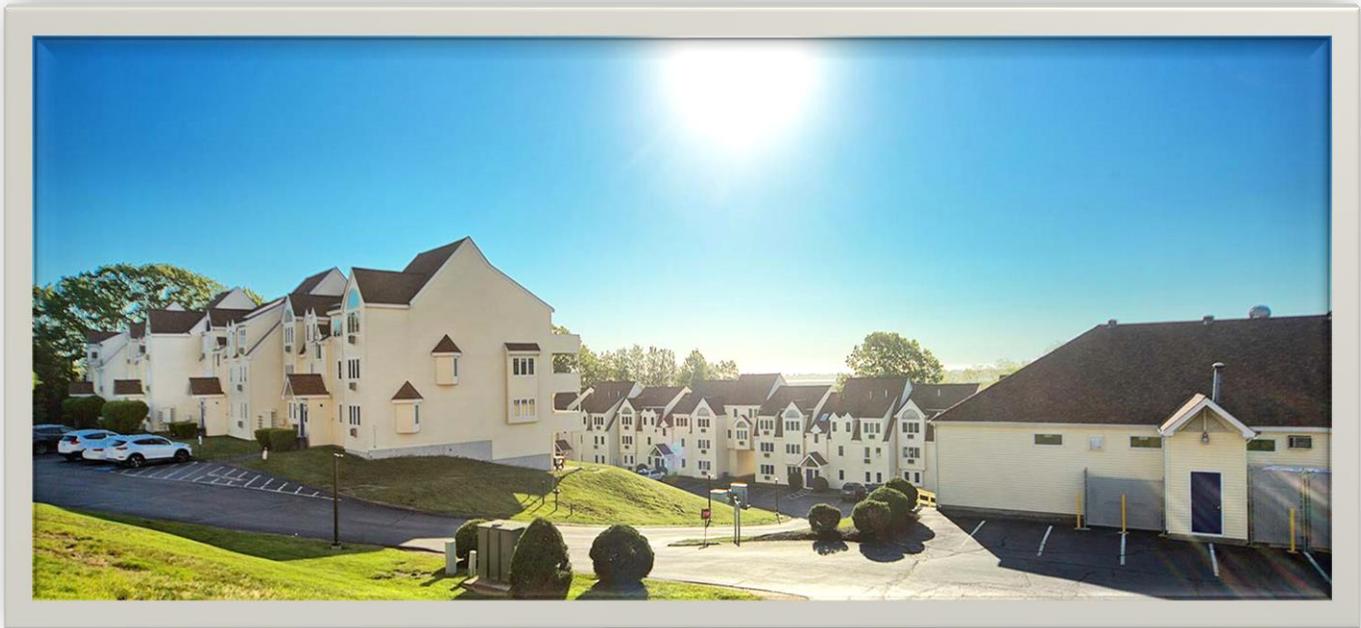
**Save the Date!!**

4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

**NEW ENGLAND  
GARDEN CLUBS**

**October 12-13, 2021  
Village by the Sea  
Conference Center  
Wells, Maine**

Celebrate peak Fall foliage  
season in Maine while  
networking with members  
from across our Region!  
Hosted by the Garden Club  
Federation of Maine.



*Village by the Sea at Sunrise in Wells, Maine*

## **Join us for the NEGC's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting!**

Covid restrictions are lifting in Maine and we expect to hold our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the New England Garden Clubs this October 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> at Village by the Sea in Wells, Maine. Make plans to spend time on the beautiful southern coast during peak foliage season. In order to make this event more economical for members to attend, we're holding the event at a condominium Conference Center as opposed to a hotel. Our venue borders the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge and is close to the quaint towns of Kennebunkport, Ogunquit and York. Take advantage of special room rates which will be in effect – stay one night and get the second night for HALF price! All units have fully equipped kitchens and range from two-bedroom, two-bath units you can share with a friend (\$149/night) or stay in a half suite (\$119/night), or a one-bedroom unit (\$99/night). Note that condos are on one of three floors with no elevators. All are individually decorated by their owners and can be viewed at [www.vtbs.com](http://www.vtbs.com). Details on meals and events (adhering to all social distance requirements) are still being worked out and more information, as well as registration forms, will be released this summer through your State Federation President and on our website under the MEETINGS tab at [www.newenglandgc.org](http://www.newenglandgc.org). We know many might wait till closer to the event to reserve a room, though condos can be reserved now by calling 1-800-444-8862. Make sure to tell the reservationist that you're attending the New England Garden Clubs Annual Meeting to get the special room rate.

# NEGC Calendar

## Special Event

**May 16 – NEGC Virtual Cocktail Party, 5:00 p.m.** – Sponsored by Region Director Suzanne Bushnell on Zoom to celebrate the end of her term and the conclusion of the highly successful Region Project. NGC President Gay Austin will be special guest. For further information and the Zoom link, contact Suzanne Bushnell at [smbushnell@comcast.net](mailto:smbushnell@comcast.net).

## Environmental School

**September 22-23 - Environmental School 4** – Water and Related Issues, is offered by Connecticut, on Zoom. For further information Sharon Bender [slbender16@gmail.com](mailto:slbender16@gmail.com)

## Regional Meeting

**October 12-13 - NEGC Annual Meeting** at the Village by the Sea Resort in Wells, Maine.