

# BLUE RIDGE DIGEST

Blue Ridge District Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The past few months have certainly proven to be quite a challenge for both gardens and gardeners alike in the Blue Ridge, haven't they? Heat, rain, more rain, no rain, wind, more heat and...but what's this? A slight hint of cool? A slight reminder that the first bit of crisp fall weather will be along before we know it? A bit of temperate weather to keep us comfortable and happy to be out in the garden again and enjoying the weather while we do it? Yes! Let's savor this little bit of cool, however fleeting, and look forward to the crispness of fall and the beautiful foliage to come when it gets here.

What I did on my summer vacation...  
As many of you know, with the installation of a new District administration comes the task of filling all of the Committee Chairmanships for the District Board of Directors and filling the Appointed Officers positions. That task has been time consuming, but very rewarding, and I am extremely happy to say that the District, as is always the case, has a wonderful Board of Directors in place for this administration, and an excellent group of Appointed Officers. I am deeply thankful to all of these lovely ladies for being willing to serve, and I look forward our working together for the next two years. Please give them your help should they ask for it.

Things to look forward to...  
There will be many things going on in the District this Fall to look forward to, among them a Flower Show presented by the Westchester Garden Club in September, the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs Fall Plant Sale, and of course the Blue Ridge District Fall Meeting. The registration form for the Fall Meeting is in this issue, and as you see the program will be wonderful! Make plans now to attend- and bring a friend!

Meantime, stay cool. And dry.

*Felice*

## AUGUST 2023 ISSUE

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### 2023

- Sept. 1            Deadline for VFGC Grant Applications
- Sept. 15         Deadline for VFGC Grant Applications
- Sept. 16         Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs Plant Sale 9-1; many vendors too!
- Sept. 27         Westchester GC Flower Show p. 5
- Sept. 28         BRD Board of Director's Meeting
- Oct. 2-3         VFGC Landscape Design School Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden Richmond
- October 25      Fall District Meeting—Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs
- Nov. 1            Deadline for articles for the Blue Ridge Digest
- Dec. 1            Awards deadline



## FALL DISTRICT MEETING

Wednesday, October 25

Registration Form — Page 7

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Artwork from public domain websites and personal photos.

## WEBSITES

### National Garden Clubs Inc.

<http://gardenclub.org>

### Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs Inc.

<http://viriniagardenclubs.org/VFGC/>

**Newsletter Deadlines:** August 1  
 send info to: November 1  
[shirle4858@gmail.com](mailto:shirle4858@gmail.com) February 1  
 540-989-3137 May 1

Free to members with email

Subscription if mailed - **\$8/yr. or \$16/2 yr.**

**NEW amount in effect now for subscriptions beginning with the August issue of the Blue Ridge Digest.**

## CLUB NEWS

**New Castle Garden Club** members visited Fincastle Presbyterian Church in Fincastle, VA in June for a tour of their grounds and church and were inspired to learn how garden clubs can also assist local churches.

The site of Fincastle Presbyterian Church dates back to 1771 when an acre of land was first set aside for the benefit of the Church of England, Botetourt Parish. The Anglican Church, however, never gained interest in the Valley. By 1785 the church building was used by others than its former Anglican members due to the passage of the Virginia Act of Religious Freedom. In 1813 the Presbyterians of Botetourt petitioned to erect a new church and the site has remained the home of Fincastle Presbyterian Church since that time.



The grounds surrounding the church have been used as a burial site since the first church was erected. Many gravestones are from the colonial period and bear the names of prominent frontier heroes and leaders in early Virginia history. The southwest area of the cemetery is the burial place of some of Botetourt's Revolutionary War patriots. A monument was erected in 1973 honoring the 26 documented patriots and soldiers.



Members were interested to learn the Garden Club of Virginia restored the churchyard in 1943, erected a stone wall and added holly, crepe myrtle, boxwood, and spring flowering bulbs. A brass plaque denotes their efforts. The organization has continuously performed maintenance work there since 1948, sending a crew of workers to weed, replant, and reposition gravestones.

Inside, members enjoyed a brief history of the church, including the mid-20 th century restoration of the interior returning the building to its original design prior to the 1849 Greek Revival remodel. The gracious hostesses were each presented with beautiful hanging baskets before the group continued their outing with lunch at Rancho Chico in Daleville, Virginia.

New Castle Garden Club was formed in 1939 and its 30 members are led by President Anita Martindell.

Submitted by: Tina Crawford

2023-2025 BRD PRESIDENT'S THEME

“Sewing the Seeds for Tomorrow’s Gardeners”

Got pots? Last summer the **Southside Garden Club** was approached by their newest member with a proposition: would the club be interested in partnering with the Valley Interfaith Child Care Center in Blacksburg to use their creativity and gardening skills in an effort to gradually transform the barren landscape of Center’s play area into a cheerful and child-friendly space.

They said yes, absolutely! A committee was formed; meetings with the center staff were held, and brainstorming began. Understanding that, over-all, this would be an on-going multi-phase process, the committee chose to get their feet wet with a project that could be done for this summer, with minimal cost.

Every gardener has clay pots. With imagination, experimentation and paint they can become wonderful things to add to child’s garden. The photos show some of the results.

Fantasy “flowers” fashioned from cut-out and painted soda bottles and “planted” among real foliage provided an additional fun element to this phase of the project. They are all looking forward to what might be next.



## WELCOME

### NEW MEMBERS

BIG SPRING GARDEN CLUB  
Rena Hesk

BOONES MILL GARDEN CLUB  
Bea Bailey  
Karen Barr  
Missie Gerst  
Brittany Goard

GREEN THUMB GARDEN CLUB  
Kathleen Taylor

HUNTING HILLS GARDEN CLUB  
Linda Crowley  
Cindy Gartland

MAYWOOD GARDEN CLUB  
Hazel Beeler  
Bonnie Brooks  
Dawn Clephas  
Kitty Kesmer  
Mary Snyder

MONETA GARDEN CLUB  
Mandy Eames  
Ellen Gaberdiel

NEW CASTLE GARDEN CLUB  
Mary Ellen BORLAND

PIEDMONT ESTATES GARDEN CLUB  
Brenda Shelton

SALEM GARDEN CLUB  
Emily Paine Carter  
Peggy Fanny  
Mary Lanne Perrin  
Kathy Reed  
Leigh Thomas

SOUTHSIDE GARDEN CLUB  
Katie Kecorius  
Jeanne Roper

SUGAR LOAF GARDEN CLUB  
Jordan Nail

TOWN and COUNTRY GARDEN CLUB  
Dianne Kidd  
Claudia Lambert  
Margo Mayo  
Cindy Scaggs

WESTCHESTER GARDEN CLUB  
Patti Hanes  
Pat Holt

## CLUB NEWS continued

**Sugar Loaf Garden Club** held a Small Standard Flower Show on August 2, 2023 entitled "Posies and Poetry." It was held at Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs and was open to the public from noon until 2 p.m. Sugar Loaf wishes to thank all of those who came to see the flower show.



New club members learned how to conduct a flower show by serving as committee chairmen and from entering designs and horticulture.

Flower Show Chairman Mary Olson reported that the top ribbon winners were:

Best in Show (Design) - Joyce Woods  
Award of Merit (Horticulture) - Joyce Woods  
Award of Merit (Horticulture) - Shirley Edillon  
Horticulture Excellence—Shirley Edillon

## IN MEMORY

(Please send death notifications  
to the BRD Editor)

You're invited to....

## The Beauty of Fall

An NGC Small Standard Flower Show

Presented by **Westchester Garden Club**



Wednesday, September 27

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

at

Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs

3640 Colonial Ave.

Roanoke

Free and Open to the Public

Light refreshments

## LANDSCAPE DESIGN SCHOOL

Hurray! The Virginia Landscape Design School is finally moving into the new National Garden Club Landscape Design Curriculum with Series 29. The new curriculum includes a segment in each course aimed specifically at redesigning home landscapes.

You may want to make modest changes to your home landscaping that do not require the services of a professional designer. Environmental awareness may mean making changes in planting choices which can make significant impacts on the ecosystems around us. VFGC Landscape Design School is a fun way of learning some "how tos" that can help.

Come join us October 2-3 for LDS Course 1 to be held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens in Richmond. You may join us as a new student or a refreshing Consultant. You may decide to attend for just one day or for the whole course (One day attendees are not eligible for Consultant certification). Landscape Design Courses may be taken in any order – completion of

4 courses is required for consultant certification.

Please see the schedule of classes and registration form (email attachment).

Marty Bowers 540-309-1676  
martbw@gmail.com

## BLUE RIDGE DISTRICT AWARDS

How many of you compile a yearbook, have a club newsletter, a club website, worked hard to hold a flower show, plant trees, attend district meetings, have a civic project that includes native plants, plant for roadside beautification or decorate historical buildings?

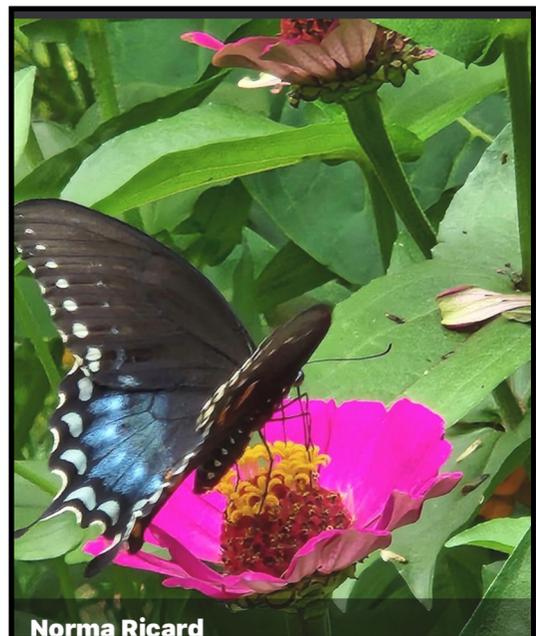
These are just a few of the many projects for which you could submit an awards application. A full listing of opportunities and instructions for applying can be found at the Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs website – [viriniagardenclubs.org](http://viriniagardenclubs.org)—click on Awards List, then Blue Ridge District.

Our Award year runs from January to December unless otherwise stated. December 1 is the deadline for submitting entries to Patty Smith, 3856 Carvins Cove Road, Salem, VA 24153-2512, and phone: 540-384-7226.

Please encourage your membership to take advantage of these many **opportunities**.

Patty B. Smith  
BRD Awards Chairman

Norma Ricard of **Piedmont Estates Garden Club** in Martinsville captured this photo of a butterfly. She was excited because they have been trying to draw pollinators to their flower gardens. Success!



**Norma Ricard**

## PEONIES

### More Than Just Beautiful

Peonies, *Paeonia* spp, are well known for their lush flowers and attractive foliage, but these plants are more than just beautiful blooms. These perennials are very hardy and last for years when planted correctly in full sun with and well drained soil. They do not need dividing and resent being transplanted.

Panayoti Kelaidisia, Director of Horticulture for Denver Botanic Gardens, says in the August 2023 Garden Gate magazine that "peonies will grow with no care in old cemeteries and on deserted properties for decades. Their thick roots keep peonies going through summer with minimal water. They do need cold winters to flower well." An added plus is that they are deer resistant.

Peonies were cultivated in China and introduced to Europe and America about 1800. A few varieties will withstand the hotter temperatures of the lower South and tolerate some afternoon shade.



There are three types of peonies; herbaceous, whose leaves die down in the fall, tree peonies which develop into woody shrubs with very large blooms, and a hybrid which is a combination of herbaceous and tree peonies. Its foliage also dies back in fall. Peony flowers come in several types, and can vary in size from 2 to 10 inches; they may be single, semi-double and double. Flowers come in colors from pure white to cream to pink going to rose and red. Festiva maxima with double white flowers and red flecks is a southern heirloom hybrid that blooms reliably throughout the region.

Peony plants are best planted in fall or earliest spring. Bare root herbaceous plants consisting of thick roots and several eye buds should be planted in organic matter only one inch below the soils surface. Tree peonies can be planted 3 to 4 inches below the surface. Both

types may take 2-3 years to bloom, but are well worth the wait.

With many varieties to choose from and low maintenance requirements, peonies of all types are a source of spectacular flowers and lush foliage. Although not natives they are a good choice because they are also drought tolerant and deer resistant. One only needs the right location.

Gail Trussell, Horticulture Chairman

### ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY and TREASURES NEEDED

I continue to be wowed by the finished products of the many talented designers who have come to us as guest speakers. As the magic begins I think to myself, "I can do that." By the time the design is nearing completion I'm having very dark thoughts about my own abilities. Sound familiar?

To complement Sally Harrison's program and to help and inspire you, the District will be offering a tool kit containing essential tools and you will have the chance to win this kit with your purchase of an opportunity ticket. Contents of the kit will be on display for your examination. Following our usual practice, tickets will be offered for a donation of \$2 each or 3 for \$5.

The sale of fashionable accessories has become a standard feature at our District meetings and has been a significant source of needed income. We would like to continue this offering but we find ourselves in dire need of a fresh influx of goods. Perhaps you noticed this at our spring meeting? If you have items in your closet or jewelry box that no longer bring you joy and are in good condition, please give them to us so that we can re-home them and raise money for the District. I will be present to receive any donations at the Board meeting (September 28th) and at the District meeting on October 25th.

Clubs and/or individuals who want to reserve a sales table or have a silent auction to offer may contact me at the address below. Tables are available for \$20 each. Advance notice regarding silent auctions will enable me to set aside adequate display space. As always, your participation as a seller or donor is enthusiastically welcomed!

Lee Greiser, Projects  
frieccreditcard@hotmail.com

## FALL DISTRICT MEETING



Wednesday, October 25, 2023

The Fall Meeting of the Blue Ridge District-VFGC will be held at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs Center at 3640 Colonial Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018. All garden club members are invited to attend. So grab a friend and sign up before the deadline.

The featured Floral Design Program will be presented by Sally Harrison. She is a member of River Road Garden Club, Ikebana of Richmond and the Richmond Designer's Guild.

Sally is an accredited National Garden Club Flower Show Judge, a Past President of The Piedmont District and current First Vice President of Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs.

She is most comfortable with traditional mass design. After arranging altar flowers for years, she was invited in 2005 to study for six days with the Flower Guild of the National Cathedral in Washington DC. For a person who loves floral design, she feels that week was as close to heaven anyone could be on earth. She stayed on the grounds of the Cathedral, attending demonstrations in the morning, workshops in the afternoon and choral Evensong in the Cathedral at 5. She will be sharing some of the techniques she learned at the National Cathedral with us. Come for an enjoyable day!

### Schedule:

9:00-10:00 a.m.	Registration check-in Project Displays Vendor Booths open
10:00 a.m.	Business session & Program
Noon	Lunch - check your selection on the registration form.
12:45-1:00	Business continues Announcements Door Prizes & Silent Auction

If your club wishes to have a sales table (\$20 fee) contact Lee Greiser at [friedcreditcard@hotmail.com](mailto:friedcreditcard@hotmail.com)

## BLUE RIDGE DISTRICT FALL 2023 MEETING PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Club \_\_\_\_\_

### Check all that currently apply:

- Past District President
- BRD Board Member
- VFGC Board Member     SAR     NGC
- Club President (current)
- VFGC Life Member
- SAR Life Member
- NGC Life Member
- Guest

### Lunch Choice from McAlisters (check one):

- Savannah Chopped Salad
- Pecan-berry Salad
- McAlisters Club
- Grilled Chicken Club

Includes a bag of chips, dessert and beverage.

**Registration & Lunch:** \$25.00

**Please make check payable to:**  
Blue Ridge District, VFGC

### Mail registration form & check to:

Nancy Powers, Registrar  
5211 Hawkbill Circle  
Roanoke, VA 24018-8626  
540-776-3206 or [charminglysew@cox.net](mailto:charminglysew@cox.net)

**DEADLINE: Mail by October 16th**



Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs

*Fall*

**PLANT SALE & HARVEST FESTIVAL**

**SATURDAY, SEPT. 16TH**  
**9AM-1PM**

A GARDENERS PARADISE FULL OF GARDEN TREASURES, LOCAL VENDORS, AND FALL CULINARY DELIGHTS

**3640 COLONIAL AVE.**  
**WWW.ROANOKECOUNCILOFGARDENCLUBS.COM**  
**ANY QUESTIONS: (540) 343-4519**

**Garden Tool Sharpening**      **FREE Children's Event**  
**\$2.00 Per Tool**                      **10am-12pm**



Shirley Edillon, Editor  
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