

# BLUE RIDGE DIGEST

Blue Ridge District Virginia Federation of Garden Clubs

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Summer's here at last, and with it the opportunity to be back in our gardens, giving old and beloved plants some primping for their new season, gently purging past bad choices, and perhaps making room for one or two new additions.

Summer, as it happens, is also when vast numbers of young people are set free of academic restraints, and might be looking for something interesting to do with their time. Are you sensing a connection here?

The theme of this administration is "Sowing the Seeds for Tomorrow's Gardeners".

Certainly, introducing young people to the joy and art of gardening is something clubs have and continue to undertake, and that is always an effort to be encouraged.

However, never underestimate the importance of the individual gardener: that would be you.

All it takes to make the connection is one gardener plus one young person (neighbor/grandchild/niece/nephew) plus one garden with things to be done,

things to be learned and beautiful plants to be enjoyed. That's it. And there really are young people out there just waiting for that opportunity. Look around you. Be open to the possibilities however they come to you. For example: in my case, serendipity, and two sets of neighbors, facilitated my entirely unexpected introduction to the young person who will be expanding their horticultural horizons in my own garden this summer. Some times that's all it takes to make the connection and to make a difference. One gardener and one young person and one garden. And neighbors... they might surprise you!

For now, ready or not, summer in our gardens beckons. I wish you all a summer of beautiful blooms and abundant harvests, and many wonderful moments at the end of the day when you sit back in your garden and enjoy what you have so lovingly tended.

*Felice*

## MAY 2024 ISSUE

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### 2024

- May 21-22 VFGC 90th Convention, Boar's Head Inn, Charlottesville VA
- May 31 Dues Deadline
- June 2-5 NGC Convention-Denver
- June 2-8 National Garden Week
- July 11 Westchester GC Flower Show p.6
- July 22 Free Program-Floral Design-p. 6
- Aug 26-29 Flower Show School III-Roanoke
- Sept 15 Deadline—"Keys to the Future" Youth Grants Projects and Beautify and Restore Grants
- Sep 12 Blue Ridge District Flower Show
- Sep 25 BRD Board Meeting-Roanoke
- Oct 23 Fall District Meeting-Roanoke
- Nov 11-12 Flower Show Symposium-Roanoke
- Dec 1 Awards applications deadline



**"Sowing the Seeds for Tomorrow's Gardeners"**



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## 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 February 1  
540-989-3137 May 1  
Free to members with email  
Subscription if mailed - \$8/yr. or \$16/2 yr.

## CLUB NEWS

**Blue Ridge Garden Club** met March 24, 2024 and had a delicious St. Patrick's Day themed feast served by Donna Henderson and Connie Dixon.

They were pleased to add a new member, Kim Snow.



Their speaker was club member Janice Wilson, who had a presentation of Lavender in the Kitchen. She brought home-made Lemon Lavender Upside-down Cake, Lavender Sugar Cookies, Lavender Lemonade, Lavender Sugar, and Lavender Tea. She shared the many health benefits of lavender.



**Salem Garden Club** reports that their club is now 97 years old, founded in 1927, and they are looking forward to their 100th anniversary in a few years!

## DUES PAYABLE BY May 31

The Blue Ridge District Director Treasurer, Necia, Evans, requests that all club treasurers submit dues to her by May 31, 2024. Dues are \$3.00 per club member and \$1.00 for each Youth Club. Her address can be found in the VFGC Yearbook.

Please include an updated membership roster with your dues. And be sure to confirm that all email addresses are current, updated and legible.

## PLANT AMERICA - Plant for Pollinators

National Garden Clubs President Brenda Moore wants to encourage NGC members to make our gardens more than just beautiful. That's why she created the National Garden Clubs Pollinator Garden Certification program. Our gardens can support birds, bees and other insects, and this program provides the incentive to take additional steps to make sure we're providing all the components to help pollinators thrive.

They have created a checklist to make sure you have everything you need to support pollinators:

- 01 Food sources
- 02 Water source
- 03 Areas to raise young

You probably already have several plants that provide pollen and nectar. But could you add a few native plants that are perhaps a better source of food? Could you add a shrub that has berries for wintertime nutrition? You don't have to install a pond, but what about a birdbath? Consider adding a heater for fresh water in the winter. May of us have birdhouses in our gardens, but if not, a small, inconspicuous log or brush pile can provide a safe place for insects to nest.

In addition to providing food, water, and shelter, think about your gardening practices and what you can do better to support pollinators. Naturalists are encouraging us to "leave the leaves" in the fall for insects that overwinter in leaves, and to wait until spring for garden cleanup since some insect larvae stay in hollow stems until spring.

We all want to do what we can to support pollinators-their lives depend on us. By making a few tweaks to our gardens we can make them feel right at home!

[taken from the NGC website]

APPLY TO REGISTER YOUR GARDEN as a National Garden Clubs Certified Pollinator Garden! One approved, you will receive a certificate and have the option to order an NGC Certified Pollinator Garden Yard Sign!

<https://gardenclub.org/plant-america-plant-pollinators>



## NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

For members who subscribe to a printed, mailed newsletter—please send in your \$8.00 renewal to BRD Treasurer, Necia Evans, at 205 Woodbine Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24060-7439.

The 2024-25 quarterly issues of the *Blue Ridge Digest* begin with the August issue 2024.



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

BLUE RIDGE GARDEN CLUB  
Kim Snow

SALEM GARDEN CLUB  
Lily Banner  
Debbie Elson  
Chris McCart  
Cindy Miller  
Cindy Neathawk  
Donna Sinclair  
Fran Williams

SUGAR LOAF GARDEN CLUB  
Andrea Fisher  
Connie Parsell



## IN MEMORY

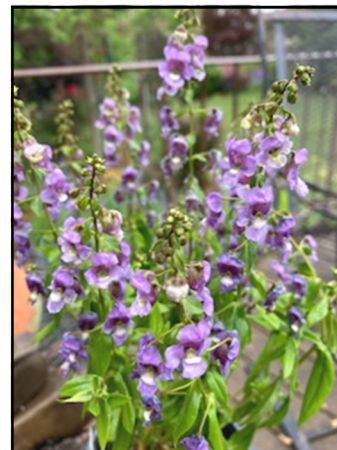
**JANE PUTNEY**  
Blue Ridge Garden Club

**CHARLOTTE KABLER**  
Westchester Garden Club

(Please send death notifications  
to the BRD Editor)

## ANGELONIA OR SUMMER SNAPDRAGON

Recently the Roanoke Times published an article by Norman Winter, the "Garden Guy" about *Angelonia augustifolia*. I was interested because last summer I planted a cluster of these plants in pink and purple for the first time and was very pleased with their performance of providing color all summer long.



According to Winter, the National Garden Bureau has designated 2024 as the "Year of the "Angelonia," or the annual of the year. A native of Mexico and the West Indies, this plant, an annual in Virginia, is a member of the Plantaginacea or plantain family which includes such members as Penstemon, Linaria, Digitalis, and snapdragon. "This plant gives the South a summer plant that blooms all summer to early fall and and looks like a snapdragon or foxglove."

Angelonia comes in the colors of pink, purple, blue, and white. There are three distinct types, Standard, Super and Cascade. The Standard spikes can be 18-30 inches tall with an 18-inch spread. The Super can reach 30-40 inches tall and 16 inches wide, and the Cascade group can reach 8-14 inches with a 30 inch spread. Angelonias are hardy plants that need full sun, require no deadheading or pruning and are adaptable to drought conditions. They are also pest and disease resistant. They are truly low maintenance. These plants will do well in containers, and cascading varieties will enhance hanging baskets. The three types qualify as thrillers, fillers, and spillers.

The tubular blooms of Angelonia are attractive to pollinators because of their fragrance, and they are deer resistant. They are truly a dependable plant; my only regret is that they are not native to Virginia and are not perennials in this area.

Gail Trussell

## FLOWER SHOW JUDGES

The Blue Ridge Flower Show Judges Council met on March 25 and enjoyed a Napkinizing Workshop presented by Shirley Grant, President of the Belmont Garden Club. Council members learned to decoupage a napkin of their choice on a Posie Pocket (smashed can). They finished their Posie Pocket by adding silk flowers to make a beautiful arrangement and were also given a prepped flower pot to decorate at home.



Pictured are:

Seated - Glynis Hopkins and Bunny Eanes  
Standing - Shirley Grant (workshop facilitator), Rita Leiser, Betsy Kline, Janice Clem, and Ann Robinson

Not pictured - Shelby Trail who assisted her sister, Shirley, with the workshop.

## BRD WINNERS FOR SMOKEY BEAR/WOODSY OWL YOUTH POSTER CONTEST

This BRD Chairman is pleased to report that three entries from Blacksburg New School received 1st place awards and advanced to the state level:

3rd Grade-Vance Santamaria  
4th Grade-Bea Lawrence  
5th Grade-Henley Collins

Necia Evans, Chairman

State Awards will be announced in May.

## 2023 BRD AWARD WINNERS

Five applications from **one** club were submitted to the BRD Awards Chairman prior to the December 1st deadline. Based upon their merit all five were judged to be winners and forwarded for consideration at the State level.

**Blue Ridge District Awards Winners** for the Year 2023 are:

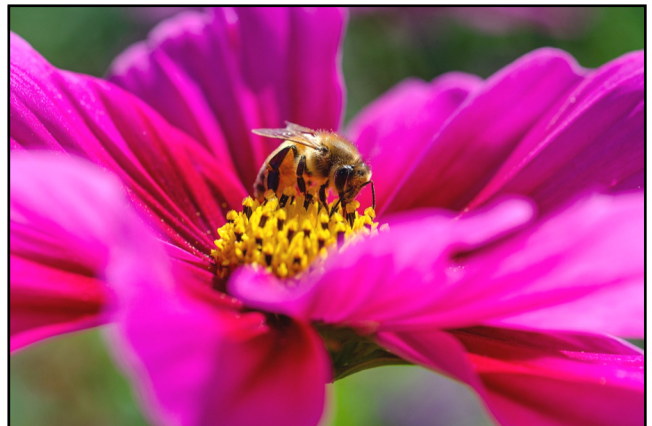
- B-29-A Vision of Beauty Calendar—Blue Westchester Garden Club
- B-29-B Vision of Beauty Calendar Sales—Blue Westchester Garden Club
- B-30-B Publication of Club Newsletter—Blue Westchester Garden Club
- B-31.1. Club Yearbook—Blue Westchester Garden Club
- B-32 Standard Flower Show Schedule-Single Club—Blue Westchester Garden Club

**State** level judging is conducted in January and winners are to be announced at the upcoming VFGC May 21-22 convention to be held in Charlottesville, VA.

### **Congratulations to Westchester Garden Club!**

Clubs, please take a moment to review the Blue Ridge District's Awards listed on the VFGC website and make plans to submit an award winning application that will showcase your club's hard work.

Patty Smith, BRD Awards Chairman



## HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

## Blue Ridge Flower Show Judges Council

Exciting news! There are **two flower shows** scheduled in our district that you will want to see.

The first flower show ***Surprise! It's Christmas in July*** will be presented by Westchester Garden Club on Thursday, **July 11** from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Roanoke Council's Garden Center. See the garden center transformed by creative designs, beautiful horticulture, inspiring botanical arts and educational exhibits.

You may be greeted by Santa and see an old fashioned aluminum Christmas tree and lots of other Christmas decorations to add to the holiday mood. Come see the show and enjoy light refreshments, too.

Mark your calendar to return to the garden center for our Blue Ridge District flower show ***September Interlude*** on Thursday, **September 12** from 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. More information will be shared soon on what promises to be a most beautiful show. Of course, we are counting on help of some type from each of our garden clubs – whether that be helping on the flower show committee and/or exhibiting in the show. For our district show to be a success, your support is needed.

To get everyone's creativity flowing for the district flower show, the Blue Ridge Judges Council invites you to the exciting program ***Thinking Outside the Box*** by NGC Accredited Flower Show Judge and designer Kathy Ward from Richmond. She'll show ways to use ordinary items from the local hardware store in a new light to add creativity and interest to your floral designs. Come to Roanoke Council's Garden Center on **July 22** at 1:00 p.m. for this free program.

VFGC's Flower Show School Course 3 will be August 26-29 at Roanoke Council's Garden Center. This event is open for you to attend, whether you come for one day or for the full course. Details are in VFGC's *Old Dominion Gardener* on VFGC's website [viriniagar-denclubs.org](http://viriniagar-denclubs.org). Flower Show School provides opportunities to learn more about horticulture, design and flower shows.

Currently, our district has no one attending flower show school with the intent of becoming a flower show judge. Let's change this! We have many talented garden club members in Blue Ridge District who would make wonderful and much needed flower show judges.

Please give some thought to becoming a flower show judge. If you have any questions, please contact me at 540-977-1713.

Janice Clem, Chairman



## VFGC SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

BRD Scholarship Committee Report – March 27, 2024 submitted by BRD Chair Carol Buriak

The VFGC Scholarship Committee was provided \$8,000 to award for the upcoming academic year beginning in Fall of 2024. \$2,000 of this total was designated as the Betsey Edwards Scholarship with the remaining \$6,000 designated as VFGC scholarship money which could be divided as the committee wished. This was a change from last year when the committee had \$13,000 to award but it was restricted by specific scholarship requirements.

Happily, two students who had applied last year and were awarded scholarship monies chose to re-apply again. They did not disappoint!

Ashleigh Elizabeth Mann was awarded the Mina Adams \$3,000 scholarship last year. She is now a Junior at Longwood University and has maintained a 3.96 GPA in her major of Environmental Science with a Microbiology minor. The committee awarded her the Betsy Edwards Scholarship of \$2000.00 plus an additional \$500.00 from VFGC. Her application will be forwarded to the South Atlantic Region for scholarship consideration at the regional level. It will then be forwarded to the National Garden Clubs, Inc. for their scholarship consideration.



Elizabeth Marie Eroshenko, is a Junior at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University pursuing a degree in Environmental Science. She is interested in the effects of climate change on soil and has maintained a GPA of 3.93. The committee awarded her a \$2500.00 VFGC Scholarship.

Trinity Starr Shirlen is a Sophomore at Randolph College pursuing a degree in Environmental Science/ Biology. She was awarded a \$1000.00 VFGC Scholarship.

Laila Grace Buckman is a Freshman at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University pursuing a degree in Fish and Wildlife. She was awarded a \$500.00 VFGC Scholarship based on her well-written letter of intent combined with her many extracurricular activities and first semester grades of all A's and one B. We are hopeful that she will apply again next year.



**CELEBRATE NATIONAL  
GARDEN WEEK IN  
YOUR COMMUNITY!**

**June 2-8**

Join NGC clubs across the country to celebrate National Garden Week, June 2nd-8th, 2024. This week is an opportunity to encourage pride in your community, interest new members, and work with other groups to be part of those efforts.



**BOOK REVIEW**

**In Search of Plants**

This collection of novels - with a little romance thrown in - dwells on efforts to find and learn more about plants. Several are likely to be page turners and great leisure reads.

*The Botanist Daughter.* Kayte Nunn. Orion, 2019.

An award winning historical novel is set in two times: 1800s Cornwall and 2017 Sydney, and centers around the search for a miracle plant that has the potential to save lives.

Woven into the plot are the lives of two women's stories.

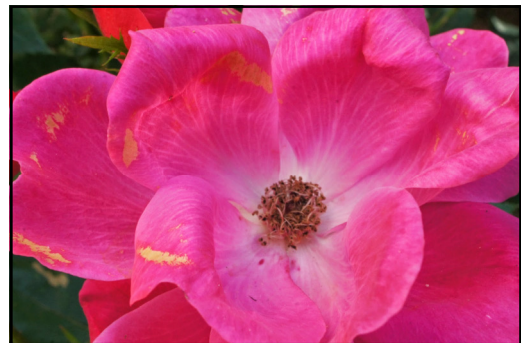
*The Garden of Small Beginnings.* Abbi Waxman. Berkley, 2017.

A recently widowed mother of three and textbook illustrator finds herself in a botanical garden with the goal of learning more about plants and gardening in order to illustrate a book. Described as quirky and entertaining, the book also offers a bit of romance, gardening tips, and a cast of characters at an LA garden.

*The Signature of All Things.* Elizabeth Gilbert. Random, 2014.

From the author of *Eat, Pray, Love*, this is a globe-trotting novel of a 19th century woman botanist who searches for the origins of medicinal plants well before Darwin and her encounter and romance with historical figure Ambrose Pike, the remarkable illustrator of orchids.

Karen Dillon, BRD Chairman



ROANOKE COUNCIL OF  
GARDEN CLUBS

## SPRING PLANT SALE

A GARDENER'S PARADISE OF  
SEEDLINGS, BLOOMS AND  
GARDENERS GIFTS

SATURDAY  
MAY 11TH  
9AM-1PM

FREE CHILDREN'S EVENT 10am-12pm  
VENDOR TABLES and Garden Tool Sharpening  
\$2.00 per tool

3640 COLONIAL AVENUE  
Just Off Electric Road



JOIN US FOR

## MAHJONG & BRIDGE DAY

10AM - 4PM | WEDNESDAY, MAY 22  
ROANOKE COUNCIL OF GARDEN CLUBS  
\$50/PLAYER - INCLUDES BOXED LUNCH



INSTRUCTION  
PROVIDED BY  
STAR CITY  
MAHJONG  
AVAILABLE FOR  
\$87 - INCLUDES  
BOXED LUNCH &  
2 SESSIONS OF  
INSTRUCTIONS.  
LIMITED TABLES.  
SIGN UP  
QUICKLY!

QUESTIONS? PLEASE  
CONTACT 540-589-3084



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