**Power Point Narrative for April 27, 2025**

# 1 Welcome to the 2025 VFGC Awards Ceremony. We are recognizing the achievements of 2024.

I wish to begin by thanking the six District Awards Chairmen, who fielded your questions and helped with the application process. They held the district level judging and are responsible for district award certificates.

Would the District awards chairman, please stand:

Patty Smith for the Blue Ridge District

Joann Wallace for Piedmont

Becky Yates for Shenandoah

Kathie Kingery for South Central

Jane Sorenson for Southwest

Jessica O’Connor for Tidewater

And my vice-chairman, Jeanne Bruton who created the Power point presentation we are about to enjoy. Please give them your applause.

I also want to thank the dedicated judges who evaluated well over 100 state awards applications.

I have received questions about the point scoring rubrics. There are 11 special rubrics plus the one general rubric. They can be found on the state web site awards page, or among the forty – one pages of the national awards on the NGC website.

Point score rubrics assist the clubs in writing up their award applications as well as guide the judges in evaluating the awards .

All the awards but the club publicity press books, go first to the district awards chairman, by Dec. 1st. Then blue ribbon winners are sent on to me for judging at the state level.

At the state level, newsletters, flower show schedules and web sites are judged electronically, rather than in person.

I send the qualifying award applications on to the South Atlantic Region or to National electronically. Scanning makes this possible regardless of how the application is submitted.

Today we will be giving out the award certificates with ribbons, rosettes, and checks where earned, cash for youth and the point score rubrics for feedback – all in the envelopes for your club. District presidents please accept these envelopes and either give them to the club president if here, or mail them.

Please note the fiscal year is the end of May, so deposit your check immediately upon receipt. Checks held too long may not be honored. Lost checks will not be replaced.

This power point recognizes many but not all of the wonderful and generous programs benefitting our communities and especially the young people. The power point does not show every award earned, rather includes highlights of some of the 2024 award applications. Perhaps you will see something that inspires or enlightens you.

# 2 First are the **District level awards** which showcase the efforts of a district as a whole. Would the district presidents please come forward and accept your award bundles. It’s Ok to sit back down if you wish, just don’t peek until we’re done!

**# 3 Club Membership by Districts** is the first category – as you can see the South Central District placed first with 2.88% in membership. This number is most impressive considering the state as a whole dropped 3.76%.

# 4 This next slide shows the membership awards at the club level:

* Among small clubs, Four Seasons of Southwest has a 27.3% increase
* Among Medium clubs – Rose and Garden of South Central with 40%
* Among Large clubs – Rappahannock County of Shenandoah with 7.%

# 5 Now for District Newsletters

Among the smaller districts, with fewer than 900 members, The “**Shenandoah Sharings” Newsletter** earned first place. The Editor, Val Story is to be congratulated. Pictured here is the flower show schedule for the show, Southern Charm, staged at the spring district meeting. This newsletter includes articles and photos from the officers, chairmen, clubs, as well as messages from state, regional and national officers.

# 6 And **Piedmont,** in the larger district category, earned the blue with their newsletter titled **“Footprints”.** These photos are of designs created for the Fine Arts and Flowers event at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond. If you ever have the opportunity to attend, you should! All newsletters were judged on line by judges from home.

**# 7 Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl Posters are one of our more fun traditions.**

**BLUE goes to the Tidewater district with a total of 951 posters,** which is 1.98 posters per member. Tidewater has ranked first for many years now, a legacy from Barbara Ohmsen who held the poster chairmanship for at many levels.

**# 8 RED goes to the Shenandoah District with a total of 641 posters** or .83 per member. The entire state received 1,684 posters, over last year’s 1638, a nice increase! Smokey would be pleased.

**# 9 Penny Pines has been a long standing partnership between NGC and the US Forest Service.** Members pass around mason jars collecting coins and bills at club and district meetings to purchase plantations of trees to be planted nationwide. Mid Year this program was changed to “Plant a Tree” counting dollars donated rather than Plantations. These winners reflect a combination of Penny Pines donations and Plant a Tree donations.

# 10 This year **Shenandoah** overtook Tidewater. Shenandoah placed first with $4690 combined dollars donated

# 11**Tidewater** placed second with $1515. Individuals, clubs and districts make donations in memory of club or family members.

**# 12 Taking the Penny Pines/Plant a Tree category down to the club level:**

# 13 The small Monticello Garden Club in the Shenandoah district gave $590

# 14 Medium Madison Garden Club also in Shenandoah gave $372

# 15 Large Colonial Heritage in Tidewater donated $773.

**These donations are self reported to the state chairman, rather than receiving totals back from NGC or the Forest Service.**

**# 16 The District Flower Show Schedule winner is South Central with their Small Standard Flower Show “Awaken to the Beauty of Spring”** held April 4 in the Ash Camp Baptist Church. This schedule included attractive black and white drawings of spring bulbs.

# 17 Now moving to the **clubs by District** -you won’t see every award given, rather some highlights from the club projects and accomplishments. The complete list of all the awards both state and regional is in the program inside the envelopes, will be on the VFGC web site and also in the next Old Dominion Gardener.

**Starting with Blue Ridge District which has 354 dues paying members**

**# 18 Westchester** continues a strong tradition of selling **the Visions of Beauty Calendars.** The club earned first place with total number sold – 35 as well as number per member – 2.33.

# 19 **Westchester’s club newsletter** is titled “Windows on Westchester” and earned the blue again this year. And they received the South Atlantic Region Newsletter award as well. I love the article on “ annuals that deer avoid” by their horticulture chairman, Linda Hall. I read it with great interest – many of us share the challenge of deer depredation.

# 20 The fifteen member **Westchester Garden club** presented a small standard flower show titled “Surprise! It’s Christmas in July!” The show was staged at the Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs on July 11. Alpine trees, deer and Christmas gifts welcomed visitors. They had 69 horticulture entries, 16 design entries, 20 botanical arts and 3 **educational exhibits.**

**# 21 This Daphne earned the Arboreal Award. You also see examples of botanical arts exhibits. Westchester receives the purple Flower show achievement rosette. And** their schedule earned Westchester an additional Blue.

**# 22 Now for the Piedmont District, the largest district in our state with 1436 dues paying members.**

**# 23 the small Northam Garden Club** earned **First place for their Horticulture Therapy Garden Project.** This category differs from the more poplar horticulture Therapy award, in that it focuses on a garden. Members helped landscape a Habitat for Humanity house in Ashland using some money from the Richmond Council of Garden Clubs. Club members gave the home owner a booklet listing the low maintenance shrubs and their care and walked him through his new yard. A clear landscape plan was included. Northam also earned the South Atlantic Region award for Garden Therapy.

# 24 **The medium Chesapeake Bay garden club earned first place with their website** which is maintained by club member Vicky Bowen and updated monthly. Judges viewed it on line from their homes and described the photos as engaging; the site as easy to navigate, all links working and “overall excellent”. South Atlantic Region judges agreed and gave Chesapeake their web site award.

# **25 The large Salisbury Garden club submitted an excellent award application for National Garden Week**, earning first place. They planned daily activities throughout the week of June 2 – 7. They placed educational exhibits in local libraries, planted annuals and cared for gardens at the Midlothian Post Office, at a church, a local fire station and a memory care facility. They purchased flowers for mini-bouquets in small donated containers for 165 food trays delivered by Meals on Wheels. Clear photos of the activities and detailed financial information were included in the application. South Atlantic Region gave Salisbury their award for National Garden Week.

# 26 For a second year the **medium Sleepy Hollow Garden Club has placed first with their publication in the category of ”other”**  – a “Year-End Look-Back” Celebration. This Power Point presentation was viewed by a panel of judges on-line. Photos taken by members over the year were combined into a presentation “to capture and celebrate events, achievements, projects and friend building” The power point was presented at the end of the year luncheon in May and then sent to members via email. The South Atlantic Region gave Sleepy Hollow the award for Power Point Program.

**# 27 The small Violet Bank garden club continues it’s efforts at recycling plastic** film, earning another blue. Members began collecting plastic in Sept. of 2016. Over the eight years, they have earned 14 benches which have been placed at the Violet Bank museum, the Roslyn Landing Trail along the Appomattox River, the Colonial Heights War Memorial, pickle ball/tennis courts and Crater Community hospice. They are going forward this year with the goal of another 1000 pounds of plastic. Violet Bank earned the South Atlantic Region award for their achievements.

# 28 **Violet Bank** with 17 members earned the blue for their Floral **Design Program**. Judges reviewed several outstanding award applications, some excellent ones were for a series of workshops, but please note this award is for a single program and not a series. In this case the club President led a Holiday Greenery Centerpiece Workshop. The pictures are nicely captioned, showing the workshop from the initial step of choosing greenery and accessories though the finished tabletop design.

Now for the fun of flower shows –

**# 29 The Thomas Jefferson Garden** club presented a Horticulture Specialty Show, earning a light green rosette for their show titled “Springtime Splendor” that was staged April 25 in the Trinity Lutheran Church in Henrico. 100% of the club members participated presenting 106 horticulture entries and two educational exhibits.

**# 30** The Clivia ‘Bush Lily’ earned the Growers Choice Award, the peony ‘Coral Charm’ earned the Award of Merit and the collection of 5 Japanese Maples earned both the Award of Horticulture Excellence and the Collectors Showcase award; A creative way to display the branches on a trellis.

**# 31 Richmond Designers Guild** staged a Horticulture Specialty Flower Show “How Fair is a Garden” also earning the light green rosette. This show was open to the public June 10th at the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond. 95.8 % of the members participated. I was privileged to have attended this delightful show in a well lit space in the Education Building.

**# 32** Here you see several of the 130 horticulture entries in the 41 classes. The ‘Giant Canna Striata’ earned the award of merit as did the Pachysandra ‘Variegata’.The Leucothoe earned the Arboreal Award for broadleaf evergreens. The Japanese Iris ‘Dame Fortune’ earned the award of horticultural excellence. The hydrangeas showed amazing colors.

**# 33 And the Piedmont District Flower Show Judges Council** staged a Design Specialty Flower Show titled “Good Vibrations” earning the Blue and Yellow Rosette. Beach Boys Music played throughout. There were 44 design entries, 25 Botanical Arts and 2 educational exhibits. Fifty individuals participated from 24 clubs including the National Capitol Area. This overview shows the staging of one class on black table cloths against the white and gray walls

# 34 The design on the left uses Birds of Paradise to create an angular design earning the Designers Choice Award . On the right is a reflective design which earned the Award of Design excellence.

**# 35 Moving on to the Shenandoah District with 768 members**

**# 36 The large Lake of the Woods Garden Club earned a blue with their Arbor Day/Tree Planting award application.** The annual Arbor Day celebration showcased the Veterans Dam Walkway landscape design project that included the installation of 29 trees plus shrubs. All were chosen for hardiness and drought tolerance. Most of the trees are native and this year featured the Shademaster Honey Locust chosen for its dappled shade that allows healthy turf.

**#37 The small Francis Fauquier garden club earned the blue for their Landscape Design for the Community award application.** They have been maintaining window boxes at the Post Office since the 1980’s beginning with wooden boxes and now with 3 specially made concrete boxes – you see one here. Members replant three times each year. They are able to grow Wall Germanders ( an evergreen woody shrub from the Mediterranean), adding annuals or holiday evergreens plus decorative items for each season. 100% of the members participate and the application included detailed records of costs and source of funds.

# 38 the medium **Green Hills Garden Club earned the blue with their Youth Environmental Education award application**. You may remember this from previous years. It is an amazing “Grow Native” project. In 2022 ten classes of 4th graders planted 210 native tree seedlings in containers with the help of garden club members and the Boxerwood Nature Center in Lexington. Varieties include Button bush, River Birch, Sycamore, Maple and Gray Dogwood. The young tree stewards have been keeping detailed records tracking the growth of their trees. The trees will be planted in autumn of 2026 to create a riparian buffer or wildlife habitat at a local site to be determined. I do hope the club continues to apply so we can see how this ends.

# 39 The **medium Madison garden club has been providing monthly Horticulture Therapy visits** at nursing homes in Madison since l947, earning a blue for their application. The activities are similar to those done in many clubs statewide, but this write up was exceptionally detailed with captioned photos and appreciative statements from nursing home staff. It was clear they were working with the point score rubric including explaining member participation.

# 40 the large **Lake of the Woods club earned the blue in their Civic Beautification/Civic Achievement project**. Members upgraded the landscape in front of the Clubhouse garden replacing dying Boxwood and nandina with native evergreen shrubs and perennials. Their club raised funds from two years of cookbook sales and spring plant sales to cover the costs. Member participation was 100% and they are now seeking donations from other clubs and organizations to defray some of the $6,896 cost.

# 41 The medium **Monticello garden club yearbook earned a high scoring red with their club Yearbook**. Their theme of “Bee Active!” is delightfully portrayed with black and white drawings. They have a detailed list of club projects and a full page devoted to each month’s program. This compact yearbook addresses all the points of the two page point score sheet, unchanged as National Garden Clubs no longer judges yearbooks. Yearbooks only go up to the regional level.

**# 42 Next is South Central District with 286 members**

**#43 the Staunton River Garden Club earned a high scoring red with 97 points for decorating an historic building – Avoca, a Queen Ann style Victorian house built in 1901. It houses a museum showcasing local history and culture. 6 out of the 8 members decorate the foyer and staircase for the Christmas Tours – Their theme was “Winter Wonderland”, using gold and white colors with fresh greens and angels. For this decorating an historic building award, you may use the prior December project, as the awards are due Dec. 1, before many decorations are up.**

# 44 Here you see the cover of the **Keysville Garden Club Yearbook**, there are only 14 members, but very active judging by their interesting programs and calendar of events. This cover is lovely and there are more colorful photos inside. Exhibiting horticulture and designs at monthly meetings is clearly a priority and the book includes a page to record one’s own exhibits each month. Judges awarded Keysville 97 points, a high scoring red.

# 45 **Medium south Boston Garden Club** earned a red with the high score of 95 for decorating the 1920’s renovated R J Reynolds tobacco warehouse, the “Prizery”. The chairperson of the eight day Art Gala asked the club to create floral interpretations of selected art works. Each of five groups of designers chose a piece of art and created a design to be displayed beside it. The gala raised funds for the Prizery, which is also the welcome center, performing arts theater and community room, excellent exposure for the garden club.

# 46 the medium **Buckingham/Dillwyn Garden Club earned the blue with their organic gardening** practices award application. This intriguing project was directed by Park Ranger Stacy Haflay, who demonstrated how to create a hydroponic container garden using a tub with lid and pvc piping. The hydroponic garden can be used indoors to start seedlings or can be kept indoors all year round for those who don’t have outdoor space.

47 the medium **South Boston club earned a near perfect blue with their roadside beautification award application**. This ambitious project replaced declning crepe myrtles along the median strip of the four lane highway at the north entrance to the town of South Boston. Of the 28 matching crepe myrtles planted by the club in 1996, 7 were replaced and the base growth of the others was removed. The club worked with the town and a professional landscape company. To defray the total expense of over $2,000, the club used $800 from a “VFGC Grant to Beautify and Restore “ which is exactly what they accomplished. The South Atlantic Region judges gave South Boston their award for Roadside Improvements.

**# 48 Southwest District is next with 229, the fewest members in our state.**

**# 49** The **small Dogwood Garden Club of Big Stone Gap scored a perfect 100 points with their Litter/Recycling and Reclamation** award application. This ongoing project involves the Visitor Center for the Town of Big Stone Gap, Union Primary School students, East Stone Methodist Church, Mountain Empire Community College and new this year the Lonesome Pine Community Hospital as collectors of plastic film. Two more hospitals may join in soon. And the club continued participating in the October Mountain Empire Home Craft Days Festival – reaching a large audience with their recycling message. Members are working towards their fourth TREX bench to be placed on the Green Belt walking trail spring of 2025. And the South Atlantic Region Judges gave Dogwood their award.

# **50** The **small Seasons IV Garden club earned the blue for Youth Horticulture Education** with their ongoing program with Master Gardeners and local library staff to help children and their parents gain the knowledge and confidence to grow their own food. In addition to harvesting vegetables to take home and enjoy, new this year they worked with Appalachian Sustainable Development which provided interns, advice, and materials. The program was offered late afternoons and early evenings to encourage more working families to participate. This year they also began a book club for adults with gardening topics, which included one of my personal favorites: *Braiding Sweetgrass.*

# 51 The medium **Town and Country Garden Club of Wise earned the blue with their Pollinator Gardens with Youth** application. Members worked with 20 junior gardeners to improve an existing butterfly garden behind the school. They amended the soil, added new pollinator friendly plants, weeded, watered and cared for the plants. With a hose donated by a local store and a few plants from club members, the expenses were only $120. They had advice from a Biological Specialist from Natural Tunnel State Park, and help from teachers and members of the Wise Kiawanis Club.

# 52 The medium **Galax Garden Club earned the blue with their application for Civic Beautification**. 90% of the members including one at 105 years of age, raise funds and or maintain the Gazebo Park in downtown Galax. The City of Galax helps by hauling bulk mulch to the site and repairs the structure as needed. Plus the police chief arranges for hours of community service at the park by persons in rehabilitation. Now that the park is landscaped, the annual expenditures are under $200 for annuals with the city providing about $1,000 a year of in kind goods and services. When you look at the photo, it is difficult to believe it was a vacant lot in 2003.

**# 53 On to the final district – Tidewater with 480 members**

# 54 The small **Green Meadow Point Garden Club scored a 99 point blue with their National Garden Week** application. All seven members participated by creating and placing green and white bows on their mail boxes or lamp posts. They used signs that had been distributed by our previous state president, Mary Owens and created more so a total of five decorated posts promoting national garden week were visible in various parts of the neighborhood. Simple and so effective!

**# 55 the medium Lake Smith Terrace garden club earned the blue with**  a very unique **membership brochure** – a seed packet! Members purchased seed packets and added a label on the front with their club logo “Come Grow with US’ and a QR code that links to the club face book page. Seed packets were given to all guests visiting their meetings, and shoppers at their annual pansy and spring plant sales. The total cost was less than $56 for a two year supply.

# 56 The **large Colonial Heritage Garden Club submitted a perfect scoring blue application for their Food Bank Donation** project. Members live in a 55 plus community without space for gardens, but didn’t let that stop them. They wanted to help food banks that accepted fresh produce as well as those who took only non-perishable items. To make it work they accepted non-perishable donations plus cash which they then used to purchase fresh produce. They tracked their monthly poundage of both types. Their application includes delightful thank you notes from two of the food banks.

# 57 The small **Merrifields garden club submitted their application for Bird, Butterfly and Wildlife Survival** earning a red. This fascinating project involved raising Eastern Black Swallowtail Butterflies. Club members partnered with the Hoffler Creek Wildlife Foundation, source of butterfly caterpillars for the 55 - 2nd grade classrooms of the Portsmith Public Schools . Judges loved clearly captioned photos documenting the laying of eggs on fennel plants all the way to male and female adult Eastern Black Swallowtails emerging mid July.

# 58 A most impressive and colorful **Lynnhaven Heritage Garden Club** **yearbook** earned the blue for clubs with fewer than 20 members. They include photos of their officers, and colorful pictures, sketches, and clip art on each page. There is excellent information on the club projects. Each month includes design and horticulture divisions as well as members’ birthdays.

**# 59 And moving onto the Youth Awards**

**#60 for Youth Poetry the theme was “My garden has vegetables to spare that I can Share- helping fight hunger by sharing vegetables from our garden.”**

**# 61 4th grade student, Avriel Bears**, sponsored by Madison Garden Club of Shenandoah placed first with her poem, titled “Vegetable”

Vegetable

Nutritious, Colorful

Planting, Growing, Changing

I share my vegetables

Weeding, Picking, Sharing

Savory, Amazing

Veggie

# 62 **5th grade student, Lilly Richards**, also sponsored by Madison, earned the South Atlantic Region Award!

She placed first with her acrostic poem - Note the first letter of the first word in the line spells “Vegetable”.

“My Garden Work”

Very delicious and nutritious,

Everyone should share.

Go and enjoy the fresh air

Every Tree and plant we grow.

Take time to be part of the show. Away they go every year,

But they’ll be back, don’t shed a tear.

Let’s all celebrate their hard work.

Everybody, LET’S

SHARE, SHARE, SHARE!

**#63 Now for the Smokey Bear Woodsy Owl Posters**

The clubs with the most Smokey Bear/woodsy Owl Posters are:

Green Meadow of Tidewater with 845 earns first place

Madison of Shenandoah with 338 wins second place

# 64 All Five of our students were recognized at the South Atlantic Level

The winners of 1st through 5th grades are:

1st grade: Reese Collier sponsored by Madison (S) 3rd place at SAR

2nd grade: Camila Watson sponsored by Calfee (S) 2nd place at SAR

3rd grade: Mika Skaggs sponsored by Merrifield (T) 1st place at SAR

4th grade: Eric Xing sponsored by Southside (B) 1st place at SAR

5th grade: Eve Foytik sponsored by Green Meadow Point (T) 2nd at SAR

# 65 - 69 show posters

# 70 VFGC Special Achievement Awards - or President’s awards

# 71 Focusing on **Flower Shows- the club with the most new Participants exhibiting in a show – is the small Keysville garden club of South Central**. They win $25. Of the 14 members, five were new members who had never participated in a show before. Keysville staged a small Standard Flower Show, “Melodies of Life”, April of 2023 (it is a two year category).

# 72 TREX recycling Challenge- The Buckingham/Dillwyn Garden Club of South Central earned $50 by collecting 2,061 pounds of plastic in 2024 !! The next closest clubs were Keysville with 1,914 and Violet bank with 1,266

These clubs reported their totals to the chairman, Violet Neel.

# 73 Logo

Congratulations to all of the winners of the VFGC Awards and to the clubs participating by submitting award applications. On the final pages of the award ceremony handout, you will find the South Atlantic Winners listed and also the names of the individuals, clubs, and districts who donated funds to support the awards program. Your generosity is appreciated Remember if you receive a check, cash it immediately.

This concludes the Presentation of the awards earned in 2024. I hope you found new ideas for club projects and that even more clubs will participate in the awards process this year.

Congratulations and thank you all.

Heidi Sage and Jeanne Bruton,

VFGC Awards Chairman and Vice Chairman