

BUTTE GARDEN CLUB

Meets on the LAST Wednesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Butte-Silver Bow Archives Building, 17 W.. Quartz in the upstairs Conference Room. An elevator is available. Attendees are encouraged to arrive at about 6:30 for drinks and treats and get to know other gardeners.

The club is focused on education in a city that has a brief and cool growing season in a high mountain desert (less than 12" of moisture a year). Generally, there are three presentations at every gathering after a very short business meeting of about less than 10 minutes.

Presentations are geared to meet the expectations from beginning gardeners to very experienced gardeners.

Meetings are monthly from September through May with the exception of December. During the summer months there is an annual garden tour of 4-5 gardens and one or two field trips.

We encourage prospective members to attend a meeting or two to see if the club meets your expectations. Annual memberships are \$20 which also makes you a member of the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs and National Garden Clubs which is the largest all-volunteer organization on the planet.

For further information you can contact Gail Stuart (membership chair) at gailmontana76@gmail.com or (406) 490-9099, or Norman DeNeal (president) at denealnorman@gmail.com or (406) 723-6656.

A HISTORY OF BUTTE GARDEN CLUBS

Butte, Montana was in the 1890's the most environmentally ravaged city in North America due to mining and smelting of ores that killed every living plant and several people in the city. The result was that air, water and soils were contaminated with pollutants that eventually resulted in Butte becoming the largest Superfund site in the country. The restoration of clean water, soil, and air is presently still an ongoing though almost complete process.

So it is an unlikely story that this city also had the most garden club members per capita of any city west of the Mississippi River. At its highpoint there were over 600 garden club members in 18 neighborhood clubs. The effort was largely the result of unusually competent leadership led by two prominent members, Alma Higgins and Evelyn Mooney. Higgins became Montana's most famous pioneer gardener. She established the Ponderosa Pine as the State Tree, planted several personal gardens, became the nation's "Christmas Tree Lady" by promoting living Christmas trees, planted the White House Christmas tree, and landscaped the often barren city and college campus with street trees. Mooney was an unusually competent leader who eventually rose to become the national president of National Garden Clubs in St. Louis Missouri. She led the construction of the national headquarters in 1952, and is even today remembered as the most influential national president in the long lineage of national presidents.

Today the Butte Garden Club is the only garden club in Butte. It was established in 2001 and had an immediate burgeoning membership. Presently, the club has a growing membership guided by an especially talented core of community leaders.