



MONTANA

GARDENS



Diane Ward
2023-25 MFGC President

Spring is just around the corner, and like all our fellow gardeners, I can't wait! While some parts of Montana still have lingering snow, the warming temperatures and sunshine will soon melt those last patches. However, it's not quite time to pack away the sweaters or break out the shorts—Montana's winter has a habit of blending right into spring in the blink of an eye. But one thing we *can* do is start planning our flower and vegetable gardens! New plant catalogs are arriving daily, showcasing beautiful new flower varieties, blooming shrubs, and innovative hybrid vegetables.

There's plenty of exciting news in this issue! First and foremost, I want to remind everyone about our Annual State Convention, a special event as we transition leadership for the 2025-2027 term. This year's convention will take place in **Helena**, our state capital, with the fitting theme "**Last Chance Gold Rush.**" Appropriately, the convention will be hosted at the **Best Western Premier, Great Northern Hotel**, located in the historic Last Chance Gulch.

A block of rooms has been reserved for us at a discounted rate, but **reservations must be made by May 19** to receive this special price. After that date, standard rates will apply. A registration form has been sent to all Presidents and District Directors—be sure to submit yours by **June 6**! You'll find the form included in this issue and on the MFGC website <http://www.mtfgc.org>

Exciting Convention Highlights

In addition to installing new officers, we'll be announcing **State Award winners** and the recipients of the **MFGC and Murphy Scholarships**. We've also planned **exciting educational tours** for attendees. We encourage clubs to participate in our **Ways and Means Table** and bring a **Creative Wreath** for the **Silent Auction**.

A special treat this year is a **Small Standard Design Specialty Flower Show** with the theme "**Frontier Days**," written by our talented designer and flower show judge Jim Sadler. This promises to be a fun and unique event, and we hope everyone will enter! More details are included in this issue.

Flower Show Judges Symposium – September 3-5, 2025

Montana has over **30 accredited flower show judges**, and we're proud to host a **Judges Symposium** this fall in Missoula. Every garden club member is invited to attend and "audit" the classes. To maintain their credentials, judges from Montana (and possibly other states) will attend this three-day event featuring expert instruction from a **National Garden Club Instructor** in both horticulture and floral design, followed by testing. Best of luck to all our dedicated judges!

Connecting with the National Garden Clubs

Throughout my term as State President, I've participated in **National Garden Clubs, Inc.** "Care to Share" Zoom meetings. The most recent session, hosted by President-elect Donna Donnelly in March, gathered over 50 current

(continued on next page)



Montana Federation of Garden Clubs

88th Annual State Convention

June 20-21, 2025

The official publication of the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

Spring 2025, Volume 72, Issue 1

FEATURING SPRING GARDENING AND MFGC CONVENTION



and incoming state presidents and directors. A key focus was **strengthening the connection between states and regions** and increasing awareness of the many resources NGC offers, such as **awards, scholarships, and educational programs.**

Did you know? NGC is now active on **Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, and Facebook!** Be sure to follow along for inspiration and updates.

In May, I will attend the **NGC Convention in Charleston, SC** (May 18-23, 2025). This year's theme highlights the importance of promoting the **"PLANT AMERICA"** initiative, an NGC trademarked brand.

I encourage all clubs to apply for the **PLANT AMERICA grant**, which offers up to **\$2,000** for **landscaping, environmental projects, horticultural efforts, or educational opportunities** within the community. More details can be found on the NGC website (gardenclubs.org).

Looking ahead to 2026, NGC is exploring exciting ideas to celebrate the brand, including potentially integrating the **PLANT AMERICA logo on Boeing aircraft** and hosting a **festival-style convention** in collaboration with the **Missouri Botanical Garden.** It's shaping up to be an exciting year!

One More Bit of Valuable Information!

The **Montana Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. (MFGC)** is proud to announce our new sponsorship of **Montana PBS's "Montana AG Live"**—a regular call-in program covering agricultural and gardening topics across the state. As a sponsor, MFGC will be credited at the **beginning and end of each of the 18-22 episodes per season** as well as on approximately **44 repeat broadcasts** throughout the year. The sponsorship also extends to **on-demand streaming**, giving us valuable exposure and helping more Montanans learn about our garden clubs. We're thrilled about this opportunity to connect with fellow gardening enthusiasts statewide!



Now, it's time for me to get back to browsing those tempting seed catalogs and making tough decisions about what to plant this year!

Have a wonderful summer, *Diane*

Symposium - September 4 and 5

The Montana Federation of Garden Clubs, in collaboration with the Missoula Garden Club, will host a Symposium on September 4 and 5 at the Missoula County Fairgrounds.

The first day will focus on **Horticulture**, featuring a session on *Collections*, with an emphasis on Sunflowers and Hardy Hydrangeas. The instructor for this session will be Pam Braun. On the second day, the focus will shift to **Floral Design**, with sessions on *Transparency* and *Mono-Botanic* design styles. The allied topic for this day will be **Fiber Works**, led by instructor Gina Jogan.



Susan Billmayer
Flower Show Schools
Chairman

This Symposium, held every three years, is an opportunity for flower show judges to renew their certification. However, it is open to **all** who are interested in expanding their knowledge of horticulture and floral design. Brochures and registration forms will be available soon. For more information, please contact Local Chairman Gary Clark or Registrar Ellen Darling.

Getting the Gardening Season Started



Darcy Neal
Great Falls Flower Growers

It can be extremely overwhelming to look out your window in early Spring watching the snowbanks fade while the “to do” list seems to endlessly grow. The following are things I do to prepare my garden for the growing season.

First, I go through my tools to make sure my pruners, loppers, and hedge trimmers are sharp and clean. I am partial to Felco pruners because I believe they hold an edge longer, and I can get replacement blades/parts if needed.

Cleaning up perennials is next on my list. The most common question I am asked every season is “What do I do with my ornamental grasses?” I trim the upright grasses, such as Feather Reed Grass, down to roughly four inches tall. Blue Oat Grass is the exception. I trim the seed heads off and pull the dead material out of the grass clump (which usually isn’t much). For Tufted Hair Grass, I trim enough to tighten the shape.



There are a few perennials I don’t do anything with except trim the dead material out of them. I give these perennials a little time to fully come out of dormancy prior to cleaning them up. These varieties include Creeping Phlox, Dianthus, Snow in Summer, low growing Sedum, and Candytuft.



Thirdly, I address the Hydrangeas. In my area, these are divided into two groups: Smooth (Arborescens) and Panicle Hydrangeas. Although both groups bloom on new wood, I do prune them differently. Smooth Hydrangeas include the varieties Annabelle and Incrediball.™ I prune them down to four to six inches above the soil line and remove the older/dead material. Panicle Hydrangeas include Limelight, Quick Fire, and Vanilla Strawberry® to name a few. These are pruned back by ½ to ⅔ of their size, and I also remove any dead material.



Most landscapes contain roses, and many people wonder how and when to prune them. I prune my roses in the Spring, starting with removing anything dead. I then prune out any crossing/rubbing branches. Finally, I prune them to shape; the height is determined by where the stem is alive (green).

Next on my “to do” list is prepping for any vegetable gardening I plan on doing. A few early planting candidates include potatoes, onions, rhubarb, asparagus, strawberries, and raspberries.

Lastly, I check my garden for any watering it may require. Although this time of year is typically cooler with more moisture, it’s still a good idea to check to make sure your perennials, trees, and shrubs aren’t too dry coming out of dormancy.

For me personally, it is very rewarding to look back in my garden as I am cleaning it up, and to see how quickly plants grow once the dead material is removed. I suggest tackling the mountain of Spring work one section/one variety at a time so as not to get overwhelmed or completely worn out! Happy Gardening to all!

Perennials - Divide and Conquer !



Jennifer Weiss
Belgrade Bloomers
Garden Club

If you have grass and weeds in a flower bed, deal with them now! Strip the grass off the area by cutting deeply to remove as much of the root system as possible. Then, cover with black plastic and weight it down to make contact with the soil. Leave the plastic in place for weeks/months, and then check for growth. Let the sun and heat do their job! If necessary, use a grass/weed killer, but follow planting directions and wait times.

Let's say you have that lovely flower bed, free of grass and weeds, beautifully amended. Points to consider before planting or replanting — **Spacing, Sun or Shade, Water Requirements, Height (tall, medium or short), Bloom Times and Color.**

When or why does a plant need dividing? The center has died out (grasses), roots, rhizomes or tubers are on the surface, the plant has outgrown its space or is not performing well, it's in the wrong location, or it's taking over the garden.

Note that plants with a central tap root don't divide well (oriental poppy, columbine, lavender, sea holly, gallardia and others).

Spring blooming plants should be divided in the fall. Fall and late summer blooming plants should be divided in the spring. It is better for the plant to be divided in the cooler seasons of spring and fall.

Start —

- Cut the foliage back. Let the plant put energy into the new root growth.
- Use clean, sharp tools.
- Dig carefully, trying not to damage too many roots.
- Once you have the root ball out of the ground, separate it into sections. You can take some soil off, leave as much as you can.
- Remove any damaged roots using sterilized, sharp pruners.
- Either replant or pot up extras.
- Any potted plants should be watered and put in a shady spot.

When replanting —

- Dig the hole about twice as wide as the root ball, but not too deep. Plant at the same height as it was before. Bulbs that worked their way to the surface should be replanted at recommended depths. Choose large corms or bulbs to replant and discard any shrunken, mushy, or diseased ones.
- Make sure the new plant is watered in well. Do not fertilize with a nitrogen-forward fertilizer. Nitrogen promotes leaf growth; right now you want the root system to start growing. You can use a good compost now which should be good the first year. If the soil is less than stellar, you can use a weak, organic, non-burning fertilizer.

Tools to use —

- Flat-backed spades. Long handles give more leverage; short handles work better in tight spaces
- Diamond point or flat blades
- Garden fork
- Loppers
- Pruners

Clean, sharp tools take a lot of the work out of digging. Spades with stuck-on dirt and dull blades need more power (that means you) to work.

Disinfect tools between plants if there is a chance of spreading disease. 90% rubbing alcohol, a 10% bleach solution, or other sanitizer will work.

MONARCH BUTTERFLIES PROPOSED FOR THREATENED SPECIES STATUS

~Kathy Waters, Butterfly Chair

In a December press release announcing the potential listing of the Monarch Butterfly to the Threatened Species List, U. S. Fish and Wildlife stated that the population of the eastern migratory population of monarchs has declined by 80% since the 1980s, putting it at a 56 to 74% chance of extinction by 2080, while the western migratory population has declined by more than 95%, putting it at a greater than 99% chance of extinction by 2080. The eastern population is everything east of the Continental Divide; while the western population is everything west of the Continental Divide.

If listed, threatened status will protect Monarchs by prohibiting anyone from killing, transporting them or making changes that would render their property permanently unusable for the species, such as eradicating milkweed from the land. This includes anyone that sprays to kill milkweed and nectar plants, and developers that take land out of production by paving or building on it.

Monarch butterflies are counted in the winter while hibernating. The Western population hibernates at 257 sites along California's coastline and Baja California in Mexico. *Lower Topanga Canyon State Park was overwintering habitat for Monarchs, but was destroyed in the 2025 LA wildfires.* The western population of the Monarch butterfly has declined to a near record low with fewer than 10,000 found living in California this year.

The eastern population has decreased more than 80% since the 1980's. They over-winter in the mountains of central Mexico just west of Mexico City. It takes three generations of Monarch butterflies to make the 2,500 - 3,000 mile trip to Canada and the northern U.S. states. In spring they mate, lay eggs on milkweed, the only plant species used for this purpose, and die. The eggs hatch, the larvae feed on poisonous milkweed leaves. The poison sap gives them protection from predators. They pupate, emerge as adults and begin the long trip north. They can fly up to 100 miles a day, often at elevations of 800 to 1200 feet. When they reach their destination, again they mate, lay eggs and die. The cycle continues until the third generation reach their far northern limit. The fourth generation starts the long trip back to Mexico City in late summer or early fall. This generation lives through the winter, hibernating in the cold weather.

Habitat loss, climate change, pesticides, natural enemies, disease and weather events are believed to be responsible for the Monarch's decline. The Monarch butterfly was first petitioned to be listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 2014, but that effort was shelved due to more urgent population priorities. In December 2024, the U.S. agency released a proposal to list the Monarch Butterfly as a threatened species.

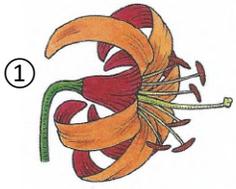
"The iconic monarch butterfly is cherished across North America, captivating children and adults throughout its fascinating lifecycle. Despite its fragility, it is remarkably resilient, like many things in nature when we just give them a chance," Martha Williams, then-director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, said in a December statement. "Science shows that the monarch needs that chance."



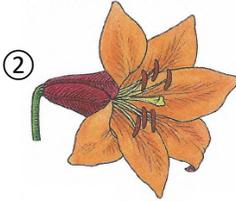
- How can you help?**
- Plant native milkweed that is native to your region. In northern Montana, we plant Showy Milkweed (*Asclepias spectabilis*). This is important because if you "cheat the zone" and plant a not-as-hardy milkweed, the Monarchs stop migrating too soon and die.
 - Plant nectar-rich flowers in large patches for the adults to feed on.
 - DO NOT USE PESTICIDES! This is the most important thing you can do. Pesticides also get into your food supply and are absorbed through your skin. A few chewed leaves are a small price to pay for your and your family's well-being.
 - Advocate for all pollinators. Join a pollinator project in your community.
 - And tell everyone how important the pollinators are to life on earth!

Lilies Add Distinction to your Garden!

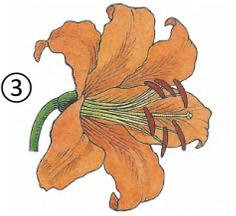
~ Gary Clark, Horticulture Chair



Early on, *lilium* (lilies) were considered difficult to grow because of easy rotting, with not much blooming the first year after planting, and scale-like bulbs drying out before planting. Lilies are known to have been around a long time, dating back to the ancient Egyptians and Bible times. Madonna lilies (*Lilium candidum*) were mentioned in the Bible and shown in ancient paintings and drawings.



The lily flowers range in size from 1 inch to 1 foot in diameter and most have a very pleasing fragrance – some have no smell (Asiatics) and a few have disagreeable fragrances. Lilies include all colors of the spectrum except the true blues. Size varies from dwarf (1-foot *L. pumilum*) to 3-5 feet high (*L. henryi*). Flowering times extend from June to October in most climate zones. With many buds on a single stalk, these long lasting flowers can bloom for days or even weeks.



A basic necessary idea for growing lilies is to have free-draining soil (excess water in winter quickly leads to bulb rotting). Adding coarse sand in and around bulbs helps alleviate this. Also, one should not let bulbs dry out before planting – just keep them cool but not freezing. The depth of planting depends on each cultivar. Some lilies are stem-rooting and need to be planted 6-8 inches in depth, whereas others such as Madonna Lilies are basal-rooting and need to be planted not more than 2 inches deep. After planting them with well-rotted compost or peat with bulb fertilizer mixed in, water them well and keep the bulbs damp but not soggy or drenching. Most lilies need staking (especially tall varieties). Dead flowers need to be removed and plants cut down in late autumn after they have turned yellow.

I plant most of my lilies in the fall, but for spring planting, I start them first in pots and place them in partial shade in my back yard (making sure to stake them). The bulbs grow larger in the pots and get a good start before summer and winter with well-rotted organic matter. Lilies like their “feet” wet and their “heads” dry and sunny. They propagate easily from scale parts and seeds.

Note the three major flower forms in lilies by their shapes: ① Turks-Cap or reflexed shapes, ② trumpet shapes, and ③ bowl shapes (see above). These shapes can be upright on the plant, outward-facing, upward-facing, or downward-facing. There are seven major groupings of *Lilium*: 1. Asiatic Hybrids – flowering in June/July, 2-5 feet tall, example Cinnabar (shown below left) 2. Martagon Hybrids – flowering in June/July, up to 5-feet tall, example Mrs. RO Backhouse 3. Candidum Hybrids – flowering in June/July, example *L. testaceum* 4. American Hybrids – flowering in July, up to 4-feet tall, example Shuksan (shown below middle) 5. Trumpet Hybrids – flowering in July/August. 4-5 feet tall, example Golden Splendor 6. Oriental Hybrids – flowering in August/September, up to 5-6 feet tall, example Stargazer (shown below right) 7. Species or Wild Lilies – flowering time varies on varieties, example *L. canadense* or *L. candidum*.

With just a little TLC, you can add a beautiful array of color, blooms, and fragrances to your summer garden with lilies!

Some information derived from
The New Flower Expert by
Dr. D.G. Hessayon



Gardens Connect

~ N. DeNeal, Garden Therapy Chair

Gardens give. And they give with gifts of beauty, memory, calmness, and healing. In the storied city of Butte, there exists several gardens that are dedicated to the loss of a loved one. Memory is important in Butte. In its first 100 years it had the most ethnically diverse ethnic population per capita in human history. Its Mining Hill became the most industrialized place on the planet at the height of the Industrial Revolution. And with New York City and Northern Michigan, Butte led this nation's labor movement. With so much history, it might not be surprising to know that in this milieu of memory Butte has many memorial gardens. Several new ones are home gardens that commemorate a family's loss of an adolescent. Picking just one garden is not fair because they all well express a connection to healing. Nevertheless, choosing one will illustrate the meaning of the others.



Toby's memorial garden overlooking Butte in the evening (above), and the garden with a plaque and many family and favorite plants (below).



Nestled next to an untouched forest that rises another half mile above the Mile High City is Annie Bouchard's garden. This was not Annie's first garden. She had many from childhood to now via several home moves. Before this current garden, she unexpectedly became pregnant at an advancing age. But the boy, Toby, was immediately intuited by the family as somehow an exceptional gift. The intuition proved true. Toby was charming, smart and curious. From his mother he learned early on how to cook, sew, and care for plants. When moving to the mountain site home two years before he died, he set out a design for the garden with landscape blocks that were laid with the precision of a carpenter's level. Sartorially precocious, Toby once charmed his peers by eagerly dressing up for dress up day at school. But it was one day early. Oops. But the next day the other boys came way more dressed up than they otherwise would have been.

Toby died at 17 in innocence. It really didn't take any time for Annie to dedicate her new garden as a memorial to Toby. The garden had Toby's toys and an aspen he planted. Petunias started from seed, family iris, lupin, pansies, daisies and a myriad of other plants came to grace the garden. Adjoining the garden is a tent gazebo with rustic chairs and a firepit. A garden bench was placed by one of Toby's retaining walls. And that bench looks down into the Butte valley straight to his grave in Holy Cross Cemetery. At night the garden is aglow with hundreds of small lights, some reminiscent of Toby's love

for fireflies. A memorial stone and plaque now lay among the flowers. From time to time the family notices how the mischievous Toby still moves his toys to express his love and continued presence. And last year the garden was blessed by a gifted priest from France, among Bouchard family friends.

Now with seven years, the garden has become a medium for healing loss and turning that into wisdom. Countless others have experienced much of what this one memorial garden illustrates. Gardens, a miracle in themselves, can gift other miracles. They can illustrate that everything is connected both within this realm of time and that which lies beyond time.

News Roundup



Miles City Garden Club members were busy and having fun over the winter months. We celebrated Christmas with a

wonderful party and dinner catered by our own chef extraordinaire, Anna!

As a service to the community, we volunteered to help the Salvation Army with the bell ringing. We were once again invited by the local FFA chapter help judge the floriculture competition. We learned as much from this experience as the area students did!

We spent a cold day inside an area greenhouse taking cuttings and rooting a variety of plants. We'll care for them until it's time to repot them in the spring. We have several more upcoming garden-related workshops planned.



This year, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of our affiliation with the MT Federation of Garden Clubs.

Stevensville Garden Club

Active garden club member Joanne McElfresh, age 90, passed away in November 2024. She enrolled in the UM School of Forestry and graduated in 1956 with a degree in Forestry, Timber Management option. She was the first female graduate to go into the field as opposed to clerical work. She was a career Forester who served in Region 1, primarily in Timber Management. Her favorite job adventure was when she was promoted to Zone Timber Planner. Many of her stories came from this time in Butte, 1975-79. Joanne was named Humanitarian of the Year for Stevensville in 2013. She was a champion of women and per Joanne's wishes, a non-profit has been established with funds from her estate, for education and spiritual formation called YES YOU SHOULD GO. In Joanne's own words. "An education opens doors and minds. It was an awesome adventure, and I have no regrets."

In Memory of Ruth Layton MFGC President, 2005–2007



Ruth Layton passed away in December 2024.

A lifelong gardener, Ruth was known for planting large gardens, preserving ("putting up") her harvests, and generously sharing her horticultural knowledge with her grandchildren. Her love for horticulture extended beyond her home—she supervised the county fair horticulture area for many years, encouraging community involvement and education.

Ruth also made significant contributions at the state level. As chair of the 2010 National Garden Clubs (NGC) Fall Board meeting held in Great Falls, she helped secure the initial MFGC investments with the meeting profits—an enduring legacy for the organization.

During her tenure as MFGC President, several Montana Blue Star Markers were dedicated, commemorating veterans and enriching communities across the state. She also started the "Circle of Green Thumb" award recognizing members from each club.

Life Members of District 5 Raise Funds for Vo-Tech Scholarships at "Holidaze Style Show and Luncheon"

A unique, but tried-and-true fundraiser chaired by Patty Schlaeger for Life Members, was a roaring success last November. The event was attended by 110 people with 26 others working during the show as entertainers or models. Over \$1200 was raised. An heirloom quilt was donated for a raffle and 50/50 tickets were sold. More than 50 items donated by local businesses in Great Falls and Cascade were given away as door prizes. A scholarship application form was sent to 13 high schools in the area surrounding Great Falls. Two \$600 scholarships for vo-tech education will be awarded to high school seniors who apply by May 1, 2025.

With the participation of all the combined Life Members, this project was set to succeed!

Gallatin Empire Garden Club received word that member Susan Woods passed away this winter. Susan served as the club president for many years and was the MFGC Life Members Chair for several terms.

Nominating Committee

James Sadler, Chairman

As Chair of the Nominating Committee, I would like to present the following slate of officers to be voted on at the MFGC convention in June:

- Regina “Jeannie” Bennett of the Missoula Garden Club was elected as President-elect at the Winter Board Meeting.
- Cindy Carlton of the Gallatin Empire Garden Club has been nominated to be First Vice President.
- Liz Smith of the Miles City Garden Club has been nominated as the Second Vice President.
- Ann Wickum of the Chester Garden Club has been nominated to be re-elected as our Recording Secretary.
- Beverly Geary of the Stevensville Garden Club has been nominated to be Treasurer.



Liz Smith



In 1995, I traveled to Fairmont Hot Springs to federate the Miles City Garden Club, so I am a longtime member.

At a local level, I have served as President and Vice President, Chairman of many committees, including our Blue Star in 2015 and Blooming on the

Prairie State Convention in 2019. I have been Eastern Montana Gateway District Director for three separate terms. I served as Membership Chairman at the State level for three consecutive Presidents.

I am honored to have been asked to serve as 2nd Vice President and am looking forward to meeting new members and being re-acquainted with old members.

The President will appoint the Parliamentarian and Corresponding Secretary. Thank you to everyone who served on this committee with me in presenting this fine slate of officers for the Federation.

Beverly Geary



I have been a plant fan as far back as I can remember. Mom was not a gardener, but enjoyed flowers in the garden. As a child, I did my best to help them survive. One of my proudest childhood moments was when I was able to revive the “stick” (that’s what we called it). Turns out it was a pink camellia. You’ve got to love plants. They are incredible!

In college I studied Ornamental Horticulture at an agricultural school which focused on plant sciences and production. After college I tried to fit myself into nursery work and just was not happy.

My path led me to a data processing job where I learned that I enjoyed computers and numbers. I got good at keying, balancing numbers and maintaining the equipment. At my second data processing job, I grew into PC setup and maintained them at a multiple branch bank.

In 1986, I worked for Elmore and Associates Accounting in Missoula, as a data processing manager where I learned the world of payroll and financials. I set up PC’s and bookkeeping software for the firm’s clients.

In 1996 I found my DREAM JOB that lasted 25 years. At Altman Plants, one of the largest nurseries in the U.S., I processed payrolls, then moved onto the sales department where Excel became my life. I used it to stock Cactus and Succulent plants into Wal-Mart and Lowes stores nationwide, including Alaska. In 2006 I became their first employee to telecommute to work. I retired in 2021.

The first garden club I joined was the Miles City Garden Club where I served one term as treasurer. In the Stevensville Garden Club, I served two terms as treasurer and one as president. I hope to serve the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs with integrity, accuracy and continuity as their next Treasurer.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE of the MFGC 2025 ANNUAL CONVENTION

FRIDAY, June 20, 2025

8 a.m.-10:45 a.m. REGISTRATION Convention Registration; Check in for Flower Show; Drop off Ways and Means Items; Deliver and Price Wreaths for Silent Auction; Setup Chairperson Displays.

11 a.m. CALL TO ORDER (Open business meeting)

Welcome and Opening

Flower Show Judging Begins

12:30 p.m. LUNCHEON (AWARDS PRESENTATIONS)

2:00 p.m. CONTINUING BUSINESS MEETING

3:30 p.m. TO 5:00 p.m. TOUR GARDENWERKS FLOWER FARM – Carpool loading in Hotel Parking Lot

5:00 p.m. Flower Show Judging ends

5:00 p.m. Reception in honor of President Diane Ward

6:00 p.m. WELCOME DINNER Speaker **Diane Ward** AND Award Presentations for Flower Show

App. 7:30 p.m. Judges Council Meeting (All flower show judges) Election of 2025-2027 Chairperson(s) and Symposium Presentation

SATURDAY, June 21, 2025

8:00 a.m. REGISTRATION if needed

8:30 a.m. LIFE MEMBERS' MEETING Agenda: Elect Life Members Chair for 2025-2027

“Springtime in the Rockies” and once again the weather can’t make up its mind! One minute I look out the window and it is snowing, then I see some sunshine peeking through, and later I will see wind and rain! It’s always a surprise what each day will bring this time of year.

The deadline for awards has passed, and I’ve received a number of Award applications. Now the fun begins with judging, printing certificates, etc. to prepare for the state convention presentation noted above.

I would like to give some guidance and address the reports that are presented at state conventions. Reports are now limited to “up to 4 minutes”. Depending on the specific meeting agenda, the State President and Parliamentarian can change this time limit. State Chairpersons, Club Presidents, District Directors, and State Officers need to prepare reports for our state conventions. One of three copies of the report need to be given to the recording secretary, district director, and the State President. The State President may request that reports be pre-filed electronically. Club president reports should cover major club projects, special speakers or demonstrations, participation in Montana Federation of Garden Club, Rocky Mountain Region, and National Garden Club projects, and other information that clubs may find useful, such as fundraising and tour ideas. Clubs are requested to not give a month-by-month synopsis of their activities. The information provided in this article is available on our MFGC website, under member section, click on ‘How to’, go to ‘Host a Convention’, then ‘Reports’ are on page 11. I hope this helps with writing your reports!

9:00 a.m. CONTINUING BUSINESS MEETING

Board of Directors Reports (Officers, Chairpersons, District Directors, Club Presidents)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT
ELECTION OF 2025-2027 OFFICERS

12:30 p.m. LUNCHEON (SCHOLARSHIP AND ENDOWMENT AWARDS)

2:00 p.m. Tour of remodeled State Capitol (Carpool to Capitol)

3:15 p.m. Class at Hotel, “Using Montana Native Plants in Your Landscape”

5:00 p.m. Reception in honor of President Jeannie Bennett

6:00 p.m. INSTALLATION DINNER , Featured Speaker NGC President Donna Donnelly
INVITATION TO 2026 CONVENTION
FINAL CREDENTIALS REPORT
COURTESY RESOLUTION

ADJOURN: (Adjourn Sine die)

SUNDAY, JUNE 22, 2025

8:00 a.m. POST CONVENTION NEW BOARD MEETING

All new or continuing members of the Board of Directors for the 2025-2027 Garden Years



Cindy Carlton, 2nd VP

Convention Tours and Speakers

Friday, Jun 21, 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Tour and garden excursion to Gardenwerks Flower Farm at 3225 Cooney Drive, Helena, MT www.gardenwerks.com and Flowerfarm@gardenwerks.com. Gardenwerks is the premier Helena Full service locally owned garden center. Stock is tried and true for our region and carefully selected from growers in Montana, Idaho, and Canada. Enjoy the display gardens, water features, walkways and patios, and vegetable gardens that will inspire you home gardens. Browse the entire line of eco-friendly products as well as tools, seeds, containers and all garden accessories. Consult the largest gardening library in Helena and consult with the Certified Plant Professionals who work here. Learn about raising and managing a cutting garden, a great choice for garden club flower design activities. You will enjoy this educational tour with the bonus of quality garden shopping.



Saturday, June 21, 2025 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.

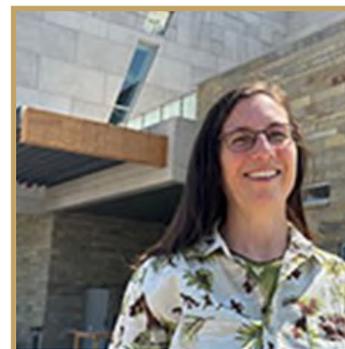
Montana Capitol Building Tour

Most garden club members did not get to see all the remodeling that occurred in our Capitol so our trip to Helena is a great opportunity. The Historical Society tour guides are well versed in the history of Montana, the capitol building, and of the new, Montana Heritage Center (Opens in Nov 25). If construction allows, we will also see the new Native Plant trail around the soon to open Heritage Center. Sue Leferink, our own member of the Townsend, and formerly of Helena, Garden clubs is now an employee of the Montana Historical Society. She will enthusiastically help us with these tours and then teach a class for us on our return to the hotel.



Saturday, June 21, 2025 3:15 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Class “Landscaping with Native Plants” by Sue Leferink. Sue is an enthusiastic and highly knowledgeable Montana Native Plant expert. As a volunteer at “Montana Wild” on Highway 12 west of Helena she has laid trails and provided classes for hundreds of visitors to enjoy. MFGC members still fondly remember the Helena convention offered in 2016 where bees, jams, and honey were central to the theme. Sue is a delightful and in-demand teacher, and we are lucky to take her away from work to join us. In “landscaping with native plants” we will learn the right plants to use under the austere conditions that most Montanans garden in. Her ability in Montana landscaping will teach us how to do this effectively and aesthetically in our own yards and in club projects. Sue will be ready for questions and provide information on other Helena gardens to consider visiting,



Media

~ Bob Wicks, Media Chair

There are many educational materials available through the Federation to all the garden clubs in the state. There are many topics to choose from including garden design, plant and tree disease, landscaping and gardening in general. If you have a topic you would like to share with your club, please let me know. I can send the DVD or book that is available on the subject you would like to learn about. Another great resource is Montana State University. The Extension has Mont-Guides on any subject you can imagine. The address for the list of Mont-Guides is msuextension.org. The professors at MSU are also available to come to your city and give a talk on their area of expertise. In Billings we had Dr. Clain Jones talk to us about soil health. To find a professor's name and subject they teach, go to Extension on the MSU website and find the name of the expert. Another great resource is the local Extension office. Last year Red Lodge had the state Horticulturist come and talk about two different topics. Please feel free to reach out to me for help or to receive materials for your club. My email address is bobwix@hotmail.com.

Tips for Creating a Petite Design

Jim Sadler, Design Consultant

Now is the time to prepare for the convention Petite flower show in June. All of the entries allow the exhibitor to use dried plant material. By doing the entries now you will be able to let them set awhile, and you will be able to better judge if they are worthy. Taking a black and white picture with your phone is also a strategy to improve your design. I email the picture to my desk computer. When I receive it, I will open it up to view the picture. I have found that chances are I will spot problems immediately. Corrective measures can be taken until I am satisfied with the results.

The reason why I mention this fact is that if you collect your materials now, you will have time to plan. Often the materials I gather dictate the style or how I execute a design. Spring is a suitable time to collect small flowers for your designs. Take a tour around your yard, alley, or field near you, and you will discover a whole new world. Many of the wildflowers are small and in a proportion that is useful. When you collect it, be sure to take many times the number that you need.

While the small flowers are still fresh there is a trick that I want to share with you. Purchase a box or package of silica gel. If you do not have a craft store that carries it, you can purchase it on the internet. Depending on how big the package is, the price varies. The good thing is that it lasts forever and can be used over and over. Fill a glass or microwaveable cup halfway. I then place the stem, flower, or spray in the cup. Then with a spoon, I gently fill the container slowly around the plant material. Be sure the material is fully covered. I then place it in the microwave for 10 seconds. Let the cup cool down. It is best that the material is not totally crisp. You may have to increase or decrease the time to get the desired degree of dryness. It may take several attempts to get what you need. Set the material aside for a time when you have peace of mind to do the design.

Doing Petite designs is very much the same as doing regular designs. All of the principals of designs are followed. One way to check is to enlarge a picture of your finished design. If it is a good design, you should not be able to tell that it is a petite design.



88th MFGC Convention

June 20-21, 2025—Helena

“Last Chance Gold Rush”



One of the highlights of convention will be a NGC Small Standard Design Specialty Flower Show similar to the one held in Billings in 2022, which was so much fun.

Preregistration is required. Please notify JoAnn Gibbons at jogibbons@cybernet1.com or me to reserve a place. JoAnn will prepare your entry tag for you and will place it where your design is to be situated. Designs to be exhibited at Convention. Entry begins after 8:00 AM and continues until 10:45 AM June 20 when entry time ends.

NGC awards to be given, if warranted: Table Artistry, Designers Choice, Award of Distinction, Award of Design Excellence.

All members are welcome to enter.

James Sadler, Chairman

Frontier Days

Section A Table Artistry Section “Pretty dishes make food taste better.”

- Class 1: "**TEA at the Montana Club**" - a functional table set for 1 person. Dimensions allotted 12"
- Class 2: "**PIONEER'S FEAST**" - an Exhibition Table must contain some vessel meant for the service of food and set within the allotted space of 12"
- Class 3: "**TRAILBLAZER'S PICNIC**" - an Exhibition Table must contain some vessel meant for the service of food set within the allotted space of 12"

Section B Designers Choice Section “Adventure is found where you seek it.”

- Class 4: "**GOLD RUSH**" - 5" Designers' Choice
- Class 5: "**SCOUT'S DISCOVERY**" - 5" Designers' Choice
- Class 6: "**CATHEDRAL CHOIR**" - a Multi-Rhythmic 5" design

Section C Award of Distinction Section “Roadside treasures can be fascinating.”

- Class 7: "**TIMELESS JOURNEY**" - 8" Designer's Choice
- Class 8: "**UNSTOPPABLE SPIRIT**" - 8" Designer's Choice
- Class 9: "**WESTWARD HO**" - 8" Spatial Thrust





Montana Federation of Garden Clubs

PRESENTS

“LAST CHANCE GOLD RUSH”

88th Annual State Convention – Premier Best Western, Helena Great Northern Hotel

835 Great Northern Blvd., Helena, MT

June 20-21, 2025

Blocked rooms will be released on May 19th! Pay full price after that date.

Reserve now: Hotel Front Desk - (406) 457-5500. Convention room rate is \$220.00 (plus taxes) – Double queen rooms. **Rates include deluxe breakfast bar with items that change daily and complimentary overnight parking.** Anyone wanting to share a room may contact Jeannie Bennett: mfgc.jeanniebennett@gmail.com or call (406) 781-7615.

Convention Registration Form must be postmarked by June 6, 2025.

Name: _____ Club: _____ District: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail Address: _____

PLEASE CIRCLE APPLICABLE TITLES: * indicates voting member. ** indicates club delegate.

Advisory Council Member*	Alternate Delegate**	Appointed State Officer*	Club Delegate*
Club President*	Club President Proxy**	District Director*	First Time Attendee
Flower Show Judge	Garden Club Member	Guest	State President*
Landscape Design Consultant	National Board Member	National Life Member	Region Board Member
Region Director	Region Officer	State Chairman*	State Life Member
Student FS Judge	Student LD Consultant		

REGISTRATION: Registration form and fees must be postmarked by June 6, 2025! No routine refunds after June 13, 2025. MFGC Members must register to attend any function. Add registration and meals for total cost.

REGISTRATION:

Convention Registration \$35 \$ _____

LATE REGISTRATION – POST MARKED JUNE 7 OR LATER \$45 \$ _____

MEALS: 20% gratuity included

Friday, June 20, AWARDS LUNCHEON \$25 \$ _____

Friday, June 20, WELCOME DINNER \$45 \$ _____

Saturday, June 21, SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON \$25 \$ _____

Saturday, June 21, INSTALLATION DINNER \$50 \$ _____

TOTAL REGISTRATION COST: \$ _____

List any Food Allergies here: _____

CLUBS ARE ASKED TO BRING SOMETHING FOR WAYS AND MEANS AND A WREATH FOR THE SILENT AUCTION!

Make registration checks payable to: MFGC. Mail to: P.O. Box 109, Whitehall, MT 59759. OR E-mail to: janetinparadise@gmail.com. Any questions, please contact: Janet Finney at 406- 224-0275.

By entering the event and by your presence at the 2025 MFGC Annual State Convention, you consent to be photographed, filmed, and/or otherwise recorded. You consent to the use of your image, voice or name for publicity, advertising, informational, educational or promotional purposes by the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

Notes, Dates and Links



Big Sky Stars—Send congratulations, thanks, anniversary announcements, and commendations from your club for print in Montana Gardens.

\$20

Contact the Editor



Enter to Win MFGC's Patriotic Photography Contest to Celebrate 250 Years of American Independence in 2026



Calling all MFGC members ★ Help us Celebrate! Take photos this summer to enter the contest. High resolution entries due **April 15, 2026** in the following divisions.

Containers grown by the garden club member.

Gardens grown by the garden club member or a club.

Floral Designs Any type (traditional or creative) floral design created by a garden club member.

Arrangements a. created by a garden club member;
b. created by a youth up to 16 years of age.

Public Areas Any area such as Blue and Gold Star plantings, cemeteries, military sites, libraries, parks, post offices, etc.

Photos should feature predominately red, white and blue plants/flowers. One entry per division per member; digital photos only. We reserve the right to use all entries in MFGC publications and on the MFGC website and Facebook pages.

First, second and third monetary awards. Complete entry information can be found on the MFGC website.



Images in this issue provided by Diane Ward, Jeannie Bennett, Jennifer Strelczyk, Mary Wambolt, Jim Sadler, Phyllis White, Liz Smith, Beverly Geary, Norm DeNeal, Kathy Waters, and Darcy Neal.

Contact information for Officers, Chairmen, District Directors and others is available in the MFGC website's Member Section. Please send ALL change of address information to Beverly Geary, Montana Gardens Circulation Editor, bevmg@hotmail.com

Please update Club information on the MFGC website by contacting Elaine Wood, mfgweb@gtfalls.com

2025 MFGC Winter Board Minutes appear in the Members' Section at <https://www.mtfgc.org>

MFGC, RMR and NGC meetings are open to Montana Garden Club Members.

June 1, MFGC Dues are due.

June 20-21, MFGC 88th Convention and Installation, Helena

August 22-23, Rocky Mountain Region Annual Meeting, Cheyenne, WY

September 1, MFGC Endowment Grant Applications Due—see the website for information

September 4-5, Flower Show Symposium, Missoula

Notes from the Treasurer —

New MFGC Members:

Anaconda GC - Donni Cochran

Stevensville GC - Cynthia Shaver, Judy Hoar

Ginny Coleman, Pamela Murphy,

Robin Northern, Rebecca Aliff,

Kimmy Burns, Pam Moen

Rainbow GC - Jeannie Smith, Cheryl Tadej

Plant-a-Tree:

Rainbow GC - \$100

Sponsorship:

Montana AG Live, \$500

MONTANA Gardens

Official Publication of the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. Member of the Rocky Mountain Region and National Garden Clubs, Inc. All rights reserved. Full color issues are available at: www.mtfgc.org

The Montana Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. promotes education, resources and networking opportunities for its members and Montana youth to promote the love of gardening, floral design and civic and environmental responsibility.

Co-Editors: Phyllis White, gardens@bresnan.net

and Norm DeNeal, denealnorman@gmail.com

Darlene Skari, Copy Editor

Erika Madden, Graphic Design Consultant

Editors reserve the right to edit all submissions for content and length. Submissions are encouraged

Submission Deadlines:

July 15, 2025 – Summer/Fall

November 1, 2025– Winter **Note Date Change**

April 15, 2026—Spring

MFGC is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization (EIN #81-6010783). Donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. As a tax-exempt organization, your donation makes an impact, and we are thankful for your support.



Beverly Geary
 Montana Gardens Circulation Mgr.
 1891 Sutherland Dr.
 Corvallis MT 59282-9679

NON-PROFIT
 ORG.
 US POSTAGE
PAID
 BOZEMAN, MT
 PERMIT #106



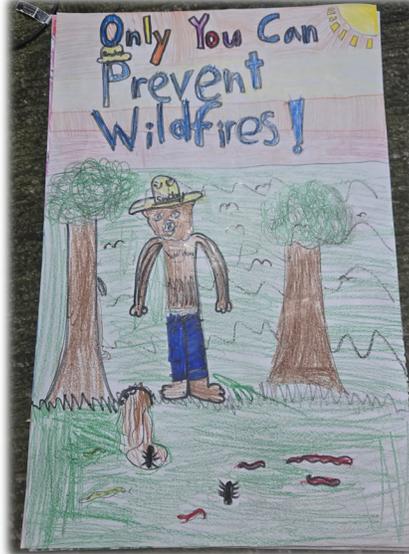
Montana Garden Clubs

2025 Montana Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl Winners

Grade 1



Grade 2



1st Grade, Aspyn Burroughs
 Rainbow GC

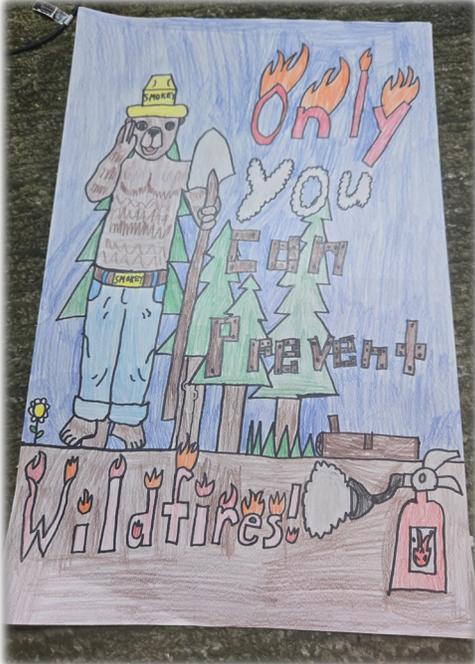
2nd Grade, Melody Dugan
 Bullhook Blossoms

3rd Grade, Grayson Helgeson
 Bullhook Blossoms

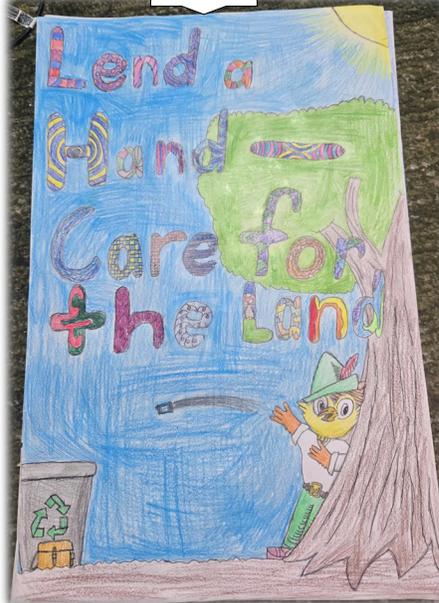
4th Grade, Calypso King
 Bullhook Blossoms

5th Grade, Pierre Bibbs
 Malta Dirt Daubers

Grade 5



Grade 4



Grade 3

