



MONTANA

GARDENS



**Darlene Skari, Chester and Great Falls
Flower Growers Garden Clubs
Garden Club Member of the Year**



**James Sadler, Missoula Garden Club
Gardener of the Year and
Chairman Leadership Award Winner**



**Officer installation in Helena *from left*, Corresponding Secretary Nancy Dold,
Recording Secretary Ann Wickum, 2nd Vice President Liz Smith, First Vice President
Cindy Carlton, President Jeannie Bennett, and Parliamentarian Joyce Hendricks.
Not pictured, Beverly Geary, Treasurer.**

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

Fall 2025, Volume 72, Issue 2



Jeannie Bennett
2025-2027 MFGC President

Hello Montana Federation of Garden Clubs Members,

It is my privilege to offer my initial letter of acceptance and presentation of goals to everyone via our wonderful publication, "Montana Gardens." With a well-attended convention behind us it is time for the 2025-2027 executive team to reach out to the Montana clubs and the next three months we will be doing just that.

My theme as President is simple: *Stop and Smell the Flowers*. Here is a little idea why flowers and all the flowering plants we enjoy are what I will focus on the next two years. Born on July 4th in 1956, near Philadelphia, PA, I always thought I was a firecracker myself and took the Revolutionary history of the area seriously. I am excited by the celebratory possibilities of being President during the 250th Anniversary of the United States.

In our Montana Federation 75th Anniversary book by Denise Fink, I discovered the State president in the year 1956 was Esther Hamel, famous for her love of all things flowering and Garden Therapy. I will read her books this winter and work hard to further promote her awards legacy.

I am also eager to offer an impressive convention next year in Anaconda. We will have a 3-night stay at the Forge hotel at particularly good rates. We will do a little celebrating too as it is the 75th Anniversary of Montana Life Members as well as the 250th Birthday of the US. The convention will have educational opportunities that feature firsthand flower design, awards applications, membership strategies and for developing sponsorship of our State Federation.

Years ago, I learned about the Management author Stephen Covey. I especially appreciated his distinction between Personality traits and Character traits and how to use them to manage in an organization. I hope to show a kind, pleasant personality as we work together, but I can guarantee you that I always be of good character. So, I hope for two great years together and am excited about the 2025-2027 seasons as we move forward. See you all soon at the Fall district meetings where we can begin our fundraising as we get to know each other better.

Jeannie Bennett

Text of the Officer Installation Ceremony at the State Convention

By Joyce Hendricks, Parliamentarian

Officer installation ceremonies mark a time of renewal and transition as leadership is passed from current officers to a new set of officers eager to put their plans into action. This ceremony is the beginning of a new year of fun and fellowship for everyone as we work to fulfill our objectives and purposes. The 2023-2025 board has served us exceptionally well these past two years. Congratulations to everyone who has been a key to our success! Thank you so much for all the hard work you have done these past two years. We recognize and thank you for your leadership and sacrifice of time, energy, and skill as you fulfilled the duties of your office.

According to the dictionary, "Leadership" is the action of leading a group of people or an organization. The words "guidance", "monitoring", or "direction" are common synonyms. The concept of leadership is easy to understand, but the mechanics of becoming a leader are often hard to master.

A good leader is frequently described as decisive, confident, optimistic, reliable and inspiring. The job of a leader may involve making tough decisions that are in the best interest of the organization, which may not always please all the members. Leaders must embrace the changes that need to occur within the organization in order for it to survive, while also being aware of and respectful of its past.

As new officers, you have demonstrated your leadership and devotion to MFGC. By your election, the membership has expressed confidence in your ability and has entrusted you with the administration of the organization for the next two years. Each of you will become a key figure within the organization. You are expected to attend the annual meeting and the meetings of the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee, and conform to and follow the Bylaws of the organization at all times.

Members, You may be asked to support, encourage, and provide assistance to the newly installed officers. Do you promise to support these officers in their work and help as you are able?



Photo courtesy of Jim Fuller

Members Tour the Montana Capitol Building during Convention

Top 2025 Award Winners

In Recognition of Outstanding Effort and Projects

Anaconda Garden Club

C-8-Yearbook, 1st

Belgrade Bloomers Garden Club

C-7 Multimedia, 1st

C-10 Photography, 1st, Phyllis White

Bullhook Blossoms Garden Club (Havre)

A-1 Presidents Community Beautification, 2nd

A-5-1 Presidents Communication, 1st,
Karen Vosen

A-6-B Presidents Horticulture Therapy, 1st

A-11-II, 1st Club Award

A-12-B Presidents Club Scrapbook, 1st

A-20 Linda and James Sadler Rose Award,
1st, Linda Hoines

B-5 Kerin McCarver Special, 2nd

B-6 Living Legacy, 1st

B-12 Mary Lee Artistic Expression of Flowers,
2nd, Karen Covert

B-13 Anaconda Community Beautification, 1st

C-1 Award of Appreciation, 1st

C-2 II Horticulture Report, 1st

C-3 Floral Design, 1st

C-6 Landscape Design, 1st

C-8-B Best Club Yearbook, 2nd

Butte Garden Club

A-17 Gardener of the Year, 2nd Diane Widhalm

B-4 MFGC Most New Members, 1st

Chester Garden Club

C- 4 Member of the Year, Darlene Skari

Dearborn Garden Club

A-12-C Club Scrapbook, 1st

Dillon Garden Club

A-16 Darlene Skari Public Workshop, 1st

B-5 Kerin McCarver Special Award, 1st

Gallatin Empire Garden Club (Bozeman)

A-11-I Jones Container Gardening, Cindy Carlton

C-9 Award of Excellence, Sage Gardeners

Great Falls Flower Growers Garden Club

A-9-II Youth Activities Award, 2nd

A-19 Corneliusen Dahlia, Gladiolus Award, 2nd,
Patty Howse

C-8-C Best Club Yearbook, 2nd

Missoula Garden Club

A-17 Gardener of the Year, 1st Jim Sadler

A-18 Fink Past to Future Award, 1st Ryan
MacPherson

A-20 Sadler Rose Award, 2nd Donna Dowell
and 3rd Nancy Dold

B-7 State Chairman Leadership Award, 1st
Jim Sadler

B-9 Atkinson Creative Flower Design, 1st Jim
Sadler

B-10-I Highest Percentage of Judges

B-10-II Education, Ellie Darling, Gary Clark,
Cheryl Carroll

B-14 Pollinator Garden Award, 2nd Ryan
MacPherson

C-1 Award of Appreciation, 2nd

Miles City Garden Club

A-9-II Youth Activities, 1st

C-8 B Club Yearbook, 1st

Rainbow Garden Club (Great Falls)

A-8-II Presidents Wildflower and Native
Plants, 1st Amy Grisak

A-13 B Marie Jones, Trees, 1st

Rainbow Awards (continued)

A-14 Rose Kopp Special Children, 1st

A-16 Darlene Skari Public Workshop, 1st

B-5 Kerin McCarver Special Award, 2nd

B-II V Hamel Butterfly Garden Award, 1st

Cabbage Patch Kids Junior Garden Club

(continued)

B-14 Pollinator Garden Award, 1st Patty Schlaeger
C-2-II Horticulture Report, 1st
C-3 Floral Design Program, 2nd
C-10 Photography, 2nd Patty Schlaeger
D-1 Youth Club Sponsorship, 2nd
D-2 Youth Gardening Award, 1st
D-3 II Youth Bird/Pollinator Award, 1st

Stevensville Garden Club

A-1 Community Beautification, 1st
A-7 Membership Increase (percentage), 1st
A-8 II Wildflower and Native Plants, 1st Beverly Geary

A-15 Davis Patriotic Garden, 1st, Beverly Geary
A-19 Corneliusen Dahlia/Gladiolus, 1st Jeannie Fraser
B-1 Magill Garden Tour, 1st
B-12 Mary Lee Award, 1st Beverly Geary
C-7 Multimedia, 2nd

Whitehall Garden Club

A-3 Conservation, Preservation Award, 1st
C-11 Life Members, 1st
D-1 Youth Club Sponsorship, 1st



I am happy to report that we received over 80 applications, with 14 clubs participating, and award monies totaling almost \$1200 going to our members and clubs. Diane Ward, former State President, received 18 Green Thumb nominations honoring club members for exceptional work and participation in their clubs and communities! It is an honor to read about the great impact our clubs have across our state. Thank you for participating in our Awards program! Keep taking those pictures.

~ Cindy Carlton, Awards Chair

2025 Scholarship Winners



The winner of the \$2000 **MFGC Life Members Scholarship** is Sarah Elgin. Sarah came highly recommended by Associate Professor Tony Hartshorn MSU Land Resources and Environmental Sciences.

Sarah is a third-year student at MSU pursuing a degree in Environmental Science with a minor in GIS. She has been passionate about horticulture since moving in with her grandparents in middle school. They taught her about growing their own food on their one acre property in rural Arizona. Their garden was a place where she learned about sustainability, self-sufficiency and appreciated hands-on experience.

While studying at the University of Washington she worked at the student-run farm where she led volunteers in growing organic vegetables and flowers. Since then she has worked on several other farms furthering her passion for sustainable agriculture. Thanking the MFGC Life Members, Sarah says, "*Scholarships like the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs Life Members Scholarship make it possible for students like me to continue working toward my educational and career goals.*"

Olivia Collins (pictured on the right with Carol Brady, Scholarship Chairman) was awarded the \$3900 **National Garden Clubs Scholarship**. She is a senior in Ag Education with an Environmental Horticulture minor at MSU, Bozeman.

Hello! My name is Olivia Collins, and I'm incredibly honored to receive the NGC Scholarship. I'm from Joliet, a small town in south-central Montana, and found my passion for horticulture and education early through my local FFA program in high school—especially the floriculture contest. That experience sparked a love for plants, floral design, and greenhouse science. I've worked at multiple flower shops, run my own small floral business (OC Flowers), and currently work as a floral designer at Langohr's Flowerland in Bozeman. I also do freelance floral work during the summer wedding season. I'm majoring in Agricultural Education at Montana State University and plan to teach high school agriculture classes with a focus on floriculture, horticulture, and plant science. Thank you so much for supporting me through my final year of college—this scholarship truly means a lot.



Many of the garden clubs in Montana award scholarships to college students, graduating seniors, and vocational tech students. These scholarships promote education and augment the Federation's \$2000 Life Member Scholarship. The Anaconda Garden Club, District #5, Great Falls Flower Growers, Townsend Garden Club, Miles City Garden Club, and Whitehall Garden Club awarded over \$6,000 this year.

Patriotic Photography Contest Celebrating the 250th Founding of the United States of America

In anticipation of our photo contest, I am hoping that many of you have planted a red, white, and blue garden or container, or plan to arrange a flower design to enter into our contest. The divisions will be:

Container(s)- garden club member

Container(s)- garden club member or club

Floral Design- Traditional or Creative by club member

Arrangement (A)- created by a garden club member

Arrangement (B)- created by a youth 10-16 years old

Public Areas- any area (such as Blue and Gold Star marker planting, libraries, parks, post offices, etc)



Also, Phyllis White and I have come up with some rules by which to follow for a fun and equitable contest! The following rules will be applied:

Open to garden club members only, except Arrangement (B) for youth

No artificial flowers or wreaths

To interpret the theme, plant material and patriotism should be apparent in the photo

Picture may be taken anywhere

Photographer does not have to own the container or have planted the garden

Applicant/photographer has to have taken the picture

No people in the photo please

Any image the contestant has taken may be submitted, but preferably from the last two years

I am considering a deadline of May 7th, 2026 to help alleviate coinciding with our Awards deadline (and income tax due date). I hope we are inundated with entries and have many photos to share with our members. We will share an application link on the MFGC website under NEWS for club members to access the application as soon as possible. While you're there, check out the information on taking great pictures of flowers. National Garden Clubs has a Photography Group you can join for free to learn photography techniques. Go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/423896271551028>, select "Join". You must answer a few questions to be admitted to the group.

Thank you and Happy Creating!

~ Cindy Carlton, Contest Co-Chair

Building Membership

Hello Everyone! Yes, it's me again, your friendly neighborhood "How-is-your-Membership-doing" gal.

You know — the three M's? **Members Matter Most**. So we have to **up** our game. Get out there and recruit. • Have Membership drives. • Host public programs. • Have an ice cream social. • How about yard tours? • If your town has an historical section, how about a history tour with speakers? • Haunted house tours. • Involve other clubs — FFA, 4H, Kiwanis, Scouts. • Have a table with Garden Club information. • Ask your library if you can put up a display.

While you are out shopping, approach a person carrying a plant or garden implement, etc. Engage in conversation, then invite them to your next meeting. You never know where your next member might be lurking. Keep a look out and reach out with an invitation.

See you next time, when your membership starts growing.



~ Liz Smith, MFGC 2nd VP and Membership

It's About an Energy Relationship

~ N. DeNeal, Garden Therapy Chair

Albert Einstein's most significant contribution was in realizing that everything is energy. Before 1907, the consensus was that everything was either matter or energy. However, Einstein viewed matter as essentially condensed energy. Reality, he concluded, is a relationship of energies.

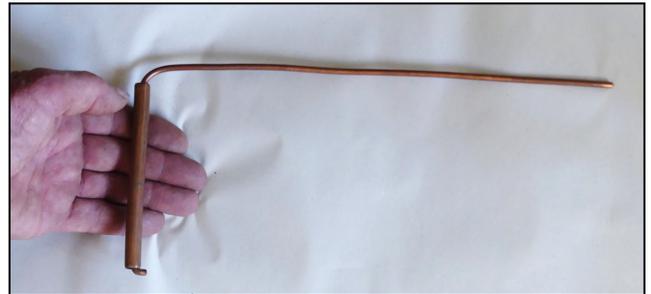
The relevance of Einstein to gardening is that he recognized the connection between taking care of plants and energy. Yet that fundamental insight is not new. In some form, people have realized this for at least 6,000 years. In our time, the book "The Secret Life of Plants" (1973) expressed how our feelings about plants affect their health. If we love our plants, they thrive. Conversely, if we despise the plants, they struggle and often die. So, when some gardeners talk to and encourage their plants, the results are measurably better. It's not the talking that is important, but rather the good energy that we transfer to the plants, which is significant. Plants don't understand English, but they are receptive to the good energy we transfer to them. Plants are sentient beings.

More amazingly, this relationship is a two-way street. Plants receive, but they also give. And when we give, the byproduct is that we also receive. Have you ever noticed that in a greenhouse where the plants are especially lush, the workers there are unusually happy?

All this might seem abstract or witchy-woo. But it can be demonstrated. This is done with what might be called "energy rods".

These provide the visual confirmation. Nothing new here. The history here goes back for millennia. The rods can be made of almost anything, but a good introduction would be with copper rods.

Copper is both readily available and known for responding to energy. If you want to make your rods, the photo here shows what one rod looks like. But you need two rods for the demonstration. For each rod you need 4 ½" of ¼" inside diameter copper tubing, and about 17" of 5-6 gauge copper wire. Hardware stores usually have the materials along with a copper tubing cutting tool (though a hack saw or metal cutting blade would work too). Make a 3/8" sharp right angle bend on one end of the copper wire. Slide the wire through the tubing and hand-bend the wire above the tubing.



You don't need prior experience to perform this demonstration. Now choose a plant or tree you like. Ensure the plant is isolated and not too close to other plants or trees. Approach the plant, holding the two rods in each hand, and tilt them slightly downward so they are parallel. Step back about 3 feet from the plant, approach the plant, and the rods will cross at the edge of the plant's energy field. Typically, the edge of the plant's energy field will be 6-12" from the plant. Now, think about how you love, respect, and wish for the plant's good health. Hold the thought. Again, approach the plant from approximately 4 feet away. This time the rods will cross at about twice the distance from the plant. Mathematics shows that the area of the energy field is 6 times as large when the radius is doubled. All done by only sending the plant positive thoughts.

This demonstration can be even more dramatic when finding another person's energy field. Of course, you need a willing subject. Start by asking the other person to stand without any particular thought. Approach the person and the rods will cross at the edge of that person's field, generally about 3 feet. Then ask the person to think of something that makes them happy. You don't need to know what that thought is. Have the person hold the thought and then approach them from about three times the distance from where the first energy field was determined. Typically, with a positive thought, you will double the distance you first encountered. Then ask the person to think of something that makes them mad or angry. Have them hold the thought, and approach them with the rods. You both will see that the rods show not just a smaller energy field, but none at all. This is a phenomenon that illustrates the foundation of ethics and the judgment required for a good human life. You can confirm the demonstration with a third approach after asking the person to again silently hold the positive or negative thought. The rods will show which thought the person was holding, though you did not know which thought it was.

The lesson here is that if we love gardening, the plants will return our love and increase what is positive in us. That relationship can increase over time. Gardening makes us a better person.

State Flower Show

~ Jim Sadler, Show Chair and State Design Consultant

For those who attended the State Convention in Helena, the State Petite Flower Show was a major highlight. The theme of the show was "Frontier Days," paying homage to Helena. The show was staged in the convention room, allowing participants to view the arrangements at their leisure. Members from across the state entered the show. Petite shows are popular since participants can easily pack and transport their designs.



The show's highlight was Master Judge Gary Clark receiving the Design Excellence Award (left). The judges said his convincing card of intent was a key factor in earning the top award.

Section A table designs were very competitive. Cathy Speich-Ferguson received the Petite Award for her innovative design, "Trailblazer's Picnic" (right).

Congratulations to Mary Davis, whose designs earned two Petite Awards. One is for Section B: "Adventure is found where you seek it," with the "Gold Rush" design (below left); the other is for Section C: "Roadside treasures can be fascinating," featuring the "Westward Ho" design (below right).



Comments following the show were highly favorable, reflecting positively on the Helena State Convention. Thanks to everyone who participated and shared their work.



National Garden Clubs, Inc. — Flower Show Awards

Club Standard Flower Show Award to
Thumb-R-Green, Billings
"Yesteryear's Vintage
Gardens"

Club Small Standard Show Award
to Missoula Garden Club

"Butterflies on Parade" First Place



Conservation

“There is in fact no distinction between the fate of the land and the fate of the people.” Wendell Berry

~ Kerry Hovland, Conservation Chair

Take a walk through our old forests or the wild prairie, and we can see that Mother Earth is very adept at doing her own thing. She does not need our help to thrive. We earthlings on the other hand have about obliterated her good works. We plowed and over grazed her, till nothing grew without gallons of chemicals. We covered her with asphalt and concrete, till everything scorches. The pollinators have become extinct in many places, all because we think we know more than she does.

When I began my native gardens over 40 years ago, I knew nothing grew without good soil. The soil was tightly compacted so I had to soak it before I could dig. Part of it was a dump for their corn mash liquor.

A wonderful man Mr. Hoffman, owner of GT Falls Floral, showed me how to compost. Throughout the years I have found the best advice has come from old guys that gardened before chemicals.

Mushrooms and worms are good indicators of healthy soil. Mushrooms tell you that you have organic matter that can break down and feed your garden. Worms consume organic matter, excrete nutrient-rich poop for the soil, and they are great aerators for the soil. Rich nutrient soil is the base for every living thing on this planet.

Many chemicals keep seeds from sprouting and when added to the soil season after season, eventually killing everything. Weeds, while often a nuisance, have a purpose too, some could sustain life. There are good, bagged soil generators out there. Becoming an ingredient reader is necessary today.

There are particularly good organic fertilizers also. Through the years, I have found that with good soil, fertilizers are not necessary. A hand full of alfalfa pellets/rabbit food, is all a rose bush needs. Farmers and ranchers have begun to regenerate their lands, and healthy living soils are producing as much or more without chemicals.

We must grow from the bottom up, tend our soil by adding carefully to have a richer environment where our plants and pollinators can thrive.

“Reforest Montana / Plant-A-Tree”

~ Glenna Waltee, former MFGC Treasurer

Yes, it's a new name, but not a new program. In the past, dating back to 2005, monies for the Penny Pines program have been collected at the local level. The donations were then sent to the State Treasurer and subsequently forwarded to the National Garden Clubs National Headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri. Recently, NGC has changed its procedure and is now charging a fee on each donation before forwarding it to the USDA National Forest Service Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

A recommendation from the MFGC Finance Committee to the MFGC Executive Board was made to retain all donated funds in Montana, and the Executive Board approved. After working with the Northern Region Headquarters for Montana, it has been established that all donations collected from local Montana garden clubs will go directly to the Montana National Forests.

The Montana Federation of Garden Clubs and the USDA Forest Service are proud to have formed a partnership sustaining our urban forests in Montana through the reforestation/forest education program. This includes wildfires, insect infestations, and other natural disasters that necessitate the replanting of trees for soil protection, watershed enhancement, future harvestable timber, recreation, and animal habitats.

Our state of Montana and local garden clubs can participate in the program with the Forest Service by donating in multiples \$50. A donation of a minimum of \$50 may be made in honor or memory of an individual, organization, or theme, such as National Garden Week, Arbor Day, or Keep Montana Beautiful. A certificate will be issued based on the information provided on the new form.

With this new name, **“Reforest Montana,”** which better reflects the program's mission, a new donation form has been established and will be on the MFGC website for our new fiscal year, starting now. I challenge the local clubs to demonstrate ingenuity in promoting education in conservation by creating public awareness of the need to protect and manage our local National Forest resources.

Planning the Garden

~ Jim Sadler, NGC Accredited Flower Show Judge

Thinking about that special garden —

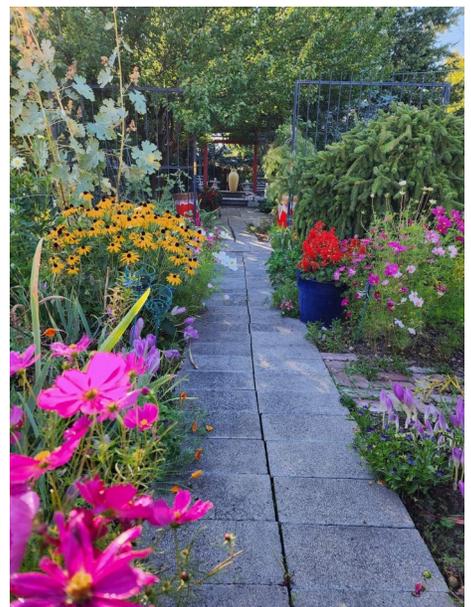
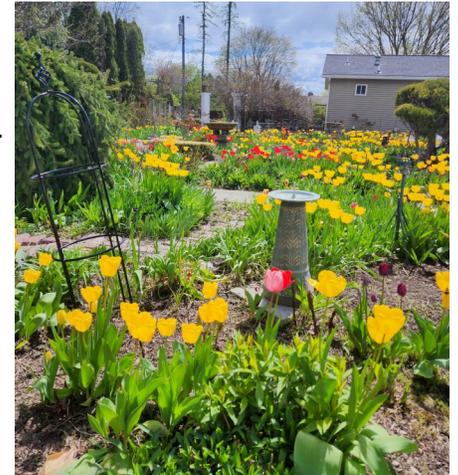
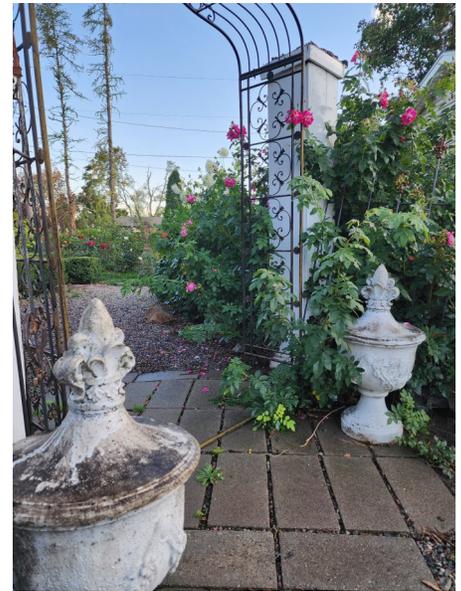
Dreaming or planning for the garden can be turned into an actionable plan. Are you one of those folks who thumb through gardening magazines and dream about how you can also have one of those magnificent yards? What you are never told is that before you can choose your plants and start digging to fulfill your dreams, you must first assess your garden space and especially your soil. Time taken to improve the soil will allow you to have that magazine picture-perfect garden.

Conventional wisdom tells us to do a soil test. Most soil tests do not give a complete representation of the fertility of your soil. A test will let you know the pH of the soil and if certain essential minerals are missing. What a soil test does not indicate is the condition of the soil texture. Soil texture is extremely important. Gardeners who have come before us did not necessarily have soil tests. What they had was knowledge handed down to them by many generations of gardeners. We have lost the urgency of experiencing a crop failure. My Grandparents purchased very little from a grocery store. They saved their seeds, stored the harvest in a root cellar using various canning methods, and ate what was grown. If there was a failure, they would have to go without. What they knew instinctively was that they had to learn to take care of their soil.

If you are raising plants to eat or just for their beauty, certain conditions must exist to have a successful garden. The technical term is tilth. Tilth is the physical condition of the soil that is characterized by texture, structure, and organic matter. Soil is a mixture of sand, silt, and clay. The proportion of each determines the texture. The best texture for a garden is loam, which is soil containing significant proportions of at least two of these particle types. The structure of soil is created by the minerals and the bio life present in the soil. Good soil has earthworms, nematodes, and arthropods. Bacteria and fungi containing a mycorrhizal network are also necessary. Finally, organic matter is especially important to our gardens. Healthy soil needs to be fed adequate amounts of organic matter regularly because it is being consumed by soil biology and plants.

My grandparents never had a compost pile. Every piece of garden material that was not used was dug back into the soil. This works for large vegetable gardens. A compost pile that is turned regularly and then mulched around the garden may be more realistic for flower beds. Their garden soil was very loose. You could easily put your hand into the soil. Loose soil allowed oxygen to reach the roots. I got yelled at if I did not walk on the paths. We had boards on which I would navigate.

Many years of paying attention to the tilth allowed the family to be well fed. When dreaming of that garden scheme, consider your soil. Done right, your garden soil will reward you with productivity and beautiful flowers.



MONTANA FEDERATION OF GARDEN CLUBS
EIGHTY-EIGHTH CONVENTION MEETING MINUTES—synopsis*
HELENA, MONTANA – JUNE 20-21, 2025

Call to Order: President, Diane Ward, called the 88th Convention of the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs to order at 11:08 am on Friday, June 20, 2025.

Presentation of Colors, Girl Scouts Troop 3941 of Helena.

Pledge of Allegiance, Jeannie Bennett

Welcome & Garden Club Creed: Diane Ward President

Welcome to Helena, Emily Dean, Mayor Pro Teme, Andy Shirliff, Commissioner of Helena **Inspirational Thought:** Mary Kempf

Recognition of Former Presidents in attendance: Mary Davis, Norm DeNeal, Phyllis White, Linda Sadler, Joyce Hendricks, Sherry Corneliusen, Jim Sadler

Recognition of Convention Committee: MFGC Executive Committee

Diane Ward, MFGC President, Introduction of Head table

Recognition of Garden Club Member of the Year, Cindy Carlton presented to Darlene Skari

Preliminary Credentials – Glenna Waltee, Registrar, Credentials Read.

Voting Members	52
Total MFGC Members Attending	69
Total Guests and non MFGC Members	4

Declaration of Quorum, Joyce Hendricks, Parliamentarian

Reading & Adoption of Convention Rules: Joyce Hendricks, Parliamentarian. **Adopted 6-20-2025.**

Adoption of Agenda: Norm DeNeal made motion, Patty House 2nd. **Adopted 6-20-2025**

Appointment of Committee to Approve the 2025 Convention Minutes: Mary Kempf, Phyllis White, Cindy Carlton

Appointment of Timekeepers and Tellers: Sue O’Leary, Elaine Wood.

Garden Club Memorial Service: Mary Kempf

2024 Committee Approval of Minutes: 2024 87th Convention Minutes were approved by committee, Pat Ludwig, Kerry Hovland, Charlene Moug

Appointment of Financial Review Committee: Lilla Flesjer, Liz Smith, Debbie Werholz

Adjourn for Lunch - Awards

Policy & Procedure Changes

State President

1. The State President is required to attend all annual meetings relating to the presidency during their term (2025) [*Policy change adopted.*](#)

Out of State Meetings

President

A. Attend the National Garden Clubs Annual Convention: advance and/or reimbursement shall be up to \$2000 to be paid out of the MFGC general fund (2025) *Policy change adopted*

B. Attend the Rocky Mountain Region Annual Meeting: advance and/or reimbursement shall be \$1000, to be paid out of MFGC general fund (2025) *Policy change adopted*

First Vice President

A. First year of their term *may* attend Rocky Mountain Region Annual Meeting: advance and/or reimbursement shall be up to \$500 to be paid out of the MFGC general fund (2025) *Amended Policy change adopted.*

B. Second year of their term *may* attend the National Garden Clubs Annual Convention: advance and/or reimbursement shall be up to \$1000, to be paid out of the MFGC general funds. (2025) *Amended Policy change adopted.*

In State Meetings

President

B. Delegation (President and Vice Presidents) shall be advanced and/or reimbursed for travel and lodging for in-state meetings (District Meetings) up to \$1500 annually to be paid out of general fund. Receipts must be presented (2025) *Policy change adopted.*

(continued)

State Treasurer

4. After the Treasurer receives the membership dues, the Membership Chairman/Circulation Manger will provide a computerized list of the MFGC club membership, to be sent to the President, Vice Presidents, Recording Secretary and Treasurer in September and March. An updated alphabetical membership list with names and addresses will be sent to the Montana Gardens Publisher prior to each publication deadline (2025) *Policy change adopted.*

Recording Secretary

2. The Recording Secretary shall submit approved meeting minutes (Convention and Board meetings) to the President and the editor of the Montana Gardens, in time for publication the issue of the Montana Gardens which immediately follows each meeting. Upon submission to the editor, the minutes will be sent to the Web Master simultaneously to be posted in the member's section of the MFGC website (2025) Motion Made to amend to remove the word executive. (2025) *Amended Policy change accepted.*

Club and Member Services

1. The Montana federation will honor a deceased Advisory Council member with a \$200.00 memorial donation to the MFGC Endowment Fund (2025) *Policy change adopted.*

3. Fund raising projects should be approved by the Executive Board prior to being carried out including the Life Members, Judges Council, Awards, and those intended for the MFGC General Fund. (2025) *Policy change adopted.*

Education

5. NGC sponsored schools may request an allowance a year in advance to support schools in Montana. Plans to schedule an NGC school must be presented to the Executive Committee for approval. (2025) Motion was made to change wording to at least six months in advance. Motion 2nd. Motion failed. *Policy change adopted as written.*

Convention and Meetings

1. When MFGC general Funds are available, MFGC Elected and Appointed Officers, District directors and Awards Chairperson, if in attendance, may be reimbursed, if requested for the annual meeting registration fees. (2025) Motion made leave and all meals with the exception of the Life Members and Judges Council dinners. Motion 2nd.

1. When MFGC general Funds are available, MFGC Elected and Appointed Officers, District directors and Awards Chairperson, if in attendance, may be reimbursed, if requested for the annual meeting registration fees *and all meals with exception, of the Life Members and Judges Council dinners.* (2025) *Amended Policy change adopted.*

2a. The Treasurer will advance up to \$500 to the State Convention, if requested. The requested amount will be returned to the Treasurer after the final Convention accounting. (2025) *Policy change adopted*

2b. The Treasurer will advance up to \$500 to the Convention Chairman, if requested to be used for education purposes such as programs, tours, speakers and workshops (2025) *Policy change adopted*

4. Bids for Annual Conventions should be presented in writing to the Executive Committee at the meeting two years prior to the date of the Convention. A copy of the Montana Federation Convention Guidelines book should be used for assistance (2025) *Policy change adopted*

Adjourn meeting 2:45 pm to reconvene on Saturday morning at 9 am

Tour Gardenwerks Flower Farm, 3:00 – 4:30 pm

Welcome Dinner

Flower Show Awards – Jim Sadler

Farewell Speech – Diane Ward

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Call to Order: President, Diane Ward, called the 88th Convention of the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs to order at 9: am on June 21, 2025.

Final Credentials – Glenna Waltee, Registrar,

Voting Members	52
Total MFGC Members Attending	69
Total Guests and non MFGC Members	4

Diane Ward, President noted we have a quorum.

Policy and Procedures changes continued

Convention and Meetings (continued)

5. Each club is requested to donate one or more items (new or used) to be sold at the Ways and Means table during the convention.
(continued)

The host club may request a donation of specific kinds of items. Any profit from Ways and Means items sold at Convention will remain with the host club(s) as long as all the costs of the function are paid **(2025)**. *Policy change adopted*

6. All Convention and meeting reports are limited to four minutes (2025)

Awards

3. Specific awards listed in the Awards Rules Handbook have funds placed into Awards savings to be invested so interest earned will cover their awards each year. The State Treasurer shall maintain and update these records **(2025)** *Policy change adopted*

5. Sponsored awards must be paid in advance for each 2-year term in order to be entered in the awards booklet as a paid award. Otherwise, it will be listed as a certificate award. The State Treasurer will send out the payment notices. **(2025)**

NEW Policy

6. If a project secures a 1st place award it cannot be submitted for the same award in following years unless substantially different details make it unique. (2025) New policy adopted

Reports of Officers -	On File
Vote for proposed budget, proposed budget adopted	
District Director Reports	On File
Club Presidents Reports	On File
Nominating Committee Report, Jim Sadler	On File
Chairman Reports	
Blue Star Memorial - Kathy Austin-	On File
Montana Gardens -Phyllis White	On File
Flower Show School, Symposium, Credential Chair, Susan Billmayer	On File
State Scholarship, Carol Brady	On File
The Fundraising & Life Members report by Patty Schlager was read by Diane Ward	On File
Media Library, Bob Wicks	On File
Finance Committee Report:	Report Filed

Scholarship Lunch –

Carol Brady, NGC - Olivia Collins, Joliet, MT - \$3900, MSU; Life Member - Sara Elgin, \$2,000

Invitation to 2026 Convention, Anaconda, MT - June 26-27

Theme: “Creating a Greener Future Together”

Announcement of 2027 Convention –

Belgrade Bloomers, Gallatin Empire Garden Clubs

Chairman Reports (cont.)

Joyce Hendricks-Landscape Design School	On File
Plant A Tree – Vanette Nagamori (Glenna Waltee)	On File
Social Media report by Jodie Haidle was read by Sherry Corneilusen	On File
Website Report – Elaine Wood	On File
Pollinator Gardens report by Kathy Waters was read by Jeannie Bennett	On File
Smokey Bear – Jennifer Strzelczyk	On File

Nominating Committee Report – Jim Sadler

Nominations: President – Jeannie Bennett; 1st Vice President – Cindy Carlton; 2nd Vice President – Liz Smith; Treasurer – Beverly Geary; Recording Secretary – Annie Wickum; Corresponding Secretary – Nancy Dold; Parliamentarian- Joyce Hendricks

The nominations were elected unanimously. Installation at dinner this evening

Meeting Adjourned

Resolutions of 2025 Convention – Courtesy Resolution, Joyce Hendricks, Resolution Chairman On File.

Original signed by Recording Secretary Ann Wickum

Original Minutes Approved By: Cindy Carlton, Mary Kempf, Phyllis White

Notes, Dates and Links

Please submit MFGC Membership dues and rosters before Sept. 1 to:

Beverly Geary, Treasurer

1891 Sutherland Dr., Corvallis, MT 59828-9679



Notes from the Treasurer —

Reforest Montana Donations

\$68, Gumbo Gals of Nashua

\$68, Gallatin Empire

\$100, Rainbow Garden Club

New Life Members:

Kathy Ross and Jayne Dean, Whitehall GC

Lori Sprague, Anaconda GC

Arlis Vannett and Cathy Speich-Ferguson, Dillon GC

June 2025 Convention Minutes and February 2025 Winter Board of Directors Minutes, as well as other Board Minutes covering the past few years are available in the Member Section on the MFGC website.

MFGC has a Facebook page that can be viewed by the public. <https://www.facebook.com/MontanaGardens>.

We also have a MFGC Facebook Group for garden club members only. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1086355972413385>.

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:

November 1, 2025 – Winter

April 15, 2026 — Spring

July 15, 2026 – Summer/Fall

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.

August 22-23, RMR Meeting in Cheyenne, WY
Registration and information are on the MFGC or RMR websites.

August 30-31, Flower shows in Dillon — Beaverhead County Fair and in downtown Billings — D.A. Davidson Building.

September 1, MFGC Endowment Interest Grant Applications Due. Information and an application form are on the MFGC website.

September 4-5, Flower Show Symposium in Missoula. Missoula County Fair Horticulture Bldg. See MFGC website for application and more information. Pam Braun will present horticulture Collections and Writing Evaluations for a Flower Show. Gina Jogan will present Transparency and Mono-Botanic Designs and Fiber Works on Friday. Contact Gary Clark for more information; see the MFGC website for the registration form. Open to the public.

September 30, Flower Show public viewing at the Daly Mansion in Hamilton. Hosted by the Stevensville Garden Club.

District Meetings —

September 13, Saturday Great Falls, District 5 meeting

September 24, Wednesday, Glasgow, District 7 meeting

September 25, Thursday, Miles City, District 12 meeting

September 26, Friday, Billings, District 10 meeting

September 27, Saturday, Bozeman, District 4 meeting

September 29, Monday, Hamilton, District 2 meeting

September 30, Tuesday, Chester, District 6 meeting

October 4, Saturday, Anaconda, District 3 meeting

October 15, PLANT AMERICA Grant Applications Due

Images in this issue provided by Jim Fuller, Kerry Hovland, Jim Sadler, Darlene Skari, Patty Schlaeger, Norman DeNeal, Mary Davis, Liz Smith, Phyllis White.

Contact information for Officers, Chairmen, District Directors, and presidents is available in the MFGC website's Member Section. Please send ALL change of address information to Mary Kempf, Montana Gardens Circulation Editor, mh.kempf@hotmail.com

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

Big Sky Stars may be sent to the editor with a \$25 donation sent to the treasurer. Use it to congratulate, honor, thank or send a holiday greeting. Thank you for supporting MFGC.



Mary Kempf
Montana Gardens Circulation Mgr.
P O Box 510
Dillon MT 59725

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



Award Winners from Front Cover

We are proud to recognize **Darlene Skari** as our **Garden Club Member of the Year!** For more than 50 years, Darlene has shared her time, talents, and heart with the Chester Garden Club, the Great Falls Flower Growers, and garden lovers across Montana. Her contributions in horticulture, floral design, and strategic planning have greatly strengthened the Federation throughout the decades.

In the early years, while raising her young children, Darlene often traveled long distances on rural dirt roads to attend meetings in town. Along the way, she formed lifelong friendships and brought enriching educational programs and flower shows to the community. She served on many club committees and in leadership roles, rising from club member to district director, then as the 35th president of the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs (2007–2009), and later as Rocky Mountain Region Director (2015–2017). She also served on the National Garden Clubs' Calendar and Scholarship Committees. She is a Master Flower Show Judge and a Landscape Consultant.

In 2010, Darlene played a key role in organizing the NGC Fall Board meeting and tours in Great Falls, an event that welcomed members from every state.

Among her fondest memories are helping to install Montana's own Junne Johnsrud as National Garden Club President in 1983, participating in flower shows, beautifying local parks, and establishing a financial endowment for MFGC. During her presidency, the Federation's Bylaws were fully revised, and she was instrumental in federating the Bullhook Blossoms Garden Club. Her colleagues often marveled at how she could walk into any coffee shop in the state and recognize someone—thanks to her deep roots in both agriculture and the garden club community.

James "Jim" Sadler, winner of the **Gardener of the Year and Leadership Awards**. Jim Sadler has extensive experience in gardening and a flair for transforming unexpected opportunities into living works of art. He embarked on his present garden when his son plowed up a grassy acre for an FFA project, and together they turned that plot into a series of themed "rooms." Visitors wander from an Asian garden to an English cottage retreat and on to a formal French parterre, each space reflecting Jim's eye for structure, color, and harmony.

Jim is a Master-level Garden Club judge; he has also served as a dahlia and rose arrangement judge, as well as a horticulture judge, and currently holds credentials as an iris judge. His garden showcases these specialties, with dahlia borders, rose arbors, and iris beds. Better known for his floral designs, he cultivates his materials to ensure each arrangement reflects his creative vision.

Jim has deepened his design expertise through multiple national symposiums, and his work was honored as one of the National Garden Clubs' Designer of the Month. His arrangements regularly earn praise on the NGC Pinterest Floral Design section, and three of his pieces have been featured in the Vision of Beauty calendar. For the past 30 years, he has overseen five annual flower shows as Superintendent of the Missoula County Fair's Floriculture building, nurturing local talent and celebrating horticultural excellence.

Jim is also a former president of the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs and has held many state chairmanships.