



MONTANA GARDENS



Jeannie Bennett
2025-2027 MFGC President

National Garden Week, celebrated June 7–13, 2026, is an opportunity to highlight the mission and impact of National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC), founded to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility, NGC continues to enrich communities nationwide through education, service, and environmental stewardship. Two programs sponsored solely by NGC are **Plant America** and **National Garden Week**.

National Garden Clubs supports community gardening initiatives, offers educational programs for gardeners of all ages, and publishes its quarterly magazine, *The National Gardener (TNG)*. Additional resources are available at NGC Website, gardenclub.org. In Montana, garden clubs actively participate in meaningful programs such as **Blue and Gold Star Memorials**, **Reforest Montana**, and **Plant a Tree** projects—efforts that honor military service, restore forests, and improve our natural environment.

Gardening has long been part of America’s history. National Garden Week was established in 1891, and gardening traditions in this country date back to 1565. In 1728, John Bartram founded the first botanical garden in Philadelphia, which remains in existence today. Internationally, the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in England is the world’s largest, encompassing more than 300 acres of botanical collections.

Today, National Garden Clubs includes member organizations in all 50 states. Montana is proud to have **23 member garden clubs** within the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs and to be part of the **Rocky Mountain Region**, one of NGC’s eight geographic regions. As the largest volunteer gardening organization in the world, NGC’s strength lies in the dedication of its members and their commitment to community service.

Community Garden Week, observed during the first full week of April, emphasizes the value of community and school gardens that support learning, bring people together, and foster environmental awareness. Another well-known observance is World Naked Gardening Day, celebrated on the first Saturday in May, encouraging people to joyfully connect with nature while gardening.

As our nation approaches **July 4, 2026**, the **250th Birthday of the United States**, the **Greatest American Cleanup** is calling on citizens to take action. This nationwide effort focuses on neighbors helping neighbors through litter cleanup, tree planting, and beautification projects that strengthen communities. Garden clubs and individual members are encouraged to participate in and register projects at KAB.org (**Keep America Beautiful**).

In recent decades, opportunities to learn about plants and gardening have declined. National Garden Club Week reminds us of the value of sharing knowledge, working together, and caring for our communities. By nurturing our gardens, we ensure the love of gardening continues to grow for generations to come.

Jeannie Bennett

Did you know about these Benefits of Membership in the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs (MFGC)?

Here are some examples of what the \$10.00 annual membership fee does for you and your club.

You are eligible for every benefit the National Garden Club offers for the \$1.00 per member that we send to NGC. In 2026, Montana has already received nearly \$5,000.00 in Plant America grants. We will have a scholarship award of over \$4,000 soon, too.



Receive the award-winning Montana Gardens, 3 times a year. This newsletter is the source for Montana announcements, information, and education at your fingertips. We currently spend about \$9.00 per person a year providing the printed, high-quality newsletter.

Apply for and receive up to \$875.00 in State and Sponsored awards each year.

Apply for a State Endowment Grant for up to \$1,000 for club projects funded by interest in our investment account. These grants would not be possible without the MFGC officers and former officers who established the accounts and managed our state assets.



Use the State not-for-profit EIN to provide donors with a tax relief acknowledgment for their donations. The club would have to establish a 501 (c)(3) at considerable cost if it weren't federated with MFGC.

MFGC offers liability insurance for your club activities that require insurance, especially at public events. Clubs purchase the days of coverage for a low cost. It is often used for flower shows.

Attend the annual convention, which travels around the state. Montana has about one-fifth of our membership who attend this event, which includes the business of the MFGC, educational opportunities, fellowship, and interesting tours at each location.



Low-cost NGC schools exist for members to become certified or at least more knowledgeable in Flower Show hosting and judging, Landscaping, Gardening, and the newest Environmental Science. We have many graduates throughout the state. There are NGC website podcasts that are great, usually free, educational opportunities.

While we do not all mingle with other clubs or even other states to experience all the state and nationwide events, it is still a joy to have a club where you live that offers so much more to support the club members than they could without State and National membership.

I am a dedicated member of the organization, but you can have a more casual relationship with the program and still benefit from our National, Region, and Montana Federation organizations

Jeannie Bennett, President



Notes from the 1st Vice President



Cindy Carlton

On the 11th of April, there was a vegetation fire in a field about three “blocks” east of my home in the Gallatin Valley. There have been three other fires in the valley so far this year. The fire close to me was active for an hour and a half and I was keeping a close watch on it. The wind finally started blowing “it back on itself” and then, the rains came for about 30 minutes on and off. With the help of firemen and fire engines, it was extinguished. It is predicted that we will receive rain for the next few days, and I hope it happens. Most of the state needs a wet Spring!

I have been receiving Award applications online and in the mail. By the time this publication comes out, the deadline of April 15th will have passed. I am considering starting the judging the last week of April and again mid-May, if needed. Preparation includes listing the applications in a spiral notebook and placing them in alphabetical and numeric order. I print many judging scoresheets as we basically need three per application.

President Jeannie and I will attend the National Garden Club convention in St. Louis, Missouri in early May. I am looking forward to the meetings, meeting new people, touring the National Garden Club Headquarters, and the Missouri State Botanic Gardens! We will be driving; there will be so many miles that I have not had the opportunity to see.

I was able to attend the Gallatin Valley Water Conservation District seminars on April 2nd. They discussed noxious weed control and identification. It is the property owners’ responsibility to actively control weeds. There was a panel to discuss the required permit processes needed to make changes around rivers and creeks. They took questions from the audience. It was time well spent.

The 250th Patriotic Photo Contest is just around the corner. The deadline has been extended to **June 5th, 2026**. The divisions and QR code to enter your pictures are below and on the next page.

I am anticipating the convention in Anaconda this year! I am researching a location and dates for our 2027 Convention in Bozeman.

Gallatin Empire Garden Club members will plant around our Blue Star Memorial Marker to commemorate National Garden Week. Plant America! Earth Day was celebrated on April 24th at the Gallatin County Fairgrounds, and Whitehall celebrated Arbor Day at their Community Center. Miles City held a membership tea, and Belgrade gave away seeds at their library’s garden party. What is happening in your community this spring?

Happy Spring Gardening,

Cindy

Here are the **250th Patriotic Photography Contest** divisions and rules. This is a statewide photo contest. Entries may be used in MFGC publications and on social media. Monetary awards sponsored by the MFGC Endowment Fund and private donors will be presented — First place \$50, Second place \$25, Third place \$15.

The six divisions are as follows:

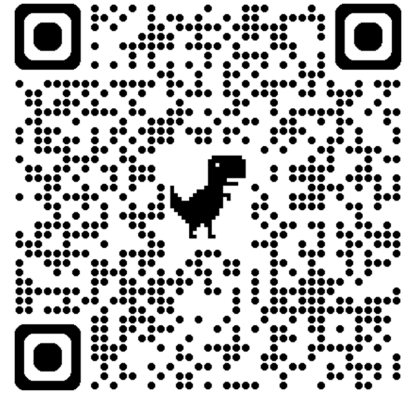
- Container(s) - garden club member
- Garden(s) - garden club member or club
- Floral Designs - Traditional or Creative by a club member
- Arrangement (A) - created by a garden club member
- Arrangement (B) - created by a youth 10-16 years old
- Public Areas - any area (such as Blue and Gold Star marker plantings, libraries, parks, etc.)

The following rules will be applied:

- Open to garden club members only, with the exception of Arrangement (B) for youth
- No artificial flowers or wreaths
- To interpret the theme, plant material and patriotism should be apparent in the photo
- No people in the photo, please
- Picture may be taken anywhere
- You, as the photographer, do not have to own or have planted the container or gardens
- Applicant (photographer) has to have taken the picture
- One entry per division per member

(continued)

Open the Google Application form at <https://bit.ly/4olpHEc> or use the QR code to the right. (Aim your cell phone camera at the image, and a link will show at the bottom of the view finder. Press it, and the form will open. Fill in the form and press "submit.") Then email the image you wish to enter to cdcarlton@hotmail.com by June 5, 2026. The Application link is also available on the MFGC website. <https://www.mtfgc.org>



Notes from the 2nd Vice President



Liz Smith

Hi Everyone. It is me again. Rocky Mountain Region Garden Clubs: has a nice ring to it, right? We, as members of Montana State Garden Clubs, are a member of it. We need to embrace it. The RMR 2026 annual Convention is August 21-22, 2026, to be held in Fargo, N.D. Lots of rich history and adventure awaits you there. All garden club members are welcome. The registration form and accommodation information can be found on the RMR website.

The RMR Award of Excellence theme this term is "Plant More Trees in our Rocky Mountain Region." That can't be too hard to do. Are you planting a wind break, or maybe a nice apple tree in back of your property, or a shade tree for keeping the sun out of your bedroom? All of these matter. All of these are a way of embracing our Rocky Mountain Region. More on this on page 14 and at the RMR site. Please check it out. <https://sites.google.com/site/rockymtngardenclubs/>

Let's talk other RMR Awards. Please send applications to me, Liz Smith, 51 Little Coyote Drive, Miles City, MT 59301. phone 406-853-6114 email: mtliz50@yahoo.com or Anna Brandt 2820 Wilson, C4, Miles City, MT 59301. phone 406-853-0554. email: granna.mae7@gmail.com (Whew that was a mouthful). The due date is **July 1, 2026**. That gives us time to choose between all of you. Please apply. There is a nice photography award, go to the RMR site



and read it, youth gardening award, and club programs. Again, I will repeat myself and say, 'There is no bigger thrill on awards day that being told you won.' You can't win if you don't apply. There are several awards that your club could qualify for. Please send all award applications digitally with the exception of scrapbooks and yearbooks. Those can be sent by postal mail. All submissions must include the completed award form as well as the permission form to be considered. WE ALL HAVE STORIES TO TELL--LET YOUR CLUB TELL THEIRS WITH AWARDS.

Liz



Montana Life Members

Elaine Wood, Chair

In 1951 in Billings, the Garden Club Convention was held, and Mrs. R. J. (Evelyn) Mooney of Butte, urged the Federation to begin a Life Members group and to follow National Guidelines. She had been a National Garden Club President at the age of 52. Several garden clubbers paid their \$25 and Life Members was begun.

A breakfast with 10 members present was held in 1952, and in 1953 the idea of raising funds for a scholarship program began. Several breakfasts were held at convention. They had secret pals and discussed putting the money into bonds. The correspondence concerned whether Life Members could have bylaws. The National Parliamentarian said we legally could not have our own since we are a part of a parent organization, and we would have to have a separate IRS 501 c (3) number, so we have guidelines.

With that as background I would like to let you all know that MFGC Life Members has considered itself to be a group of like-minded people supporting education and having fun while doing so.

We will be celebrating our 75th, Diamond, Life Member anniversary at the 2026 convention in Anaconda. Holding to the idea of fun, I encourage every Life Member who attends to come dressed as if it were the 50's. Poodle skirts, T-shirts and jeans, pony tails, slicked hair. You get the idea.

Everyone is welcome, so let's have fun!



Conservation and Environment

Kerry Hovland, Chair

Montana Conservation —

Forty-plus years ago, a gardener had only books to learn about gardening; today, there is a wealth of information to get one started. There are still wonderful books to read, but the internet has given us so much more. Our lands need help. The more we can grow eco-friendly now, the less our future generations won't have to redo the harm that herbicides and pesticides are doing to our planet. Explore some of these websites —

Websites: Montana Conservation Seedling Nursery, Montana Master Garden Program, Montana Native Plant Society, and Plant Something Montana.

plantsomethingmontana.org: Is a wonderful go-to page. You can learn Conservation with trees and shrubs, Landscape Architecture and Design, Montana Audubon, Montana Master Garden Program, Native Plant Society, and much more. It's a great place to find Mont Guides. They also have a catalog that lists plants for our zone. Planting the wrong plant for your growing zone is a major failing point and a cost for new gardeners.

growingorganic.com: You will learn about regenerative gardening. Healthy soil is the bedrock of every thriving landscape.

The Advantages of Staging a Horticulture-Only Small Flower Show

Jim Sadler, Design Consultant

A horticulture-only small flower show offers garden clubs a practical, educational, and rewarding way to promote the joy of growing plants while meeting the standards of National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC). By focusing exclusively on horticulture, clubs can showcase plant excellence, encourage participation from a broad range of members, and provide meaningful education to the public—all without the complexity of a full standard flower show.

One of the most significant advantages of a horticulture-only small flower show is its **simplicity**. By concentrating on horticulture, clubs eliminate the need for design staging, special props, or multiple divisions. This streamlined approach reduces planning demands while still allowing clubs to follow NGC policies for classes, judging, and awards. Small shows can be tailored to available space and seasonal plant material, making them achievable even for smaller clubs or those re-establishing show activity.

A horticulture-only show is also highly **inclusive**. Nearly every club member grows something, whether it is flowers, foliage, herbs, vegetables, or container-grown plants. This type of show welcomes first-time exhibitors and experienced gardeners alike, offering a comfortable entry point for members who may not feel ready to participate in floral design. Because exhibitors can enter plants they already grow, preparation is approachable and confidence-building, leading to greater participation and enthusiasm.

Education lies at the core of National Garden Clubs, and horticulture exhibits strongly support this mission. Exhibitors learn proper grooming, labeling, and conditioning of plant material, while judges provide evaluation based on documented standards. Visitors benefit as well, gaining inspiration and practical knowledge about what grows well locally and how plants can be cultivated to their best potential. These shows reinforce sound gardening practices and spark renewed interest in plant identification and care.



Horticulture-only small flower shows are also excellent **community outreach tools**. The public readily relates to live plants grown by local gardeners, and exhibits are easy to view and understand. Shows can be staged in accessible locations such as libraries, community centers, schools, or club meeting spaces. Educational signage and simple explanations can enhance the visitor experience and increase awareness of garden club activities and goals.

From a financial and logistical perspective, these shows are **cost-effective**. Without elaborate staging requirements, expenses are limited primarily to ribbons, clerking supplies, and basic display equipment. Clubs can choose to emphasize education rather than competition or keep the event informal while still adhering to NGC standards. This flexibility allows clubs to focus on plant quality and member enjoyment rather than scale.



Five-year old *Fritillaria* Crown Imperial flowers shown growing in Jim's garden this year.

Finally, a horticulture-only small flower show often serves as a **foundation for future growth**. Clubs gain valuable experience in writing schedules, staging exhibits, working with judges, and managing show logistics. Many clubs find that once

members gain confidence through a horticulture-focused show, interest grows in expanding offerings or adding design divisions in future years.

In summary, a horticulture-only small flower show is an effective way to promote gardening excellence, strengthen member engagement, and educate the public. It honors the fundamental purpose of garden clubs—to foster a love of plants—while remaining manageable, flexible, and rewarding for clubs of all sizes.



Assistance with Flower Show Schedules and Planning

Clubs interested in presenting a horticulture-only small flower show are encouraged to seek guidance when developing a schedule and organizing the show. I am available to assist clubs with writing horticulture schedules that conform to National Garden Clubs standards and are tailored to local growing conditions and club goals.

I am happy to provide a **consultation by phone or email** to help clubs plan their horticulture-only show, answer questions, and offer practical suggestions for a successful event.

Jim Sadler,
406-728-4743
jimsadler1220@gmail.com

Nominating

Diane Ward, Chair

The Nominating Committee is comprised of MFGC members, one from each of our 8 districts. As the former MFGC President (2023-2025), I have the honor to Chair this Committee. I am reaching out to all members to make recommendations from your District to serve with me in searching for our next leadership. If you or anyone you know would like to join me on the Nominating Committee, please e-mail me at mydoubleheartranch@gmail.com or call me at (406) 565-0222.

As was previously stated by Jim Sadler, "In the life of every organization comes the time when the current officers' terms end. New officers are in due course nominated and elected." The First Vice President, Second Vice President, Treasurer and Recording Secretary will be nominated by the Nominating Committee. At the annual meeting in 2027, Board members will elect new officers to serve in the 2027-2029 term.

PLANT AMERICA 250 YEAR CELEBRATION GRANTS

Five Montana Garden Clubs — Stevensville, Missoula, Miles City, Whitehall, and Rainbow, were chosen to receive the National Garden Clubs Plant America Blue Star Grants to plant their Blue and Gold Star areas Red, White, and Blue for the 250th Celebration of America.



Clubs submitted plans online which were judged at NGC and granted under a very tight deadline. Club Treasurers received a check for 75% of their Grants. When they complete the plantings and submit proof to NGC, they will receive the balance of the award. I hope plantings will be completed by or during National Garden week. Great job to these clubs.

Jeannie Bennett, President

Blue Star Gardens

Darcy Neal, Horticulture Chair

These special gardens are intentionally planted to honor all service members (past, present, and future). Maintaining and developing beauty within the landscape has remained at the heart of this project. It can be overwhelming/difficult to design these spaces as many of them are located near cemeteries and parks without access to water. Generally, in Montana, there are three criteria to consider when choosing plant material. These criteria include colors, deer resistance, and drought resistance. Listed below are a few ideas for perennial and shrub varieties that I believe would look beautiful in a Memorial Garden. I also included a few that are not deer or drought resistant in case the garden is in a location that does not require those traits. A few annuals that would compliment your Blue Star Garden include Snapdragons, Zinnias, Marigolds, Salvia, and Larkspur.



Perennials & Shrubs			
Red	White	Blue	Yellow
Red Charm Peony	Duchesse De Nemours Peony	Iris	Bartzella Itoh Peony
Arizona Red Shades Gaillardia	Candytuft	May Night Salvia	Arizona Apricot Gaillardia
Desert Eve Red Yarrow	Creeping Phlox	Creeping Phlox	Prairie Sun Rudbeckia
Jacob Kline Bee Balm	Common White Yarrow	Veronica	Zagreb Coreopsis
	Becky Shasta Daisies	Sea Holly	Moonshine Yarrow
	Potentilla	Centaurea Montana	Potentilla
*Cardinal Red Lobelia	*David Upright Phlox	*Rozanne Geranium	* Basket of Gold Alyssum
*Hope for Humanity Rose	*Blanc de Coubert Rose	*Delphinium	*Goldenrod
*Dragons Blood Sedum	*Hispanicum Sedum	Scabiosa	*Angelina Sedum
*Not considered deer and/or drought resistant			

Blue Star Gardens also support Gold Star Families, the families of fallen servicemembers, during their time of need. One thing that stood out to me while I was reading about the development of Blue Star Gardens is the Gold Star Families Code: Honor, Hope, Healing. These three words hold the significance and importance of these gardens. Design styles help bring communities together, showing service members deep appreciation and gratitude for their service. Both Formal (distinct lines/patterns) and Natural (meandering mounds of color/texture) design styles can carry everyone through the seasons of the code and is chosen with the location in mind. Thank you to our Service Members and best of luck to everyone designing/planting your Blue Star Gardens! May your memorial gardens continue to honor our service members, give hope to those who visit them, and may broken hearts heal as the seasons change.

A Lot of Flowers, A Lot of Happiness

N. DeNeal, Garden Therapy Chair,
with Carmella Gross

In Butte, if there is anyone who knows how plants affect people, it would be Carmella Gross, the owner of the Petunia Factory Greenhouse. Gross began her career at the Petunia Factory 51 years ago as an employee, when the operation consisted of one greenhouse growing mostly petunias and marigolds. Since then, she has increased the greenhouse space 11-fold and has become the owner after the original owner died. Employees have increased over 4-fold, and plant varieties have increased over 20 times. The operation is considered Butte's premier greenhouse over four other Butte greenhouse operations. The Petunia Factory is a year-round operation with the winter season offering several poinsettia varieties and exclusively high-end handmade décor for the Christmas holiday. What is most characteristic of the operation is the employees' cheerfulness and the wide variety of plant choices. Customers often visit before the traditional spring opening on Mother's Day and before Thanksgiving just to *get their "plant fix"* energy and check out new varieties for upcoming purchases.



Carmella Gross

Employees usually return each year. It is a coveted job even though the work is physically demanding. The women especially notice that their hair, nails, and skin are more vibrant when working with the plants. Maybe it's the added oxygen in the greenhouse, and maybe the added physical exercise. A decline in their hair growth and skin appearance is apparent during the late summer and autumn breaks. In general, *employees often experience their workplace as their "happy place"*. Employment is something to look forward to rather than a drudgery to endure during the day for a later paycheck.

But the relationship between plants and personal health is more pronounced in the experiences of specific individuals. Some new young employees were party people before they were hired. Alcohol was the favored experience enhancer beforehand. Employment soon reduced alcohol use and, in most other cases, eliminated it. For a couple of employees, working at the greenhouse eliminated their clinical depression and anxiety. Most people experience moments of depression and anxiety. But those experiences are temporary, and life goes on. But clinical depression and anxiety are different. Advice just to pull oneself up by one's own bootstraps lacks understanding of the condition and further contributes to anxiety about the problem. Clinical depression affects the physical structure of the brain. It immobilizes a person. Simply getting out of bed in the morning and dealing with the everyday chores of eating, sleeping, and doing simple chores is a true struggle. Prescribed medication can really help, but it is often a band-aid approach. For two employees, one a relative and another a former employee, working at the greenhouse changed their lives to the point where they needed not only less prescribed medication during their employment but eventually needed no medication. One person would not even leave home, and even held back her child for a year of beginning education to maintain a form of desired attachment. In that one case, the employee regained confidence by interacting with the public in the greenhouse. She was later able to work as an engaging hotel desk clerk.



Petunia Factory Staff

At the greenhouse, the tedium of transplanting and trimming eliminates everyday worries. Employees are positively energized by the annual nurturing from seed birth to the later maturity of an explosion of varied color and form. Excited customers feed the workers' energy. *Plants not only heal but return love for loving care.*

News from our Clubs

Miles City Garden Club news. To get us through the winter, we had our annual Christmas party and braved the cold as we rang bells for the Salvation Army. Helping decorate valentine cookies and planting seeds at HRH Residential Living was a fun way to interact with our friends who reside there. We were once again asked to participate in floriculture judging at FFA Cowtown Ag Expo. We learn so much as we work with these outstanding youth involved in FFA!

Our spring will start with our annual Membership Tea where we always enjoy fellowship, refreshments and an educational program. In May, we will work together to fill area planters and flower beds in our community with red, white and blue flowers to celebrate the 250th anniversary of USA!



We received several grants and donations which are enabling us to update our tech equipment, make improvements to the Blue Star Memorial garden and purchase a flagpole/flag for it.

Top: Cookies for Valentines Day.

Above: FFA Cow-town Ag Expo floriculture judging.

Left: Planting seeds at HRH Residential Living.

The **Thumb-R-Green** club in Billings is busy, as usual. The latest project was a fund raiser for a Gold Star Memorial marker. The generosity of others exceeded our goals. The marker will be dedicated on May 23rd at 10:00 am at Veterans Park, Poly Drive and 13th Street W in Billings. This will add to the Blue Star Memorial we have now. The educational exhibit pictured to the right was made by Connie Schneider for the 2025 flower show.

We are busy preparing for the flower show we have every Labor day at our Farmers Market. We always having a guest speaker for education at our monthly meeting in addition to one of our members telling us about their favorite plant subject.



Rainbow Garden Club members celebrated **Lucille Johnson's** 105th birthday recently. Lucille has been a dedicated member for many decades. She served as the state Treasurer in the 1990's and was named the 2013 Garden Club Member of the Year. Lucille says she owes her longevity to having a sense of humor and keeping active.



*You're Invited to the Montana Federation of Garden Clubs
89th Convention, June 26-27, 2026, hosted by the Anaconda Garden Club
Creating a Greener Future Together*

- 40 Queen Rooms Reserved
- Plan to arrive Thursday June 25
- Conference rate \$149/night
- Breakfast is part of your reservation
- 100 Union Avenue, Anaconda
- Call and reserve your room now:
(406)797-4100
- [The Forge Website](#)



**Learn, Connect and Relax all at
The Forge Hotel and Convention
Center**

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Special Guest Shirley Pursel,
Rocky Mountain Region Director

Thursday afternoon and evening, June 25

- 4:00 pm Registration Opens at The Forge Hotel. Displays, Ways and Means, and Silent Auction set up
- 5:00-6:00 Advisory Council, Huddle Room
- 6:00-6:30 Club Presidents and District Directors, Convention Room
- 7:30—8:30 Judges Council Meeting, Convention Room
- Dinner on your own

Friday, June 26

- 8:00 am Registration
- 9:00 Business Meeting Opens at The Forge Hotel
- Noon Awards and Scholarship Luncheon
- 2:30 “Food Preservation Plan for Your Garden” Elaine Wood
- 3:30 “Flower Design—Manipulation of Greens” hands on, Susan Yurman
- 6:00 Life Members 75th Anniversary Dinner and Celebration

Saturday, June 27

- 9:00 am Reconvene Business Meeting at The Forge Hotel
- Noon Lunch at Barclay Restaurant in the hotel
- 1:00 Depart for tours (Carpool from parking lot); Walking involved
- 6:00 pm Dinner with Guest Speaker RMR Director Shirley Pursel

*(Convention information
continued on next page)*

Saturday, June 27 Events

Noon

Lunch at the Barclay II/Convention Site

1:00 pm

Depart for tours from the hotel. Maps and carpool arrangements will be provided. Some walking is involved; seating for presentations is available.

Anaconda Smoke Stack State Park, 100 Smelter Road

Barbara Andreozzi, AGC Past President, will lead a 30-minute presentation on the history of the 585-foot smelter stack. The session will cover the collaborative effort to fund and design the park, as well as the partnership between Anaconda-Deer Lodge County and the AGC on the Historic Guard House and gardens, focusing on sustainable landscaping challenges.



Washoe Park Begonia House and Dessert, Washoe Park Road

AGC members Mary Lynn Mckenna and Naomi Sullivan will discuss the history of the Begonia House and the AGC's ongoing commitment to its restoration and care. The Begonia House and the enclosed Washoe Park garden will be open for viewing, with information provided on begonia cultivation.



Kennedy Commons Park—AGC Memorial Garden, Blue Star Memorial, and Washoe Theater, 302 Main St.

Rosemary Corrigan, Blue Star Memorial Project Chair, will present on the collaboration required to establish the memorial and the AGC's role in maintaining the gardens. She will also share information about the all-white AGC Memorial Garden plants also located in the Kennedy Commons Park.



From the Memorial, you'll walk across the street to the Washoe Theater, an Art Deco gem and historic movie theater, named fifth most beautiful theater in the nation by the Smithsonian Institute. Jerry Lussy will lead a tour of this landmark, theater, backstage area, and the projection room upstairs.



3:30

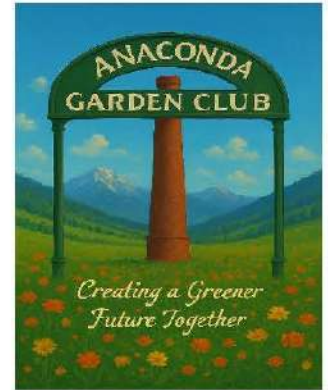
Downtown Exploration—Enjoy free time for shopping and exploring downtown Anaconda on your own.

6:00

MFGC Dinner—Join us for dinner celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the USA.



Montana Federation of Garden Clubs, June 25-26-27, 2026
 The 89th Annual State Convention, "Creating a Greener Future Together"
 Hosted by the Anaconda Garden Club
The Forge Hotel, 100 Union Avenue. Anaconda, MT



Reserve now: Hotel Front Desk - (406) 797-4100 Group: "Garden Club".
 Convention room rate is \$149.00 (plus 8%taxes) Block includes Double
 queen rooms, up to 4 people. **Rates include deluxe breakfast bar.** Room
 block **discount expires on May 19th so please get your room reserved.**

Name: _____ District: _____ Club _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail Address _____

Please check all applicable credentials (Voting Position)*

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delegate for Club * | <input type="checkbox"/> District Director* | <input type="checkbox"/> Advisory Council* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designated Alternate | <input type="checkbox"/> First Time Attendee | <input type="checkbox"/> National Board Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Delegate (vote only as sub
for Club Delegate) | <input type="checkbox"/> Flower Show Judge | <input type="checkbox"/> National Life Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Officer* | <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Club Member | <input type="checkbox"/> RMR Board Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club President/Club
President Proxy** | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Design Consult | <input type="checkbox"/> RMR Director |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> State President* | <input type="checkbox"/> RMR Officer |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> State Chairperson* | <input type="checkbox"/> State Life Member |

REGISTRATION: Registration form and fees must be postmarked by June 6, 2026 to avoid late fees. No routine refunds after June 13, 2026. MFGC Members must register to attend any official function. Add registration and meals for total cost. **Please make registration checks payable to: AGC Convention. P.O. Box 46, Anaconda, MT 59711. AGC Committee Chairs and Registrars: Mary Robertson at rubyjane7@gmail.com and Michelle Halberg mhalbergagc@gmail.com**

Convention Registration (Choose meals)		\$30	\$ _____
LATE REGISTRATION FEE if Post Marked June 7 or later	add	\$10	\$ _____
MEALS: 20% gratuity included with beverages, vegetables, salad etc.			
Friday, June 26, AWARDS LUNCHEON (Chili and Baked Potato Bar w/pulled pork)		\$25	\$ _____
Friday, June 26, 75 th Anniversary of MT Life Members Celebration-Italian Buffett w/ meatballs		\$45	\$ _____
Saturday, June 27 Anaconda tour day, Luncheon, Soup, Salad, and Sandwiches in Restaurant		\$25.	\$ _____
Saturday, June 27, 250 th Celebration Circle One – Grilled Halibut or Filet Mignon		\$50	\$ _____
	TOTAL REGISTRATION COST		\$ _____

Circle Food Sensitivities: Dairy, Gluten, Vegan, Onions, Sugar _____
 Do you need a meal alternative??? _____

MFGC SILENT AUCTION items are requested to be in reusable "carry or shopping style" bags. Feel free to choose your topic or match theme or 250th celebration. AGC welcomes your donations to the **WAYS AND MEANS TABLES**, always a fun treat.

By entering the event and by your presence at the 2026 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.

MFGC Winter Board Notes

The Zoom meeting was called to order at 10:00 am on February 27, 2026. There was a quorum, and the previous meeting minutes were approved. Minutes were recorded by Elaine Wood, Zoom Chairman.

President Jeannie Bennett reported on grants paid to clubs, convention budget, plans for the convention silent auction, other fundraising, and the hotel. She asked that club presidents and state chairmen update their email address. If the club president doesn't accept emails, please designate a club member to do so.

First Vice President Cindy Carlton reminded everyone that awards are due by April 15. They will be judged at the end of April. She and President Jeannie Bennett will attend the National Garden Club convention in St. Louis in May. The 250th Patriotic Photography project deadline has been extended to June 5.

Second Vice President Liz Smith reported on awards and described the RMR awards program.

Treasurer Beverly Geary reported on the Federation's donation to Montana Ag Live. State membership has increased by 30. Transfer of MFGC investments and bank accounts have been completed. She gave a Finance Committee report.

Website and Zoom chair Elaine Wood reported that the website is updated as soon as new information is received. Presidents are encouraged to review and update their club page. As Life Member Chairman, she reported on plans for LM dinner on Friday, June 26.

Montana Gardens editor Phyllis White reminded everyone of the next deadline on April 15. District news and convention will be highlighted. Send updated email and postal mail addresses to Mary Kempf, Circulation Manager.

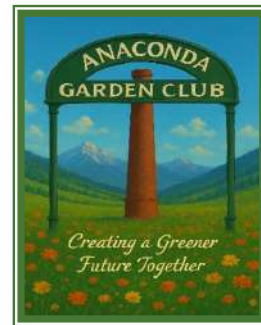
Reforest Montana chairman Glenna Waltee reported that four clubs sent donations.

MFGC Convention chair Michelle Halberg reported on the facilities, planning, and a tentative agenda for convention in Anaconda June 25 - 27.

President Jeannie announced that Recording Secretary Ann Wickum has resigned, which was accepted with regret. Linda Kaveshan was appointed as Recording Secretary pro tem. An election for the office will be held at the annual meeting in Anaconda.

Nominating Committee Chair Diane Ward requested that each District forward the name of a member to serve on the 2026-2027 Nominating Committee. The election to serve on this committee will be held in Anaconda.

MFGC is requesting a host club for the 2028 annual meeting. Please contact President Jeannie for details if your club is interested.



Plant More Trees in our Rocky Mountain Region

Award of Excellence for Regions

RMR Director Shirley Pursel

Trees do so much for each of us. Sure, there is planting and watering, but they give back so much more. If each club plants a few trees each year, we can make a difference. Trees clean our air, provide shade, and some have fruit. They are important for birds and pollinators. We can work together to plant more trees. "Many hands make all work light."

Please work within your club to plant, record and report trees planted between June 2025 to September 30. Record the type of tree, when it was planted, and the name of your club. Photographs, news releases, or any other material pertinent to the project will help make the Book of Evidence complete. **Send the information to Liz Smith by October 1.** She will compile the reports into a state Book of Evidence application and send it to Robbie Kupper, RMR chair.

Notes, Dates and Links



Please submit MFGC Membership dues and rosters to:

Beverly Geary, Treasurer

1891 Sutherland Dr., Corvallis, MT 59828-9679

See her email and phone in the online Directory.

Notes from the Treasurer's Pen—

Endowment Fund Donations:

MFGC in memory of Past President Ruth Layton	\$200.00
Chester GC in memory of Maxine Wickum	100.00
Chester GG in memory of Pat Seidlitz	100.00

Reforest Montana Donations:

Gallatin Empire GC	\$68.00
Stevensville GC - In Memory of Joanne McElfresh	50.00
Thumb R Green	250.00
Whitehall GC	50.00

New Club Members:

Dearborn GC

Mary Risberg, Patty Schlaeger and Shaniah McGlaughlin

Missoula GC

Dave Durnford & Mollie Enderson

Dillon GC

Tina Amos, Linda Berg, Kari Klemo, Joni Remely, Tara Thompson, Mary Anne Wofford & Youth member Paul Beaucamp-Stout

Saco GC

Joey Newby

Stevensville GC

Robin Johnson- Jordan, Barry Barnes & Bradley Duncan, Marilyn Mackay Mead

Thumb-R-Green GC

Charlie Hendricks, Vikki Fasjord, Becky Herman, Peggy Lankard, Hedda Wolf, Brenda Sheehan, Jim Arner, Sandra McKee

New Life Members:

Rainbow GC Judy Hess

IMPORTANT: If you are an Award Sponsor and have not sent your sponsorship funds, please do so now.

Images in this issue provided by Michelle Halberg, Norm DeNeal, Jim Sadler, Phyllis White, [Vector by Vexels.com](#) on [FreelImages](#) Photo by [micheile henderson](#) on [Unsplash](#).

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

Please update Club information on the MFGC website by contacting Elaine Wood at webmaster@mtfgc.org or 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 greeting. Thank you for supporting MFGC and this publication.

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>.

Important Dates:

June 5, 2026—250th United States Patriotic Photography Contest Entries due to Cindy Carlton, see Google form on page 4 or <https://bit.ly/4olpHEc>

June 25, 26 and 27—89th Annual MFGC Convention in Anaconda. See pages 11-13 for information.

July 1, RMR Award Applications Due to Liz Smith

August 21-22, RMR Convention, Fargo ND

MONTANA Gardens

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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

Mary Kempf, Circulation Manager

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

Submission Deadlines:

July 15, 2026 – Summer/Fall

November 1, 2026 – Winter

April 15, 2027 – 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.



Mary Kempf
 Montana Gardens Circulation Mgr.
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 Dillon MT 59725

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**Anaconda MT
 Hosts:**

**MFGC Annual
 Convention
 June 26th and
 27th 2026**

Creating a Greener Future Together

So much to do in
 the “in between”
 time!



The Washoe Stack, Boutiques, Gift Shops, Historic Washoe Theatre, Bike Rentals, Walking and Biking Trails, AGC Community Gardens and Begonia House, Washoe Park, Old Works Golf Course, and so much more!