



Redbud Reporter

Winter 2024

From the District Director

The Garden in Winter

As I write this, it is an unusually warm day in early December. I have spent several hours enjoying the weather working in my garden. There is always something that needs attention—weeding, laying landscape fabric, trimming the heads off plants whose seeds believe in monopolies, selectively choosing to leave untouched the ones that wildlife may find some use for. One reason I love gardening is it delivers both immediate and long-term rewards. For example – the winter flower bed of pansies, snapdragons, and cyclamens gets planted with small specimens from Home Depot—job done. And it will continue to grow and bloom despite what Old Man Winter can dish out. I just wish there were more choices for this time of year, and that they still had the snapdragons when I had to go back for more.

The first few temperatures in the 30's this week have finally turned summer's annuals to mush. Everything has pretty much browned out except the camellias, hollies, azaleas, and a few other evergreens—a far cry from the glorious fall show of asters, mums, ageratums, goldenrods, ironweed, beautyberry, and swamp sunflowers – so vibrant just a few weeks ago. Here and there are a few hearty hold outs—a last coneflower at Thanksgiving, a rose on the arbor. But now we have the “Garden in Winter”—a term I first read a long time ago in a gardening magazine. The article romanticized a walk in winter's grey garden of sleeping plants, dried stems, and browned out flowers – remembering their past glory and joyously confident of their return. To be a gardener one must be optimistic and

believe the sun will rise again and the daffodils will show up every year in all their glory. The seeds we plant will become glorious arrays of color that feed flying creatures. This optimism (even when what we have right now is “The Garden in Winter” and wars and a time of great uncertainty) – will help sustain us as we wait for the renewal that spring always brings. I especially am grateful for the “gardeners’ optimism” when I sit by the fire with a cup of cocoa and a stack of seed catalogs.

I am continuously grateful for the enormous, good work you all contribute to our home, Planet Earth. I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and look forward to hearing the stories of your continuing “gardening magic” after The Garden in Winter 2023 is just a memory.

Best Wishes for a wonderful 2024!

Kim Fair
Redbud District Director



Redbud Hosts the 96th Annual Garden Club of Georgia Convention!

Remarkable Redbuds, it is time to register now to attend the April 16 -17th convention in Peachtree City, GA! "Bloomin' in the Heart of Georgia – Y'all Come" is our theme. The event will feature two formal luncheons, the Awards night dinner and six speakers on a wide variety of topics.

Redbud Co-Director Bonnie Dudley and Redbud Advisor Quill Duncan are the co-chairmen of the convention. A red ribbon committee of Redbuds is on the convention board to make it a wonderful experience for all of you to enjoy. You will love to see the creative floral designs and educational exhibits that will fill the pre-function area of the conference center. And there will be some music involved!

And the best news is that the venue, the Crowne Plaza Hotel and Conference Center of Peachtree City, is right in Redbud's district! You don't have to travel far, and you will enjoy the charm of this secluded facility. It is a beautiful, wooded campus perfect for our meetings, dining and hotel rooms. You will see your favorite vendors and meet some new ones and it's always great to spend time and relax with our friends from across the state.

This fun convention has one additional treat. We are offering a designers' challenge as a free post-convention event after the concluding luncheon on Wednesday. Designers from across the state will create unique designs using the same materials. How exciting to be able to watch their creative ideas come to life!



How do you register for the convention and the hotel? Go to www.gardenclubofgeorgia.org and check out the home page. Scroll down and you will see the details and the links. Also, the beautiful winter issue of *Garden Gateways* has all the detailed information. Don't wait! You will want to be there to enjoy this exciting event. Better yet -- come and bring a friend!

Redbuds, "Y'all Come!"!! See you in April 2024!



NOW is the time for Scholarships!

The time is NOW so I have to say,
Scholarships indeed must find a way
To secure donations to help each student;
Let us face it friends, it is only prudent.

Our committee is thankful for your dedication.
You give all you can without hesitation.
So humbly, we ask for your support once again
To continue to help our students' own mission.

Send your check today, no later than January.
Our students will apply so we have to be ready
To offer some aid as they are counting on us.
We have done so well so let's keep it up!

Ask clubs, councils, districts and more...
Your friends, colleagues, businesses galore
To join with YOU to give in unity
For in that, dear friends,
We foster *Conservation and Beauty!*

Susan Turner, GCG Scholarships Chairman
404-502-8147 glencree@bellsouth.net
www.gardenclubofgeorgia.org

*Find Member Resources at the top menu bar and
scroll down to Scholarships.*

SAVE THE DATE
THE FLOWER FANTASY AT PINEOLA FARMS
NOT YOUR NORMAL FLOWER EXTRAVAGANZA

April 20 – April 21, 2024



Don't miss this unique opportunity to tour a historic home filled with beautiful floral installations. These are not your average flower arrangements!

This is also an opportunity to tour the gardens of this historic property full of spring color, hear featured garden experts and shop our many vendors.

Saturday, April 20th, 10 am – 4 pm and
Sunday, April 21st, 1 pm – 4 pm, in Fort Valley, GA
Tickets are good for both days.

Tickets and more information are available at
<https://www.pineola.com/events> or
call (478) 335-1700

We at the Magnolia Garden Club feel like education is key. We want to help inspire our youth in all fields of horticulture, therefore all ticket sales will benefit the Garden Club of Georgia Scholarship Fund.

Georgia Regional Hospital Garden News

In early December, the Gardening Group at Georgia Regional Hospital harvested white and purple sweet potatoes and baked them in the oven with olive oil and butter; they also did a sauté with sweet potatoes, carrots, and radishes. Both were a big hit with the residents, and they were so good!!!

The Group has had two more root veggie meals – this time with watermelon for dessert! The watermelon was a volunteer that grew on top of their compost pile and somehow withstood that early freeze.

Mary Cochran, who is the Staff Leader of the Hospital Garden Group, reminded the Engineering department that the Gardening Group needs a compost bin, so they are hopeful it will soon be built and installed by the Garden area.

All of the Care Units have some type of plantings that are cared for either by Residents and/or Staff.

Mary and her groups thank DeKalb Federation, Smoke Rise Morning Glories, and The Garden Club of Georgia for their continuing support and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!!!



Atlanta Camellia Show

On February 10-11, the North Georgia Camellia Society will present its 75th Annual Camellia Show in Day Hall at the Atlanta Botanical Garden. Mrs. Deen Day Sanders will serve as Honorary Chair.

The Show will include blooms grown in the Metro Area and from around the State. All camellia lovers are invited to participate and bring blooms.

Saturday, February 10th, 1 pm – 5 pm
Sunday, February 11th, 10 am – 5 pm

Admission Free with ABG entry

Contact:

president@northgeorgiacamelliasociety.org

for more information

\$\$\$\$\$ Redbud District Cash Raffle 2024 \$\$\$\$\$

Do you want to win some money in 2024? Buy a \$5 raffle ticket! Redbud District is offering this special raffle as a fundraiser for our sponsorship of the GCG 96th annual convention to be held at Peachtree City, GA on April 16-17, 2024. The drawing for the winners will be held on April 17th at the convention.

Prizes:

- First Place \$500
- Second Place \$250
- Third Place \$125.

You don't have to be present to win!

Your Club President will have the raffle tickets!

Buy as many as you want for \$5 each and make the check out to Redbud District! Keep your coupon and sign your name and address and phone number on the ticket to give to your Club President. You just might be one of our three lucky winners! Good Luck!! Thank you!

Contact Redbud Raffle Chairman Bonnie Dudley at 706 812-7167 if questions or for more tickets.



Focus on Natives – Native Vines (Part II)

This is a continuation of an article on native vines that appeared in the Summer 2023 issue of Redbud Reporter.

Carolina jessamine

Carolina jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) is one of our most beautiful native vines. Glossy, evergreen leaves are covered with fragrant, bright yellow flowers in February – March. It can be grown to twine over a trellis or arbor or cover a fence or wall without worrying about it getting out of control. Grown unsupported, it serves as an informal ground cover.



Carolina jessamine grows best in well-drained, moist soil and in full sun. It's an excellent way to brighten up your garden in those last, dull days of winter!

Caution! Carolina jessamine has severe poison characteristics. All parts of the plant are very poisonous. Sap may cause skin irritation in sensitive individuals. Children can be poisoned by sucking nectar from the flowers.

Crossvine

Crossvine (*Bignonia campreolata*) is a fast-growing, evergreen vine native to the Southeastern U.S. that blooms heavily in mid-spring. Hummingbirds love the trumpet-shaped flowers in bright shades of red, orange or yellow.

Crossvine tolerates a wide variety of conditions but prefers organically rich, well-drained soil. It will grow well in shade to full sun, with better flower production the more sunlight it receives. Several cultivars are available, including the popular 'Tangerine Beauty'.



Caution! Crossvine and passionflower are extremely flammable and should not be grown next to your house.

Passionflower

If you are looking for a truly showy native vine, consider growing passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*). Its large, purple flowers in summer are showstoppers and attract a large variety of pollinators including bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. The yellow-green egg-shaped fruit is not only attractive, it's also edible! However, you might want to leave it for songbirds and small mammals, who also like its flavor!

Passionflower is a rapid-growing, trailing vine that is native to the Southeastern U.S. It is sometimes called maypop, based on the loud popping sound it makes when you step on the fruit. It grows best in well-drained soils in a full to partly sunny location.



Where to Buy

Many local garden centers may stock some native vines. For a wider selection, consider ordering from Brushwood Nursery. A mail-order only nursery in Athens, they carry an amazing selection of vines, including many natives.

<https://www.brushwoodnursery.com>

Great Backyard Bird Count

It's almost time for the Great Backyard Bird Count! Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society, the Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) was the first community science project to collect data on wild birds and to display results in near real time. Birds Canada joined the project in 2009 to provide an expanded capacity to support participation in Canada. In 2013, it became a global project when data began to be entered into the [ebird](https://www.birdcount.org) website.



When: February 16 – 19, 2024

How to Participate:

Step 1: Decide where you will watch birds.

Step 2: Watch birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days.

Step 3: Identify all the birds you *see or hear* within your planned time/location and use the best tool for sharing your bird sightings:

- If you are new to bird identification, try using the [Merlin Bird ID app](#) to tell what birds you are seeing or hearing.
- If you have participated in the count before and want to record numbers of birds, try the [eBird Mobile app](#) or enter your bird list on the [eBird website](#) (desktop/laptop).

For more information, go to:

<https://www.birdcount.org>

Atlanta Botanical Garden Flower Show

The biennial Atlanta Botanical Garden (ABG) Flower Show will be held February 23 – 25, 2024. This year's show is titled *Primavera* and features competitive divisions of Horticulture, Floral Design, Botanical Arts and Photography. In addition to the judged entries by exhibitors from all over the U.S., the show will include displays of Ikebana.

Orchid Daze will be underway at the same time as the flower show. The ABG is home to one of the largest orchid displays at any public garden in the world. Running from February 14 – April, Orchid Daze is an event not to be missed!

Atlanta Botanical Garden Flower Show: *Primavera*

Friday, February 23 – Sunday, February 25

10 am – 5 pm

Garden Member Admission: \$10

For more information, visit

<https://atlantabg.org/events-exhibitions/flower-show>

News from the Clubs

Avondale Estates Garden Club

Avondale Estates Garden Club Board Serves Members Elaborate Holiday Luncheon

Each year, for the club's December meeting, the Avondale Estates Garden Club board members continue a long tradition of preparing and serving a holiday meal to the club members.

In 2022, the board started a new tradition of asking board members to decorate tables for the luncheon with their own holiday designs, including flowers, china, silver, and linens. Since the 2022 event was so popular, Club President Patricia Calcagno continued it for 2023.

At the Dec. 1 luncheon, held at the Lake House of the Avondale Community Club, board members pitched in to decorate eight tables, unpacking Christmas china, silver, and linens, as well as designing elaborate floral centerpieces as a treat for club members. Board members prepared food and filled the buffet meal table with some of their favorite holiday foods.



Above: Preparing deviled eggs is Club Vice President Julie Martinez.

Bottom: Table arrangements that welcomed club members to the holiday luncheon.



Children and Adults Learn about Trees at the Garden Club of Avondale Estates Bonnie Phelps Memorial Tree Walk

Fun and educational activities for children highlighted the 2023 Bonnie Phelps Memorial Tree Walk hosted Oct. 28. by the Avondale Estates Garden Club.

Headlining the event was the orange puppet Garbanzo, who told the children and their parents how trees help our environment. Garbanzo is the main character of an educational YouTube series called “Nature Time” that features Garbanzo and his people, Mr. Michael, Elise Potts, and Alan Melling (photo of Garbanzo and Alan Melling below).



After watching Garbanzo, the children gathered around craft tables to make leaf rubbings, leaf crowns, and to plant saplings. Additional adults arrived in time for the walks around the city’s historic district.

Adding children’s activities promoted the biannual event to a new audience. “We were thrilled with the turnout of both children and adults,” Club President Patricia Calcagno said. Since the date of the event was the Saturday before Halloween, children were invited to wear their Halloween costumes and gather at the Lake Avondale gazebo an hour before the start of the arborist-led walks.

Following the children’s activities, five certified arborists led groups of walkers through the historic portion of the city. The 45-minute walks allowed the experts to point out the different species and general characteristics of individual trees and talk about the importance of trees to the environment.

Goals of the Tree Walk are to ensure the future preservation of the City’s tree cover, to encourage appreciation of trees, and to educate the public about the value of trees in our environment. The event is held in the fall of odd-numbered years and is named after the late Bonnie Phelps, a longtime member of the club and the founder of the event. The next Tree Walk is scheduled for the fall of 2025.



Arborist Gary Pfeiffer (top) and landscape architect Steve Sanchez (bottom) lead tours around Lake Avondale.

Garden Club of Avondale Estates Garners Eight Redbud District Awards

After receiving the state Garden Club of the Year Trophy in April from the Garden Club of Georgia, the Avondale Estates Garden Club again brought home a plethora of awards on October 17 from the Redbud District.

With a total of eight awards, including first place honors in four categories, Club President Patricia Calcagno was overwhelmed by the recognition for the 74-member club. "So much credit goes to our past president, Peggy Burgess, for her leadership, and for our Awards Chair Christi Granger, another past president, for organizing and submitting all the entries," Ms. Calcagno said.

Awards from the Redbud District included:

- 3rd Place - The Lorraine Loftis Redbud Membership Award
- 3rd Place - The Mimosa Garden Club Historic Preservation Award
- 2nd Place - The Rita Compher Scholarship Award for the Club that Gives the Largest Amount (as averaged per member) to the GCG Scholarship Fund in the Calendar Year
- 2nd Place - The Lullwater Gavel Award for Applying for the Most State Awards
- 1st Place - The Dorothy W. Hightower Community Improvement Award
- 1st Place - The Margaret Strickland Birds & Butterfly Garden Program Award
- 1st Place - The Deanna McFarlan Club Newsletter Award

In addition to the above, the Avondale Estates Garden Club achieved the honor of winning The Jerry Tubb Award of the Year for the highest score on the President's Report.

And The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. recognized Avondale Estates Garden Club with Grateful Appreciation in their support of The Avondale Estates Garden Club Scholarship.

"As current President of the Avondale Estates Garden Club, I could not have been any prouder of our club and its members at the Redbud District Meeting where Avondale Estates Garden Club received eight awards. I thank all our members for their hard work and dedication to our Club and the projects we undertake," Ms. Calcagno said.



From left: AEGC Immediate Past President Peggy Burgess; Past President and Awards Chair Christi Granger; current President Patricia Calcagno; and Vice-President Julie Martinez

Conyers Garden Club

The Conyers Garden Club offers a variety of programs on subjects of beautification, conservation, and education. Club members are encouraged to present in areas of specialized knowledge within these topics.

The club's Second Vice President and a long-time member, Kathy Williams is well-known in the Conyers area for her lovely miniature gardens seen frequently on display in the local library and often given as gifts. Her container gardens are a fascinating example of a botanical art form. The miniature gardens create a diorama often containing miniature trees, fairies, and live plants. She uses a variety of containers for her gardens.

On November 14, 2023, Kathy led a club program on creating miniature container gardens. Club members listened attentively as Kathy discussed the importance of selecting the right plants and gave a list of the factors to consider when selecting plants for a miniature garden: size, sun and light needs; growth pattern; and color. To illustrate her talking points, Kathy brought in several plants, containers and decorative items (photo below).



Kathy also covered the importance of selecting the right container for a miniature garden, including the factors of size and shape. After covering these basic tips, she demonstrated creating a miniature container garden, which included layering: the drainage medium (pea gravel); activated charcoal (to control the moisture and reduce unpleasant smells); soil; decorative items; and additional ground cover (e.g. moss). She reviewed the maintenance of the garden, including plant pruning, watering, and other important maintenance requirements. After the presentation and demonstration by Kathy, members used personal containers and materials and donated garden accessories and soil to create lovely miniature container gardens (photos below).

As part of her demonstration, Kathy emphasized the importance of regular monitoring of the garden, including the growth of plants and issues related to too much moisture. Members were encouraged to monitor their plants. Kathy stated that she was available to answer any questions on garden care.



Green Thumb Garden Club

November was a busy month for Green Thumb Garden Club. Club members participated in the annual Veterans Day Observation on November 10th at the Greatest Generation Memorial Park in Thomaston. Per tradition, the club placed a new wreath at the Blue Star Marker, which is located on the north side of the pond at the park. The wreath was made by club member Debbie Gignilliat.

In preparation for the holiday season and Santa’s annual visit, club members Traci Harrison and Alicia Neighbors decorated the Christmas Tree at the Upton County Courthouse. Also, outdoor lighted wreaths and new outdoor bows purchased by Green Thumb were placed around the downtown square to decorate for Christmas.

At the November monthly meeting, club member Pam Whitaker presented a program on forcing branches indoors. She focused on using spring flowering tree branches or shrubs which including her favorite, the flowering quince. Forsythia, witch hazels, pussy willows, eastern redbud, cherry, and red maples are some of the best trees and shrubs for forcing indoors.



Left: wreath placed at the Blue Star Marker in Thomaston for Veteran’s Day by the Green Thumb Garden Club.
Top: Upton County Courthouse Tree decorated by Green Thumb Garden Club.
Bottom: Pam Whitaker demonstrates forcing branches for floral arrangements.

Shenandoah Rose Garden Club

Members of Shenandoah Rose Garden Club traveled to Gibbs Gardens on November 8 to attend the Japanese Maple Festival. Before leaving, we were concerned that we might not see much color. Fall foliage color in Atlanta had been disappointing this year, plus low night temperatures in October had resulted in somewhat earlier than normal fall color.

But we had no reason for concern! The Japanese maples at Gibbs were gorgeous! According to the Gibbs website, yellow Japanese maples turn color first, then the oranges, and finally the reds. We had missed the yellows and oranges, but the reds were incredible! Again, according to the Gibbs website, this was the best year in a long time for red fall color in their Japanese maples.

Seven of our nine members were able to attend. We slowly strolled through the Japanese garden, stopping to rest on strategically placed benches whenever a back ached or someone just wanted to rest and take in the beauty. The weather was absolutely perfect! We couldn't have asked for a prettier day.

After visiting the garden, we hopped into our cars and drove about 4 miles up the road to Mary's Bread Basket in Marble Hill for lunch. Great sandwiches on homemade bread!



If you haven't been to Gibbs Gardens in the fall, we recommend you take a trip. And if you haven't been in the spring for the daffodils, shame on you!!

Our December meeting was at the home of member Vickey Cooper. Vickey led us in a hands-on workshop on creating a small holiday centerpiece. Greenery came from members' gardens, while red mini-carnations, baby's breath and leatherleaf fern were purchased from the DeKalb Farmer's Market. Small round containers came from Dollar Tree.

While starting with the same plant material and containers, each member's design was different. This was a learning experience. As one member said "this gives me the confidence to try to create a centerpiece on my own".



Smoke Rise Morning Glories

For the past ten years, the Smoke Rise Morning Glories have been decorating the historic Wells-Brown House in neighboring Stone Mountain Village. The house built in the early 1870's is owned by the Stone Mountain Historic Society and has a fantastic view from the Juliet balcony of the carving on the mountain.

This year club members decorated the four fireplace mantles, the banister, the balcony and lamp post with swags, and the front door with a wreath. Using period appropriate décor, we used greenery from our gardens and purchased pine swags and fruit. One addition we always use are the clove studded oranges that offer a lovely aroma and unique accent to the mantles.

This year we had the décor completed the day before the Historic Society hosted their big holiday bash for members and the community. The community enjoys the holiday spirit all month long for drivers, walkers, runners and strollers that pass by on the sidewalks and street in front of the historic home.



Stonecrest Garden Club

The Redbud District’s newest club, the Stonecrest Garden Club (SGC), has demonstrated a commitment to civic improvement projects within the community of Stonecrest. Since its June 2023 forming, the Club has had several civic improvement workdays: planting cold-weather tolerant plants on the grounds of the city’s recreation center; working in the newly established woodland park; and providing floral arrangements to local public buildings.

Several of these workdays took place at Everett Park. This 6.4-acre park is an undeveloped area designated as a woodland park on the South River in Stonecrest. The plans for the woodland include a designated parking area, walking paths, a scenic overlook, more accessible fishing spots, and kayak launching pads. The City of Stonecrest has received two grants (one from South River Watershed Alliance and the other from The Bobcat Corporation) to facilitate its work in the park. The work is expected to take six years to complete.

On October 8, six SGC members labelled dogwoods (*Cornus florida*) in the Everett Park woodland area so these trees would not be damaged during the planned path work involving heavy machinery. On October 18, six additional members worked in the Everett Park to rescue Christmas ferns that were in the area designated for heavy machinery work to carve out the planned walking paths.



The SGC meets monthly at the Stonecrest Recreation Center. The club is allowed to meet in the center at no cost to the club. The recreation center requested that the club plant seasonal plants at building’s entrance, so on October 25th, eight members worked to plant pansies (*Viola tricolor*) and ornamental cabbage (*Brassica oleracea*) in the front of the Browns Mill Recreation Center. The plants were all donated by the City of Stonecrest.



As a beautification project and an ongoing monthly community service project, the members of the SGC signed-up in September to provide floral arrangements or potted plants to the two public libraries in the city and City Hall. Accompanied by a SGC sign, these floral donations serve as a beautification project and to inform the community of the garden club and its work in the community. During the last week of October, floral arrangements (and signage about the SGC) were donated and delivered by SGC members to the Stonecrest and Salem-Panola Libraries and to the Stonecrest City Hall.

Left: Stonecrest Garden Club (SGC) members rescue Christmas ferns.
 Above: SGC members plant pansies at Stonecrest City Hall
 Next page: Signage, floral arrangement and potted plant delivered to Stonecrest libraries and city hall by SGC members.



On November 8, 20 club members joined city officials, representatives from the Bobcat Company and the National Recreation Parks Association, and volunteers from the Arabia Mountain and South River Alliances in a groundbreaking ceremony for the Everett Park 1.5-mile walking trail. After the

ceremony, all volunteers, including the SGC members, worked to replant the Christmas ferns rescued the previous month and to plant new native beautyberry (*Callicarpa americana*) and blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium angustifolium*) in designated areas. Pruning of some trees was also done.

Wisteria Garden Club

Wisteria Garden Club met on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 3, 2023 to pack and deliver 52 Finals Survival Gift Bags to support students in their final week and Finals for the Fall 2023 semester. Seven bags were donated to international students and 45 were purchased by parents for their children. This is Wisteria Garden Club's major Ways and Means project to fund the many local, state and national garden club projects in which they participate.



Left to right: Wisteria Garden Club members Donna Harmon, Bonnie Dudley, Marjorie Bowling, Brenda Spradley, Ann Blackwell, Genie Sutton, Alesia Nixon, Debbie Massengale, Amy Davis, Harriet Wigley, Elaine Howard, and Suzanne Cook with Final Survival Gift Bags packed by the club.