New Mexico Gardener
Quarterly Newsletter of New Mexico Garden Clubs, Inc.

Volume 52, No. 6 December/January/February 2026

Winter 2026 Issue



Johnese Turri, State President 2025-2027

"Planting Seeds of Joy"

A Wonderful Gathering in Northern New Mexico



Photo: Johnese Turri

What a wonderful time we had hosting our New Mexico Garden Clubs Executive Board meeting here in the beautiful northern part of our state! It was such a pleasure to welcome everyone to our mountain communities, enjoy some beautiful scenery, and spend time together.

One of the highlights of our gathering was a fascinating tour of the John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center in Mora, which is part of New Mexico State University. What an amazing facility and what important work they are doing!



Photo: Ginny Longbotham

Established in 1972, the center focuses on growing and studying trees to help restore forests damaged by wildfires and other environmental challenges. Their research includes developing drought-tolerant seedlings, improving tree survival rates, and finding better ways to reforest our beautiful New Mexico mountains. The center has the capacity to grow approximately 300,000 seedlings annually, with exciting plans underway to greatly expand reforestation efforts.



*See **President**, Page 2*

***President**, continued from Page 1*



Photo: Ginny Longbotham

This visit was especially meaningful to me because of our **NMGC President's Project** supporting reforestation at Philmont Scout Ranch. Through the combined efforts of our **Ways and Means** and Plant a Tree projects, NMGC has contributed a total of **$3,731.98** to Philmont. These funds will help purchase seedlings from the John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center for planting at Philmont. What a wonderful way to support two important New Mexico organizations while helping restore our forests!



Photo: Suzy Andrego

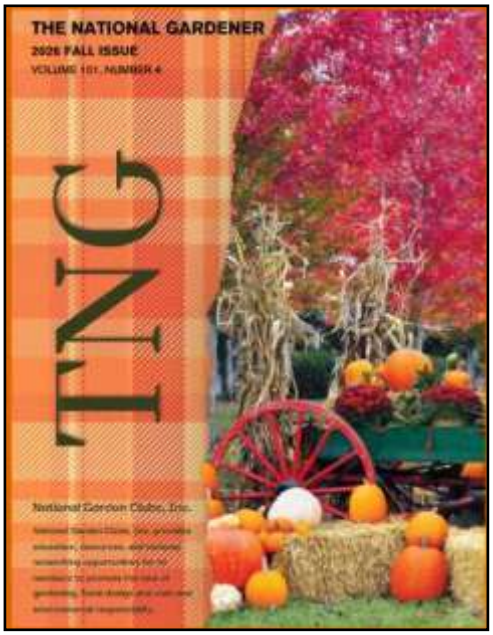
Following our tour, we headed to the beautiful Houser Raspberry Ranch in Mora for a delicious lunch. The historic ranch dates back to the 1850s and was once home to a grist mill that supplied flour to Fort Union during the Civil War. Today, it is a wonderful place to enjoy delicious food, beautiful surroundings, and a little New Mexico history!



Houser Raspberry Ranch

We also had a very productive Executive Board meeting, sharing ideas and discussing plans for the future of NMGC. Most of all, it was wonderful to be together,





Fall 2026 Editions of the

South Central Region Communicator

and

The National Gardener

are now available!

New Mexico Garden Clubs

2026-2027

President's Project Ways and Means Raffle Items









Laurie Hixson, 1st Vice President 2025-2027

It's been raining all day, and I've made a pot of stew for dinner. Yes, the growing season has come to an end, and winter is just around the corner!

I can't express how much I've enjoyed serving as your 1st Vice President. As I've mentioned before, traveling with our President, Johnese, has been an absolute pleasure. We've shared ideas, discussed opportunities, and developed some exciting plans for our organization. I look forward to putting as many of those ideas into action as possible during my upcoming term.

Through our travels to District meetings, I've had the pleasure of meeting many members and getting to know others better. One of my goals over the next two years is to meet all 322 of our members! You can help me reach that goal by joining us at the Spring Convention in Roswell on April 1 & 2. Let's make it fun by having a friendly competition to see how many clubs can achieve 100% attendance at the Convention!

As President-Elect, one of my responsibilities is to ensure that all committee chair positions are filled as we begin the new term. A list of our committees, along with descriptions of their responsibilities, is available on our website. I encourage you to consider taking on a leadership role by chairing a committee that interests you. We have so much talent and enthusiasm throughout our state, and I would love to see more members get involved.

I'm also adding a new committee: Publicity! If you enjoy writing, are passionate about garden clubs, and would like to help spread the word about all the wonderful things we do, please reach out to me. I would love to share ideas and discuss how we can increase awareness of our organization and its activities.

This is a special time of year for remembering, giving thanks, and enjoying time with family and friends. I am especially grateful for the many wonderful friendships I've made through our garden clubs. Thank you for being such an important part of this organization.

Wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season. I look forward to seeing you in Roswell!

What do you value most about your membership in New Mexico Garden Clubs?

*Please send your response to **Laurie Hixson** at **hixsons@comcast.net***

Got Yard Trimmings?

Maybe you can donate them to your local zoo? Find out how one zoo takes yard waste donations to feed the animals:

https://www.kgun9.com/news/local-news/got-yard-trimmings-tucsons-reid-park-zoo-says-they-could-help-feed-its-animals

Kersti Rock, 2nd Vice President 2025-2027, Membership

Attracting New Members

There are many ways to attract new members to your garden club. Here are a few ideas:

Flex your meeting times. Shift or alternate between daytime or evenings on weekdays with weekend meeting times (such as Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon).



Photo: Kersti Rock

Her African Violet propagated from a leaf during a program presented a few years ago by Dena Brent, a member of the Albuquerque African Violet Club.

Hold special programs of general interest (like preparing your spring garden, pruning or planting for pollinators) and invite the public. Consider holding your meeting in a neutral and welcoming public space like a local library or community center.

Invite the public to a fun workshop like making seed bombs, pressed flower cards, floral themed decorations or propagating African violets from leaf cuttings.

Host annual garden tours, plant exchanges or open flower shows.

Bring a friend or neighbor to a meeting. Provide name tags for everyone, acknowledge guests at meetings and have a club ambassador assigned to helping visitors feel welcome and involved.

Use multiple forms of social media to advertise club events and projects. Remember that different generations often prefer different types of media.

Keep club gatherings lively, fun and interesting. Keep business meetings on track and avoid unnecessary formality. The point is to function but emphasize learning, creativity, social interaction and just plain fun!

Let's grow our clubs!

Weeds are Flowers Once You Get to Know Them

~~A.A. Milne

Christine Longthorp, South Central Region, Director

Greetings NMGC Members,

South Central Region has been humming along this summer and all four states have had a brutally hot and dry season.

Fall Board meetings are taking place and awards are being compiled and ready to be applied for. NMGC will seek scholarship applicants for the next President's term starting in the summer of 2027 as we have chosen one applicant per term. The winner from NMGC will then be submitted to the SCR scholarship.

Please apply for as many awards as you can as in recent years we have not held our own in the region and there is money to be had. The awards booklet is on the newly revamped SCR website for your use. Let's look good at the Region convention to be held in Tulsa April 21st!

My SCR project is almost realized as the four Gold Star markers are being ordered, one for each state. Shirley Tetrault , as our Blue Star / Gold Star Chairman has been spearheading this for us and we have been selling the gently used jewelry as we can which has been a huge success. The next sale will be at the rummage sale at the garden center in February 2027. Meanwhile we are waiting for delivery of the Gold Star marker for our state to be delivered and then we will schedule the installation next to the Blue star at the National cemetery in Santa Fe. This will be permanent marker representing both NMGC and SCR.

I plan to attend all four state conventions in April and also the National Garden Club convention in Wisconsin in May which will be the installation of a new NGC President.

Just an FYI in 2029 our very own homegrown Suzy Andrego will be installed as NGC President here in Albuquerque where we will be hosting three conventions, NMGC, SCR and NGC. That will be a first so it will be a bonanza year!!! We have had one other NGC President and that was June Wood in the eighties.

New Mexico is one of the best states to support an almost 100 year old organization. I am so proud to be a member.

Warmest wishes, NM Gardeners,

Christine Longthorp

South Central Region Director 2025-27
calongthorp@hotmail.com
(505) 480-0673

2025 Photographic Award Submissions:

Birds



1st Place Birds
"Acorn Woodpecker Family"
Selvi Viswanathan, Los Alamos



"Flicker"
Debi Harrington
Valley Gardeners



"Hawk with Pigeon"



"Crane Returning to Family"
Beverly Cooper, Summit

'Tis the Season





Santa Fe Botanical Garden

La Luz de la Noches

December 17—31, 4:30 pm-7:30 pm





ABQ Biopark River of Lights

November 28—January 3

5 pm—10 pm

District II, Joyce Zaugg, Director

District II has 4 thriving clubs and most of them are adding new members this year.

The President of Angel Fire Garden Club is Shirla Harris

Theme: Provide Education to Help Preserve and Enhance the Natural Beauty of Our Mountain Environment

Angel Fire Garden Club meets May-Oct, the 2nd Monday of each month. Field trips included a trip to Philmont Villa and Garden with lunch at St. James Restaurant and Museum and a field trip to the Houser House and Raspberry Farm. They hosted the District II Fall Board meeting. This meeting also included a high tea and silent auction. The members have maintained two local Blue Star Gardens. Also, they had a group of teens from Lutheran church to help them in Shuter Garden that they maintain.

The President of Summit Garden Club is Alison Grieggs

Theme: Learning, Growing, Community Service, Friendship

Member Laurie Hixson coordinated the horticulture component of the county fair to meet requirements for an NGC Flower Show. For their Summer Donation Drive, the club selected Jemez Valley Elementary School. They contributed more than $1000 worth of school supplies, used books from the Los Alamos library book store. They have decided and raised money for a both a Blue Star and a Gold Star memorial plaques to be placed in the White Rock Community Garden which they maintain. Their summer field trips included a visit to a home in Los Alamos to learn how they designed and built their outdoor kitchen, annual social gathering at Ojo Caliente Resort & Spa, a visit to a members home to share ideas for container gardening, and a visit to El Alamos winery to tour the vineyard and enjoy a wine tasting.

The President of Floral Designers Garden Club is Christine Longthorp

Theme: Floral Design

Floral Design Garden Club meets in Santa Fe on the Fourth Thursday of each month. The program at each meeting is given by a member who decides and demonstrates a design type. Then the members collectively critique their work. The purpose of their club is to expand their education and confidently enter designs in flower shows, flower show schools and symposiums around the state and nation. They do not meet in November or December.

The President of Los Alamos Garden Club is Joyce Zaugg

Theme: Let's Grow

The Los Alamos Garden Club meets every third Monday of each month. They gather for a social time, a business meeting and then a program. They do not meet in June, July, and August but instead go on field trips in northern New Mexico. This past summer they visited the Desert Verde Farm in Santa Fe for a guided tour of New Mexico's only aquaponics farm. They traveled down to Madrid to tour the Origami Sculpture Garden. The members enjoyed exploring the unique outdoor collection of large-scale origami inspired sculptures and folded some origami figures guided by a very patient garden docent.

District I, Mary Noskin, Director

A Blue Marker Journey

On Tuesday, October 13, 2026, New Mexico Garden Clubs District 1 held a moving Blue Star Marker dedication at the Veterans Integration Centers (VIC) in Albuquerque. The ceremony featured solemn rituals and pageantry befitting the occasion and concluded with Glen Flanders' heartrending rendition of taps.



Photo: Shirley Tetreault

This account focuses on the process that led to the dedication. When I unexpectedly succeeded Kathleen Flanders as District 1 Director in March 2026, I felt overwhelmed reviewing notes from earlier meetings. I learned that District 1 planned to install a Blue Star Marker, but the notes offered few details. After seeing that Debi Harrington had requested funding for the marker, I contacted her. She confirmed that the funds had been requested and a location had already been selected.

The selected site was the Veterans Integration Centers. I called Executive Assistant Sheila Victorino, introduced myself, and explained our plans. Because she was already familiar with the marker, she offered to give me a tour of the complex. Debi joined us, and we spent the next two hours touring the center and discussing the dedication.

Although Shirley Tetreault had introduced me to the Gold and Blue Star Marker program, I did not know how the process worked. Because it is a National Garden Clubs project, I researched the requirements online. I then told Shirley that we planned to hold the dedication at the District 1 fall meeting. With the ordering deadline approaching, I completed the forms, wrote a personal check, and met Shirley at one of her volunteer gardens. She serves as the state and regional Gold Star/Blue Star chair.



Photo: Darice Ambrose



Greta Harrington, PTSD Service Dog

Photo: Debi Harrington

*See **District I**, page 11*

***District I**, continued from page 10*

When the marker arrived, Debi and I set a goal of installing it and the stone by the end of September. After hours of searching, Debi and John Harrington selected the stone and arranged its delivery. Because of its weight, a truck with special equipment was needed to set it in place. With Greta, Debi's puppy, nearby, John Harrington and Harvey Hagins—an Army veteran, renowned photographer, and VIC resident—spent hours preparing the site, positioning the stone, and mounting the marker. Their hard work produced a magnificent result.



Retired Army Veteran, Harvey Hagins Jr., and John Harrington



Months of preparation went into the dedication. The support and assistance proved amazing: Colleen Herman spearheaded a fundraising raffle, the dedication program was developed, Suzy printed it, Debi planned the luncheon, dignitaries and special guests were invited, and the executive board helped wherever needed. Every moment was worthwhile. After Debi, John, Harvey, and Greta finished the installation, I drove to the VIC. When I stepped out of my car and saw the completed marker, I was so moved that, for a few moments, I could barely breathe.

Photos: Darice Ambrose

Event Calendar

December 4-5, Albuquerque Garden Center's Holiday Craft & Plant Fair, 10120 Lomas Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM

April 1—2, New Mexico Garden Clubs State Convention, ***"I Went to a Garden Party"*** Roswell, NM

April 6-7 NGC Standard Flower Show: ***"Wildflowers & Wonders Across Texas"*** Doubletree Galleria, Farmers Branch, TX

April 9—10, Valley Gardeners NGC Standard Flower Show: ***"Birds of a Feather, Flock Together"*** 4920 Rio Grande Blvd NW, Los Ranchos De Albuquerque, NM 87107

April 21-22, South Central Region Convention, ***"Let the Good Times Grow: A Gatsby Garden Affair"*** Tulsa, Oklahoma

May 13—17, National Garden Clubs' Convention, ***"Welcome to Wisconsin Roots"*** Madison, Wisconsin

New Mexico Garden Clubs' Programs

Blue Star/Gold Star, Shirley Tetreault, *Chair & Gold Star Mother*

The big news of the day is our latest Blue Star dedication on October 13, 2026. The marker was placed at the Veterans Integration Center, 2701 Mulberry Street S.E. in Albuquerque, NM. It is always exceptional to see our Women Veteran Warriors Color Guard Team to present the colors. Suzy Andrego lead the pledge and Mary Noskin introduced all her honored guests. Our state president, Johnese Turri honored us with the history of the marker right before Kathleen Flanders, Gina Thoma and Marcie Kercher unveiled the marker. It was dedicated by Cabinet Secretary Jamison Herrera.





Brock Wolff accepted the marker. Christine Longthorp our SCR Director, created and laid the wreath along with Debra Sorrell and Colleen Herman. Taps were played by Glen Flanders. Following the dedication, a beautiful lunch was prepared by Valley Garden Club. High Desert Design Club created the floral designs and an early morning breakfast snack with coffee, juice and pastry. It was a wonderful morning and a great way to honor our Veterans – past, present and future.



Photos: Shirley Tetreault

National Garden Clubs presented a Gold Star certificate of appreciation during the 2026 National Garden Clubs' convention in St. Louis. Our President, Johnese Turri, accepted the certificate on behalf of NMGC.



Archives, ***Beck Fuller, Chair***

I am available at most times to accept any club materials you would like archived. My phone number is 575-571-6281 and my email address is fuller8311@gmail.com.

Horticulture, Maureen Carson, ***Chair***

By the time you read this we will have turned the calendar to December and will be well in to the holiday season. Sandhill Cranes have arrived in the Middle Rio Grande Valley. Their return reminds me of the cyclical movement of the seasons. May you find joy in the nuances of the late fall and winter landscape.

With rising costs of just about everything, I hope you have made a point of saving seeds for next year's garden. Among my favorite and easiest to save annuals are zinnia, cosmos and sunflowers. You can also harvest vegetable seeds. Among my favorite tomatoes saved are Yellow Pear, Green Zebra and Magic Bullet. To save tomatoes, try squeezing the seeds into little plastic cups then transferring to paper envelopes once dried. At this time I also pick dried seed heads from perennials such as salvia and toss them where I want new plants next year. This is a good way to increase plants for yourself, friends, or spring plant sales. Just remember where you put them and look for seedlings in the spring. Which brings me to a good practice to start if you haven't already. This is a good time to jot down notes about your garden in a notebook. I make small drawings of garden plots or container plantings I liked, record successes, not so good results, where things are, etc. I don't know about you, but come March, I may not remember what seed heads I tossed where!

Wildflower & Native Plants, ***Jackye Meinecke, Chair***

While daffodils and tulips may be traditional harbingers of spring, in New Mexico our favorite spring blooms are penstemons. Depending on spring warmth, penstemons may begin to bloom in late February or early March, just in time for the arrival of hummingbirds. Many penstemons also attract bees and butterflies.

There are hundreds of the genus Penstemon in the United States and many of them grow in the desert Southwest. However, not all penstemons grow in our state and many thrive only in specific environments. Most penstemons are a short-lived perennial, so you will want to encourage them to seed around the garden.

Some penstemons bloom in spring, while others flower in summer. Many thrive in our full sun, though some require filtered shade. Of course, penstemons grow in a variety of soils and at different altitudes, so it is best to choose native or adapted plants that thrive in your area. Luckily, many of the most commonly available penstemons grow in a wide range of environments throughout the state.

See ***Wildflowers****, page 14*

***Wildflowers**, continued from page 13*

Some hardy penstemons for gardens throughout the state are:

Parry's penstemon (Penstemon parryi) grows from the northern counties down to the Mexican border. With its 2-3 foot stems and pink, tubular flowers, this spring bloomer adds color in the garden as it attracts arriving hummingbirds.

Superb penstemon (Penstemon superbus) ranges from one end of the state to the other and grows several feet tall with coral flowers. It blooms in late spring through summer.



Firecracker Penstemon
Photo: Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Firecracker penstemon (Penstemon eatonii) sparkles with brilliant scarlet blossoms on numerous 2-3 ft. high stems from early through late summer.

Scarlet bugler (Penstemon barbatus), which also blooms through the summer with red flowers, is an excellent choice for many New Mexico gardens.

Those who garden at higher elevations may prefer the dainty **Pine needle penstemon** (Penstemon pinifolius), which blooms in red, orange or yellow from mid-summer into fall. This low growing plant spreads from 10-18" tall and wide with narrow needle-like leaves. It tends to prefer filtered light or afternoon shade.

While many penstemons, such as the P. pinifolius, prefer dry, rocky soils, **Sand penstemon** (Penstemon ambiguus) prefers sandy soil. While this plant appears delicate with thin stems and leaves and dainty white or pink flowers, it tolerates extreme heat and drought conditions. This shrubby penstemon grows to 1-2 feet tall and blooms in summer.

One of my favorite penstemons, **Palmer penstemon** (Penstemon palmeri), grows best at higher altitudes. It is one of the few penstemons with a fragrant scent. It produces tall, dramatic spires with pink striped blooms. I often see it blooming at Bosque del Apache during the spring and early summer. Sadly for me, it does not often thrive in the Las Cruces area.

I have had good luck with some of the new hybrid penstemons when I grow them in pots, so I can control the soil, the moisture and the amount of sun exposure. Penstemon 'Flock of Flamingos' or **Flamingo penstemon** has brilliant flowers and grows happily in a large container.

There are dozens of wonderful penstemon choices, which can be found in some local nurseries or at native plant sales held throughout the state. Check with fellow gardeners for the plants that perform best in their gardens or do some research to determine which plants will thrive in your in the garden.

Then sit back and enjoy the colorful spring show and the buzzing, fluttering visitors in your garden.

Website, ***Linda Frank, Chair***

There have been many informative updates to the New Mexico Garden Clubs' members only section in the last quarter.



Bylaws

The NMGC Bylaws, Standing Rules, and Manual were updated and changes approved at the April 2026 convention. The new document can be found here:

https://newmexicogardenclubs.org/nmgcprivate/documents/official/NMGCByLaws_20260408.pdf

General Board Meeting Minutes

General board meeting minutes from the Fall 2019 forward were added to the website. Those documents can be found here:

https://newmexicogardenclubs.org/nmgcprivate/nmgconly.html#gbm

Annual Reports

NMGC Annual Reports for 2022, 2024, and 2026 were added here:

https://newmexicogardenclubs.org/nmgcprivate/nmgconly.html#ar

Leadership Documents

Informational documents helpful to all members, presidents, directors, parliamentarians, secretaries, and treasurers are now here:

https://newmexicogardenclubs.org/nmgcprivate/nmgconly.html#lead

2025 Photographic Award Submissions:

Wildlife



1st Place-Wildlife
"Coyote"
Selvi Viswanathan, Los Alamos



"Camel"
Beth Schneider
Valley Gardeners



"Elk" and "Deer"
Shirley Tetreault
High Desert Design





"Bunny and Wildflowers"
JJ Huddleston, Angel Fire



"Javelina"
Beverly Cooper, Summit

“I Went to a Garden Party”

NMGC 2027 Convention: Art, Floral Design, and Fashion

Please join District V in Roswell on April 1-2, 2027, for the State Convention. We are excited to be guests of the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art and will be hosting a luncheon including a Garden Party Fashion Show. Everyone is encouraged to participate by dressing in their beautiful “Garden Party” attire. There will be prizes for outstanding outfits and accessories!! There will also be creative Floral Designs on display throughout the museum that are interpretations of the Contemporary Works of Art at the museum.



The Evening Banquet and Awards Presentation will include the program, “Rooted in the Community.” Presented by Kathleen Turner, a local mortgage loan officer and horticulturalist, well known for her sharing and caring for the community through plant propagation that brings people together.

Lodging accommodation will be at the Holiday Inn, 3620 N. Main, Roswell.

Registration information will be available in January. If you have any questions, please contact: Pegi Naranjo Smith – convention co-chair, peginaranjo@gmail.com, 575-626-7508





Impossible Garden

Jacqui Binford-Bell, Angel Fire Garden Club

I had this spot my driveway that collected construction trash and Canada Thistles. I hired Land and Home to haul off the trash, scraped out the soil and replace with new top soil. It seemed a perfect place for a wild meadow garden but it was not enclosed with a fence.

And it did not want a fence that would obstruct the view of all the flowers and plants and the bees and butterflies they attracted. On a YouTube search I found a plan for a fish line deer fence.



I used tall green garden rods cut in half. And 40 pound fishing line. I pounded in the rods about 4 feet apart and strung the first line about 8 inches from the bottom, double wrapping around the rods. I figured if this would work with deer maybe it would also work with squirrels. The top line is also double wrapped about an inch from the top. Deer nose height. I had my doubts. It is almost invisible to me. And to deer too. But when their noses touch the fishing line it startles them.



Not seeing it makes it that much spookier to them and not as something which has to be jumped over. Best part is the "fence" is not intrusive to humans. I left a 1 foot gap at each end to allow me to tend to my garden. And all my beautiful flowers are visible to me and visitors and the bees and butterflies.







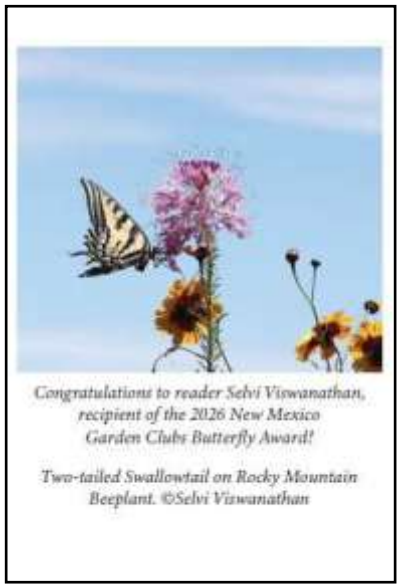


2025 Photographic Award Submissions:

Butterfly

1st Place-Butterfly
Selvi Viswanathan
Los Alamos Garden Club





Selvi was also recognized by the
North American Butterfly Association
for her photo



Dodie Bernal-Suhr
Valley Gardeners



Shirley Tetreault
High Desert Design



Shirley Tetreault
High Desert Design

My Butterfly Garden, Selvi Viswanathan



Painted Lady on Black Eyed Susan

In 2005 I was fortunate to meet Dorothy Hoard, Los Alamos Naturalist, through the Pajarito Environmental Education center. Dorothy introduce me to the wonderful butterflies in our community. She is responsible for initiating New Mexico's first butterfly count here at Los Alamos.



Dorothy & Selvi
Photo:
Mary Carol Williams

2010 was the year of my Mother's centenary birthday. Dorothy suggested I plant a butterfly garden in her honor. I liked the idea very much. I grew up until 28 in the Indian state of Berhampur Odisha. There we had a small yard where my mother grew roses and jasmines. My sisters and I would adorn our hair above the braids with these flowers. Even with my Mother's busy time taking care of things, she always had time to make sure we wore the flowers. She carried water in a pitcher every day to water the plants.

Dorothy helped me concentrate on attracting these amazing butterflies and assisting them through the behaviors and stages of metamorphosis. I now have on my deck 20 different sizes of containers and pots. After planting milkweed the garden became a certified monarch waystation. I used to have monarchs but do not see them now.

Nectar: Butterfly gardens normally have nectar flowers for food but also to attract mates. The nectar plants I planted were Pink Yarrow, Blanket Flower, Rudbeckia, Mexican Hat, Purple Coneflower, etc. Flat petal flowers are more attractive to butterflies as they are easier to land on. But I have seen Tiger Swallowtails using Day Lily blooms. Bee Balm and Penstemons, which are favorites of hummingbirds, also attract butterflies. Rue and Parsley herbs too!



Fritillary on Purple Coneflower

Patrolling: Patrolling is when males use the garden to perch to locate females by sight and scent. I encourage this behavior with Indigo Bush tree, which I saw Blues using, also Buddleia Bush, and Fern Bush. These attracted painted ladies and mourning cloak butterflies too.



Mourning Cloak on Buddleia

Photos: Selvi Viswanathan, except noted

*See **Butterfly**, Page 21*

***Butterfly**, Continued from Page 20*

Host Plants: In addition to nectar plants, we need to provide other plant options for butterflies to complete the metamorphosis stages. Butterflies choose specific host plants on which to lay their eggs, so when caterpillars come out can feed in the leaves.



Laying Eggs on Rue

I had a pleasant surprise in May, my Mother's birthday month, when a gorgeous Black Swallowtail laid eggs on my Rue plant. I could watch it from my upstairs computer room window as a male patrolled nearby. I went down and saw tiny black eggs. A couple days later, I saw another female laying eggs. After a couple of weeks, I saw 10 tiny **caterpillars (stage 1)**. I only saw one **chrysalis (stage 2)**, so I hope the caterpillars found a safe place. Later, I did have a Mourning Cloak chrysalis above my garage door! Finally, the **adult butterfly came out (stage 3)**. I never had the fortune to see the chrysalis emerging, but did see Black Swallowtails and Mourning Cloaks fluttering in our yard.



Chrysalis



Caterpillar

Basking: It is important to provide basking areas since butterflies need a place to get warm in the morning as they need 55F to fly. At Dorothy's suggestion I scattered light colored marble chips, in the shape of a butterfly to add whimsey, as they reflect the heat so butterflies can land and get warm.



Garden with Roosting & Basking Areas
Photo: Hari Viswanathan

Roosting: Butterflies need place to roost after their busy day. Normally shrubs are used, but I have small wooden house with slots for roosting.

Puddling: Males come to puddling areas to get minerals from the soil. I have a green saucer filled with soil mixed with cow manure and sprinkled with salt, which I keep moist. Also a small area can be used; just dig three inches deep, add to the soil cow manure and little regular salt and keep moist. Male Tiger Swallowtails are commonly seen puddling.



Puddling
Photo: Hari Viswanathan

I hope this article will encourage to have in your garden as part of it to attract butterflies!

New Mexico Garden Clubs News

***Summit Garden Club,** Alison Grieggs, President*



Pictured: Sandra Quintana, school secretary; Ms. Madrid, principal; Alison Grieggs

To help the ***Jemez Valley Elementary*** school kick-off the 2026 year successfully, Summit Garden Club members donated $1000 worth of school supplies. Janine Fales (treasurer) and Alison Grieggs (president) delivered the carload to the school on Aug 11. Principal Crystal Madrid was surprised and pleased to receive the items.



A book that Ms. Madrid was particularly interested in, as they are teaching cursive writing in the classroom

For other clubs considering this effort, here is a partial list we worked from that focused on elementary students (preK-5th grade): lined notebooks, #2 pencils, dry erase markers, rulers, pencil pouches, kleenex, chlorox wipes, glue sticks, zip-lock bags, measuring cups/scales, and nut-free snacks....The unexpected that were a big hit: used books purchased from our local library's secondhand bookstore (win-win), new socks, and plastic water bottles. We learned that students cannot use the drinking fountains due to water quality, so all water is brought in and personal water bottles are a student necessity. We also gave an Amazon gift card for the principal to use as needed.

We encourage other clubs to think of ways to support their local communities beyond gardening: at Summit, our slogan is Learning*Growing*Community Service*Friendship. We think these member drives are a great way to meet those goals.

Summit Garden Club supported the ***Los Alamos County Fair***, with help from NMGC members Suzy Andrego, Gayle Smart, and Marina Efroymson--who came up from Albuquerque to judge the Horticulture & Floral Design Competition.

Laurie Hixson worked successfully with Los Alamos County last year to have the Fair included under the National Garden Club competition rules. She then prepared the Show schedule, publicized the event, and served as the organizer. In addition, Betsy Comly (Summit secretary) logged entries and ensured compliance with the categorizations, while Barbara Mann (Summit member at-large) and Helen Carpenter (Los Alamos Garden Club)

*See **Summit**, Page 23*

***Summit**, Continued from Page 22*

ensured accurate entry placements.



When winners were announced: Summit swept the competition, with Laurie Hixson winning Grand Champion for her beautiful lamb's ears entry!

Laurie Hixson: carried the Floral Design with three entries that all received blue ribbons and one Best of Show. In the general Horticulture sections, she won best of show, four first place awards, two second place, and one honorable mention—in addition to her Grand Champion.

Betsy Comly: won a first place ribbon for her horticulture entry.

Alison Grieggs: was awarded eleven first place awards for her flowers, perennials, and vegetable entries and the Show's Sweepstakes Award for most blue ribbons.



Barb Mann: helped round out the Show by contributing exhibits plucked from the Los Alamos Demo Garden.

The fourth blue ribbon winner in the Horticulture competition was **Dianne Wilburn**, the new LA County extension agent, and Summit will be working closely with her during the coming year ahead.

These gardeners and their entries endured unrelenting heat, unprecedented drought, and a hail storm just a week before the fair. Nevertheless, they persisted!

Mesilla Valley Garden Club,* *Becky Fuller, President





Photos: Bel Meader

We started our year with our September meeting. We brainstormed programs and hopefully have come up with an interesting year. Our October meeting was a wonderful tea and garden tour at Bel Meader's lovely home. We invited perspective members and 11 interested parties attended. Our November meeting will be a field trip to The Keystone Heritage Park on the Westside of El Paso. Our inquisitive new friends will be invited. December will be festive with wreath making.

Lincoln County Garden Club,* *Stephanie Kinnamon, President



The LCGC had LOTS of FUN hosting the District V Fall meeting at the Downshift Brewery in Ruidoso, NM, but now it's time to prepare for Winter!









As the temperatures drop, we are focusing on harvesting the vegetables from the Smokey Bear Community Garden and then mulching the beds with leaves for winter. Vegetables from the garden were donated to the High Mountain Youth Project shelter for homeless teens and were also enjoyed by our members who cared for the garden.



Upcoming events include our Holiday Party in December, and planning meetings for our many 2027 garden projects including helping the Village of Ruidoso redesign the Ruidoso Public Library's "Waterwise Garden" into a more sustainable garden.



El Jardin Encanto Garden Club,* *Mary Lou Wilson, Co-President

Our September field trip/meeting was a guided tour of the Gutierrez-Hubbell House and the surrounding farm areas followed by a lunch meeting at Cocina Familia. The historical house is where Juliana Gutierrez and "Santiago" Hubbell settled and farmed. The acres are now leased out for local farmers. They supply some of the fresh produce used at the restaurant at Los Poblanos Farm.





A monarch butterfly awaiting release following the placement of a Blu+ transmitter in Austin, Texas, in September.

Photo: Carol Clark via AP

Monarch Madness

Tiny Trackers Reveal Monarch Butterflies' Big Journeys

Where do orange-and-black monarchs stop for a meal and a night's rest on their long migration across North America? Well, scientists are getting a closer look at their mysterious route using solar-powered trackers.

https://apnews.com/article/monarch-butterflies-migration-tracking-conservation-threats-437fd1b19ade1acc4dbb78fbcd12a699?user_

Mayor Leads Efforts to Make Phoenix a Friendly Monarch Migration Stop

https://www.kjzz.org/science/2026-09-15/monarch-butterflies-migrate-through-arizona-mayor-leads-efforts-to-make-phoenix-a-friendly-stop

Sunshine Valley Garden Club, **Cindy Johnson, President**

After our summer break, the Club met in September to discuss plans for our booth at the Sierra County Fair in October. Items needed for the booth, as well as a theme was decided, and a date for setup was made.



Our booth at the Annual Sierra County Fair in October included our banner, along with business cards, a flyer and poster announcing our next meeting, and an Invitation to our meetings with the day, time and location. At one of our meetings, we made Milk Jug Face Planters, and these were hung up in our booth, with instructions on how to make them.

We also had a form to fill out including name, phone number and email address for those interested in our Club, and a box provided to deposit them. We received four responses, and each received a follow-up.

At our October meeting we discussed ideas to improve our fair booth for next year, which included having "free" plants, cuttings, starts, etc. since we did it in the past and many requests were made for them. We had three guests at our meeting from the fair responses. We discussed having a new banner, as the current one is old and tattered. A suggestion was given to contact our local Quilt Club to see if they would be able to make one for us.



On October 30, several members of the Sunshine Valley Garden Club, a representative from the City of Truth or Consequences and a reporter from the local Sentinel newspaper gathered at the Blue Star Memorial Highway Marker. The purpose was how to proceed with the refurbishment. The decision was made to relocate it in the park for more visibility. The City representative had been in contact with a company that does refurbishment, but it could not be done until sometime in the Spring. We agreed that we could wait until then, and the rep will set it up. A picture was taken with the members standing by the marker and will appear in the newspaper along with an article about it.

Sierra County Sentinel: Garden Club and City Team Up for Blue Star Park Revival

High Desert Design Club, **Shirley Tetreault, President**



Petite Designs, Multi-Rhythmic, Illuminary and Reflective are just a few of the designs studied from June to October. High Desert members performed at a high rate of speed at the District 1 flower show, Council flower show and the New Mexico State Fair this year. “NM’s Rt 66, “The Mother Road” was the theme and they played a major part in volunteering and entering.

Petite designs were very popular with high scores going to Shirley Tetreault, Julie Moss, Dorothy Duff, Marcie Kercher, Candy Scott and Sue Bond. In addition to their designs, horticulture was also a big hit.























***Los Alamos Club,* Joyce Zaugg, President**



The Los Alamos Garden Club gathered for their first meeting after our summer break in September with a program presented by Debi Harrington. She brought flowers and plants to create two centerpieces that she invited members to copy. It was a great program and our members were able to take home a beautiful arrangement. Addie Jacobson provided delicious refreshments.



Our October meeting featured a program by Dianne Wilburn, NMSU Ag Extension Agent. Her program was titled "Your Garden After the Plants have Died". Her PowerPoint presentation gave us many ideas about how to beautify our gardens during the winter months. Dianne suggested we start with looking out the windows and glass doors that we gaze out everyday. She talked about adding colorful ***mulch***, bird bathes, lighting, and evergreen plants to the landscape. Dianne suggested that we bring nature into our homes in centerpieces and decorations. She concluded with these thoughts:

Don't put the garden to bed.
Let it change clothes.



Our November meeting will be an arts and crafts project. We will make centerpieces similar to the one pictured below. We will then bring them back to use as centerpieces for our Holiday Luncheon in December.

Photos: Joyce Zaugg

Arizona State University Launches Mentorship Program to Grow More Organic Farmers

- Program is Open Nationwide, not just in Arizona
- Mentors are eligible for up to a $5000 grant
- Domestic farmers have not kept up with demand; billions are spent annually on organic imports
- Program addresses challenges posed by transitioning from tradition to organic farming

Click Here for Details

Home Garden Club,* *Renate Reisel, Member

Home Garden Club participated in September's annual Dragonfly Festival at Bitter Lake Wildlife Refuge.

Like each year the club members enjoy working with all age children and provides different activities for all the children they are always eager to color plus enjoyed different crafts activities. This year we added *create your own succulent terrarium*. It definitely was a big success. Children and adults loved getting their hands dirty, and we're proud of their accomplishments. Our club always advertises our club with information and gives out free seeds. Plus this year we added a wonderful succulent plant if anyone likes to join the club. Happy News! We had a new member sign up and enjoyed our meeting in October.









Valley Garden Club,* *Debi Harrington, President

Valley Gardeners had a VERY BUSY late Summer and Fall! Members were heavily involved with the **2026 NM State Fair** in September. Valley Member and Accredited Judge, Sue Bond, was once again one of the 2026 Superintendents! She led a great team of volunteers to present six successful shows of Horticulture, Floral Design and Youth Divisions. Most local Valley members entered horticulture and design sections and took home lots of ribbons and Top Exhibitor Awards! Members entered, helped with classification and placement, judged, clerked, hosted and chaired committees. They gave presentations and helped with set-up and tear-down. At the end of the two weeks all were exhausted, but proud of what was accomplished working together and with other local garden clubs.



Overall Sweepstakes State Fair
Designer's Choice
Debi Harrington

After taking a few weeks to recover from the Fair, a group of ten Valley members, who are now referred to as the 'Valley Girls', planned and prepared a lunch for the District I Dedication of the newest NM Blue Star Memorial. The dedication was on October 13th at the Veterans' Integration Center in Albuquerque. Valley Gardeners fed 75 people that attended VIC for the dedication that day. The Blue Star Memorial installation at the VIC was originally started as the District I project of Debi Harrington, Valley President, when she was District I Director. Debi is very grateful that Mary Noskin and her District I officers continued this important project. Debi's husband, John, donated his time and labor to install the rock marker, with the assistance of Debi and retired Army Veteran, Harvey Hagins, Jr.



Overall Sweepstakes State Fair
Tri-Color
Julie Moss

Our next BIG Project will be the celebration of Valley's 75th Anniversary in April of 2027. For that celebration, Valley Gardeners will be putting on their first flower show – ***"Birds of a Feather, Flock Together"***. The show will be held at the Los Ranchos Agri-Nature Center on Rio Grande, on April 9-10. Entries of Horticulture and Floral Design will be open to any amateur grower or floral designer. Entries will be on April 9th and the show will be open for viewing on April 10th. On the 10th, there will be a number of great speakers on topics of gardening, birds, native plants and more. When the Flower Show schedule is complete, e-copies will be sent all Club Presidents in NMGC. ***We do hope you will join us! Come enter, come enjoy!*** So, SAVE the DATES! By the way, the Agri-Nature Center is a real treat if you have not been there! It makes for a great tour for garden clubs.

Valley Gardeners meets from 6:30-8:00 pm, on the 2nd Thursdays of most months, at the Los Griegos Community Center, 1231 Candelaria Rd. NW 87107. Guests and New Members are always welcome!

Photos: Julie Moss

Why Dance in the Rain When You Can Tango in Puddles

Candy Scott, High Desert Design

As I am writing this Super El Nino has not hit, but I know it is coming. The prediction is for 30% more rain than normal, flash flooding and a snow pack that skiers are already waxing their skis in anticipation. There is an equation that one must remember, more rain equals more wind. I know, someone says high winds and you proudly stating "I'm a New Mexican and let me tell you about high winds." That means we also know to take stock of outdoor structures and furniture, anchor and check for anything that may become a flying projectile.

Treating your garden as not just a collection of your favorite plants, but as a sponge designed to absorb, redirect, and filter a whole lot of water. Consider that an inch of rain on a 1000 sq. ft. roof creates 600 gallons of water. So along with reorganizing your water cycle, you should be clearing gutters, drains and storm channels. Extend your downspouts away from the house, if possible 5 — 10 ft.

Be sure your trees are pruned and vulnerable branches gotten rid of. A good pruning will make your trees structurally sound plus a greater chance that flying limbs won't do damage to your property. If you have young trees stake them and then sing to them "I Will Survive."

Aerating your lawn with a light coat of compost improves the soil and overall water holding capacity. A 3" layer of smart mulch for the rest of the yard. Lightweight shredded bark often floats away and will leave the soil exposed and possibly clog drains. Consider "gorilla hair" mulch that is finely shredded and mats together. Avoid walking on saturated soil, this packs the soil down and makes it harder to drain. If you have potted plants you may have to raise them up or move them if they are sitting in an area that collects water.

After the first big rain create a post-storm audit. Walk your property and ask yourself, where is it moving? where is it standing? and where are the bottlenecks? You can now make adjustments, move rocks, place sandbags, or clean a gutter. Check out those native plants in your garden, because they do make a difference. If you have rain barrels make sure that you have a 2" hose and it is going to a safe drainage zone. If one is not enough, consider a second or third one.

Hopefully this season you will chose to leave the internet behind and shop local, support local and grow community spirit. The ABQ Garden has its annual Holiday Fair on December 4th and 5th from 9 until 4 on Friday and until 3 on Saturday. Also, while you're hunkered down this winter consider learning something new. During the pandemic I taught myself to crochet. In January the Garden Center has a series of beginning floral design classes taught by Shirley Tetreault, a national flower design instructor, on Tuesday evenings starting January 12 at 6:30. Check out the Garden Center web site for more information.

So, while we are indoors it’s time for Christmas cactus, which is a non-toxic alternative to poinsettia. They are native to Brazil and are called "flor de Maio" or "May flower.”

*See **Why Dance**, Page 32*

***Why Dance**, Continued from Page 31*

Since in Brazil in May the nights are longer and Christmas cactus needs 14 hours of darkness plus cool temperatures to bloom. So, if you place them in a cool dark place at other times of the year they will bloom. Christmas cactus absorbs C02 so cleans and improves the air. With proper care they will last decades. A Montana family has been passing down one Christmas cactus for 145 years.

So while the song suggests roasting chestnuts over an open fire, we in New Mexico roast peppers and then put them in our Christmas tamales. Not only do we "deck the halls", but we light up our gardens with luminaries. Santa's plate has milk and biscochitos, which amazingly disappear before morning. I will close out my year snuggled in my blankie with a kitty in my lap, sipping on cocoa, and enjoying my Christmas cactus bloom. Stay safe during the holidays and dream of a white Christmas and a colorful spring.

State Fair Photos

Debi Harrington
Tricolor
(DH)





Sue Bond
Petite Design
(DH)



Debi Harrington
Designer's Choice



Julie Moss
Tricolor
(JM)



Jennifer Moreno
Designer's Choice
(DH)



Julie Moss
Horticulture Award
(JM)

Photos: Debi Harrington (DH): Julie Moss (JM)

New Mexico Garden Clubs, Inc. Officers

President, Johnese Turri

(505) 250-7150

johnesemarie@gmail.com

Theme: Planting Seeds of Joy

1st Vice President, Laurie Hixson

(505) 672-3483

hixsons@comcast.net

2nd Vice President, Kersti Rock

(505) 412-1060

ankaere@gmail.com

Recording Secretary, Linda Frank

(575) 405-9238

chinongardens@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary, Mary Noskin

(505)238-5731

noskinmary@gmail.com

Treasurer, Ginny Longbotham

(505) 280-2660

ginnylin@comcast.net

Historian, Ariel Seamon

(505) 507-5851

adrewsea@gmail.com

Parliamentarian, Suzy Andrego

(505) 259-3318

sandrego@aol.com

New Mexico Gardener Editor, Linda Frank

(575) 405-9238

newmexicogardenclubs@gmail.com

Organized 1950
19 Clubs
2 Youth Clubs

Incorporated August 5, 1952
404 Paid Memberships
22 Youth Members

New Mexico Gardener

Quarterly Newsletter of the New Mexico Garden Clubs, Inc. (NMGC)

A Non-profit Organization

www.newmexicogardenclubs.org

Deadlines for submission: February 1, May1, August 1, November 1

The Editor reserves the right to edit any copy for clarity, accuracy, or space requirements. It is the responsibility of the article writer to ensure that names are spelled correctly. All articles need to be submitted as a Microsoft Word document (unformatted) attached to an e-mail or submitted as email text. Photos must be sent as .jpg files, maximum three per file, as an email attachment. Do not frame or otherwise enhance. Poor quality photos will not be accepted (i.e. out of focus or grainy.) Photos that are submitted with the photographer's name will receive photo credit.

NMGC, Inc. is a Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

4401 Magnolia Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63110
www.gardenclub.org

National Garden Clubs, Inc.
Donna Donnelly

E-mail: dmdonnelly@gardenclub.org
Theme: "Plant America for the Next 100 Years"

South Central Region
Christine Longthorp

E-mail: christinelongthorp@gmail.com
Theme: "Let the Good Times Grow!"