

**GCA District 1
Director's Report
April 3, 2022 GCA Board Meeting**

On November 6, 2021, a two-year collaborative effort finally ended in the dedication of Gold Star and Blue Star Memorials. Karen Lovell wrote an article for the National Gardener, 2022 Spring Edition. Blossomwood and Forever Green Mountain Garden clubs worked together to ensure our veterans and their families were honored by the memorials. The memorials were placed at the U.S. Veterans Memorial Museum. It was a moving ceremony which also highlighted our responsibilities in preserving the earth and protecting it from unnecessary changes. We were honored to have the GCA President participate in the dedication program. The ceremony also included a color guard in period clothing from several wars and conflicts.

Conservation and ecology play a big part of District 1's efforts. Several of our clubs have continuing recycling programs. For example:

- Pop tops from soda cans are collected in support of the Ronald McDonald House.
- Plastic caps are collected and given to city schools. The schools are paid for the plastic caps and the money used for school programs.
- Clothing is given to inmates who volunteer to help the city landscape division.
- Used ink cartridges are collected and returned for money that is given to the city.
- Empty prescription bottles are given to the local free clinic.

I am also proud of the donations made by our clubs to many non-profit organizations throughout the 10 counties of District 1. Donations come in the form of garden projects and monetary support. The beneficiaries included NGC Global Partners Running Water, National Children's Advocacy Center, and Habitat for Humanity, CASA Community Gardens, Land Trust of North Alabama, NeverThirst, Huntsville Botanical Garden, several museums, Tut Fann Veterans' Hospital, Manna House, Fields of Green, and GCA Scholarships and Lifetime memberships. Don't mess with gardeners, they'll donate you!

District 1 clubs have been very busy participating in outdoor events and displays. Several clubs have on-going projects in downtown areas and public gardens throughout the 10 counties in District 1. Club members have gathered to decorate a Christmas tree in outdoor setting in several towns and cities throughout the district. The trees were decorated with ornaments made by the clubs, and in one case, the tree was decorated with children's garden tools. Members of Madison County clubs also organized and installed decorations at the Huntsville Botanical Garden, in preparation for the annual large fund-raiser: Galaxy of Lights. They also volunteered many hours to support the light display over the 6 weeks the display was open to the public. District 1 gardeners also united to donate food items and money to several local shelters, including overlooked adults facing many challenges.

**GCA District 1
Director's Report
April 3, 2022 GCA Board Meeting**

Club members also helped prepare over 4,500 wreaths for placement at two large cemeteries in Huntsville as part of the nation-wide effort for Wreaths Across America. They also helped place the wreaths on the graves of veterans, and collected the wreaths after Christmas and prepared them for storage. While several groups help with this effort, the founders and organizers are part of one of our clubs, and everything is very well organized. Don't mess with them!

District 1 was honored that GCA Board members, including the State President, attended the District Fall meeting in October 2021. It was held at a country club which provided a safe environment while following COVID restrictions. We had an excellent program on gardens in New Zealand.

One of our clubs has started a new Junior Garden Club with first-graders. One of their members is a retired elementary school teacher and is leading this junior club. She meets with the children once a month and some of her topics have been trees, worms and bees. She uses a variety of ways to teach the children about gardening. She reads books to them, has them play games, do art projects, watch videos and eat delicious snacks that coordinate with the lesson. For her "Worm" lesson the children each got to observe a worm on a paper plate. Her "Tree" lesson coordinated with a class field trip to observe trees. She crocheted worms and bees for each child to go along with her lessons. She is in the process now of planting a garden in a raised bed that the school made for this project. AND, this retired teacher is getting donations from local businesses to defray the expenses. Don't mess with teachers, especially retired ones!

Last but not least, District 1 has a new garden club. The club is named the Huntsville-Madison County Senior Center Garden Club. They currently have 18 members and plan to focus their efforts on improving the esthetics of the grounds at the senior center. They've held four meetings and are ready to go! And don't mess with them!

District II Report to the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Garden Club of Alabama

The 16 clubs in District II have as of January begun to resume normal club meetings. Most of the clubs were busy during the Pandemic with outdoor projects and some zoom meetings.

The Arab GC resumed meetings in March. They donated to the Marshall Christmas Coalition to help buy food and toys for those in need. They are considering disbanding. I just received word that they are dropping their membership in the GCA.

Cherokee Rose's 29 members were busy with maintaining the Blue Star Marker, The Ethyl Morrison Park in Centre, the Gaylesville Butterfly Garden and the Cedar Bluff Town Park. Christmas decorations were placed in many public places. Two plant sales were held. A flower show will be held Thursday, June 23 at the Cherokee County Community Center. It is a Small Standard Flower Show with horticulture, design, and Education entries. The theme is "Joy of Gardening". Janice Knight is here and has more information.

Ider GC continued to work with their Junior Garden Club, but did not have meetings.

Pell City continued to enhance the Native Plant Walking Trail by planting 36 new native trees, shrubs or pollinator perennials. They are in the process of placing corresponding plant signage. They also updated the Memorial Garden.

Rhododendron Garden Club met in person when feasible, used ZOOM meetings and emails to keep member informed and connected. They participated in the community roadside clean-up of Mentone.

A major relandscaping of the MERF Community Center was undertaken. A "Secret Garden" was created on the property for the children. The flower bed at the Mentone Post Office is a continuing project.

The club won 1st prize for their creation of Cinderella Scarecrow in the Mentone October Colorfest competition.

Two community senior lunches were cooked and served by the club with flower arrangements that were given as door prizes to attendees.

A monthly article is placed in the local newspaper, *The Groundhog*. This has helped to contribute to gaining in membership, as they announce and invite the community to meetings.

The club will be participating in a celebration of Earth Day with the youth in Valley Head School and will develop an overall horticulture plan for the campus of the Moon Lake Campus Project.

My thanks to all of the clubs in District II for accomplishments during the Pandemic. It was not easy.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marsha Merrell

DISTRICT IV Report by Rollanda Cothran, District Director

Garden Club of Alabama Board meeting at Embassy Suites by Hilton in Huntsville

April 3-5, 2022

District IV is very proud to have one of our members serving at President of the GCA.

Also glad to report that we have a National GC Board member, two Deep South GC Board members, and five GC of Alabama Board members.

District IV has eight garden clubs – All clubs either contributed money, food, raffle item, auction item, door prizes, welcome bag inserts, and several others things for the 87th GCA Convention In Huntsville. We have ~~13~~¹³ in attendance *in Huntsville*

Fayette GC did their usual excellent job last month when they hosted District IV Spring meeting in Fayette. Program was on backyard color put on by the Extension Office and a presentation was given of flowers that bloom each month of the year. It was very informative. *55 attended Dist mtg*

Since membership is a key push this year, District IV has added 16 new members.

All our clubs have been busy weeding the flower beds in their cities, planting spring flowers and laying mulch. We are very proud of our little towns.

Ceres GC in Tuscaloosa is already preparing for our October District meeting.

District V Garden Clubs of Alabama Convention Report, April 2022

The GCA of District V are once again looking forward to a year of reaching out to members, finding new members, and back to doing good in the neighborhood. Reinstating programs of the past and introducing new ones to celebrate and look to the future of gardening and all it has to offer.

We currently are a small group of six clubs in our District and all of them have continued service projects even though they may have been on a smaller basis than previous years. They continue planting and weeding in public parks and around libraries and downtown areas. Many clubs have taken the opportunity to offer school age children a look at gardening projects and showing the importance of pollinators and eco friendly habits to keep our world a healthier place. Wedowee Garden Club carried it a step further with a day of cooking and tasting of things they had grown in the school garden.

Our District meeting was held on October 21st 2021 at the Auburn Country Club, with Tulip Garden Club hosting, we had a group of approximately 30 attendees, the 2022 meeting is scheduled for October at Childersburg with Coosa Garden Club hosting the event. Four of our six clubs were Clubs of Distinction in 2021. In 2020 according to Hortensia, there were 8 clubs in the District with everyone of them being a Club of Distinction. We are sad to say that two of our Garden Clubs have disbanded since then, Perry and Garden Lovers have elected to go inactive this past year.

The towns Childersburg, Wedowee and Sylacauga all benefitted from the Garden Clubs participating in decorating public and downtown areas for the Holiday Season, Wedowee Garden Club along with the local Kiwanis organization replaced welcome signs at 5 entrances into town. All six of the clubs continued to support cleaning and planting at many of the public gardens in their towns.

The Tulip Garden Club represented District V at the "Every Light a Prayer for Peace" lighting in Montgomery last December. Wedowee along with an assist from Crepe Myrtle and the Area Master Gardeners hosted HGTV celebrity, Joe Washington when he gave a seminar on "Gardening as We Age", a very timely subject for many of us. Held in Wedowee in September of 2021.

2022 brings new light on projects and contacts with schools and the public as restrictions are eased. Bringing beauty back to our neighborhoods lets the creative juices flowing and an excitement to have back on our agenda.

Many of our clubs are scheduling field trips to area gardens. Last year, Town and Country took an out of town trip to Ball Ground, GA to visit the famous Gibbs Gardens. They commented it

was well worth the trip! In 2022 Coosa Garden Club will be headed to Barber Sports Complex in Irondale to tour the complex and their gardens followed by a stop for lunch at the Whistle Stop Café, featured in "Fried Green Tomatoes"

Personally I would like to thank all of you who have welcomed me to the GCA and have taken me under your wing, assisting with answers and help when I asked. A special thank you to Pat May who has been a great help as well as friend in trying to get this "show on the road". I am definitely looking forward to this Alabama State Convention.

Respectfully submitted

Gretchen Boling

District V, Garden Clubs of Alabama

District VIII is a small but mighty group of 4 clubs-Fairhope Garden Club, Orange Beach Garden Club, Spanish Fort Garden Club and Gulf Shores Garden Club with about 165 members. We were all very disappointed when the 2020 convention was canceled and are starting to rebound and rebuild all of our clubs. Several clubs place flowers at the library or civic center inviting guests to their meeting and others have been encouraging current members to bring guests-all have added to their rosters for a total of 26 new members. Another thing I'm very proud of is the way we all have been utilizing Facebook to share things from National Garden Club and with each other. We love having this as a way to get new members and share valuable information and photos. Some clubs have a members only group and public page!

I know we have had a difficult time applying for as many awards since Covid shut so much down, but hope to rebuild and grow in that area again with everyone starting things up again. We had one club, Fairhope participate in the Southern Charm Flower Show and be a sponsor and their President was Chair for Educational opportunities and they entered horticulture, design and educational displays. Spanish Fort does tablescapes and centerpieces for Baldwin County Fair every year. Gulf Shores had a club flower show with entries trying to get members interested and learning about flower shows. We are hoping to have a District Flower Show and get some new Floral Judges from our District in the near future.

We have several clubs that sponsor scholarships for their local schools-Gulf Shores will be awarding 2 for \$1000 and Orange Beach 1 for \$1000 this year.

All of our clubs participate in events in their communities and donate generously of their time and money. Orange Beach had their Annual Game Day after a year off and Gulf Shores is looking forward to resuming their Floral Seminar after taking the past 2 years off due to Covid of course.

Several clubs have planted trees and are working to promote the Plant America initiative. We have one club that works with the wildlife rescue group and another that participates in the Birdfest helping with education and promoting membership.

All of our clubs do special things in their communities at Christmas like take decorated poinsettias to nursing homes, centerpieces to nursing homes, sponsor Christmas lights contests, decorate Christmas trees for park, help with refreshments city events, donate gifts to families in need, and we even take a big carpool group to the Every Light a Prayer for Peace with 25 attending again this year to get us off to a blessed start for the holiday season.

Gulf Shores Garden club helps run the Alabama Coastal Clean Up every September by organizing the event at the public beach for the city.

Our clubs also help with donations to the local Veterans Home and have helped with upkeep, wreaths and flags at the Veterans cemetery.

We currently have 2 Blue Star Memorials in our District sponsored by our clubs and hope to add more.

Our clubs have been busy taking field trips to local farms, nurseries and parks.

We have 8 members attending this year's convention and are excited to be the host district for next year's convention and plan to show y'all a wonderful time!

The Garden Club of Alabama, Inc.
Treasurer's Report
Barbara Anthony, Treasurer

		May-21	Nov-21
Receipts	Disbursements	Balance	Balance
\$ 11,349.38	\$ 11,916.53	\$ 24,205.97	\$ 23,638.82

General Fund Receipts

Hortensia Ads & Patrons	\$	1,590.50
Membership Dues	\$	8,910.88
Ways & Means	\$	848.00
Total	\$	11,349.38

General Fund Disbursements

Awards	\$	1,434.67
Convention	\$	1,000.00
DeSoto Printing and Mail	\$	7,867.86
National G C Dues	\$	1,614.00
Total	\$	11,916.53

Designated Funds

Civic Development	\$	141.12		\$	3,037.26	\$	3,178.38	
Dowling Gardens	\$	10.00		\$	410.00	\$	420.00	
Helen Keller Gardens	\$	10.00		\$	1,498.00	\$	1,508.00	
Life Membership	\$	750.00		\$	2,000.00	\$	2,750.00	
National G C Headquarters	\$	10.00	\$	775.00	\$	775.00	\$	10.00
Regional Projects	\$	10.00		\$	2,500.00	\$	2,510.00	
Scholarship Fund	\$	3,790.98		\$	2,922.50	\$	6,713.48	
World Gardening	\$	10.00		\$	490.00	\$	500.00	
Total	\$	4,732.10	\$	775.00	\$	13,632.76	\$	17,589.86

Total Funds **\$ 16,081.48** **\$ 12,691.53** **\$ 37,838.73** **\$ 41,228.68**

Total Funds \$ 41,228.68

Less restricted balance \$ 17,589.86

Unrestricted Balance **2363** **\$ 23,638.82**

Balance of \$3,000 Convention Funds **\$ 1,675.00**

Membership	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
Total Members	2050	1838	1710