

DISTRICT VII REPORT
2024 GCA CONVENTION
DeLaine Spencer DVII Director

District VII (DVII) is comprised of the following ten (10) counties: Barbour, Bullock, Coffee, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Macon, Pike, and Russell. There are currently eleven garden clubs in DVII with a total membership of 163.

DVII has a total of five (5) National Garden Club Life Members (with one obtained this past year), four (4) Deep South Life Members, and sixty (60) Garden Club of Alabama Life Members, two of which are new memberships. The clubs are working on obtaining more life memberships with the goal of becoming 100% State Life Member clubs.

DVII had two members who passed away this year. Lela Smith, Lovely Touch Garden Club, Daleville and Julie Ann Griffin, Garden Club by The Lake, Abbeville, AL.

As District Director since May 2023, I have attended the 2023 GCA Convention, after which I became DVII Director. Since April 2023 I have attended the Winter and Summer State Board Meetings, the August 2023 ACFSJ Symposium; and attended a club meeting of five of the seven clubs in DVII, with the intent of attending at least one meeting of the other clubs. I worked with the host club preparing for and conducting the DVII Fall Meeting in October 2023.

DVII clubs have collectively planted 125 trees this past year. They all observed Arbor Day in various ways in their communities, and participated in Flower Shows, Environmental Studies and Landscape Design studies as certified members in these areas.

DVII contributed to the NGC Penny Pines Project in honor of former Director, Leigh Cassady. The District also made contributions to the Scholarship Fund through donations and life memberships; the Alabama Garden Fund; and purchased a *Hortensia* Memorial Ad and Patron Ad.

Our Clubs have also applied for Club of Distinction Awards and GCA Awards for some of their activities this past year as briefly presented below.

AZALEA GARDEN CLUB, ENTERPRISE, AL: Over this past year, Azalea GC has been involved in various activities/projects to enhance their knowledge and to support their City. Activities have included butterfly studies; establishing and maintaining bird sanctuaries; helping with City beautification projects; supporting City conservation efforts; studying and participating in a flower show; and conducting garden therapy studies in their club and sponsoring garden therapy workshops for various organizations in their community. They helped with a local Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony and supported GCA through attending the Every Light a Prayer for Peace program and tree lighting at the State Capitol. They participated in DVII's hosting responsibility for the GCA Christmas Tea held at the Governor's Mansion, Montgomery, AL.

A project they are especially proud to be involved in is the relocation and repairing of a Blue Star Memorial Marker at the Enterprise City Park.

CAMELLIA GARDEN CLUB, CLAYTON, AL: Camellia GC in Clayton has applied for a Club of Distinction Award and GCA awards based on activities discussed below. Some of their activities have included maintaining the grounds at Grace Episcopal Church and maintaining the Parrish House, an antebellum home which the Club uses for a reception after their sponsorship of a local Every Light a Prayer for Peace and a candle lighting program. They host a reception on Veteran's Day to honor all local Veteran's. A new project for this past year has been maintenance and enhancement of the area surrounding the Tower Bell in the historic City Cemetery. They pulled weeds, improved the daylily area of the Tower Bell, and planted Knockout Roses in the area. Their Club had quilt raffles this past year to help cover the cost of some of the projects and to make donations to the Clayton Fire and Rescue Department.

They are especially proud of their association with the Grace Episcopal Church. The original structure built in 1845 is being revitalized by local concerned citizens but its original integrity is being maintained, to include not installing electricity. The Every Light a Prayer for Peace program is a candle light ceremony – to include lights on the Christmas tree. Camellia GC has also supported this project through cleaning the grounds and putting in plantings of available period shrubs and flowers.

CAMELLIA GARDEN CLUB, EUFAULA, AL: Camellia GC applied for a Club of Distinction Award. Camellia GC participates in maintaining bird sanctuary status for their private gardens and for the City of Eufaula. They have had butterfly studies and support butterflies in their City through plantings at their homes and City locations. They are also involved with civic beautification and development programs, conservation projects, historic preservation and holiday house lighting programs. The Club members have been involved for many years in decorating the Shorter Mansion and other historic homes for the Eufaula Christmas Tour of Historic Homes and the Spring Azalea Tour. They help prepare and they participate in many of the activities for the Eufaula Pilgrimage Tour of Homes. They contributed to DVIII's refreshment responsibilities for the Christmas Tea at the Governor's Mansion. They participate in beautification of their City through maintenance of public areas and encourage keeping the City free of litter. They are proud of all their activities, many of which help make Eufaula a good place to live, work and visit.

CHUNNENUGGEE GARDEN CLUB, UNION SPRINGS, AL: Chunnenugee Garden Club (CGC) applied for a Club of Distinction Award. The members participated in the Union Springs Courthouse "Prayer for Peace" tree lighting ceremony and attended the GCA Every Light a Prayer for Peace program at the State Capitol, Montgomery, AL. They donated refreshments for DVII's hosting responsibilities at the GCA Governor's Tea at the Governor's Mansion, Montgomery, AL

CGC is especially proud of their tree planting program resulting in the planting of 75 trees this past year.

FLOWER LOVERS GARDEN CLUB, ENTERPRISE, AL: Flower Lovers GC has a total of 27 members, with nineteen (19) State Life Members, one Deep South Life Member, and one NGC Life Member. They have planted two trees with plans for more to be planted, including oak trees. Club projects include trimming, weeding, and planting in the City Cemetery; planting daffodil bulbs at various locations to include planting some this year at Miss Julie's Kindergarten - with help from the children. The Club continues to keep up the Never Forget Garden at Meadowlawn Memorial Cemetery in Enterprise. A new project for this year was planting 200 bulbs at the Enterprise Rescue Center Office and planting maple trees for Arbor Day. They are proud of all their projects.

GARDEN CLUB BY THE LAKE, ABBEVILLE AL: Garden Club by the Lake has twenty-two (22) members with twelve (12) State Life Members. This club has enjoyed several field

trips, to include Paradise Pumpkin Patch, Baker Hill; Pat Dyes' Quail Hollow Garden in Notasulga, and a tour of Dr. Max Mcinney's Camelia garden outside of Dothan. They have had educational programs on birds, various plants, roses and gardens. They have Assembled and distributed cookie trays to first responders and they maintain landscaping of the Screamer (Abbeville) Fire Department. Some of the members attended the 2023 GCA Convention and the District VII Meeting in October 2023. Members made ornaments for the State Christmas Tree, attended the Every Light a Prayer for Peace Ceremony, and supported DVII's refreshment responsibilities for the Christmas Tea at the Governor's Mansion in December 2023. They have enjoyed all of their meetings and activities, especially a meeting where they swapped items such as garden implements, yard decorations, and plants. They have made various contributions to their community and State projects but are especially proud of their contributions to help needy children in their local areas.

LOVELY TOUCH GARDEN CLUB, DALEVILLE, AL: Lovely Touch Garden Club started out this Club Year (May 2023) with three (3) members. They now have eleven (11) active members with one State Life Member, and six members who have been certified or are completing for certification NGC's Garden Studies and Landscape Design. They have planted one tree this year and will be planting others. All members have started new garden journals learning how to sketch and design their gardens and landscape their grounds. One of the new members is assisting on working with a new website for the Club.

Activities have included maintaining four large urns placed about the business district of Daleville, with seasonal changing of plantings; maintaining butterfly and bird sanctuaries in home landscapes; continuing their Flag and Cross memorial in memory of deceased Veteran's and in honor of living Veterans. They also maintain a POW/MIA Monument in Daleville. Two members serve on the City's Tree Board. The Club supports four local food banks; participated in the "Light Up Daleville" ceremony in December; sponsored a door decorating project with awards for the Most Appealing to Children and Best Overall. They participated in the Every Light a Prayer for Peace, the GCA Christmas Tea, and assisted with DVII's refreshment responsibilities for the Tea in December 2023. They hosted a public Seed Exchange at the Daleville Public Library and a children's program there called "Plant With Me." Some members provide volunteer services for the Dothan Botanical Garden on a regular basis. In addition to all of these activities, Club Members hosted the District VII Fall Meeting in October 2023.

MAGNOLIA GARDEN CLUB, PHENIX CITY, AL: Magnolia GC currently has three members. No projects/activities were reported.

SAMSON GARDEN CLUB, SAMSON, AL: Samson Garden Club has 33 members with five new members added this Club year, one Deep South Life Member and one NGC Life Member. They have fourteen (14) State Life Members and are planning to submit up to five more memberships this year. They also have one Flower Show Judge and one certified Landscape Design member. They applied for a Club of Distinction award; have participated in Civic Beautification Development, Conservation, Flower Shows, Holiday House Lightings and Every Light a Prayer for Peace.

Civic Beautification/Development included a continuing project of maintaining roses the Club planted in the median of Main Street in Samson and maintaining planters seasonally that are in front of businesses in Samson. Members cleaned a neglected cemetery and honored Veteran's planted in two cemeteries with flags posted at graves. Conservation activities included participating in the yearly Bogger Brown/Shane Owens Clean up Samson Day. Several members participated in various areas of flower Shows with horticulture, designs, and photography. Garden Therapy and horticulture information was discussed at each meeting. The Club donated non-perishable foods to the Wiregrass Electric Office in Samson to share with needy families in the community and contributed \$100 to assist in paying some electric bills for needy families. They hosted a house lighting contest at Christmas with judging and awards; members attend the Every Light a Prayer for Peace tree lighting ceremony at the State Capitol and supported DVII's refreshment obligation for the Christmas Tea at the Governor's Mansion. They had a Spring Fling and sold plants, yard art, and had other vendors participate. They also sponsored a float in the Samson Christmas Parade and tossed seed packets to parade attendees to advertise their garden club. Members landscaped and planted trees at the Samson Elementary School. Seventeen members attended the DVII Fall Meeting in October 2023. Samson Garden Club will be hosting the 2024 District Meeting in Samson, ALR.

One special project they are proud of involved getting community members to help identify Veteran's buried in a neglected cemetery in Samson which the Club cleaned up. A total of 150 names were identified as Veterans. The Club presented this list of names to the local American Legion. Flag placements in both cemeteries in Samson has been designated as an annual project.

SUMMERVILLE GARDEN CLUB, PHENIX CITY, AL: Summerville GC has eleven (11) members, with five of those members joining during this Club Year. They have three State Life Members, one Deep South Life Member, one NGC Life Member, and one

Flower Show Judge. Several members attended the DVII meeting in October. They have applied for Club of Distinction, GCA, and District Awards. They are involved in preserving the The Phenix City Federated Garden Center (The Log Cabin); provided arrangements for nursing home patients, participated in sending refreshments for the Christmas Tea and attending the Christmas Tea at the Governor's Mansion and the Every Light a Prayer for Peace ceremony at the State Capitol, Montgomery, in December. They also contributed ornaments for the state Christmas Tree with each ornament representing a branch of the U.S. Military. They have contributed to the GCA Scholarship Fund and actively maintain their website with Club news and locally related information.

TULIP GARDEN CLUB, PHENIX CITY, AL: Tulip Garden Club has nine (9) members, with four State Life Members, two Flower Show Judges, and participants in NGC Garden Studies and Landscape Design schools. The Club applied for a Club of Distinction Award; contributed to the Scholarship Fund; attended the District VII Meeting in October 2023, and the 2023 State Convention. Six trees were planted and Arbor Day observed. They participated in supporting activities for the State, Deep South, and NGC President's Project. The Club participates in restoration and maintenance of The Federated Garden Center of Phenix City (The Long Cabin), a historic building in Phenix City.

A Facebook page has been established and the Club maintains current Club news and educational information for public benefit. Members grow vegetables and share with local food banks and feeding programs. Monetary donations were made to the food banks and soup kitchens in the surrounding areas. Members supported District VII in providing refreshments for the Christmas Tea at the Governor's Mansion and making ornaments (light-weight wood and plastic) for the State Christmas Tree. Some of the members attended the Christmas Tea at the Governor's Mansion and the Every Light a Prayer for Peace tree lighting ceremony at the State Capitol, Montgomery. AL Members also assisted with decorating The Log Cabin for Christmas and decorated the Phenix City Public Library. Additional programs and activities have included making Christmas decorations for the home; studying birds and butterflies; learning about sustainability for honeybees; having seed and plant exchanges, and a teacup exchange.

The Club is especially proud of their sponsorship of an intermediate youth garden club and assists them with projects related to gardening and provide instruction in making designs and arrangements for the appropriate ages and skill levels.

Credentials Report District VII Meeting October 25, 2023

Clayton Camellia	3
Chunnenugee	2
Eufaula Camellia	2
Flower Lovers	8
Garden Club by the Lake	5
Lovely Touch	5
Samson	16
Summerville	6
Tulip	5
Other Districts	3
Total GCA Members	55

Member Category

Number of State Officers	3
Number of Past GCA Presidents	2
Number of State Chairmen Present	8
Number of District Officers Present	5
Number of Club Presidents Present	9
Number of State Life Members Present	24
Number of Guests	2
Number of Club Members Present	55