



# Deep South Garden Clubs, Inc Newsletter

Alabama Florida Louisiana Georgia Mississippi Tennessee  
"Decorate the Deep South with Floral Accents"

Published twice a year

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As newsletter editor, I welcome your submissions about things and events pertaining to Deep South Garden Clubs. The next edition will go out on March first, and any submissions must be received by Feb. 1. Send to my email: [patwyong2844@gmail.com](mailto:patwyong2844@gmail.com), and put "DSGC Newsletter" as the subject. Comments and corrections are welcomed! My hope is that you learn much about DSGC by reading this newsletter!

Pat Young

### 2023-2025 Officers

#### Director

Debby Cooper

#### Alternate Director

Mary Lynn Powers

#### Recording Secretary

Pat Young

#### Corresponding Secretary

Celia Williamson

#### Treasurer

Catherine Donaldson

#### Chairman of Finance

Peggy Tucker

#### Parliamentarian

Gay Austin

#### Historian

Julia Gilmore

#### Advisor

Carol Bullard

### STATE PRESIDENTS

#### Alabama

Kathy Sudduth

#### Florida

Tina Tuttle

#### Georgia

Lisa Hall

#### Louisiana

Patricia Ortalano

#### Mississippi

Melinda Causey

#### Tennessee

Denise Thorne



Director Cooper creates a floral design in honor of National Garden Week.

## From Director Debby Cooper.....

As we gather to enjoy the extended growing season of the Deep South, let us enjoy our time outdoors and our time with gardening friends. The DSGC annual convention held March 19 – 20, 2024, in Gatlinburg, TN, was well attended and enjoyed by all who were there. All six states were recognized for their past efforts at the Awards Banquet. Workshops and tours were offered to explore the Great Smokey Mountains. Thanks to Janie Bitner and Wanda Taylor for chairing a great event.

As we continue our gardening adventures, remember to be good stewards of the land and share knowledge whenever possible.

I continue to enjoy representing DSGC on the national level and encourage all members to take advantage of the many educational opportunities offered through garden clubs, from local to national levels.

Please remember that I, as well as the other DSGC officers and chairmen, are here to help and guide you through our ever-changing garden club journey.

Slow down and appreciate life.

*Debby*



### Deep South at National Convention

Representing the Deep South Region at the NGC Convention in Denver were (l. to r.) TN president Denise Thorne, AL president Kathy Sudduth, LA president Patricia Ortolano, Deep South Director Debby Cooper, MS president Melinda Causey, and GA president Lisa Hall.

# Deep South Unified Project

(Plan now for the deadline of Jan. 31, 2025)

## “Decorate the Deep South, with a Focus on Flower Shows, Floral Design, and Colorful Public Plantings”

**Prize money is available for clubs that have done the following::**

1. Staged an NGC Flower Show
2. Decorated a public space with flowers or for a special event.
3. Installed a colorful planting project in their community.

### Categories for prizes

#### NGC Flower Show

First prize for a club show is \$200, with \$100 offered for second. Any club that has staged an NGC flower show within the last year and a half can enter this category. Don't let your



club miss out. The same award is offered for a show staged by a group of clubs or council.

#### Floral Decoration for Public Event or Space



If your club has decorated for any special event such as a public reception, a wedding, or a special event in your town, you can

apply for this award. Again, first place wins \$200 and \$100 goes to second. The same awards are offered separately for a group of clubs or council.

#### Colorful Plantings

Clubs across the Deep South install colorful plantings in their communities every year. Debby expects many entries in this category.



Check and see if anyone has a picture of your club's planting at the peak of bloom. Then complete a Book of Evidence according to DSGC rules on the Deep South website. Your club might win the \$200 first prize, or the \$100 second prize. And a group of clubs or council can also apply for this prize money.

#### State Competition

A Deep South state can win \$200 for its state flower show.

#### Overall Winner

An additional \$200 prize will go to the overall winner.

**All entries must be submitted to Co-chairman Amye Kelly by Jan. 31, 2025. Check the Deep South website for all details.**

# Natural Resources Chair Report

LaMar and Karen Merrill

As Chairmen of the Natural Resources Committee, my wife Karen Merrill and I look around to see what we can do to preserve our surroundings for future generations.

We have four wonderful grandchildren that we would gladly give our lives to protect.

Plastic has become such an integral part of our lives; that we do not give it a second thought. But as science studies pile up, we should be more aware and proactive. We went on a cruise several



years ago and saw firsthand the ocean is afloat with plastic bottles. As I love to do on a ship, I spent lots of time at the bow watching the flying fish. As I stood there I watched a door open above the water line and a ship employee threw black plastic bags out one after another of garbage into the ocean. As we passed along through the ocean there were swirling masses of eddies of plastic bottles.

In a science article in “Access Nature”, March 6, 2024, I read about a frightening three-year study saying “People who had tiny plastic particles lodged in a key blood vessel were more likely to experience heart attacks, stroke, or death” Just think to yourself how much food packaging, clothes, water pipes that shed mini particles that are ingested or inhaled by people.

Why do we insist on bottled water or not have a better system in our homes? What is wrong with just drinking from a faucet?

When traveling, Karen and I use a metal container (cup) that we fill before leaving - our city water - rather than bringing plastic bottled water. We need to use more glass containers and less plastic. Even fewer plastic straws would be a savings.

We can also help by ensuring our community has recycling for plastic containers, or by using containers available at many major grocery and chain stores. We can ensure that our rivers are not the dumping ground for plastic, which then flows to the ocean.



Our city, much to my horror, has mandated that we bag our leaves in plastic bags rather than just pick them up and deposit them in the landfill to deteriorate naturally. I have been to City Council meetings several times to remind them it will take 500 years plus for those bags to deteriorate.

Let us all be mindful of our plastic use and hopefully retain our good health and our environment.

# Ten Takeaways from Each DSGC President's Report

## Garden Club of Alabama, Inc. - Kathy Sudduth

- The Garden Club of Alabama has 85 clubs with 1750 members.
- GCA promotes floral design, environmental studies, and landscape design.
- Kathy has implemented a better communication system that is working great.
- A local club made \$10,000 in one weekend on a plant sale
- Many clubs have partnered with local food banks to provide canned goods and fresh vegetables out of members' gardens.
- GCA began a statewide fundraiser called *Flowerpower*. Phase one of selling amaryllis bulbs netted over \$1000.
- Part of Kathy's mission statement is the promotion of gardening.
- The club with the best oak tree planting project will win a cash prize at the state convention.
- GCA is promoting membership with Facebook postings.
- Clubs advertise GCA by taking flowers to first responders, hospitals, senior citizen centers, and government facilities.

## Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. - Tina Tuttle

- Tina's theme for her administration is "Celebrating 100 Years," as FFGC commemorates its founding on April 24, 1924.
- FFGA published a commemorative calendar with a brief history and 70 factoids of the organization.
- FFGA has over 10,000 members with 12 districts and 157 garden clubs.
- As part of their centennial celebration, FFGC celebrated Florida Arbor Day with each club urged to plant a native tree at the same time on the same day. Over 120 clubs participated.
- ***The Florida Gardener*** became an online publication that was sent out to each member. It also doubled in size.
- FFGC began a quarterly newsletter ***The Idea Exchange***, where clubs and districts share their news and ideas with others.
- For the first time in 16 years, FFGC conducted a survey of their membership.
- The FFGC **Wekiva Youth Camp** was listed in *Newsweek* magazine as one of the "100 Top Summer Camps."
- The Florida Flower Show Judges published the third edition of the widely acclaimed ***What's Your Type***.

## The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. - Lisa Hall

- Lisa's theme is "Plant America-promoting beautification, conservation, and education."
- GCG continued to build on past accomplishments by adding content to a new website.
- GCG now uses Constant Contact for their communication system.
- They are installing membership management software to streamline their work.
- Because of Georgia's large landmass, GCG is using Zoom as a tool for committee and board meetings.
- Due to membership feedback, GCG is offering more NGC gardening and landscape design courses, and flower show judges' schools.
- GCG's quarterly magazine, **Garden Gateways**, has a new, larger format in full color.
- This year, GCG will give \$84,000 in scholarships to deserving students in Georgia Colleges.
- GCG is working on recruiting, retaining and revitalizing their membership.
- GCG is already planning the 2025 DSGC convention March 11 – 13, 2025.

## Louisiana Garden Club Federation, Inc. - Patricia Ortalano

- In honor of LGCF's ninetieth year Patricia chose the theme "Louisiana Goes Emerald – Plant Wildflowers."
- LGCF member Tommie Andrews became an Environmental Consultant at 101.
- LGCF will host all 4 schools and a symposium before the end of 2024.
- Two Louisiana clubs won **Plant America Community Project Grants**.
- The Bue Star Memorial at the World War II Museum in New Orleans was relocated last May.
- LGCF clubs installed 4 Blue Star Memorial Markers, with 2 more scheduled.
- LGCF sponsored tours to The Netherlands, Belgium, and the Philadelphia Flower Show.
- The Live Oak program continues, with 10,093 Live Oaks registered since the program began.
- LGCF is the only NGC state to sponsor a Cleanest City contest.
- Louisiana clubs continue to sponsor flower shows, plant trees for Arbor Day, community beautification projects, and much more.

## The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc. - Melinda Causey

- Melinda's theme for her term is "Growing in Our Communities...to Plant, Promote, and Protect."
- GCM has 2581 members, with 92 active clubs and 7 active councils.
- GCM awards 4 yearly scholarships to Mississippi State University at \$2500 each.
- GCM held a Landscape Design School series and offered Flower Show Schools free to GCM members who took the test.
- GCM has 30 active flower show judges. Eight club flower shows are scheduled.

- GCM makes use of the internet with an active Facebook presence and a comprehensive website.
- Each GCM member receives a hard copy of the state publication, ***Miss Gardener***.
- Other information sources for local members include a GCM newsletter, ***Miss Mag*** publication, and a Monday Moments information email to club presidents.
- Each club president receives a “President’s Notebook”, filled with needed documents and information.
- Mississippi boasts 61 Blue Star Memorial Markers and 4 Gold Star, with 2 more planned.

### Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. - Denise Thorne

- Denise chose “Birds, Bees, Flowers and Trees” as her theme,
- TFGC has 2057 members with 90 clubs.
- Members across the state helped stage the successful 2024 Deep South invention in Gatlinburg.
- All TFGC members receive a hard copy of the official publication ***The Volunteer Gardener***.
- A new website features all forms, awards, instructions, presidents’ guides, and club news.
- Tennessee clubs received two ***Plant America Community Project*** grants.
- For the first time TFGC offered BOD meetings in person with a Google Meets option, allowing members to attend either way.
- Tennessee has 103 Blue Star Memorial Markers and leads the nation with 81 Gold Star Markers.
- TFGC has 15 flower shows planned so far this year.
- The much-acclaimed Conservation Camp will be held Sept. 30 through Oct. 1 at Fall Creek Falls State Park.

### Deep South Coffee Mugs

- \$10.00 each
- \$10 shipping – order as a group
- Order from Director Cooper
- Deep South fundraiser
- Great stocking stuffer
- Don’t be left without a hot cup of coffee



# DSGC Plant America Grant Winners 2023 - 2024

## **Florida:**

Coral Gables Garden Club  
Garden Club at Palm Coast  
Garden Club of Coral Springs  
Steinhatchee Garden Club

## **Louisiana:**

Bulb and Blossom Garden Club  
Shady Oaks Garden Club

## **Tennessee:**

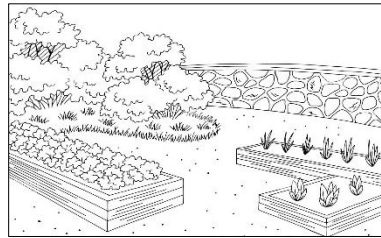
Chapman Highway Garden Club  
Year Round Garden Club

## **Georgia:**

Garden Club of Marietta  
Rose and Dahlia Garden Club

## **Mississippi:**

Coastal Garden Society  
Northwood Garden Club  
Richard/Florence Garden Club  
Starkville Town & Country Garden Club



# DSGC Ames Tools Grant Winners

## **Florida:**

Garden Club of Switzerland

## **Louisiana:**

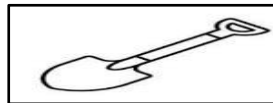
Abbeville Garden Club

## **Tennessee:**

Shadow Oaks Garden Club

## **Mississippi:**

Bay Springs Garden Club  
New Albany Garden Club



## **Latest NGC News - Check the Summer National Gardener**

- Penny Pines is now Plant-A-Tree (Details are being worked out).
- Flower Show Judging students no longer have to take the comprehensive final exam.
- Nov. 26, 2024, is the deadline to purchase pavers in the NGC Path to Success.
- NGC clubs have donated over 28,000 pounds of food since the inception of the *PLANT AMERICA Feed America* project.
- Get your garden certified as a *Pollinator Garden*. Information on the NGC website, [grdenclub.org](http://grdenclub.org).

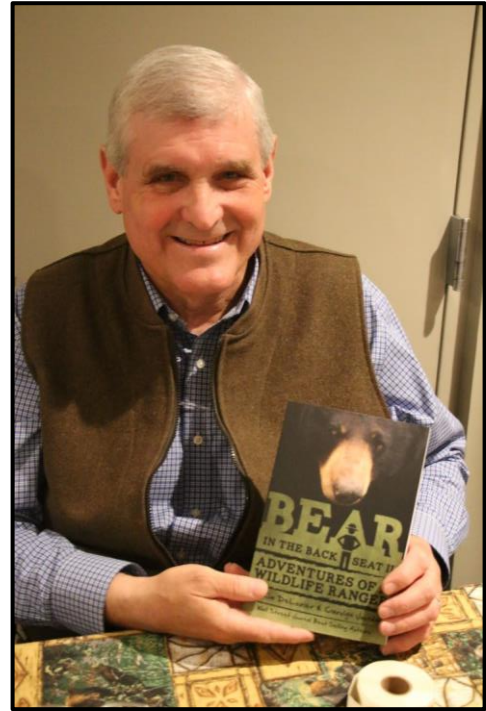


# 2024 Deep South Garden Club Convention Highlights

## Gatlinburg, TN







**A Convention Summary:**  
Good Food  
Good Friends  
Good Speakers  
Good Tours  
Good Floral Design  
Good Workshops  
A Good Time!!

**Don't miss the 2025 Deep South Convention  
March 11-13, 2025  
Valdosta, Georgia**

Theme: "The Charms of the South"

Features:

"Simply Southern" Flower Show

Tri-Refresher

3 optional tours

Floral Design Program by Lynn Fronk

Silent Auction

**See you there!!**

Deep South Garden Club, Inc.

RESOLUTION

Gatlinburg, Tennessee

**WHEREAS**– The Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs Inc. hosted the 61<sup>st</sup> Deep South Region Annual meeting at the Park Vista Hotel in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, March 19-20, 2024.

**WHEREAS**- The theme of the annual meeting was "Springtime in the Smokies."

**WHEREAS**- The Deep South Garden Club Executive Committee, Board of Directors and annual meetings were held on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 19-20, 2024.

**WHEREAS** – The Region was represented by the Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee State Presidents, delegates and garden club members.

**WHEREAS** – A special guest of this meeting was the President of National Garden Clubs, Inc., Brenda Moore

**WHEREAS** – Educational and enjoyable programs were presented with topics including six different presentations of the flora and fauna in the Smoky Mountains, plus a creative program depicting Global trends in floral design.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** – That the Deep South Garden Club, Inc. sincerely thank the many hours, creative talents and organization of the 61<sup>st</sup> Deep South Garden Club meeting hosted by the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

This resolution was adopted and attached to the 2024 Annual Meeting minutes.

s

Gay Austin, Parliamentarian

Deep South Garden Club, Inc.