

# CENTRAL REGION GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

Theme: Tree Planting Extravaganza  
November 2024 Newsletter

## ***CENTRAL REGION DIRECTOR - Lynne Ehnert***

### **Central Region Tree Planting Extravaganza - Central Region Project 2023-2025**



For those of you that were not able to attend the Central Region Convention October 17-19, 2024 in O'Fallon, Illinois, you really missed a good time.

We were treated to dinner music by the United States Air Force Band of Mid-America who is stationed at Scott Air Force Base located outside of O'Fallon. If you have never heard them, they were not what I expected. They were more like a small orchestra than a band. My mother confirmed that neither my sister nor I ever sounded like that when we played the oboe in high school, they were wonderful. They played lovely dinner music.

This was followed by an overview of information by the Air Mobility Command at Scott AFB, which controls USAF transportation worldwide. National Garden Club (NGC) President Brenda Moore spoke to us and told us about the 50 Shades of Green identifying the 50 benefits of belonging to NGC. This was well received. Several requests were made to publish her presentation on the NGC website. Many members felt this was something that needed to be shared at the club level.

We heard presentations by Dr. Elizabeth Wahle (University of Illinois Extension, Invasive Plants), Mary Vanderford (CEO, Heartland Conservatory), and Carrie Bergs (Vice President, American Rose Society). All the speakers were well versed on the National Garden Club and our goals. Presentations were directed with our organization in mind. We received information on invasive plants and suggestions on what plants work well with other plants, which plants can be controlled, and which ones are "wild." The pictures from the Rose Society were stunning.

There were several vendors at the convention with opportunities to purchase plants, jewelry, buckets for transporting flowers safely, and crafts. There were several baskets provided by each state for which to bid on and several baskets generated a bidding war.

The close of the convention was a tour of the O'Fallon Garden Club's State Street Community Garden where we planted a tree. The O'Fallon Garden Club was on hand to show us where they grow over 5,000 pounds of produce for the local food pantry.

**Lynne Ehnert**  
**Central Region Director**

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**Theme: Tree Planting Extravaganza!**

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**The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc.  
Central Region Director and  
State Presidents**

# Scholarships

Central Region Garden Clubs awarded two \$500.00 Scholarships to two worthy students for the school year of 2024-2025. Payton Duncan, a senior at Southeast Missouri State University has a 3.8 GPA and studying Agribusiness: Horticulture and Cannabis Studies. She graduates this fall and plans to go on to receive her Graduate Degree. The second student is Mercedes Jimenez a sophomore attending the University of Michigan – Dearborn. She is the first person in her family to attend college. She has a 3.36 GPA and is majoring in Environmental Science. She is planning on becoming a conservation scientist. It is wonderful knowing that we are supporting students who are studying plant sciences and helping them to reach their goal.

I was asked to take the position of Life Membership/Gold Star/Memorial -Tribute Chairmanship when Judy Newman passed. I have not received any recent requests. There are 340 Life Memberships, 75 Gold Star Memberships and two Memorials – Tributes.

Money received for Life Membership/Gold Star and Memorial – Tribute goes to the Scholarship Fund. A Life Membership can be awarded to anyone. A family member, friend, yourself, a garden club member, someone who has done exceptional things in their life or for their club. If you are a Life Member but you want to support CR Scholarship, you can purchase a Gold Star Membership. And in honor of someone who has passed or who you would like to show gratitude and respect for, you can receive a Memorial – Tribute. All the while, contributing to the CR Scholarship Fund.

You can find the information on the CR website and mail your check made out to CRGC and send an application to this chairman.

Life Membership costs \$50.00. Life Membership Pin \$10.00. Gold Star Membership/Pin \$25.00 and Memorial – Tribute \$20.00.

Scholarship, Life Membership/Gold Star/Memorial-Tribute Report  
Nan McCabe, Scholarship Chairman 2021-2025, Life Membership 2024-2025

**Nan McCabe**  
**CRGC Scholarship Chairman**  
[njkm55@gmail.com](mailto:njkm55@gmail.com)  
636-293-0647

## PHOTO FUN EVENT

This photo fun event is open to all members of Central Region. All members of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin are automatically members of Central Region. You need not be a Flower Show Judge to enter this fun event. Winners will be announced and rewarded at the first dinner of the 2025 Central Region Convention on Oct. 27, 2025, being held at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. You may begin taking photos at any time but entries will not begin until a notice appears on the Central Region website.

Note: The WGCF 2025 Symposium will take place Oct. 27-28, 2025 at the Osthoff Resort.

**Kitty Larkin**  
**WGCF Symposium Chairman**

## **National Garden Club Schools in Central Region or Online in other regions.**

### **Environmental School**

Course 1 April 4-6, 2025, MSU Kellogg Biological Station & Conference Center, Hickory Corners, MI

Course 2 March 24-27, 2025, St. Louis, MO (in person)

Course 3 (In person, out of CR area)

Course 4 None scheduled

### **Gardening School**

Course 1 March 28-29, 2025, Harbert Community Church, Sawyer, MI

Course 2 February 10-12, 2025, New Smyrna Beach, FL (Virtual course)

Course 3 None scheduled

Course 4 None scheduled

### **Landscape Design School**

Course 1 (In person, out of CR area)

Course 2 October 29-31, 2025, Waltham, MA (Virtual course)

Course 3 (In person, out of CR area)

Course 4 None scheduled

### **Flower Show School**

Course 3 October 10-15, 2025, Ann Arbor, MI (in person)

Course 4 April 3-5, 2025, Zion Lutheran Church, Ann Arbor, MI

Go online & type National Garden Clubs.org. Click on the website home page at the top of the screen. Go to the NGC website Schools section to register for any of the above classes.

Zoom offers lots of opportunities to become a consultant or refresh credentials as a consultant.

**Michigan link is <https://migardenclubs.org/>**

**Lucy Valitchka  
NGC Schools Chairman**

**Diane Dawson - President of the Garden Clubs of Illinois 2023-2025**  
**Theme: "Let's Grow Together Illinois: Plant America"**



Illinois has been revising its bylaws and reviewing the governing documents in their totality. As we approach our momentous 100th Anniversary in 2027, a significant milestone in our history, it's a time of great significance for us to review, revise, and vote on a new operating model that will unite us in our shared history and future.

Our leaders in Illinois are veterans each with decades of invaluable experience, which is a cornerstone of our organization. Yet, we recognize the importance of succession planning to make room for future generations. Change is difficult, but paving the way and mentoring future leaders is critical to an organization's success.

Four Illinois presidents attended the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial Garden & Nature Center, and Children's Woodland Garden this Summer, a culmination of a long-term Illinois project that we can all be proud of. We encourage all to visit the LMG in Springfield, Illinois, and bring the children in your life!

Illinois recently hosted Autumn Harvest in Illinois and saw small-town charm and hospitality at its best. Our Central Region Director, Lynne Ehnert, even planted a tree in the award-winning community garden supporting the "Tree Planting Extravaganza."

Sadly, these CR conventions continue to draw a small attendance (60), which has sparked new interest in reviewing and updating the Central Region's value proposition to the states. Thank you to all who supported this convention, which is hosted by a state and provides networking and fellowship. In addition to our ongoing projects, committee work, and events, Illinois is beginning to plan a year-long celebration of its historic 100th anniversary in 2027. We hope you can visit us during that year.

**Diane Dawson**  
**Illinois State President**

**Beverly Wattenbarger - President of the Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri, Inc.  
2023-2024**

**Theme: "PLANT AMERICA: Leading the Way for a Greener Missouri"**



The members of FGCM have had a very busy summer. Our 91<sup>st</sup> Annual State Convention was held May 6-9, 2024 in Columbia, Missouri at the Stony Creek Hotel and Convention Center. Our Central Region Director, Lynne Ehnert, and her mother, Kitty Larkin, Central Region Parliamentarian, were our special guests. Thank you to our Central District members for their hard work hosting another successful FGCM Convention.

Several members of FGCM attended the NGC Convention in Westminster, Colorado. We all enjoyed the convention and as always brought back important information to our members.

As FGCM President I just finished visiting our eight Districts throughout our beautiful state of Missouri, for their Fall Board Meetings. The club presidents give their annual reports at this meeting, I must say we have very active clubs.

They have been busy working on the projects for National Garden Clubs, Central Region, and FGCM. They have been working on community gardens, planting trees, many sponsor youth garden clubs and have youth projects, as well as garden therapy. Many clubs presented programs focusing of my president's project, conserving water. They participate in Arbor Day and most present a scholarship to a local high school student. These are just a few of the things our clubs have been doing this summer.

**Beverly Wattenbarger  
Missouri State President**

## Catherine Williams - President of Federated Garden Clubs of Minnesota 2023-2025

### Renaissance Festival in Minnesota is 50 Years Strong 2023



Robins bound from tree to ground and back again. Chick-a-Dees flit through the branches storing their winter stash. Breezes push the falling leaves ever so gently to the ground, and grasses nod their heads in unison. I am on a slow walk through a nature center during a Forest Therapy session. We are focusing on movement around us. Another time we focused on the beautiful golden color lighting up the woods, in trespasses with reds and greens of trees dressed in their autumn colors.

We started using our five senses, sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling the outside world. A group of ten of us are standing in an open grassy area at the edge of a forest. We start by seeing the colors and textures around us. Complimentary colors like red and green, really vibrate next to each other. Neutral colors of browns, tans, and yellows blend into the landscape. Those that could smell detected whiffs of smoke from burning wood in the air. Many could even taste the smoke! We felt the coolness of the air, warmth of the sun, and earthiness of the planet.

Part of this session included finding a tree and learning what lessons it had to teach each of us. My tree was gutted but still standing. Two of its branches were extending to the sky. One branch had broken off but the other still reached for the canopy of the forest, gallantly living on. Branches and leaves lay around it, restoring the soil and supporting any new saplings near it. The cycle of life lived on nourishing new growth.

Jerad Morrey, a local pastor, was our leader in the previous Forest Therapy session. David Motzenbecker, PLA, [David@DavidMotzenbecker](mailto:David@DavidMotzenbecker) or [www.Motzstudios.com](http://www.Motzstudios.com) is a leader of Forest Bathing. Both disciplines started in Japan during a time of extensive attention to work and little of it on one's well-being. From a realization of health deficit, grew an understanding of the importance of nature in our human lives. Motzenbecker spoke to a Minnesota garden club gathering in October.

In Forest Bathing, nature provides resilience and reduces blood pressure during chronic stress, creates connection to the outside world in sunrises, sunsets, and in stars at night. Nature restores our attention deficit disorder. Right now our attention spans are around 8-9 seconds. It is predicted that 70% of us will live in cities by 2050 and 90% of us will spend most of our time indoors. Our bodies are made to commune with the nature of the outside world. Even a Twenty (20) minute walk will be restorative. Make the walk low impact, taken in forest time at the speed of a tree. That is "slow!"

Attention Restoration Theory centers on fractal shapes such as branching patterns of trees, cones, snail shells, and flaming campfires. Alpha waves of creativity and memory are affected. Immersing oneself in nature over time increases one's intention and intuition and is transformative. A Seneca quote: *"We are a part of nature, not apart from nature."* Take a transformational pause by finding a "sit spot" with nature around you. Even looking out a window at nature or a picture of the natural world will help our well-being. But, there is no substitute for being bathed in the real thing!

**Jayne Kesler - President of The Garden Club of Indiana, Inc. 2023-2025**  
**Theme: "Plant Trees for Hope"**

**Trees, Trees, Trees**



I've been reading about seasonal change, and one idea that struck my fancy was that this time of year "Summer dances with Autumn." This morning Autumn was leading and letting us know it is coming, and now Summer has the temperature and is attempting to hold onto the lead.

My summer dances included taking garden walks, celebrating club anniversaries, visiting clubs, and dedicating Blue Star Memorials. I spent time reading Facebook posts, the newly edited Indiana Gardens, and club program books.

District Meetings have started. I enjoyed them last year, but feel I now have an appreciation for the uniqueness of each district. The variety of land from the dunes through the plains ending in the southern hills provides a uniqueness in each district which is reflected in the clubs and members. Keith and I will have had a clear view of Summer and Autumn's dance on the back roads by the last one on Halloween.

We will have added two more Blue Star Memorial dedications to Central District's August dedication at Holliday Park. North West District rededicated a rest stop Blue Star Memorial at the Indiana Welcome Center on Highway 65, and South East District will rededicate a Blue Star Memorial on October 12th in Seymour. I would happily fill my calendar with opportunities to dedicate Blue Star Memorials which show our appreciation to the Armed Forces for making sure we have our freedom as Americans.

So as our seasons dance into each other...if you get a chance to sit it out or dance, I hope you dance.

**Jayne Kesler**  
**Indiana State President**



**Nancy Ryan - President of the Garden Clubs of Michigan - 2023-2025**  
**Theme: "Grow, Share, Connect Michigan"**



Welcome to "Buds & Buddies" another new club in District 2A!

Welcome to new MGC Board of Directors member Kathy Miller, MGC Scholarship Chair. We also filled some key state leadership positions; Michele Armstrong, State Gardening School Chair, Beth Markowski, State Environmental School Chair, and Pat Hanson, and Karla Labby, MGC Yearbook Co-Chairs! Thank you for volunteering your time to support our scholarship program, schools, and yearbook awards!

A thank you to the District Directors, their teams and the host clubs who worked during the summer on the District Fall Meetings, the local Flower Show, and Landscape Design School Committees, headed by Rita Crawley, and Joan Lenard respectively, and to Trish Payne our Blue & Gold Star Chairman who not only attended dedications this summer, but also completed a two year audit of all of our markers around the state, updating our website, documentation, and dedication guidance.

Please help your district win the MGC Homegrown National Park Challenge "Get On the Map" by adding your garden/container, your clubs' native gardens, your neighbors' gardens, and even the local nature centers or preserves in your area. Sue Bailey our HNP Advisor has created a Plan of Action so "Let's Move Michigan Up!"

Our 2024 District Fall Meetings are underway; one of the best ways to "Grow, Share and Connect" with each other!

Member meetings are being scheduled for January - April 2025. They will again be on Monday. The final schedule has been sent to Club Presidents and will also be sent to members via Constant Contact.

Happy to be in Michigan, where the autumn colors paint a picture of pure magic!  
Enjoy!

**Nancy Ryan**  
**Michigan State President**

## Linda McCafferty, President of the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation 2023-2025 Honoring Veterans and Gold Star Families



This President participated in the requisite annual business meetings. The luncheons and banquets were well attended, meals were delicious and programs spectacular. During the Awards Banquet, WGCF Madison District was presented with a Certificate for its District Standard Flower Show, Captivating Color, and a huge green rosette ribbon. The highlight of the Convention was NGC Awards Chair.

Gerianne Holzman presenting to me as WGCF President on behalf of St. Croix District with the prestigious Award of Excellence. Gerianne said she had a hard time keeping this secret because she was so excited that her State Garden Club was receiving the Award. See NGC Press Release.

Not being a floral designer, the presentation, Principals of Design, by Frances Thrash, NGC Design Instructor, was over my head. My favorite program was by The Legendary Ladies who presented Unconventional Women of the West, Making History Come Alive! This was depictions of Calamity Jane, frontierswoman (1852 - 1903), Margaret "Unsinkable Molly" Brown, philanthropist (1867 - 1932), and Katharine Lee Bates, poet and author of "America the Beautiful" (1859 - 1929), portrayed by local women who volunteer their time for research, rehearsal, creation, and performance.

All in all, in spite of its beginning, this was a fantastic convention and thanks go to Colorado Federation of Garden Clubs for all their hard work. A strategic planning meeting was held in July wherein the Historic and Futures subcommittees discussed their research to digitize records (Historic) and create a marketing plan to attract new members (Futures) as WGCF moves forward. Strategic Planning is also developing "a continuous convention planning committee and reduce planning burdens on Districts/membership hesitant to plan conventions and on WGCF when required to plan non-State activities." Per Chairman Joe Powelka, "WGCF has lost districts and membership such that planning conventions and major events becomes more difficult for some districts to answer the call for planning and hosting a convention or event. There are a number of WGCF members that have the skills and experience to plan and staff conventions and events to improve chances for a successful event without stressing out individuals not ready to undertake planning and/or staffing roles. Having a centralized planning and/or staffing core should improve the chance for event success and consistent outcomes." If other CR State Clubs have already pursued similar issues, we would certainly be interested in hearing your input; please contact Joe at [eplus@chorus.net](mailto:eplus@chorus.net).

In August, Floral Designers of Wisconsin again sponsored a Standard Flower Show at the Wisconsin State Fair, Cream of the Crop, celebrating 100 years of cream puffs. The designs were breathtaking and horticulture spectacular. There was a wonderful memorial for deceased member, Judy Newman, who was a dynamic force in the organization and carry through of past State Fair Flower Shows among her other involvement with WGCF, CR and NGC.

This President recently attended her first in-person board meeting at NGC Headquarters in St. Louis. What a surprise! The building is beautiful and the gardens spectacular. The NGC Path to Success was dedicated; WGCF purchased its paver as did other districts, clubs and members. I learned that there was to be an obligatory photo taken of me sitting on the floor near WGCF's logo in the carpeting, "a tradition" began several terms earlier I was told. Not wanting to be a wet blanket, I consented but a crane was needed to help me get up so I could regain whatever dignity remained. Joe Powelka, next term WGCF President, be aware that eventually it will be your turn to follow tradition.

Summer is winding down sooner than most of us prefer but there is not much that can be done. Members have focused on their clubs' plant sales, seminars, workshops, garden tours, road trips, and community projects; in addition, they needed to fit in tasks to maintain their own gardens. Soon clubs will be meeting indoors, planning for the future, providing education, resources and opportunities to promote and share the love of gardening, floral design and civic and environmental responsibilities.

**Linda McCafferty**  
**Wisconsin State President**

**A non-member is recognized for exceptional and outstanding accomplishments in any field that advances WGCF objectives.**

**Central Region Blue Star/Gold Star  
Families Memorial Markers Committee  
Chuck McCafferty, Chairman**



Since being appointed Blue Star/Gold Star Families Memorial Markers Chairman, I have been very busy.

I was invited to a Dedication of a Blue Star Marker in Farmer City, Illinois, sponsored by The Garden Clubs of Illinois, Inc., and a Rededication of a Blue Star Marker by Federated Garden Clubs of Missouri, Inc., Northwest District, at a Veterans Home in Cameron, Missouri. I have not been informed of other Dedications in the last year; however, I suspect they were held, but I was just not invited to attend them. While it is unlikely there will be Dedications in Central Region before my term expires, let me stress that it is very important to involve the Blue Star/Gold Star committee in these activities.

Because I am also Blue Star/Gold Star Chairman for Wisconsin Garden Club Federation, locally, I was able to participate in Dedications of Blue Star and Gold Star Markers in Racine, Wisconsin, sponsored by Blue Star Mothers of Southeastern Wisconsin, Chapter 2 (not a member of WGCF) and a Blue Star Memorial Marker in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, sponsored by Lake Wissota Garden Club which is in the process of placing a Gold Star Marker adjacent thereto. Another Dedication of a Blue Star Marker is pending by Botany Belles and Beaus Garden Club in Woodville, Wisconsin, and others are contemplated by WGCF- District, and Paper Valley Garden Club in Appleton, Wisconsin.

This Chair was busiest discussing with Central Region State Presidents and their respective Blue Star/Gold Star Chairmen, the creation of a web page on the Central Region Website highlighting Blue Star/Gold Star Markers in each of Central Region's seven states. Thanks to the involvement by Central Region Webmaster Debby Walters, that was effectuated. Because the information on relevant Blue Star/Gold Star webpage's is public information, Debby created a link to each state's information. Three of them, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin include lists of Markers in their states. While Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri have Blue Star/Gold Star webpage's on their states' websites, information as to the locations of those markers is not included. To accomplish this, ever knowledgeable and forever helpful Central Region Webmaster Debby informed me that if the states, or a member thereof, have Google Drive accounts, it is as simple as creating a spreadsheet in the Google Drive of the Blue Star/Gold Star Markers located within their states. In that regard, every time the memorial marker spreadsheets are updated, the links created on the Central Region webpage would be updated also.

Presidents of Illinois, Minnesota and Missouri, please take the effort to coordinate with your Blue/Gold Star Marker chairs to place the information that is already digitized somewhere to a Google Drive, notify Debby that this has been done, and she will modify the appropriate link.

Thank you for the opportunity to work in this area of National Garden Club's and Central Region's most worthy area of pursuit (in my opinion as a Veteran of the United States Armed Forces).

## Invasive Plants

The common reed grass, *Phragmites australis*, is considered an aquatic non-native plant in all seven Central Region states. Standing tall at 6-15 feet with distinctive, fluffy seed heads, it does catch one's eye growing in large, thick patches in ditches.

When I moved to Wisconsin to live with my son, I noticed the wetland pond in our neighborhood had a patch and it was rapidly taking over the pond area. The neighbors were unaware of its existence and if it was left to grow, it would soon take over the whole pond. An effort was then set in place to try to eradicate this invasive grass.

Once an invasion takes root, exterminating becomes very difficult. Small stands can be controlled through repeated cutting or by cutting and dripping glyphosate formulated for use near water into the cut stems in late summer. Controls for large stands include burning, flooding, grazing, disking and aerial spraying of herbicides. Burning is ineffective if the water level is above the ground. Special permits will often be required to treat *Phragmites* growing along waterways.

In our case, the affected area was cut back early this spring in April. In mid-August, the *Phragmites* had grown back sufficiently that it was easily identified and could be treated with a spray-on herbicide. A professional licensed expert selectively applied herbicide to the invasive weeds in the area, including *Phragmites* and willow, while sparing native plants which included cattails and goldenrod. While the willow readily died, the *Phragmites* exhibited some resistance to the herbicide and required a second treatment. At the end of September, after the herbicide had its full effect, the area was again mowed to give native plants the best opportunity to reseed this area. The area was mowed instead of burned due to the proximity of houses. We are hopeful we can slow or eliminate the *Phragmites* and plant native grasses and plants in this area to reduce invasives from getting a start. There is a lot of wildlife which visits this pond, so it is important to try and preserve this habitat.

### Some information about *Phragmites*.

Exotic strains of *Phragmites* are a non-native perennial, aggressive wet land grass that out-competes native plants. The invasive *Phragmites* can be found across North America and dominates along the Atlantic coast where a few native *Phragmites* populations remain. The non-native *Phragmites* rapidly spread across the country in the early twentieth century due to construction of railroads, major roadways, and motorboats. It spreads when water carries root fragments from one wetland to another. Stands can become so aggressive that they consume shallow ponds and clog waterways.

Other than roadside ditches, the non-natives can be found in open wetlands, riverbanks, lake shores and in disturbed or undisturbed plant communities. It prefers alkaline and brackish water but will tolerate highly acidic conditions. It can grow in water up to 6 feet deep and also in some dry sites.

Identifying native and exotic *Phragmites* is a challenge. Natives are generally more scattered while exotic *Phragmites* forms dense, dome-shaped masses. Natives usually have gray-green leaves. If you peel the leaf back from the stem, the native will tend to have smooth, shiny stems and a reddish color in spring and summer, whereas the exotic will have finely ribbed and dull stems with a tan color in spring and summer. Native stems are cane like, up to 1 inch in diameter whereas non-native strains have tan, dull, rough, and ribbed stems. Non-native buds form on the rhizomes during the summer and become fast growing stems the following spring.

Our battle with *Phragmites* will continue indefinitely. Each spring, selectively applied herbicide will be used to treat any new or remaining *Phragmites* shoots once they can be correctly identified. Native plants will be encouraged through seeding and occasional mowing or burning. Our efforts should help preserve the pond environment, which is home to turtles, cranes, herons, egrets, muskrats, and mink..

# Invasive Plants

## Common Reed Grass *Phragmites australis*



Herbicide treatment late summer.



Regrowth of Phragmites after mowing spring of 2024.



Over grown Invasives and Phragmites.



Mowing off the herbicide treated Invasives in fall of 2024.

## Photography Tips and Tricks – Try Backlighting

### Photography Tip

#### *What's in Your Background?*

You spot a beautiful flower in your garden and you really want to take a good photo of it. Since many of us these days are using our smart phones, you pull out your phone, aim, and take the photo. You look at the photo later and you are not impressed. The flower definitely looked better when you spotted it than it did in the photo. Could the photo have been improved? Most likely so. Let's look at how paying attention to the background can help.

Most people just use the automatic settings for their smart phone's camera. I do. Instead of trying to figure out settings, why not just declutter your background. Let's look at a simple example.

This first photo is of *Penstemon digitalis*, or Foxglove Beardtongue, taken pretty much as you might see it in your garden. The clusters of flowers in the center are obviously the flowers that drew your attention, but all the flowers behind it are cluttering up the background and drowning out the star of the show.



**Photo #1**



**Photo #2**



**Photo #3**

So you try something different. In photo #2, you might look at something plain green behind the flowers. This is better, but the background is still quite cluttered with angular leaves.

How about considering something like photo #3? Get your phone just slightly below the cluster of flowers, enough so that you can use the sky as a background? This works especially well when the sky is a plain blue or it is overcast with a plain grey.

Experiment with this sometime and see what you think.

**Linda O'Shaughnessy**  
**Photography Chairman**

## **FALL & GARDENING AS THERAPY**

Chores become their own rewards.

Taking an active part in the work of the garden can be therapeutic.

\*Raking leaves on a crisp autumn day.

\*Weeding can provide satisfaction every time one is yanked out of the ground.

\*Planting bulbs you can imagine masses of crocuses, daffodils, and tulips.

It will be a springtime panorama of color.

\*Winter gardening moves to a sunny windowsill for our houseplants. What better time to plan a garden than in the winter. Armchair gardening is at its best with a garden catalog in one hand and a wish list in the other.

What makes plants so effective in relieving stress?

"Plants provide us an escape. Whether through passive viewing or active gardening, our minds let go of current worries and become absorbed in positive thoughts of beauty, renewal, and wonder."

**Linda Dingee**  
**Garden Therapy & Healing**



Shared from Chicago Botanic Garden

**[www.ngccentralregion.com/](http://www.ngccentralregion.com/)**



***Central Region Director continues from page 1.***

The centerpieces that were designed for the tables at convention and given away were very pretty. People were trying to get those that won them to give them away.

While we were thoroughly entertained; we also were able to get a lot of business done. We had a very productive board meeting where we determined how we were going to fund the awards going forward (not until we know there is a recipient); we determined that we follow NGC's lead and we will no longer offer an award for the yearbooks; we approved financial records with the wording of dues; we approved increase of state dues from \$100 to \$200; we determined that the profits and losses for the Central Region conventions will be split between Central Region and host state 50/50; and we established a committee that will be looking at the by-laws and standing rules for Central Region to ensure they are updated and follow NGC updates.

All state presidents' reports and chairman reports are posted on the Central Region website.

All in all, there was a lot of good conversation, camaraderie, and renewed friendships. This to me means the convention was successful. Our next convention will be in Elkhart Lake, WI on October 28th - October 29th, 2025, which will be led by Rene' Lynch, your next Central Region Director. Look for details on the Central Region website.

**Lynne Ehnert**  
**Central Region Director**