

Spring 2026 Issue

Johnese Turri, State President 2025-2027

“Planting Seeds of Joy”



Happy 2026 New Mexico Garden Club members. Hope this year has started off great for you!! Up here in the high country at 9500 feet is cold with the snow from a couple weeks ago only in the shadow arrears. This picture was taken then and now it's just brown grass. We won't be able to plant anything outside until June as we get freezing night time temps till then! So, I always love to see what's happening around the state in early spring!



I'm so excited for our Annual Convention in Las Cruces on the 7th and 8th of April. This will be my first convention as President and I'm quite impressed with the wonderful convention committee down in Las Cruces. We've got the National President, Donna Donnelly coming which is so exciting. She is such a dynamic leader. The committee has made arrangements for us to tour The Taylor Mesilla Historic site and have time to shop in the Mesilla Plaza!! But, to me, the best part is you get to visit with our members from all over the state. We've got such wonderful members!!! Please consider attending - I don't think you'll be disappointed.

Remember about our Blue Star contest. Thanks to Shirley Tetreault's, she's started a contest! If you take your picture with one, and send it to her, you could win a prize at our April convention.

It's been so wonderful so see all the articles sent in for the Gardener. We have so much

President, continued from page 1

talent and creativity in this organization, and I love for you to share ideas and support each other more.

I am so happy to have such wonderful board members to work with. What great women and ideas!! We had our executive board meeting we had up at my house in the mountains at 9500 feet. It was in October and luckily we didn't get snowed on.



I am hoping all of your clubs are submitting dates to your activities to newmexcogardenclubs@gmail.com to put on the **calendar** on the website so that if one of our members is in your town or close by they might attend.

Please check out the information Debra Sorrell has sent about **Awards!!** Everyone is eligible to enter. Check out the NMGC Awards handbook at https://www.newmexicogardenclubs.org/documents/awards2021/2021_Awards_Handbook_Revised_October_2021.pdf.

Thank you all for what you do for our wonderful state!!! And remember to just keep Planting Seeds of Joy!!!

Event Calendar

February 20-21, Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs [Annual Rummage Sale](#), ABQ Garden Center

March 9, [District I Spring Meeting](#), ABQ Garden Center

March 11, [2025 Awards Application Deadline](#)

March 12, [District IV Spring Meeting](#), Truth or Consequences

March 20, [District II Spring Meeting](#), Los Alamos

March 21-22, [District I Spring Flower Show](#), ABQ Garden Center

March 23, [District V Spring Meeting](#), Artesia

April 7-8, [NMGC State Convention](#), Las Cruces

April 11, [FloraFest Plant Sale](#), UTEP, El Paso, Tx

April 11-12, [Cactus Society Spring Show & Sale](#), ABQ Garden Center

April 17, [Conservation Seedling Program Lowcost Seeds for Landowners](#), Order Ends

April 27-29, [SCR Spring Convention](#), San Antonio, TX

May 1, Deadline to Submit Articles for the Summer New Mexico Gardener

May 3, [Albuquerque Westside Parade of Gardens](#)

May 4-6, [NGC National Convention](#), St. Louis, MO

May 9, [Santa Fe Master Gardeners' Spring Fair](#), Santa Fe Co. Fairgrounds

May 17, [Spring Rock Garden Plant Sale](#), Santa Fe Botanical Garden

October 13, District I Blue Star Marker Dedication, Veterans' Integration Center, Albuquerque

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

The new year begins and we are currently having such a mild winter, it almost feels like spring is coming early. I hope you all enjoyed the holidays and are now looking forward to the NMGC Convention in Las Cruces on April 7 and 8.



It is also time for me to remind all the clubs that state **membership dues are due by May 1**. As 2nd VP, I must collect state dues of \$8 for each club member. The NMGC membership list that is used to email our clubs with notices, reminders and other information including the quarterly Gardener is based on paid memberships. Each club should send their dues, payable to “New Mexico Garden Clubs, Inc.” to [me](#) by May 1st along with a copy of their membership list. This membership list should only include those members for whom state dues are enclosed. The only exception is if the NMGC board has declared someone an honorary member. NMGC currently only has 1 honorary member. Honorary NMGC membership can be given if the state board determines that the individual has “served in an extraordinary capacity or bestowed unusual favor to benefit the aims and purposes of the federation” (NMGC Bylaws, Article 2, Section 2D.).

A note about how to send your membership list. Sending a digital copy of the membership spreadsheet is most helpful. I will attach a blank spreadsheet form with all the necessary columns to my upcoming email about dues. However, if you wish to send a printed copy, please try to format the printout so that all the columns for each row are shown on the same side of the page. Usually this means selecting “landscape” mode. You may also need to select the “size to fit” or “auto fit” options before printing. You can also manually decrease the “percent” size until all columns for each row appear on the same page. It is very difficult to enter information from a printed membership list when some of the information for a given member is on one side of the page and the rest is on the other side or on a separate sheet.

My other duty is to promote membership in the clubs and assist with forming new clubs. New members bring with them new energy and new ideas for our clubs. Clubs can also sponsor youth groups which can help keep our organization growing for years to come. Please let me know if I can assist you with forming a new club or youth group. And, of course, please let me know if you have formed a new club or youth group.

Please also share your membership ideas and successes in your own articles for the Gardener. They may help other clubs grow! And remember those dues!

Welcome New Members!

Mesilla Valley Garden Club

Bel Meader

Jackye Meineke

Los Alamos Garden Club

Beverly Cooper

Joyce Zaugg, District II Director, 2025-2027

"Let's Root for Each Other and Watch Each Other Grow"

We have finally received some snow this past month in northern New Mexico. So far it is not quite enough to keep us from worrying about our spring plantings. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for more moisture this month and in March. We gardeners know that we'll keep spending time and enjoying the work in our gardens and our community gardens no matter the conditions.

Our Spring Executive and General meeting will be March 20 at the Crossroads Bible Church. I will send out the call notice at the end of February.

Our state President, Johnese Turri, held the Fall Executive Board meeting at her home in Angel Fire September 8-9, 2025. I attended and had a wonderful time. The Board meeting was fascinating and the activities that were planned were so much fun. I came home with a number of cool things.

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

I want to thank all the Presidents of our four clubs in District II. They work very hard to keep our clubs running smoothly. Thank You!!!!

The President of Angel Fire Garden Club is Shirla Harris.

The President of Summit Garden Club is Alison Grieggs.

The President of Floral Designers Garden Club is Christine Longthorp.

The President of Los Alamos Garden Club is Alahna Weller.

2026 National Garden Clubs Convention

"Meet Me in St. Louis, Where the River Bends and the Arch Touches the Sky"

May 4—6, 2026

The 2026 Convention features all things Missouri!

- Learn about the flower shows, gardens & more at **Missouri Botanical Garden**.
- Uncover the story of Missouri **prairie** restoration.
- Discover the secrets of Missouri **native plants**.
- Get to know **the Arch** – up close and personal!
- Vendors
- Convention Seminars (6 total) are offered at **no additional charge and do not require sign-up in advance**. Each Seminar will be held twice (9:00am & 10:30am) in rooms set up for 100+ people.

[**Get Details Here**](#)

Christine Longthorp, South Central Region Director

Greetings to New Mexico Garden Club Members!

The New Year has started with great enthusiasm from all states in the South Central Region. I want to encourage you all to attend the South Central Region Convention that will be held in San Antonio on April 27th through 30th hosted by Texas. The venue is the “haunted” Menger Hotel just across from the Alamo which is an historic site. Also, the programs and excursions that Texas has chosen are very special and will be something to share with our home state. NGC President Donna Donnelly will be attending so it will be packed with news of projects and exciting future plans for the largest non-profit organization in the nation. Everyone who attends this convention leaves energized so come and add your special flavor to the celebration of garden clubs in our region. New Mexico Garden Clubs is planning to rent a small bus and bring a contingent from the Land of Enchantment and some are choosing to fly. How much fun is that going to be!

In case you haven't heard, my project this term is to purchase a Gold Star marker for each state to honor mothers who have lost sons and daughters who served in all branches of the military. We recently installed one at the Council of Garden Clubs center here in Albuquerque. This year it was heartwarming to see that a Christmas tree at the White House was dedicated to Gold Star moms and each state was represented with their state flower and bird plus gold stars. New Mexico has chosen our National Cemetery in Santa Fe as the location possibly to be placed alongside the Blue Star marker at the gate. This is purely a National Garden Club inspiration and has long been supported all across our nation. So, let's make it our State effort and add four more to our region.



To make these markers a reality, we are raising funds as usual with our Ways and Means. One of the sales is a revival of something we have done many times in the past which proved to be fun and lucrative. It is a gently used and much loved jewelry sale! Club Presidents, please ask your members in these non-gardening days to sort through jewelry that is no longer worn and get it to the convention for new ownership. We in New Mexico have a state contact person who is Suzy Andrego to make it easier to unload as items are received. Let's see what treasures we can sell to make our goal happen. As an aside, when we were at the reception after our Gold Star installation ceremony one of the gold star moms was talking about disposing of her jewelry and wanted ideas... well, our fundraiser was tailor made for her.

May you all enjoy the comfort of home, family and friends and have fun making plans for your garden for the spring. See you all in San Antonio in April.

South Central Region Convention

April 28–29, 2026
Historic Menger Hotel
San Antonio, Texas

Enjoy a narrated boat ride along the beautiful San Antonio Riverwalk, two fun and engaging workshops, and inspiring speakers on orchids, lavender, and Red, White & Blue landscaping of Blue Star Memorial Markers.

- Tuesday will be Fiesta Day, featuring a fabulous Design program hosted by the San Antonio Judges Council.
- Wednesday, dress in your Red, White, and Blue Western wear and enjoy true Texas hospitality!

We hope many of our New Mexico members will be able to attend and show their support. It promises to be an informative, festive, and memorable convention.

[Press Release](#)

[Schedule](#)

[Registration](#)

**SUPPORT OUR South-Central Region Director, CHRISTINE LONGTHORP
BY SUPPORTING HER WAYS AND MEANS FUNDRAISER FOR
HER DIRECTOR'S PROJECT A GOLD STAR IN EACH OF
OUR FOUR STATES.**

Her Ways and Means Project is a BIG Jewelry Sale but we can't do it without your donations.

Have any bracelets, necklaces, earrings, pins, or any other jewelry that you don't wear or want anymore??

Bring it with you to Suzy Andrego at the NM Garden Clubs Convention, April 7&8, 2026.

Suzy will box it up and make it look pretty (she can even do some small repairs if anything needs it). It will go to the South-Central Region Convention, April 28-29, 2026, to be held in San Antonio, TX where it will be sold at the

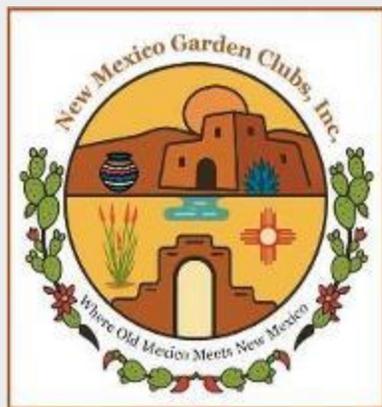
BIG Jewelry Sale "Gold for Gold!"

If you can't come, send your jewelry to convention with a friend. Need a tax donation form, just let Suzy know. We need your name and address, and we will get one right over to you.

NMGC State Convention for 2026

April 7th and 8th

Las Cruces, NM



Get ready for camaraderie and fun at the upcoming NMGC State Convention for 2026!

We at District IV are excited to be welcoming you to sunny Southern New Mexico. The Hilton Garden Inn in Las Cruces will be your destination on April 7th and 8th.

To our great pleasure and the highlight of our convention, our **National Garden Club President, Donna Donnally** (see page 1) will be attending, and we want to put our best foot forward and welcome her to our state and show that even in our desert climate, we have dedicated gardeners.

This will be our NMGC President, Johnese Turri's first convention and she deserves support from every one of us. The convention committee has been working diligently to make this a convention to remember. We also want to announce that you will be able to register online and use your credit card both for registration and any silent auction purchases.

So, mark your calendars now and come to **"Where Old Mexico Meets New Mexico"**.

Official Call: https://newmexicogardenclubs.org/documents/nmgcConventionCall_2026.pdf

Book Your Hotel: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/newmexicogardenclubs-2026-convention/>

Online Registration, pay with Credit Card: <https://form.jotform.com/252635984554166>

Printable Registration, pay with Check: https://newmexicogardenclubs.org/documents/nmgcConventionRegistration_2026.pdf

2025 NMGC AWARDS TIME!

CALLING ALL GARDEN CLUB MEMBERS

DID YOU?...Feed the birds? Plant tree a tree? Care for a community garden space? Design a floral arrangement? Recycle? Take a fun or beautiful photograph? ETC?

You and your clubs are always out there, doing incredible volunteer work and educating folks around the state and we would LOVE the opportunity to honor you.

Everyone is eligible to enter. Link to the [NMGC AWARDS HANDBOOK](#). Take some time to browse through it and read the requirements for the award you might be interested in. Choose something to enter. It's easy to do. Is there someone in your club you would like to honor and recognize at the convention awards banquet? Those opportunities are also in the Awards Handbook!

The Deadline has been EXTENDED! Award entries will be accepted until **March 11, 2026**

Let's go New Mexico! You deserve these awards!

New Mexico Garden Clubs' Programs

Archives, Becky Fuller, Chair

Garden Clubbers, please remember to bring any materials you may want to archive to the Convention, or have them brought by someone who is able to come. Thank you!

Blue Star/Gold Star Markers, Shirley Tetreault, Chair



Did you know that we are getting ready to celebrate America 250? That means that it is so important that we make sure that our markers are clean and the landscaping around them is fresh and colorful. Now is an excellent opportunity to prepare and plant for the upcoming spring season. In the last Gardener I offered an award for anyone who could find two missing markers that are not on my list. I have not heard from one person. They are somewhere in your city just waiting to be found.

Did you know that this program began in 1945 to honor the men and women serving in the Armed Forces during World War II. We are a part of this! We can honor them everyday by keeping this program strong.

Did you know that I am proud of everything you do and I want to see and hear more about your efforts. Call me or text me (505) 259-2263 or send me an email ammasangels@comcast.net New Mexico is very active and we are happy to report that we have Blue Star and Gold Star markers all over our state with two more on order. We have a Blue Star that will be dedicated in the fall at the Veterans Integration center in Albuquerque and a Blue Star will be dedicated in Ft Stanton, Healing Americas Heros.



New Mexico Gardener & NMGC Website, Linda Frank, Chair

I want to give a BIG THANK YOU to all those who have been submitting articles to the New Mexico Gardener and updates to our website. We are continually stepping closer to having dynamic, current, and relevant communications throughout our membership community with these tools. All thanks to YOU!!!

We have a new email account to use when you have a Gardener article or a website update:

newmexicogardenclubs@gmail.com

Please use this email address in the future. And, Happy Spring!



Plant-A-Tree, Shirla Harris, Chair

“Silent Heroes”

We all have silent heroes in our lives—ones we often take for granted. They provide habitat and food for wildlife, protect the land from wind erosion, and help regulate our climate. They offer shade and windbreaks, slow climate change, act as moisture barriers, and contribute to our psychological well-being and recreational enjoyment. They filter our air and water, store toxic carbon from the air we breathe, and even provide resources such as timber, fuel, and pharmaceuticals.

I’m sure you’ve guessed by now—our silent heroes are the trees in our amazing and beautiful conifer forests!

For many years, New Mexico Garden Clubs have made it a goal to contribute to tree-planting efforts. Another wonderful opportunity for involvement here in New Mexico is through Philmont Scout Ranch. Their programs focus on volunteer engagement, environmental education, wildfire prevention and mitigation, and overall forest care and conservation.

For the past two years in Angel Fire, our Garden Club has added a fun incentive to encourage contributions by offering raffle tickets for a chance to win a handmade throw or quilt. We’ve had a presence at many local events—not only selling raffle tickets, but also educating our community about our club, sharing general gardening tips, and raising awareness about the importance of protecting our forests. All proceeds from the raffle go directly to Plant a Tree.



If you’d like to join our efforts, you can send a check made out to Angel Fire Garden Club. Raffle tickets are \$5 for one chance or \$20 for five chances.

Please mail your check to:

Angel Fire Garden Club
PO Box 503
Angel Fire, NM 87710

Be sure to include your name and phone number. The drawing will be held in October. You’ll be notified if you win, and we’ll then collect your mailing address to send your prize!

Horticulture, Maureen Carson, Chair

What's For Lunch?

In my last article I reported on some swallowtail caterpillars that hatched on my *Ruta graveolens* plant very late last fall. Happy to share that 8 caterpillars made it to the beautiful bright green chrysalis stage with just a few not morphing to the complete stage. Hopefully by our next publication I can show you that they all transformed into Swallowtail butterflies! Following their journey on my Rue plants made me curious about other



Two Tailed Swallowtail

Rue plants made me curious about other butterfly species common here in New Mexico and their HOST PLANTS. While most of us are probably aware that Monarchs need *Asclepias* species, I'd like to share some other butterfly species and the favorite plants their caterpillars need to nibble!



Giant Swallowtail Caterpillar

butterfly species common here in New Mexico and their HOST PLANTS. While most of us are probably aware that Monarchs need *Asclepias* species, I'd like to share some other butterfly species and the favorite plants their caterpillars need to nibble!

Western Swallowtail: Aspens, Willows, Poplars, Sycamore

Two-Tailed Swallowtail: Cherries, Ashes, Hop Trees

Black Swallowtail: Rue, Hop Trees, Ashes

Pipevine Swallowtail: Pipevine

Monarch: Butterfly Weed

American/Painted Lady: Aster, Thistle, Mallow

Southwestern Fritillary: Pansies, Violets, Flax, Stonecrops

Great Spangled Fritillary: Violets

Sulphurs: Legumes, Alfalfa, Clover

Blues: Legumes, Lupine, Vetches

Western Pygmy Blue: Saltbush, Thistle, Lambsquarters

Skippers: Mallow

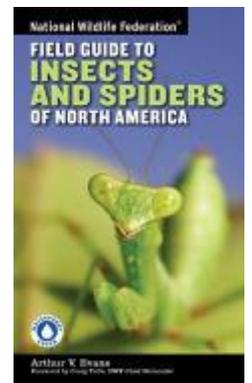
Sagebrush Checkerspot: Rabbitbush, Aster

A great resource book for "all things insect" is the National Wildlife Federation Field Guide to Insects and Spiders of North America. And keep in mind that if you want butterflies, you have to let the caterpillars eat!

In closing just a few late winter/early spring reminders: Prune Roses, Check stored Dahlia Tubers, Aerate and Reseed/Top-Dress Lawns, Fertilize (Organic when possible), Repair Irrigation Lines,

Continue to Water Trees/Shrubs, Plant Cool Season Crops outdoors and Start Warm Season Seeds, Troubleshoot Early Pest Infestations (use alternative methods such as hard water spray to remove, handpick or use organic products such as Insecticidal Soap.)

Happy Growing!



Wildflowers & Native Plants, Jackye Meineke, Chair

As I write this wildflower description in the depth of winter, we have had a generous, slow rain across the state, with snow up north. That thrills me, as I think of the spring wildflower show that will brighten our year in February through April, depending on where you live in the state.

Of course, when you receive your newsletter, we will be moving into spring — and down in southern New Mexico, it will soon be hot. So, I wanted to introduce some wonderful native flowers that will stand up spring through summer across the state.

My first choice always is to suggest planting chocolate flower (*Berlandiera lyrata*). This tough wildflower grows from the southern New Mexico border all the way up to the Panhandle of Texas and beyond. It has many names: Chocolate Daisy, Lyreleaf Greeneyes, Chocolate Drop and Greeneyes.



Courtesy Wynn
Anderson

This yellow flower has the maroon bits at the center that make the flower smell like chocolate cake fresh from the oven in the mornings. As the day progresses, the maroon bits and the petals drop off, leaving a green flower disc. As the seeds dry and drop off, gardener's are visited by small birds, such as Inca Doves, to dine on the seeds.

I've seen this plant on a trail in a harsh rocky, high altitude environment where it was only a few inches across and tall with a couple of brave blooms and in a well-tended garden where it can grow to two feet wide and nearly as tall covered in blooms each day. Obviously, it tolerates many types of soil. It stands up to the desert sun or thrives in filtered shade. All together, a very rewarding wildflower to plant as a pollinator or habitat attraction.

Chocolate flower grows easily from seed or often can be purchased in local nurseries. Once its tap root is established, it becomes more drought tolerant, returning every spring to bloom from early March (in the southern part of the state) all the way through to December — or later, if we have a warm winter or it is growing in a sheltered space.

So as you make you spring perennial planting lists, be sure to consider the hardy garden flower for some of your rugged areas.



Courtesy Bruce
Leander



Courtesy Bruce
Leander

***“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant, if we did not
Sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”***

—Anne Bradstreet

Where Did I Plant the Crocus?

By Candy Scott, High Desert Design Member

As Published in Los Ranchos Village Vision



January and February are the months the gardener takes a breath of crisp air and waits for nature to let you know if your fall planting was a success. Being a transplant from California, I never knew the joys of winter and the amazing rebirth of spring until I moved to Albuquerque. When I see the first crocus popping up I get very excited, I start taking pictures and checking the weather reports. Though I do find crocus to be the comedians of the garden; they make you think it's time to start spring prep and then laugh at you when you have to brush the snow off them!

So, what sign are we waiting for? Daffodils. They are a reliable harbinger of spring. In order to encourage a garden filled with daffodil flowers, give your garden a general feeding in mid to late February. Nothing fancy. Just a spraying of Miracle Grow. It will show your bulbs that you still are thinking of them and hope they are doing well.

I love watching videos on what to do with potted plants, because it's like tamales: everyone has the best recipe and their secret ingredient is locked up in a vault at the bank. My formula for potting soil is five parts potting mix, three parts garden mix, and one part mushroom compost. There are probably 10,000 different methods. Some folks add coffee grounds, but since I don't drink coffee, I haven't tried it.

So what to do in January? Number one: cut back your watering. A long watering once a week tends to be better than two to three shorter ones. Not only do plants prefer it, your water bill does as well. Save those big water bills for the summer. Number two: be sure to keep a check on your drip systems, this is the season most of your leaks will occur. Be sure you have detached hoses from the wall when it's going to freeze, that can be a nasty repair bill. Know your watering system and what parts are vulnerable to the cold and get advice on what to do to protect them. Number three: mulch is good, but not for everything. Irises don't like their rhizomes wet, so be gentle with mulch. Remember when the weather gets warmer that bugs find mulch good breeding grounds. Lastly, going through seed catalogues, ordering some seeds, and even already starting some seedlings are a great way of taking your mind off the cold and keeping you active until spring.

This is how I do it: a couple weeks of soaking, a couple weeks wrapped in wet paper towels, set far enough apart for roots to grow, and then gently placed in labeled Ziplock bags and then chilled in the refrigerator. Next, the fun part, planting your seedlings and placing them under a grow lamp and waiting for the first sign of life. Keep babying the new sprouts until you see the true leaves and they are large enough to transplant to a larger pot. Keep these indoors until they are strong enough to take our wind and snow, and pray for no hail. Remember, your winter seedlings are for spring planting.

There are a lot of articles and videos you can Google. While this is the fun part of winter, you will have to find room for these new children in your yard. Remember, it's not hoarding if it's plants!

Butterflies, Memories, and a Call to Action

By Noelle Johnson, AZ Plant Lady

Early in January, I had the chance to visit Monterey, California—a place that holds a special place in my heart. I spent many summers there as a child visiting my grandparents, and returning as an adult brought back a flood of memories. The rugged coastline, cool ocean air, and stunning natural beauty reminded me why this region has always felt so magical. During our visit, we explored the world-famous Monterey Bay Aquarium, enjoyed plenty of delicious seafood, and made a special trip to the [Pacific Grove Monarch Sanctuary](#).

One of my most popular classes is Butterfly Gardening in the Desert, so I was especially excited to see monarch butterflies in their coastal California overwintering grounds. Most people assume that all monarch butterflies migrate south to Mexico for the winter—but that’s not entirely true. Most monarchs west of the Rocky Mountains migrate to overwintering sites along the California coast. Pacific Grove, a small town next to Monterey, is famously known as “Butterfly Town USA” because thousands of monarchs historically gathered there each winter before dispersing in spring.



Photo by Noelle Johnson

I brought my fancy camera and zoom lens, hoping to capture close-ups of clusters of monarchs resting in the trees. I wish I could tell you we saw hundreds of butterflies—but the truth is, we didn’t see a single one in the sanctuary. In 1997, more than 45,000 monarchs were counted in the sanctuary. The day we visited this year, there were just 132. With so few butterflies, most high up in the trees, they were nearly impossible to spot. It was heartbreaking.

What makes monarchs remarkable is that each generation of butterflies that arrives in this sanctuary has never been there before. Scientists still don’t fully understand how they navigate hundreds of miles to find the same tiny grove of trees year after year.

Sadly, monarch populations have declined dramatically due to a combination of habitat loss, pesticide use, and climatic extremes such as drought. Drought and development have reduced milkweed populations—and milkweed is critical, because it’s the only plant monarchs will lay their eggs on. Arizona is a crossroads for monarch migration. Some monarchs continue on to California or Mexico, while others remain in our low desert regions. That means you can make a real difference simply by growing milkweed and nectar plants in your own landscape—helping replace what has been lost elsewhere. Monarch caterpillars can only eat milkweed and without it, monarchs cannot survive. Several native milkweeds are well-suited to desert gardens, including my personal favorite:

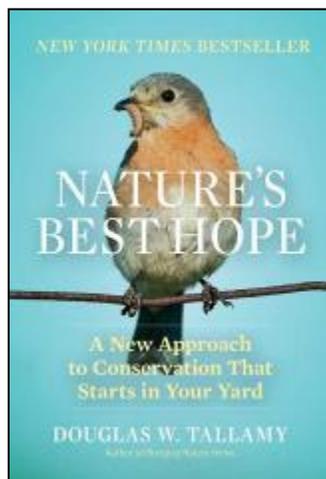
Desert milkweed (*Asclepias subulata*) which has upright, succulent stems and thrives in full sun. Other types of native milkweed include, Arizona milkweed (*Asclepias angustifolia*), and giant sand milkweed (*Asclepias erosa*). While native milkweeds can sometimes be hard to find at local nurseries, they are often available at botanical garden plant sales, typically held in March and October. Milkweed isn't enough to help sustain a healthy monarch population though.

Nectar plants provide the sugar-rich energy adult butterflies need to fly, find mates, lay eggs, and migrate. These plants are especially important for monarchs during fall migration. Some excellent native nectar plants for our region include: Mistflower (*Conoclinium* or *Ageratum* spp.), Flattop buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Goodding verbena (*Verbena gooddingii*). By adding both milkweed (host plants) and nectar plants to your garden, you’re supporting monarchs through every stage of their life cycle.

I invite you to add milkweed to your landscape and help do your part to protect these special butterflies. Even small gardens can make a big difference.

Book Review: *Nature's Best Hope*, by Douglas Tallamy

Reviewed by Kathleen Burke, High Desert Design Club, Albuquerque Council of Garden Clubs, Native Plant Society of New Mexico Albuquerque chapter, Mountain Garden Club



This review is for anyone who loves gardening, birds, butterflies, or wildlife. It is also for anyone who cares even a bit about species preservation.

In 2024 I traveled to Chicago where I found myself incidentally walking into a lakeside urban “park” which was in some ways more like walking into a surrealistic dream. I didn’t question very much where I had arrived. I was mesmerized. I was filled with joy. My nearby surroundings consisted of birds, insects, trees, shrubs and forbs, the soil underfoot and the easy path I was on. How could this be, this forest-like place? Wasn’t I in Chicago?

Two years later, after studying native plant species fairly in depth, I learned that I had unknowingly walked onto the Montrose Point Bird Sanctuary, a garden the likes of which I had not known in urban North America. The birds were there because their sanctuary was there. Their sanctuary was native plants.

I came across Doug Tallamy, a Ph.D. entomologist when I noticed his work referenced twice in separate articles in a recent issue of

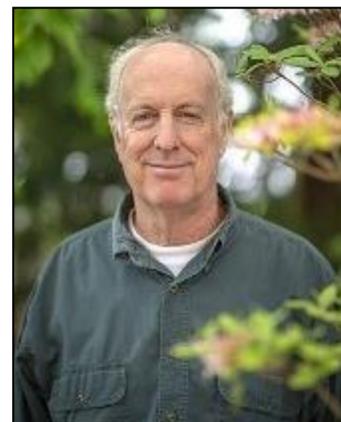
American Gardener, the magazine of the American Horticultural Society. Eagerly, I proceeded to find that Tallamy had received prestigious awards from the American Horticultural Society, the Garden Club of America, the National Audubon Society, the Herb Society of America, the Garden Writers Association, among countless others.

Have you ever read a book that left you wondering what rock you had been living under? As an avid gardener for over three decades, I was long past expecting my world to be rocked by a gardening book! If you are a gardener and haven’t yet read *Nature’s Best Hope*, I am quite certain you might feel much the same upon doing so. It is an illuminating window into what is going on in the ecosystem related to plant life. Novice or seasoned gardener, you might find this book a beacon of hope, as previously discovered by the prestigious award givers, and by myself.

This is a famous and groundbreaking book. Online, there are *twenty-four pages* of search results for book reviews on *Nature’s Best Hope*. That equals a rough estimate of 240 reviews, mostly written and published by garden clubs and conservation societies. (I have borrowed from some of these reviews.) Add to that what appears to be a never-ending list of online videos reviewing or referencing *Nature’s Best Hope*. Arguably, Tallamy has achieved cult status in the gardening and naturalist world. Laura Fenton titled her review “A Book That Changed Me”. From Ken Cross: “Every now and then you read a book which you believe should be read by everyone on the planet.”

At the heart of this book is the depth of Tallamy’s knowledge and experience. As a professor of Agriculture in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, chief among his research goals has been to *better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities*. He is revered among gardeners and conservationists, for good reason. He has authored some 104 research papers and taught insect related courses for over 40 years.

As an aside, when Tallamy was honored as recipient of the Thomas W. Keesee, Jr. Conservation Award at the posh National Audubon Society Awards, rather than giving a conventional acceptance speech he gave a



Douglas Tallamy

Photo by Homegrown
National Park

slideshow highlighting the native garden he and his wife have planted on their 10-acre property, home to 1,335 species of moths and butterflies and 62 bird species. Dare we imagine this number of bird and butterfly species in our own gardens? With thanks to Dr. Tallamy, we might.

Nature's Best Hope is an electrifying read, as many have noted, in which Tallamy takes the issue of conservation outside the realm of academia or government and into the scope of the rest of us. His explanations of the specialized relationships among plants, insects, and animals yield fascinating stories and foundational building blocks for understanding the natural world. Not only am I newly inspired, I will plant nearly all native flora in my own yard as a result of how much this book had opened my eyes.

"But until I read Doug Tallamy I didn't truly understand why all that (sic. native plants) mattered. I thought it was about saving the plants and avoiding toxic chemicals, which to be sure are admirable ambitions. I didn't realize it was about saving the whole darn ecosystem, which P.S., we humans are a part of." Laura Fenton.

Books sometimes change our worldview. Let's wade into this a bit. Wildlife populations are in decline because the native plants they depend on are fast disappearing. According to Tallamy, it is not enough to preserve natural habitats and fight extinction in protected parks and preserves. As important as these places are, they are too small and separated from one another to protect species in the long run. Humans can and must devote space for nature - insects, birds and other animals, and the native plants they need to survive - in our yards. What makes Nature's Best Hope especially compelling is its practical optimism. Readers are encouraged to see their yards not as decorative spaces but as living, breathing ecosystems. The book includes plant lists, design tips, and community engagement strategies.

"In his new book, Nature's Best Hope, Dr. Doug Tallamy has delivered a deep and powerful wellspring of inspiration for the many people craving an opportunity to be part of transformative change for our challenged world." -Sue Dingwell.

You're probably aware that wildlife populations are dropping. Maybe you've seen headlines about global insect decline. Tallamy artfully explains how this is all connected; plants and insects co-evolved over millennia. A caterpillar can't just eat anything. It requires a specific host plant. Enter native species. It's the spiders, moths and especially caterpillars for whom we need all these native plants. Birds and other wildlife need these insects to survive, and especially to feed their young, who cannot eat seeds and berries.



A white sphinx moth pollinates a flower while seeking nectar.

Tallamy takes the opportunity to address some common questions that have surfaced just of late: debates about the value of introduced plants; the feasibility of restoration projects; or the advisability of letting nature 'take its course' - issues which receive detailed and clarifying explanations.

The book is simply yet persuasively written. The science demonstrates the stark difference between native trees and exotic trees in their ability to support insects. Native trees, unsurprisingly, have a far higher insect biodiversity and a far higher biomass of insect life.

Here is a peek at what is arguably the most important of Tallamy's work: In *Nature's Best Hope*, Tallamy draws on his own research, recently published in *Nature*, to take things a step further. Some natives are better than others. He calls them keystone plants. "Before discovering keystone plants we overestimated the degree to which most native plants contribute to the food webs and assumed that if a plant was native, it contributed a lot," he writes. "We now know that *a few native genera* contribute much more than most others and we cannot ignore them if we are to produce a complex, stable food web." He adds, "There are certain native plants, and there are actually not that many of them, that are doing the bulk of the work." Tallamy says in [a recent interview on the University of Delaware website](#). So, if you build landscapes without these powerhouse plants that

support caterpillars, the food web is doomed.”

Tallamy further encourages the planting of oaks (sp. *Quercus* “the greatest of trees in their ability to support biodiversity”) as they provide the desired largest caterpillar boost to a local ecology within North America.

Here you will find how native plants like oaks and cherries support hundreds of insect species, which in turn feed birds and other wildlife. For example, chickadees needing hundreds of caterpillars a day to raise their young is particularly poignant, illustrating how even the smallest creatures are part of a delicate, interdependent web. In contrast, non-native ornamentals and pesticide-laden lawns offer little sus-

tenance, becoming ecological deserts in this time of urgent need. (By the way, there is a website that allows you to identify the keynote genera that are best for your area, the [National Wildlife Federation plant finder](#)).

“Yet beyond its scientific rigor and practical advice, *Nature’s Best Hope* is a book about belonging. It asks us to reconsider our place in the natural world—not as distant observers, but as participants in its renewal. For anyone seeking to find hope in the face of envi-

ronmental loss, *Nature’s Best Hope* is an essential read. It reminds us that the most powerful conservation tool may be the shovel in our own hands—and the willingness to plant with purpose.”- attributed to Gary Kurtz

There is so much more in this book that I want to share with each of you. Alas, this is merely a book review. Please read the book. Please share it with friends. I think you will be delighted. You will have a lovely time getting to know what the famous American naturalist E.O. Wilson calls “the little things that run the world.”



“Kirtland’s warblers are now so few in number that their future is precarious. We still have the power to reverse the decline of many plant and animal species.”Photo and quote Doug Tallamy.



“A bluebird brings to its nest one of the many thousands of insects needed to raise the babies. Ninety percent of insect species that eat plants depend on finding the plants with which they have co-evolved and have a special relationship.”

Photo and quote Doug Tallamy

Bosque del Apache Arboretum Updates

Cari Powel, Desert Arboretum Manager

Hello Friends!

We kicked off the year with a nice workday on January 3rd. Thank you to Hope, Mary, Tom and Gary and Penny from Albuquerque! We cleaned up lots of packrat nests and some javelina damaged prickly pears. The arboretum is looking great and we were even able to pack our tools up a little early.

Check out some of the beautiful cacti fruits on display and on the menu for birds and critters!



Desert Arboretum Workday January 3, 2026



National Garden Clubs January 2026 Designer of the Month

Jennifer Moreno

Uptown and Valley Gardeners Club Member



Jennifer is from Albuquerque, NM and has been a member of both Uptown Garden Club and Valley Gardeners for more than 20 years. Jennifer says it is her mother, Mary Ann Moreno (a garden club member, master judge and master gardener for over 50+ years) who has been her inspiration to become an amazing creative floral designer. Jennifer is an NGC Master Flower Show Judge, and she is also an NGC Environmental consultant.

Jennifer loves to use plants from her garden to design with. She likes to incorporate staging panels into her designs when necessary. She says using a staging panel is dependent on the design and the Show schedule. Sometimes it is really necessary and sometimes it's not. It's usually at the discretion of the designer and if they feel that a staging panel adds to the overall design. Her favorite design types are Exhibition Table designs and ALL creative design types! Jennifer is the NM Garden Clubs and South-Central Region Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl chairman, and she gives programs on the poster contests to local garden clubs.



As a member of National Garden Clubs, she has met many interesting and wonderful people in in her many years as a member. Those people have provided her with wisdom, friendship, and guidance regarding all things relating to NGC including judging, designing, and gardening. I wouldn't be where I am without them! Jennifer LOVES meeting people, learning from them and sharing stories. Her advice to a new NGC garden club member; She says “ just jump right in! The best way to learn is to take a hands-on approach and to ask a lot of questions”! CONGRATULATIONS Jennifer!

***“No single sort of garden suits everyone.
Shut your eyes and dream of the garden you'd most love.
Then open your eyes and start planting. Loved gardens
Flourish, boring ones are hard work”***

—Jackie French

New Mexico Garden Clubs News

Summit Garden Club, Alison Grieggs, President

Summit Garden Club closed-out an amazing 65th year of Summit at our annual Winter Party, December 8. Our theme this year is “Community,” we and emphasized that during the holiday season. To this end, we thought of our neighbors this year--as 1 in 7 New Mexicans experience food insecurity. So we asked for donations that we split between two important local charities that help our community: [LA Cares](#) and the [Food Depot](#). We also had a special donation can for cash that we gave directly to the two groups. We had tons of fun, camaraderie & conversations, surprises & snacks to celebrate the winter season, holiday spirits, and our friendships. And we are famous for our nibbles, so there were copious snacks and sweets. YUM!

We delivered over **300 pounds** of food to **LA Cares** which supports local needs in our county with food, rent and utility assistance, and referrals to services and **The Food Depot** which supports nine northern New Mexico counties, and along with their partner agencies, distributed 10 Million pounds of food last year to New Mexicans in need!

"For every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle....a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And this anticipation nurtures our dreams of spring." —Barbara Winkler

Our next Summit Garden Club meeting was February 2 at Mesa Public Library. First on the agenda was the roundtable 10-minute gardener. The question was *"What gardens, public or private, fire you up to really work on local gardens, public or your own?"* Finding out about gardens around the country or around the world is always illuminating. We love to expand our horizons!

Our program started with a short talk and slides by Angela Prada, LA County extension officer, on the topic of growing grapes in our town.



Mojito Mint

Next was a discussion of saffron. Many of us purchased these bulbs, with varying results.

Then we had a talk about growing herbs, led by Betsy based on a long conversation she had recently with Kimberly Tanner, LA Master Gardener and herbalist extraordinaire. When talking with Betsy, Kimberly stated that when Smith's started having fresh herbs, she cut way back on her growing of herbs indoors

in Winter and also explained how to check for dryness of the soil--her approach to watering focuses on varying at different times of the year. Betsy says that after just an hour with Kimberly on the phone, she felt she had received her own private Master Class on herbs.



Cumin seeds being "popped" in oil



Arp Rosemary

El Jardin Encanto, Mary Lou Wilson, Co-President & Secretary



In October we did pumpkin painting led by member Kathy Otero.

For our November we went to see ARCA's Las Palomas Greenhouse in Los Corrales. The tour was led by employee Matt. Las Palomas Greenhouse provides vocational training in horticulture for adults with intellectual, developmental and cognitive disabilities. They cultivate over 28,000 plants annually, including their celebrated poinsettias.



Photos Courtesy of Mary Lou Wilson

Mesilla Valley Garden Club, Becky Fuller, President

Mesilla Valley Garden Club has been busy getting ready for the Spring Convention to be held here in Las Cruces! We have been so lucky to have Judy Laird as our Chairperson. Her expertise, organizational skills and experience have been invaluable.

Our November meeting was spent making table arrangement for the residents of the Village at Northrise. It was super fun to get to meet and share some of the residents. Again, Judy was our teacher and mentor. We did not have a Christmas party this year as many of our members were out of town. January brought a treat for us with a program by Sabine Green, the Floraculture Design Program Coordinator. Judy had some large design containers and Sabine put together designs on the fly. As it was still Christmas break, we did not get to see one of her students put one together, we were able to meet one of her star pupils. We look forward to seeing as many people as possible for the convention! Safe travels!

Los Alamos Garden Club, Alhana Weller, President

November found the Los Alamos Garden Club constructing a wreath ornament and cornhusk dolls (using paper towels for the practice). The dolls are harder than they look to make.



In December we had a wonderful holiday luncheon at the Fiore and Sol restaurant in Los Alamos. There is a canyon in Los Alamos named “Acid Canyon” as things were dumped there during the WWII years by the Laboratory. The canyon has long since been cleaned up and

abounds with hiking trails. Our January meeting program was presented by Bob Dryja, a retired Lab employee who knows many things regarding gardening. The title of his talk was “Acid Canyon as a Garden”. He compared it to a big flower pot, with a slide show to prove his point. Interest was expressed by many to take some seasonal hikes with him into the canyon to see the “flower pot” for ourselves.



The fencing project for the Memorial Rose Garden, which is the club’s civic project, is nearing completion. The club members will soon get to remove all the wire cages that are protecting the rose bushes from the hungry deer. Two members were judges for the Los Alamos Public Schools Science fair grade school division this past Saturday. They were able to award 2 prizes.

Morning Garden Club, Vicki Hobson, President

Morning Garden Club of Roswell has been continuing to learn about our community as well as learn new skills and techniques in gardening.

We recently met with Roswell High School teacher Hollis Boardman and FFA students that are learning about gardening and working in the school’s greenhouse. They explained the competitions they prepare for and let members hear some sample questions asked during these rigorous events. Everyone involved is hopeful we can work together to the benefit of all. The winter weather has put a hold on gardening but left us with beautiful scenes and welcomed moisture in the form of 8 inches of snow. Our butterfly garden was tidied up earlier in the season, so we’ll wait to see our spring bulbs breaking ground soon.



Sunshine Valley Garden Club, Cindy Johnson, President



At our November meeting we did pinecone crafts. The pinecones were provided by two of our members who have many pine trees on their property. We made pinecones for the birds by smearing them with peanut butter, rolling them in bird seed, then adding a ribbon hanger. We took home the ones we made to hang on our trees for the wild birds. We also painted them as flowers and made Christmas decorations from them. We had lots of fun and tapped into our inner creativity.

We had delicious food at our Annual Christmas Luncheon in December at the beautiful Sierra del Rio Golf Course restaurant in Elephant Butte. Gifts were given. Everyone had a joyous time.



At our Annual Business Meeting in January, we planned the Programs for the year, collected dues and revised our Yearbook. The upcoming Membership Luncheon on February 13 was arranged. Sunshine Valley is the host for the District IV Spring Meeting on March 12, and a committee was established to organize it. The Club also will be making an auction basket for the Convention in April.



High Desert Design Club, Shirley Tetreault, President

High Desert Design Club is a highly functioning design club with many irons in the fire. Several members serve at the local level, state, region and national level of garden club. We have several National Garden Club flower show Judges and are also involved in all events at the Albuquerque Garden Center.

High Desert was awarded a grant from Keep American Beautiful. It was offered by National Garden Clubs Inc. to plant and enhance the gardens with a Blue Star/Gold Star marker. High Desert works and maintains the memorial garden at the garden center with the Blue Star and Gold Star. A committee has been formed to clean, organize, plant, water etc. Patriotic Iris is already in place and other plant material will be red, white and blue.

Each month a different design is studied to keep current.

Angel Fire Garden Club, Connie Gauntt, Member

These are a few pics I took when our club went on the field trip this past summer to the beautiful gardens in Taos. I had to go back thru my pics and find my most favorites. I look forward to seeing everyone again this summer.



Home Garden Club, Renate Reisel, Dragonfly Festival Chair

Like every year Home garden club participated with activities at Bitter Lake Wildlife Refuge. Each year our club members help children with their chosen craft.

As we have a big variety its very hard for the kids to pick what they love and many times pick more than one item, plus the children are excited to color as we offer a wonderful variety of coloring sheets plus a nice box of crayons to take home.



District I of New Mexico
Garden Clubs, Inc.
Presents
"Better Together"



An NGC Small Standard Flower Show

Albuquerque Garden Center
10120 Lomas Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87112
(505) 296-6020

March 21-22, 2026

FREE to the Public
Open Saturday March 21, 2026, 1:00 pm -5:00 pm
Open Sunday March 22, 2026, 10:00 am - 1:00pm

Member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.
South Central Region
New Mexico Garden Clubs, Inc.

Valley Gardeners Garden Club (VGGC), Debi Harrington, President

Valley Gardeners meets the 2nd Thursday evening of most months at the Los Griegos Community Center (LGCC) in Albuquerque.

VGGC currently has 35 members, most of which are very active within the club as well as in the Council of Albuquerque Garden Clubs with all of the numerous activities. VGGC's meetings focus on many aspects of horticulture and gardening and also floral design.

VGGC has four NEW Accredited Judges!

They are Sue Bond, Gina Thoma, Dodie Suhr and Gigi Zacharias! Congratulations! That now gives Valley seventeen (17) Judges, plus one student judge!

In November, VGGC collected food for the LGCC Thanksgiving food boxes for neighborhood residents. Our donations were a way to say "Thank You" to LGCC for allowing us to hold our monthly meetings there free of charge. In December, houseplants were collected and decorated for the Holidays for Saranam. Members donated over 50 plants for the resident families and staff members at the two Albuquerque locations.

Recent programs included Houseplant Dividing and Propagation and a design program on NGC Petite Floral Designs - both led by the NMGC Horticulture Chair, Maureen Carson. In February, our focus was on "Drought Impact on Plants in the SW Landscape" and was given by John Garlish from the Bernalillo County Extension. John presented drought facts, suggestions



for drought tolerant plants – especially ones for our pollinator friends.

**When the world
wearies and society
fails to satisfy, there
is always the garden.**
Minnie Aumonier



In March, our featured speaker will be Elliott Gordon from the Xerces Society. He will speak about our pollinators and how we can help them. Our meeting in April will be on Irises and Pegi Naranjo-Smith will be our presenter. Pegi is an NGC Master Judge and an Iris Judge for the American Iris Society.

VGGC welcomes guests and/or prospective new members anytime. Please join us at an upcoming meeting!

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

Recording Secretary, Linda Frank

(575) 405-9238

chinongardens@gmail.com

Treasurer, Ginny Longbotham

(505) 280-2660

ginnylin@comcast.net

Parliamentarian, Suzy Andrego

(505) 259-3318

sandrego@aol.com

2nd Vice President, Kersti Rock

(505) 412-1060

ankaere@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary, Mary Noskin

(505) 238-5731

noskinmary@gmail.com

Historian, Ariel Seamon

(505) 507-5851

adrewsea@gmail.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, May 1, 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!"