Dear Friends –

What an exciting Fall it has been for The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.!!! The first State Board Meeting of the 2017-2019 Administration was held at the King & Prince Resort on St. Simons Island during the last week of September. Twenty-two new members have joined the Board for this administration. At the Board Dinner, the GCG Seal of Honor was presented to James Maund, the DNR Site Manager on Sapelo Island for his 17 years of service there.

October was filled with seven unique District Meetings that were well planned, had great programs and speakers, and were a lot of fun to attend. I am so impressed with all that the districts are doing to accomplish the mission of GCG. The District Directors and their members are doing a fantastic job and should be very proud of their efforts.

In November, the 2017 President’s Workshop – “Plant America Symposium and Tri-Refresher” was held in Athens at our beautiful State Headquarters House. The workshop was a huge success with a great two-day program featuring speakers that were both interesting and knowledgeable. More than half of those attending took the opportunity to refresh their credentials for NGC Schools.

There will be a lot happening in 2018, including the 90th Anniversary of GCG. If at all possible, try to incorporate something into the activities of your committee that will acknowledge this important milestone – clubs should be encouraged to do the same. Let’s “Celebrate 90” in as many ways as we can!!!

Don’t forget, there will be no Winter State Board Meeting. However, each member of the Board will still need to do a report in January that will be distributed over the listserv. Please send your report to Barbara Bourque by January 31.

Enjoy the Holiday Season and time spent with family and friends. I look forward to continuing to work together in 2018 to achieve the mission of GCG as we are guided by the theme “PLANT AMERICA – Georgia’s Heritage, Georgia’s Legacy”.

Fondly,

Jane
Plant Society & Affiliate Membership –
GCG Chairman, Ruthellen Anderson

Are you a member of a Plant Society? If so, is your plant society a member of The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.? An Affiliate Member is a non-profit organization that shares common goals with GCG and wishes to formalize its association with the Garden Club of Georgia. If the Plant Society you belong to is not a member please encourage them to join, the annual dues are $15 a year which allows members to participate in select programs, events and schools available to The Garden Club of Georgia’s general membership, but is without the privilege of a vote.

Plant Societies and Affiliate Members
American Camellia Society
American Hydrangea Society
American Ivy Society

Central Georgia Daylily Club – New 10/28/17
Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia
Georgia Hosta Society
Georgia Iris Society
Georgia Perennial Plant Association
The Greater Atlanta Begonia Society
Gwinnett County Master Gardeners Association
Historic Oakland Foundation
North Georgia Camellia Society

Oconee Valley Iris Association – New 10/28/17
Rome African Violet Society, Study Group
The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
Plant Society & Affiliate Membership Application

Plant Society
AffiliateName: ____________________________________________________________

MailingAddress: ____________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip: __________________________ County: __________________________

Year Founded: ______________________________________________________________

Number of Members: __________________________

President’s Name: __________________________________________________________

Address: _________________________________________________________________

City, State, Zip: ___________________________________________________________

Phone: _________________________________________________________________
Email: ________________________________________________________________

Treasurer’s Name: _________________________________________________________

Phone: _________________________________________________________________
E-mail: ________________________________________________________________

Please mail to the below address this completed application and your $15 check made payable to

The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
Mail to: Ruthellen Anderson, 437 Gold Bullion Dr. E., Dawsonville Georgia 30534
I may be contacted at 706-216-5034 (H) 706-344-2968 (C) or aruthellen@gmail.com
2018 Legislative and Governmental Affairs Update

November, 2017

Tally Sweat

2018 is election year in Georgia and the perfect time for garden club members to share with legislators your ideas for “Planting Georgia’s Heritage and Legacy in Conservation, Beautification and Education”. At the state legislature your legislative team will be primarily concerned with coal ash, stream buffers and Trust Funds. The latter are those fees collected by the state for specific purposes, i.e., recycling old tires when you purchase new tires with the fees supposedly being used to clean up illegal dumps across the state; however, the legislature has redirected most of the fees collected to the general fund.

In addition to supporting Trust Fund legislation, your legislative team is supporting stronger laws to regulate coal ash pollution released into the state’s land, water and air. Georgia’s Environmental Protection Division is responsible for keeping our drinking water, rivers and streams free of pollutants but in years past has been weak in its enforcement. As you may already know coal burning companies are in the process of either closing or retrofitting their plants with less-polluting gas. In doing so, the companies are dewatering the plants’ coal ash ponds located next to the state’s rivers and lakes. There is fear that this activity could release toxic pollutants without the public being made aware, so legislation is needed to require notice is given.

Another danger is found at waste management facilities that accept coal ash in landfills, which could pollute aquifers, marshes or streams. Some landfills have accepted coal ash from outside the state. Regulations for both coal ash ponds and landfills must be strengthened. That is where you can make a difference. A great example of local action is the “No ash at all” group in Wayne County which has stalled out-of-state coal ash from being shipped into their community. Garden club members are “in the thick of the fight”!

Your team works closely with the Georgia Water Coalition during the legislative session. GCG was a founding partner of the GWC and as a member of the GCG you are eligible to attend events sponsored by the GWC. Also, each local club may become a GWC Partner by going to www.gwc.org and registering your club as a sponsor. There is no fee for registering.

And mark your calendar for our annual Capitol Conservation Day on March 1, beginning with free breakfast at Central Presbyterian Church and a visit with your legislators and the governor in the Capitol during the day.

Also in March the GWC will be honoring the Clean 13 at an event in Atlanta. Recognition will be given to thirteen companies, individuals, governmental and non-profit organizations that are keeping Georgia waters clean. Visit the GWC website for more information on this event being held on March 8 at Mason Fine Art Gallery in Atlanta.

You can make a difference when you help “Plant Legislative Action in Georgia” so get in touch with your legislators both before and during the 2018 Legislative Session.

For more information, contact Chairman Tally Sweat, tsweato6@parksprings.net.
Atlanta Botanical Gardens Flower Show, INGENUE  A Toast to Georgia’s Film Industry, February 23-25 at the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. The 2018 show features three full days focused entirely on plants, showcasing horticulture, floral design, landscape design and photography. Surrounding all of this will be the beauty of the Garden itself, so a visit to the flower show also will include opportunities to see the Garden as spring awakens and our annual Orchid Daze exhibition as it fills the Fuqua Orchid Center with tropical exuberance. BB

WIN  WIN  WIN

$   $   $   $   $   $   $   $   $   $   $

G C G  C A S H   R A F F L E

The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. will have a Cash Raffle this year (2017-2018) as a fund raiser. Merchandising will no longer be the fund raiser for GCG. Garden club members from each district are encouraged to participate and support this new fund raising effort.

Each District has been given 350 tickets to sell. As an incentive to sell all of their allotted tickets, a $250 bonus will be given to each district that sells their 350 tickets. Additional tickets are available.

Both garden club members and non-members may participate in the raffle and you do not have to be present at the drawing to win.

Cost of Tickets: $5 each or 5 for $20

Cash Prizes to be given at the 2018 Convention

$1000 first prize
$  500  second prize
$  250  third prize

(submitted by: Winette Alman)
As we approach the close of 2017 and look forward to a new year, the Scholarship Committee celebrates the success of our recent past in anticipation of a bright new year of Scholarships to be awarded. We thank and appreciate our members and friends who supported the GCG scholarship fund.

Scholarships are awarded in February. For your contribution in this giving period, we invite receipt before January 31st. Named and Patron contributions made before this date will be listed in Garden Gateways, the Expressions 2019 and in the State Headquarters Archives.

The Dollars Educate Scholars membership fundraiser continues. Gifts of any amount made before the end of January really do have an impact. Since 2016, six up to ten percent of the scholarship budget has increased from just $1.00 per member!

Twenty-seven student’s lives were enriched last year because you, your club and your district helped to provide an education for these deserving students through your contributions. We again ask for your support and generosity during this season of giving, as you are able.

On behalf of the Scholarship Committee, we wish you and yours all the joy and wonders of the season with blessings in the New Year!

Dot Williams, Scholarships Chairman
Susan Turner, Scholarships Co-Chairman
A Quick Glance at Scholarships
Scholarships are one of the wonderful ways GCG fulfills its Mission of Education.

Last year $65,153.00 was awarded to 27 students with two students receiving scholarships from National of $4,000.00 each. The Scholarship Committee meets each February to review scholarship applications and award funds to the students. All scholarship donation checks are made payable to The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.

Donations to the GCG Scholarship Fund and counted in this current scholarship giving year must be received before the end of this coming January, 2018 to be listed in Garden Gateways, Expressions 2019 and the GCG Headquarters Archives. With consideration of GCG as a 501 (c) 3, your donation made prior to December 31st may be tax deductible, as allowable by law.

Ways to Contribute to Scholarships

Named Scholarship
Denotes donations of $1,000.00. Send to Susan Turner, Scholarships Co- Chairman, P.O. Box 810 Conyers, GA 30012. Forms obtained on-line from the GCG website can be used to send with your check. These donations are recognized in the Expressions and Garden Gateways publications and are named by the donor. You will receive a letter of appreciation from Susan Turner.

Patron of Scholarships
Denotes donations of $200.00-$999.99. Send to Rosemary Maulden, Assistant Treasurer, 302 Bushoan Road, Brunswick, GA 31525-9447. Patrons are recognized with a certificate at district meetings and in the Expressions and Garden Gateways publications. You will receive a letter of appreciation from Rosemary Maulden.

General Scholarship Fund
100% of General Fund contributions are given in scholarships. Large or small contributions to the General Scholarship Fund are always needed and welcomed. Send to Rosemary Maulden, Assistant Treasurer, 302 Bushoan Road, Brunswick, GA 31525-9447. Rosemary will send you an acknowledgement of your gift.

General Scholarship Fund- Honorariums and Memorials
Honorariums are a great way to honor a club member, former president, speaker or someone who has helped your club within your community. Memorials make a lovely gift in remembrance of a club member or someone in their family.
Send to Rosemary Maulden who will send letters to the donor as well as to the honoree or the designated family member as an acknowledgement of this thoughtful gift.
Brown Thrasher and Cherokee Rose Scholarship Endowment Funds
Contributions are placed in the designated endowment fund. Interest income only is available in awarding scholarships. The Cherokee Rose Scholarship is available to a qualified graduate student majoring in graduate programs of Landscape Design, Environmental Planning, Historic Preservation, Decorative Arts, or Historic Architecture. Contributions are sent to the Assistant Treasurer, Rosemary Maulden.

Dollars Educate Scholars Fundraiser
January is “Scholarship Month”. All clubs are asked to donate $1.00 per club member for scholarships from your club treasury. All monies collected from each club are sent to Rosemary Maulden, Assistant Treasurer, 302 Bushoan Road, Brunswick, GA 31525-9447. Your donation will be acknowledged by Rosemary. If your club participates, extra points will be given on the President’s Report. Over 6% of the scholarships awarded came from the “Dollars Educate Scholars” fundraiser last year!

GCG Life Memberships
One half of all GCG Life Memberships goes to scholarships. The application is available on the website. Mail your check along with this application to Bess Hartley, 250 Cotton Hill Road, Fort Gaines GA 39851. A letter and a GCG Membership Card will be received from Bess Hartley.

Expressions Publication
All proceeds from the sale of this publication support scholarships. If you purchased a copy, you have contributed to scholarships. Thank you for your continued support of this beautiful and informative publication.

Thank you for throwing out a lifeline to students who need our help to graduate. Your support contributes to the future of those who will love, protect and care for our earth now and for the generations that follow.
The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.

“Dollars Educate Scholars”

The Dollars Educate Scholars Fundraiser continues for the 2017-2019 term. Mark your calendars for January as GCG Official Scholarship Month!

What a meaningful way for every member to be able to contribute to our Scholarship Mission. Each member contributes just $1.00 to your Garden Club treasury. The club treasurer will write one check to GCG and mail with the Dollars Educate Scholars Transmittal Form to Assistant Treasurer, Rosemary Maulden 302 Bushoan Road, Brunswick 31525-9447

In two years we have raised an additional $11,238.57 for Scholarships. We thank you for your support! Plan to join us with sharing in another generous response in giving to scholarships.

The 2nd Annual Dollars Educate Scholars Challenge is now underway. Participate and help your District Director be crowned the King or Queen of Dollars Educate Scholarships!

“Dollars Educate Scholars”
TRANSMITTAL FORM

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE GARDEN CLUB OF GEORGIA, INC. OR GCG

Please complete the following information and mail with your clubs check for $1.00 per member, or any amount you desire, to Rosemary Maulden, Assistant Treasurer 302 Bushoan Road, Brunswick 31525-9447. Please write legibly.

Name of Garden Club:

Club Number: District:

Garden Club President or Representative Data:
Name: Title:

Email: Phone number:

100% Participation? Circle one. Yes No

Amount Enclosed: $_____________________________

Questions? Contact Susan Turner, Scholarships Co-Chairman 770-922-4411 glencree@bellsouth.net
Dot Williams, Scholarship Chairman 478-477-1742 d.williams@bellsouth.net
Rosemary Maulden, Assistant Treasurer 912-267-9623 rosemarymaulden@bellsouth.net
It’s not too late to order your 2018 Expressions Calendars. The more we sell, the more we can add to the Scholarship Fund! Any orders should include shipping and be sent directly to me, Janet Carn. The shipping fees and my address are listed as follows:

---

### Celebrate! Expressions 2018

**Support GCG Scholarships**

To order calendars return this form with your payment. All orders must be Pre-Paid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club #</th>
<th>District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club Name</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club President</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Zip</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Expressions Requested</th>
<th>@ $9.00 each</th>
<th>Total Book Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Shipping**

If you prefer to have your Expressions shipped, please add shipping costs here. For orders of 50 books or more, contact the GCG Chairman. If picking up at Fall District Meeting, skip this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Books</th>
<th>Shipping</th>
<th>Total Shipping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-10</td>
<td>$8.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-25</td>
<td>$14.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-49</td>
<td>$17.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sub-Total $  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax</th>
<th>Enter Sales Tax % for location where your Expressions will be delivered/picked up</th>
<th>@</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total Tax $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Total Amount Enclosed $  

Questions should be directed to: Send to: Janet Carn, 8003 Lakeside Dr., Appling, GA 30802  
JANET CARN, GCG EXPRESSIONS CALENDAR MARKETING CHAIRMAN 706-373-4861, Jbc0112@gmail.com
Garden Therapy

Do you have a good garden therapy project planned for a nursing home, senior center, VA hospital or any like place? If you do, plan to apply for a GCG Garden Therapy Grant. It is not a hard or complicated application to fill out. It does not have to be a big project! We have had two clubs to apply and receive $250.00 each for their projects. Dekalb Federation of Clubs and Bellmere GC. Also, let me encourage each club to donate $25.00 to Garden Therapy each year by March 1st and your club or council or district will receive a certificate. This money is where the grant money comes from each year. Just go on the GCG website and get the form. (Pictures from one of the grants-- Wheel chair accessible beds for Creative Enterprises Inc. This is a daytime therapy/activity facility for young adults with special needs.) Peggy Tucker

Historic Landscape Initiative.
Elaine Bolton, 770.227.0313 ehb839@earthlink.net

We continue to look for gardens across the state which are older than 50 years. The garden may be maintained by the original owner or the present owner may have continued the plan set in place all those years ago. Hopefully the owner has some photos and plant records of the garden “back then”. Please let me know so that we may talk with them and hopefully schedule a survey. (We will do the survey!) These surveys will be archived in the Cherokee Garden Library and of course shared with the owner. The Garden Club of Georgia has a long history of surveying historic gardens in the state and we want to continue this.

It’s not too early to mark your calendar for the annual Historic Garden Grants fundraiser which will be held in May 9 in Thomasville at Pebble Hill Plantation. Plan now to attend and hear the authors of Seeking Eden share their new book on Georgia’s historic gardens.
“BEE ONE IN A MILLION”

Are you registered??
If you have not heard of the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge, you should check into this. The MPGC is a nationwide call to action to preserve and create more pollinator habitats to help out bees, butterflies, birds, bats and other pollinators.

The National Pollinator Garden Network is a partnership between conservation organizations, gardening groups, civic organizations and participating federal agencies to inspire people and organizations to create more pollinator habitats. It was launched in 2015 by nine founding organizations. Because of the National Garden Club’s reputation and the strength of our membership, NGC was invited to be an inaugural Network Partner, and we, as GCG members, are part of this venture.

The Challenge is to register one million pollinator gardens by 2018 (or later if the goal has not been reached). You can register your home gardens or public gardens on the website http://millionpollinagardens.org/, or you can go to the NGC website and click on the project. Once registered (IT IS EASY!), you can then click on the map powered by SHARE to see your garden marked. Georgia has quite a few gardens registered, but the majority are in the Atlanta Metropolitan area.

Any pollinator habitat is eligible—whether it is a pot on your patio or a large public garden—just as long as you provide food and habitat for the pollinators. Remember to plant wisely, using as many native plants as possible, and select plants that provide nectar and pollen and include host plants such as milkweed for the monarch butterfly. Use pesticides sparingly, if at all, and leave a little mess!

Willie Maxwell
GCG Butterflies and Bees Chairman

After a presentation on butterflies and information on the Roslyn Carter Butterfly Trail, youth painted rock with butterfly motifs that could be hidden in the community or kept as keepsakes of the program.
GARDENING IN GEORGIA

EDUCATION - The 2017 State President’s Workshop- Plant America Symposium and Tri-Refresher recently held in Athens at the GCG headquarters was well received! We had lot of fun being together and enjoyed the fellowship! Our speakers had familiar faces as well as new faces. Master Flower Show Judge, Anna Burns gave instructions on the petite design-to use and display the beauty of native plants in our home through design-as well as in the landscape. David Nichols gave Georgia’s Heritage with the history and landscape design of the Founder’s Garden. Georgia Legacy was presented by Dr. Jennifer Cruse-Sanders, new director of the State Botanical Garden since February 2017. She is also the first female director. The presentation included programs and activities at the garden along with the Children’s Garden development details.

To continue your education “Save The Date” for the Native Plant Symposium on January 17, 2018 – Athens and the Native Plant and Wildflower Symposium March 28, 2018-Tifton.

BEAUTIFICATION - As the Christmas season approaches we will be decorating our homes and civic community. Think in terms of cheerful colors that can be found in plants for home and landscape.

CONSERVATION - It is all about taking care of our home-Earth-Air, Water, Forest, Land, and Wildlife. Let us utilize the pledge in our club meetings, programs, and share it with the community.

NGC CONSERVATION PLEDGE: I pledge to protect and conserve the natural resources of the planet earth and promise to promote education so we may become caretakers of the air, water, forest, land, and wildlife.

Be sure to make plans to plant your daffodil bulbs at the state parks before the first frost. Did your club add additional bulbs to the 25 given by the state chairman to each district? It is something to consider as these beauty spot will give a colorful welcome to the spring season and park visitors.

Happy Holidays!!!

Virginia Pennington
2nd Vice Pres.
Special Projects GCG:
Gardening in Georgia, Native Plants
Blue Star Marker Dedication

On October 12, 2017 a Marker sponsored by Magnolia Garden Club in Tifton was dedicated in the Baldwin Garden, a lovely peaceful setting by the reflection pool across from the Chapel, on the campus of Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton.

The very next day, October 13, 2017, a Blue Star Memorial Marker sponsored by Camellia Garden Club in Magnolia District was dedicated. The marker was placed in Memorial Park next to the Post Office at 19372 Hartford Street E in Edison. Bricks honoring those who served in the Armed Forces made up a memorial circle where the marker was placed. I seemed that the whole town came out for this event. I believe it was the largest attendance I have seen for a dedication.

On Veteran’s Day, November 11, 2017, another Blue Star Memorial Marker was dedicated at the Georgia Visitor Information Center in Lake Park, just north of mile marker 2 entering Georgia on I-75. This marker co-sponsored by Valdosta Garden Center, Inc. and Camellia District Garden Clubs replaces a marker that was damaged beyond repair by a vehicle a few years ago. Members of the Valdosta Garden Center hosted a reception at the Crescent, honoring all Veterans after the dedication.
Dedication Participants included Garden Club of Georgia President, Jane Hersey and National Garden Club Blue Star Marker Co Chairman, Martha Price.

The dedication of these markers brings the number of Blue Star Markers dedicated in Georgia to a total of 161. This is a wonderful testament to the care and support that members of the Garden Club of Georgia gives to those who serve in the Armed Forces. Keep up the good work!

As of now we have 2 Gold Star Markers with interest in placing at least 2 additional markers.

It is the time of year to encourage clubs to make a donation to the Garden Club of Georgia Blue Star Marker Restoration Fund. Clubs receive a certificate for at least a $25.00 donation. This fund enables the Garden Club of Georgia to award grants to assist clubs with Blue Star Marker Restorations.

Pricing for the markers will remain at $1,470.00 for the Memorial/Highway Markers and $490.00 for the By-Way Markers until May 2018.

THANKYOU for your continued support of the Blue/Gold Star Memorial Marker Program. As always, contact me if I can assist in any way.

Jan Thiese, Blue Star Memorial Marker Chairman

Phone: (478) 477-6507  Email: janicemariemaconga@cox.net

---

**Save the Date**

April 20 - 21, 2018 for a proposed Tri-Refresher in Augusta, Georgia. We plan to include the Sacred Heart Garden Festival speakers and tour gardens which are not confirmed until February.

*Virginia Allen*
YES, SANTA, THERE REALLY IS A VIRGINIA

Wildflower Chairmen
Evelyna Keadle Rogers and Barbara Keadle Johnson

Santa Claus is a gardener, there is no doubt about it. I can picture him sitting in his large recliner resting up after his whirlwind sleigh ride around the world, and reaching for one of his many garden catalogues. If he snoozes, visions of gardening projects dance through his head.

Why am I so certain Santa is a gardener? Look at the evidence: Santa is the symbol of giving to others; like the postman he is not stopped from his mission by rain, sleet, snow, or flood; his work gives him joy as he shares with others; like a gardener, he plans all year for the brief beauty of his project; he wants to make the world more beautiful by smiles and happy hearts; like a gardener, he shares.

Unlike Santa, most gardeners do not limit sharing to just one night. As plants multiply, gardeners dig and divide and share with friends.

There are few gardens in my hometown that do not have plants given by Miss Sadie, and where I live now most of us can point out plants given to us by Mac Short or Miss Fan.

At my grandmother’s house I loved going into her large walk-in pantry to look around and ask questions. There were always three large tins that I wanted to peek into. Two remained empty until they were filled with the Christmas fruitcakes swabbed in cheesecloth. I would go with my grandmother into the pantry and watch as she dabbed drops of rum onto the cheesecloth, and firmly pressed the lid closed-seasoning the fruitcake, she said. The third tin was also filled with cheesecloth, too. This time the cheesecloth did not wrap fruitcakes, it held saved seeds. There were many little pouches of cheesecloth each filled with seed, and tied with string. My grandmother sewed the little patches, and my Aunt Cat filled them with seeds she gathered from her garden.

Her landscape was unique. The grounds around the house held no flowers, only large shrubs pruned into magical shapes, and trees. In the field beside the house grounds she planted a very large vegetable garden and flower garden. Her design was whimsical—a row of staked green beans might be next to a row of staked dahlias or sweet-peas. Several rows of potatoes might be next to rows of tulips. Cherokee Roses draped on the fences. Friends and neighbors and even strangers never stopped to admire without leaving with some of the bounty of her garden.

Aunt Cat saved seeds for her future projects, and my grandmother passed the little cheesecloth packets of seed to friends and family. Seed swapping must have been a community-wide project as my grandmother always seemed to arrive home with little bags or jars of seeds given to her.

Aunt Cat would plant the gift seed, and point out to all who listened who gave them each row of seed. The seed-swap was like Christmas all year long—giving joy to others.

Christmas is a time of giving. A time when we focus on making others smile, a time when we take a break from the dizziness of our hectic pace to gather family and friends to review special memories, and to create new memories; a time filled with our own traditions, and the beginning of new traditions. Christmas is a time of giving to others of our time, our best cooking specialties, and special gifts homemade or purchased. Santa Claus is the symbol of giving, and cherished by children everywhere.
When not caring for his reindeer and busy in his toy workshop, I am sure Santa Claus is a gardener. Because of the chill factor at the North Pole he probably has to make some modifications for his gardening. And he needs the exercise to work off some of those sweets he enjoyed on Christmas Eve.

Most everyone knows about the little girl, Virginia, who wrote to a newspaper to ask if there really is a Santa Claus, and his answer, “Yes Virginia, there really is a Santa Claus.” I thin Santa Claus would like to know there really is a Virginia-Virginia Pennington. Virginia took time from her busy holiday schedule to call and talk to me about ways to promote wildflower projects. When Barbara and I first arrived on the Board of Directors of the Garden Club of Georgia, Virginia stepped forward, one of Santa’s helpers, held our hands and encouraged and guided us. She has continued to encourage and inspire us. She called today to say she was hit anew when at the president’s workshop Amy Carter said, “Wildflowers are native plants.” “We all know this,” she said, “Yet I think you need to address it more.” We will. We shared ideas, and the talk has given us many new resolutions for the New Year-2018, a new year to promote wildflower projects across the state.

Sharing ideas, and information is a gift also. Yes Santa, there are lots of Virginias out here and they all believe in the mission of Santa Clause- give and share our best for a more beautiful world. As gardeners we are all Santa’s helpers, spreading the spirit of giving to others beauty, knowledge, inspiration, and joy.

Merry Christmas to all, and a New Year filled with happy Gardening!