We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.

Maya Angelou 1928 - 2014
Be a rainbow in someone else's cloud.

Supporting Monarch Butterflies as Pollinators

The Monarch butterfly population is declining worldwide due to loss of habitat. One of President Sandy Robinson's focus areas for her President's Special Project is the plight of the Monarch, and a commitment to creating gardens and habitat that will help to restore their population to health. To do this, she has created four programs under the Monarch Watch banner to foster NGC support:

- Container Gardening for Bees and Butterflies
- Monarch Waystations
- Seed Savers

Gardens are necessary to the survival of butterflies as well as other pollinators. A butterfly garden can be large or small, as much as a person has room for. If space is limited, container gardening is an option. Further information on container gardening can be obtained from Container Gardening for Bees & Butterflies chairman Mary Ann Moreno. She can be reached at jbmorenogmail.com.

Butterfly gardens should include full-sun annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs. Many of these plants serve as both host plants as well as nectar plants for a wide variety of butterflies. By adding native Asclepias species or Milkweed to your garden, you invite Monarchs to complete their life cycle within the garden by laying eggs that hatch into caterpillars and to form their chrysalis within your garden.

(Note: information and Monarch photo from NGC)

National Garden Clubs provides many educational opportunities for the youth at the pre-school, elementary, middle and high school level. The purpose of the youth gardening programs is to introduce gardening, conservation, protection of wildlife, recognition of plants, trees and shrubs, basic flower arrangements, and a love and appreciation of nature.
The goal is that they will be future citizens who will be responsible and capable with greater self-expression, dignity, integrity and knowledge of their environment.

**AHS National Children and Youth Garden Symposium**
For more than 20 years, the National Children & Youth Garden Symposium (NCYGS) has educated thousands of teachers who have, in turn, gone on to educate over a million children: A million children who take this knowledge and apply it to the world around them with curiosity, energy, and genuine appreciation.

Click here for Youth Garden Symposium website.

**Youth Garden Clubs**
All clubs of National Garden Clubs may organize and/or sponsor a Youth Garden Club. The benefits to the students include:

- Introduces the art and science of gardening using fundamental math, reading and writing skills, as well as practical applications.
- Increases awareness of the environment, natural resources, ecology, conservation, composting and recycling.
- Helps raise standardized test scores, especially in science.
- Encourages creativity through observing the cycles of life.
- Develops leadership skills.
- Provides opportunities for participation and recognition with nationally sponsored contests and awards.
- May lead to future hobbies and career opportunities.

Each established Youth Garden Club is registered annually with the state garden club, which automatically registers the club as a member of National Garden Clubs. Click here to find Youth Floral Design lesson plans in the Official NGC Online Store.

**Youth Gardening Programs**
Many NGC members work with youth in settings other than a Youth Garden Club. Youth Gardening Programs by NGC clubs can be affiliated with a school, church, neighborhood, day-care centers or established youth organizations such as Scouts, 4-H, science and ecology clubs, Master Gardeners and Future Farmers of America.

**Gardens for Children**
Gardening opens whole new areas of exploration, awareness, enjoyment, amazement and learning for children. Download this listing of some the Children's Gardens across the United States that were created to spark an interest and love of gardening in children, not only to improve and maintain our environment but for the sheer fun of "digging in the dirt."

A wonderful way to involve your membership or to increase your membership would be sponsoring a youth garden club.

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