



GCFP District VI Newsletter



2nd Quarter, 2022

Seedlings

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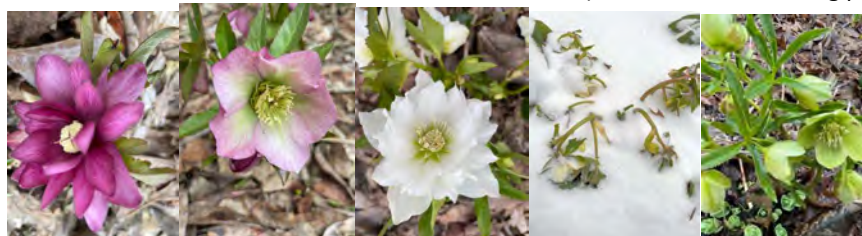
Director's Corner

Janice Davis, District VI Director

Which flower of late winter and early spring occupies a special place in your heart? In my garden it is the **Hellebores**. (*Photos below*) They begin poking their heads out of the ground in late February or early March. They are tough but so elegant and charming with naturally nodding blooms. The "blooms" (which are actually sepals that protect the true flowers) can last for several weeks before transforming to a paper textured seed pods.

I was first introduced to hellebores many years ago by a very knowledgeable Patton Garden Club member and dear friend, Evelyn Holtz McGough. This was long before they became trendy in the garden. She shared with me what is frequently called "Stinking Hellebores". They have deep green and deeply cut leaves with small green flowers. That started my love affair with Hellebores and many additions to my garden. Also known as Lenten Rose, these vigorous evergreen perennial plants are available in a stunning and sophisticated array of colors. Well-known as the Lenten Rose because their rose-like flowers usually appear in the Lenten season. They make a terrific cut flower if conditioned properly. The foliage is thick and evergreen, with leaves that are lobed and palm-like. They remain attractive into the summer and are a splash of green in the garden through the winter season.

Hellebores are a woodland edge plant that like semi-shade with a rich moist and free draining soil, hardy to Zone 4. They do well under deciduous trees; sun in the spring but shade in the hot summer months. Prune in late winter or early spring when new growth begins to appear. Cut away tattered old growth as close to the base as possible. A big plus is deer and rabbits ignore them in favor of tastier treats. (Continues on following page)



2022 District Calendar

May 20-21—May Mart sponsored by the IGC; S&T Bank Arena
May 21—Somerset GC Plant Sale
June 5—Patton GC Plant Sale
June 6-7—GCFP Board Meeting Boalsburg, PA
July 18—Patton GC Flower Show
July 27—Judges Council Flower Show Greensburg
July 29,30—GC of Johnstown Flower Show
Aug 3—Bedford GC Flower Show
Aug 10—District VI Board Meeting
Sept. 9—District VI Annual Meeting, Somerset

**A special thank you to
 Nerita Brant, *Seedlings*
 Proofreader**

Articles, events and happenings concerning District VI may be submitted to: Mary Lou Colussy at lalou46@aol.com
 Next Seedlings by August 1, 2022

Director's Corner (cont. from page 1)

Caution: The leaves, stems and roots are toxic. Although seldom fatal, your pet or child can become ill if any part of the plant is ingested. The sap and seeds are poisonous to the touch causing skin irritation. If collecting seeds wait till, they have dried and shake then into a container.

Like nature, spring is the season when garden clubs immerse into an active period. District VI clubs are having a busy spring with The Garden Club of Johnstown and the Patton Garden Club installing new officers in April. The Weeders and Seeders Garden Club will hold an installation service in May.

The Garden Club of Johnstown created a new award to honor Mary Jo Gardill on the anniversary of her 50th year as an active member of the club. "The Mary Jo Gardill Novice Award" will be given to the Blue Ribbon Winner in the Novice Class of all future GCF flower shows.

The GCFP 2022 Convention in Malvern, PA was fantastic, so many interesting, educational presentations and exotic designs with tips. It was wonderful to be able to be with old friends and make new friends. This is something we have not been able to do for two years. We can be so proud of our own Sheila Croushore our GCFP President she did a terrific job. *(Make sure to check out the photos in this edition.)* We had so much fun with over 25 attending from District VI, great showing, and support for Sheila. The planning committee from District I is to be congratulated for an awesome job! If you have never experienced the camaraderie and learning opportunities of a convention next year is your chance. The 2023 GCFP Convention hosted by District VII is right here in western Pennsylvania. It is the first ever weekend convention starting on a Friday and ending on a Sunday. The GCFP 93rd Convention, "Thyme to Garden", April 21-23, 2023, is being held at the Double Tree by Hilton, Monroeville, PA 15146. Please seriously consider attending next year's convention. We need to support Sheila as she hosts the convention and passes the gavel to a new GCFP President. Let's increase the number attending for 2023! Hope to see you there!

I plan to visit as many clubs this summer as possible. Something special happening let me know! See you soon!

All the ugliness of the world can best be forgotten in the beauty of nature!

2022 Award Winners



Congratulations to Angela McDonnell from the Weeders and Seeders Garden Club!!!! She is the recipient of the Forget-Me-Not Award for District VI - 2022.

Forget-Me-Not Award winners were honored at the GCFP Convention Monday, April 4th at the luncheon. They will be seated at the HONOR TABLE at the Malvern Convention.

They will also be featured in the KG Online.

Thank you to the Weeders and Seeders for submitting Angela for consideration for the award. She is a wonderful asset to her club and to District VI. Angela will be recognized at her club meeting in March.

**Seedlings
Awarded
2nd Place for
District
Newsletters
13-24 pages
at 2022 GCFP
Convention!**

Seed Money—Indiana GC, Patton GC, Weeders and Seeders GC

Facebook Page—Somerset GC—1st Medium Clubs

Website—Somerset GC—1st Medium Clubs

2022 Marjorie Hamblin \$1000 Scholarship—Hailey Elizabeth Frontino—Blair GC

2021 GCFP Flower Show Schedule—1st for a Small Standard-- Weeders and Seeders GC; 2nd for a medium size club—Blair GC

GCFP Convention, 2022

GCFP Officers and District Directors



Jenny Rose Carey—workshop Presenter



Doug Tallamy—Keynote Speaker

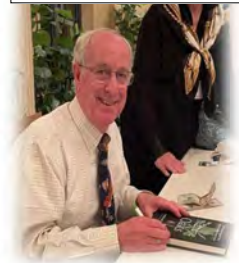


Table Centerpiece



Invitation to 2023 GCFP Convention in Monroeville next April 23-25, 2023



Honor Designs



Table Centerpiece

Ikebana Design Workshop



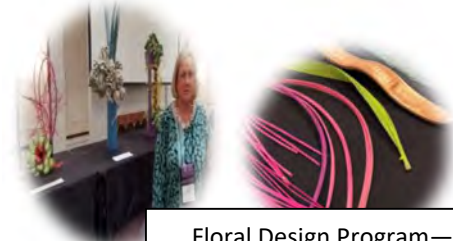
Horticulture Therapy Display



2022 GCFP Convention Attendees from District VI



Floral Design Program—Janice Hamlin



CAR-SGC Conference

**7 Super Blooms that Changed Our World
November 2-3, 2022
Seven Springs Mountain Resort**

Join us in beautiful Laurel Highlands for a Super Conference
7 Super Blooms 7 States/Areas 7 Springs =
A winning combination

TOURS

Tour the Flight 93 National Memorial
Fallingwater – a Frank Lloyd Wright house

WORKSHOPS

Seasonal Succulent Designs - Tonya Young
Planting for Birds & Pollinators - Marcy Cunkelman
New and Exciting Houseplants - Ron McIntosh
NGC Exhibition Table Designs – Chris Leskosky
Williamsburg Christmas – Janice Davis
Creating from Your Own Garden – Fran Lansberry

DINNER SPEAKER

“Roses and Tulips and Sunflowers – Oh My!?!” –
Tom Huston

VENDORS – Many!!

Hotel reservations may be made for November 1-4
at special conference rates by phoning Seven
Springs Resort at 814-352-7777.

Registration Form on CAR-SGC and GCFP
websites

BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES AND OTHER POLLINATORS

By Marcy Cunkelman

Well, it's SUPPOSED to be SPRING, but it's more like Mother Nature is having trouble saying good-bye to winter. You look out the window and it's warm and sunny. 10 minutes later it's dark and snow covered. But it doesn't matter to the birds and butterflies and other pollinators. They know when it's time and these cold spells can cause some harm to some who emerged early in the warm sunshine, but most will survive and continue their cycles. I saw a mourning cloak, spring azure, comma and cabbage white butterflies already this year.

You can help the birds with natural nesting material using the fine and medium grasses your pull and cut when clearing your gardens. I take little piles of grasses and put under shrubs or inside tree branches for the birds to gather and choose on their own. Small twigs are good for to put around your gardens in little piles for house wrens and other birds to use for their nests. **DO NOT PUT OUT MAN MADE THINGS** like dry lint or strings, pet fur that have flea and tick medication.

If you are feeding birds, make sure you keep your feeders clean. Take down and soak your feeders in bleach-water with ration of 1:9. Rinse several times and dry. Clean the area under your feeders also. I do not put the black oil and thistle seed hulls in the compost. Either put on separate pile or put in garbage.

Toward the end of April in to May, the Ruby-throated Hummingbirds will be returning. Make your own food with 1:4 ratio of sugar to water. I start out with ¼ cup of white sugar to 1 cup of water. Bring to a boil, cool and refrigerate. Just put out a little of the food until they are back. **REMEMBER**, do NOT use red dye. Keep your feeders clean and in the summer clean often and fill with fresh food. Do not let it get cloudy

If you can't have a garden to plant some pollinator friendly flowers, why not try a container garden. I use these all the time and you can fill with a variety of host and nectar plants for the bees, butterflies and the hummers. I like to use parsley and dill for the swallowtails and me, single zinnias with “noses”, ageratum, globe amaranth, marigolds, lady in red salvia, black and blue salvia, cosmos to name a few. If you use flowers with single blossoms, they are better since the nectar is easier to drink. Plant different sizes of flowers too, for the different sizes of butterflies and bees. Make sure the containers or garden is in the full sun for most of the day. You may have to water more if in a container. I have saucers under the container and fill the saucers until the water is soaked up. I fill the top of the soil to see if it's wet enough. May need to water several times a day, if extremely hot. If watering this way, I may water in the evening and let it soak up thru the night. Don't let the water stay in the saucer for more than a day.

Continues on Page 10

Garden Club Leadership

By Brenda Moore

Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve.” – Martin Luther King Jr.

Did you ever play the childhood counting game “rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief, doctor, lawyer, Indian chief?” If that game had any validity, it would have been an easy way to discover our strengths along with our weaknesses. Because it’s not that simple, parents tend to encourage their children to participate in various activities to help them discover their strengths or talents.

It was no different for me. I took ballet and violin as a child. The thought of doing too much in front of an audience frightened me because I was a shy child, so I didn’t excel as a ballerina or as a violinist. I really didn’t discover my strengths until adulthood. I stepped out of my comfort zone and became involved in organizations and activities. I started to help at church, and then in our children’s classrooms. Next thing I knew I became the President of the Women’s Club and the Ligonier Valley, PA Parent-Teacher Organization. I discovered that I enjoyed serving in leadership positions that involved administrative duties, public speaking, and building relationships. I never would have known that without accepting and trying new positions and activities. Along the way I also discovered things I wasn’t good at. All strengths, talents, abilities, and gifts require a discovery point. I think the expression “natural born leader” is far from true. No one is born a leader. We discover our leadership tendencies and grow them.

The discovery process is the same in the National Garden Clubs’ (NGC) leadership positions. My journey started with agreeing to attend and join a garden club almost 28 years ago, when I moved to Oak Hill, WV. A year or two later I found myself serving as my garden club president, never dreaming that would lead to me to serve as a District Director, then the West Virginia Garden Club President, and now the NGC First Vice President.

All that is required to become an effective leader within NGC, or a garden club, is:

- **Have a passion for the cause. Know and believe in the mission of NGC which is “National Garden Clubs, Inc. provides education, resources, and national networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibility.”**
- **Be willing to take part in meetings and prioritize the responsibilities of your position.**
- **Focus on the organization. Leadership is not about self; it is about serving and involving others.**
- **Be willing to learn about your position but also realize knowledge is not everything. How you communicate that knowledge is just as important.**
- **Be willing to make mistakes and to learn from those mistakes.**
- **Become a communicator. This comes with practice.**
- **Be willing to accept a position, when asked.**

I encourage you to step out and consider taking a leadership position. You might serve in a club, district, or state position. You might discover strengths and abilities you did not realize you even had.

If you have already discovered your strengths and have served in a position, consider applying for a position on a NGC committee for the 2023-2025 administration. There is a fillable form on the NGC website, under Forms Library. Look for the Board of Directors Application at the very end.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

BCGC Flower Show

**The Bedford County Garden Club
is hosting a**

**Horticulture Specialty Show
August 3, 2022
from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.**

**Presbyterian Church Hall
115 East Penn Street
Bedford, PA**

**Bedford
Garden Club**



CLUB ACTIVITIES

BLAIR GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE



BLAIR GARDEN CLUB PLANT SALE
Jaggard United Methodist Church
1801 Pleasant Valley Blvd.
Altoona, PA

**Blair Garden
Club**



Friday, May 20, 2022 8:00 am. - 5:00 pm.
Sat., May 21, 2022 8:00 am. - 11:00 a.m



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Events at Evergreen Garden Club

Marcy Cunkelman, Evergreen GC President

Evergreen Garden Club is relieved that a venue was found for our annual fundraiser, Tinsel Time. There will be some changes and these will be announced in the next newsletter. For over 30 years, Tinsel Time was held at the Rustic Lodge and Joe was wonderful to work with. (We were spoiled.) But Rustic Lodge will be closing at the end of October. We found out right after our Tinsel Time Luncheon this past December, so, we have been scrambling try to find a place that could still have the same activities of shopping, program, door prizes and a luncheon. Covid has really changed how things are done now. Most places did not offer food and you wouldn't cater in to other places. Prices to rent have gone up and most places don't have staff to help serve meal. But we found something close and Tinsel Time will be December 1st, at the Ramada Inn (formerly the Holiday Inn) along Wayne Avenue. A change will be a buffet instead of sit down, but there will be real table service and not throwaway plates and plastic utensils. (This really surprised me for the amount of rental). And if you can believe this, the table clothes and napkins were included in the price. Not \$10 per tablecloth and \$2 per napkin, like another venue. That added up into our profit. Staff was easy to work with and felt very comfortable like it was with Joe. So, I hope to see you all on Thursday, December 1st at the Ramada Inn, Wayne Ave, Indiana, PA.

Evergreen Garden Club



Evergreen GC was voted to represent our District for the trash to treasure contest. It was Van Gough's Irises. Club members Carla Eichman and Linda Bradford were the artists. Even though it didn't place at the GCFP Convention, you knew exactly what masterpiece painting, it represented. All the entries were awesome!!!

The March meeting program was very interesting and something all our members can help contribute and recycle at the same time. Cindy Rogers did a program on recycling plastic bags to make benches. 500 pounds of bags are used to make one recycled bench. There are places to drop off the bags for the benches and these are being used instead of being thrown away. At our April meeting, we plan to visit a local greenhouse and see how things work behind the scenes from seed starting to bring plants and containers home. Hopefully it won't be raining or worse, snowing. Our annual planting will be held in May at the Silas Clark House bulb-out garden. There will be annuals to brighten up the intersection, while drivers wait at the light. Marcy Cunkelman will be doing a program on pollinators for the June meeting. Members have been to the gardens and spring sure has been hard to know if you need to water or even safe plant some new flowers. As I write this, the weather will down in the low 30s again. Hoping April will calm down and not turn right to hot and dry summer.

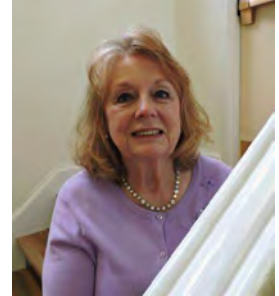
It is finally feeling like it's beginning to feel more like old times again. We able to work together and have meetings in person. Here's to a great year to fun and improving our community.

CLUB ACTIVITIES

New GCJ Officers for 2022-2023



Gloria LaMonaca, outgoing President for 2021-2022



Charlotte Crissey incoming President for 2022-23



Jan Davis and Mary Jo Gardill

Mary Jo is a 50-year member and Master Accredited Judge. The Mary Jo Gardill Novice Award may be awarded to the exhibitor receiving the blue ribbon in the Novice Class for a NGC Standard Flower Show of the Garden Club of Johnstown, which is a traveling award.



Left side: Left to right: Jean Livingston-Parliamentarian; Toni Callahan-Historian; Cheryl Wyrwal-Membership Sec; Sharon Davidhizar-Membership Sec; Sheri Lowry-Community Club Treas; Sue Konvolinka-Treas.

Center: Jan Davis at April meeting conducting installation of our 2022-23 officers.

Right side: Left to right: Charlotte Crissey-President; Bridget Sarosi-1st VP; Mary Jo Gardill-2nd VP; Nancy Rovanseck-Rec. Sec; Jackie Johnson-Asst. Rec. Sec; Darlene Wissinger-Corr. Sec.

Garden Club of Johnstown

GCJ Flower Show

**“A Patriotic Summer”
NGC Standard Flower Show
July 29th @ 2-5 pm
July 30th 9am-3pm
Westmont Presbyterian Church
601 Luzerne Ave.
Johnstown, PA 15905**



CLUB ACTIVITIES

MAY MART—May 20-21, 2022

**INDIANA GARDEN CLUB
MAY MART – GARDEN & VENDOR EXPO
OUR ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**



Indiana Garden Club's annual May Mart Garden and Vendor Expo will be held **May 20th and 21st** at the S&T Arena, White Township Sports Complex. It is our club's only fundraiser. It allows us to fund our scholarships, make donations to environmental causes and help with the beautification of local public gardens.

There will be 40 plus vendors selling specialty plants, garden art, bird and nature products and a large variety of handmade items. Our ever-popular Orphan's Court will be selling plants, perennials, shrubs, bulbs and house plants all donated by garden club members and the general public. Come early as things go fast! Food trucks and our own mushroom sandwiches make for a delicious lunch.

Our club's Garden Mart booth has garden related items made by IGC members as well as donated items for sale.

The scholarship booth has tickets for sale for people to win items donated by each vendor. All the money collected goes to our scholarship fund. Applications for scholarships are available at the booth as well as on our website: www.indianagardenclub.org.

The times are 9 to 7 on Friday and 9 to 4 on Saturday. Admission is \$1 per adult, children are free. It's a great way to spend the day. Please join us!

For more information contact us at: 724-541-4318 or igcinformation@gmail.com or indianagardenclub.org.

**Indiana
Garden
Club**

PA Flower Show School Dates

Updated Registration Trifold has been posted on the state GCFP website. Go to FORMS, scroll all the way down to last form highlighted in red. C-1 Flower Show School #1.

The schedule for all four Flower Show School Courses at Plymouth Meeting, PA is as follows:

- Course 1. April 28-May 1, 2022
- Course 2. October 13-16, 2022
- Course 3. April 13-16, 2023
- Course 4 October 12-15, 2023

**Birds And Butterflies and Other
Pollinators**

From page 4

I like to plant rows of mixed zinnias, cosmos, marigolds, borage and Mexican Sunflowers in the garden near my vegetables. This brings the pollinators to the veggies and I can watch the butterflies, bees and hummers, while in the garden.

Do what you can to help bring in the birds and bees and other critters to your habitat, using a good variety of native plants. **Don't forget that chemical-free is the only way to go if you want to enjoy the new visitors to you yard.** Remember, plant and they do come!!!!

CLUB ACTIVITIES

PGC Flower Show

**Patton Garden Club
Presents
"Childhood Memories"**



A NGC Standard Flower Show
July 18, 2022
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC—from 6-8 PM -- FREE
ADMISSION
La Ferme Rouge
246 Marina Road
Patton, PA 16668

**Patton
Garden
Club**

PGC 2022-2024 OFFICERS

**President: Mimi Bradley
Vice President: Donna Krise
Treasurer: Jeannine Cymbor
Secretary: Mary Davis
Corresponding Secretary: Cheryl Vescovi**

**PGC Plant Sale—June 4, 2022
8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**



CLUB ACTIVITIES

Somerset GC at the GCFP Convention

For those of us who were lucky enough to attend the state convention, we were treated to an outstanding event hosted by District I. After two years of being unable to meet “live”, everyone was excited to be there ... and the clubs of District I made our state garden clubs proud!

SGC members also did our club proud with various members there to represent, not least of whom was our state president Sheila Croushore!

SGC was also very excited to receive first-place awards in its class for our newsletter, website, and Facebook page. Thank you to everyone who helps me with these endeavors, especially Sophie Szych who designed the newsletter logo and reviews the quarterly issues prior to distribution.



Andrea Falcheck, Club President, with Janice Hamlin, Florida Design Instructor, Florida Federation of Garden Clubs. Janice was the guest presenter for the Judges Council Luncheon on the final day.



**Somerset
Garden
Club**

Tables. Tables, and More Tables

SGC member Nerita Brant made an amazing presentation at the March meeting where she demonstrated various table settings - the functional table for 2, exhibition type 1 table, and the exhibition tray table.



**SGC Annual Plant Sale
May 21, 2022
starting at 9 am.
Dressler Laurel Arts Center,
214 Harrison Avenue,
Somerset, PA,**

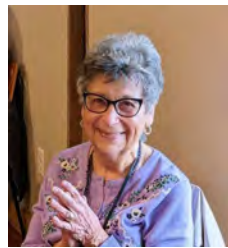
CLUB ACTIVITIES

What's New with Weeders and Seeders

Weeders and Seeders

Although meetings are suspended during January and February, Weeders and Seeders gathered via Zoom in January of 2022 to brainstorm and make Plans for the coming months. This resulted in the formation of a well- rounded program of interesting topics, speakers, and field trips.

On **February 22** members and Master Gardeners in Westmoreland County were treated to a special Zoom program on the topic of Horticultural Therapy, presented by Betsy Brown of Grand Rapids Michigan. Betsy is a Registered Horticultural Therapist who served many years on the board of the Michigan Horticultural Therapy Association, including four years as president. She shared her 24 years of experience in this fascinating field. The zoom audience was captivated by her ideas and endearing anecdotes that she presented during the program.



Our club's first meeting of the year, attended by 23 members and 4 guests, was on **March 15th** at the Loyalhanna Watershed's Nimick Family Education Center. We began with a special tribute to our member **Angela McDonnell**. Angela was presented with the "**Forget-Me-Not-Award**" from District VI of the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania (GCFP), of which she has been a member for 29 years.

All of the clubs in our district were able to nominate a member and Angela was chosen as the District VI award recipient! In addition, a special surprise memento of our club's appreciation, a **Lifetime membership to the GCFP**, was also presented to Angela by Nerita Brant. Nerita is a close friend of Angela's and plays an active role in District VI, holding many positions over the years. **Angela is an inspiration to us all and we congratulate her!**

After Angela's tribute, we were treated to the program, Sassy Succulents, by our own Paula Heming. Paula presented a very informative and humorous talk on raising succulents, and even gave away some of the "baby succulents" as door prizes! After the program, the members had green (but not all healthy) St Patrick Day snacks.



The following meeting was productive and covered the Weeders and Seeders public gardens' spring cleanup duties, a new garden project introducing biodiversity to children, new member mentorship, formation of a craft committee, and the 2022 calendar of program, events, and field trips!

Our next program on April 19th, will be "**Gardening with Caterpillar Hostplants to Enhance Biodiversity**" by member and entomologist Andrea Kautz. Andrea will also demonstrate how to "get on the map" in Doug Tallamy's "Homegrown National Park".

HOW TO PROPAGATE PLANTS FROM CUTTINGS

GROWING NEW PLANTS FROM SOFTWOOD, SEMI-HARDWOOD, AND HARDWOOD CUTTINGS

By Robin Sweetser

Source: almanac.com

Many of our favorite tender or semi-hardy garden plants won't survive winter outdoors. To enjoy them next year, take cuttings of your plants to make new plants—for free! Plant propagation is really rewarding. Here's how to take herbaceous, softwood, semi-hardwood, and hardwood cuttings from your garden plants—and when to do it!

One of my favorite aspects of gardening is plant propagation. Whether it's from seed or from a cutting, I love seeing a new plant emerge and grow. Taking stem cuttings is an easy way to propagate your favorite garden plants in order to grow them again next year, fill in empty garden space, or share them with friends.

TYPES OF STEM CUTTINGS

The first thing to know is that not all cuttings are not created equal. Depending on the type of plant and time of year, there are different types of cuttings that should be taken! Here are the main types of stem cuttings to know and the timing for each:

- **Herbaceous stem cuttings** can be taken at any time during the growing season (spring to late fall) from soft, non-woody growth on annuals and perennials. This includes most garden flowers and foliage plants that produce non-woody stems (e.g., coleus, chrysanthemums, mint, etc.), as well as houseplants.

The growth of woody plants such as trees and shrubs changes as the growing season progresses, maturing from softwood to hardwood.

- **Softwood stem cuttings** are taken in the spring and early summer—between April and July—from the tender new growth on woody shrubs, trees, and vines. These cuttings tend to grow new roots the fastest.
 - Softwood cuttings can be taken from plants such as clematis, lilac, forsythia, weigela, hydrangea, Rose of Sharon, and spirea, to name a few.

- **Semi-hardwood (or “semi-ripe”) stem cuttings** are taken from late-summer to early fall from this year's growth. While the base of these cuttings is woody and firm, the growth at the top should still be soft. In autumn, hormone levels are high, so plants should root and grow well.
 - Semi-hardwood cuttings can be taken from woody evergreens such as arborvitae, boxwood, holly, rhododendron, and yew, as well as other woody shrubs, like rose, lilac, hydrangea, and forsythia. Herbs such as lavender, bay, rosemary, sage, and thyme also grow well from semi-hardwood cuttings.
- **Hardwood stem cuttings** are taken in late fall, winter, or early spring while the plants are fully dormant. Hardwood cuttings are taken from mature growth produced in the last season or the season before. These cuttings are slower to grow roots, but can still be grown successfully with a bit of patience!
 - Hardwood cuttings can be taken from most deciduous shrubs such as forsythia, rose, viburnum, deutzia, Rose of Sharon, and weigela.



The new growth on this lilac shows the ripening wood at the base and soft wood at the top. Perfect for taking a semi-hardwood cutting from!

PLANTS TO PROPAGATE FROM CUTTINGS

Even with a greenhouse, we don't have enough room for all the plants we want to save and it's even more difficult if you are trying to fit them all on a sunny windowsill. Instead of lugging in large containers and digging up entire plants, you can easily take herbaceous, softwood, or semi-hardwood cuttings of your favorites and start new plants.

Tender container plants such as coleus and iresine are at their peak in mid-summer, but when the weather turns colder, they will be lost unless you bring them inside. One way to ensure that they last through winter is to take a few cuttings and keep them indoors until spring.



Almost any garden plant that produces stems can be propagated via stem cuttings. Perennial flowers, vines, shrubs, and even trees are all great candidates!

Iresine is a great candidate for propagation.



Many herbaceous cuttings root so easily that they will even root in a glass of water. This includes coleus, African violet, some ivies, iresine, mints, and impatiens. (If you try this, keep the water clean and put the glass out of direct sunlight. Once roots form, transfer to soil.)

Coleus are extremely easy to propagate, rooting readily from their stems.



SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR TAKING CUTTINGS

Before you start taking cuttings, take time to gather all the materials you'll need. If you are organized, you'll be able to prepare a lot of cuttings in a short time. You'll need:

- clean plastic pots or boxes
- a bag of sterile potting soil and perlite or vermiculite
- powdered rooting hormone (optional, but recommended)
- a sharp knife, clippers, or razor blade
- rubbing alcohol to sterilize your cutting tool

As a rooting medium, you can use a mix of potting soil (soilless mixes are best) and perlite or vermiculite to make it drain faster. I have had success using straight vermiculite as well.

Rosemary can be propagated via softwood cuttings (new growth), hardwood cuttings (old growth), or semi-hardwood cuttings (a mix of old and new growth).



TAKING STEM CUTTINGS

Taking cuttings is easy, but the methods used for propagating softwood, semi-hardwood, and hardwood cuttings differ slightly. The techniques are listed below, but first, here are a few general tips to keep in mind:

- Cuttings taken from the base of a plant will typically root faster than those taken from the top.
- Thin cuttings root better than thick ones.
- Plants grown in shade root more quickly than those grown in full sun.

HOW TO TAKE HERBACEOUS AND SOFTWOOD CUTTINGS (SPRING TO EARLY SUMMER)

Herbaceous cuttings can be taken throughout the growing season (spring to late fall), while softwood cuttings should be taken in spring or early summer. Cuttings can be taken as long as the parent plant is healthy and in active growth. This method can be used on tender and hardy perennials such as verbena, mint, and petunias, as well as shrubs such as hydrangeas and fuchsia.

1. Fill your containers with a potting mix and water so that the mix is moistened.
2. Look for new, vigorous side shoots or tip growth and prune off a 3- to 4-inch piece just below a leaf node.
3. Remove the lower leaves and any flowers or buds, moisten the stem in water and dip it into a little pile of rooting hormone (not directly into the jar because you could contaminate the whole container).
4. Make a hole in the soil with a pencil, stick your cutting into the hole, firm the soil around it, and gently water it.
5. Take more cuttings. Twelve plants fit nicely in a rectangular box. Always take more cuttings than you need because some are likely to fail.
6. Be sure to include a label with any pertinent info on it!

HOW TO TAKE SEMI-HARDWOOD CUTTINGS (MID-SUMMER TO EARLY FALL)

Take semi-hardwood cuttings from mid-summer to early fall. A healthy semi-hardwood cutting includes a bit of both old and new growth. This technique works well on broadleaf evergreens such as holly, boxwood, and rhododendrons; deciduous shrubs such as lilac; woody herbs such as lavender, rosemary, and thyme; and even some conifers.

1. Fill your containers with a potting mix and water so that the mix is moistened.
2. Take a cutting that is 4 to 6 inches in length.
3. Remove the bottom-most leaves and the growing tip. If the remaining leaves are large, cut them in half horizontally to reduce the amount of moisture loss.
4. Dip the base of the cutting into a rooting hormone and stick it into a container of potting mix.
5. Place the container in a plastic bag and blow in some air to puff it up before tying it shut. Put the pot in a bright spot out of direct sunlight so you don't cook the cuttings. Open the bag weekly to add fresh air and to check the plants for mold or new growth.
6. It can take 4-5 weeks or up to 6 months for roots to form, so don't get discouraged. The firmer the wood, the longer it takes to root.

Another type of semi-hardwood cutting is called a "heel cutting." Heel cuttings are pulled off the plant rather than cut (see photo, below). They will have a piece of old bark from the original stem still attached, which often aids in rooting.



A heel cutting is made by pulling the stem away from the branch rather than cutting it off.

HOW TO TAKE HARDWOOD CUTTINGS (LATE FALL TO WINTER)

Take hardwood cuttings in late fall or winter, when plants are dormant. These cuttings can also be taken in early spring before new growth appears. Generally, this method works great for deciduous shrubs such as forsythia, dogwood, viburnum, willow, mock orange, yew, and privet.

1. Fill your containers with a potting mix and water so that the mix is moistened.
2. Find a healthy-looking hardwood stem or branch that you can take a 6- to 8-inch cutting from.
 - Make the cut just below a bud (aka, a leaf node).
 - Trim off any softwood growth from the top of the cutting, making an angled cut right above a bud. Having an angled cut at the top of a cutting helps to prevent rot and also allows you to identify which end should be facing up!
3. Dip the base in rooting hormone. Stick the cutting in a container of potting soil, leaving only the top 2 to 4 inches exposed.
 - If you are making a lot of cuttings, stick them 4 to 6 inches apart in a nursery bed outside and cover with floating row cover.
 - If using pots, put them in a protected but unheated place (like a cold frame or shed) where they get some light.
4. Keep the soil on the dry side during the winter and start to water more as the temperatures warm up. Move the pot outside to a shady spot after the last frost of spring. You should see some new growth by mid-spring.



WHERE TO KEEP CUTTINGS

Many people use a sunny windowsill as their temporary nursery, but if you wish to create lots of pots with cuttings, here's an easy way to create a mini-greenhouse ...

1. Place the box or pot of cuttings in a large plastic bag, blow in it to inflate it, and seal the end. Big zip-lock bags work great.
2. Place this in a warm spot out of direct sun: 65 to 75°F is optimum. Bottom heat helps cuttings root faster, but is not necessary.
3. Open the bag every few days to check for mold or wilted cuttings and to add fresh air. This helps to prevent mildew from forming in this humid atmosphere.
4. After a week or two, if the plants look lively, you can peel back the bag and move them into indirect light. Check for rooting by giving them a gentle tug. If they resist being pulled out, roots have begun to form.
5. Soon you'll be able to move your new plants into their own pots filled with fresh potting soil. After a few weeks you can fertilize them and move them to their new indoor locations!

When spring comes around and the threat of frost has passed, plant your rooted cuttings outdoors as you would a young plant. Keep an eye on them for a few weeks, watching that they get enough water and don't get burnt up by the sun or bitten by frost.



Native Alternatives to Common Garden Plants

Source: FineGardening.com

By [Panayoti Kelaidis](#)

The relatively adaptable and easygoing North American native plants in *Great Natives From the Western United States—That Anyone Can Grow* are excellent alternatives to commonly grown nonnative plants. These picks are as good—or even better—than the old standbys. Here's how they compare.

Instead of: Meadow rue



Photo: Michelle Gervais

Try: 'Denver Gold' columbine



Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

'Denver Gold' has beautifully textured foliage like meadow rue (*Thalictrum* spp. and cvs., Zones 5–9) and European columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*, Zones 3–9), but it blooms much longer and is more adaptable.

Instead of: Ajuga



Photo: Ann E. Stratton

Try: Sandia alumroot



Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

If you are looking for an attractive edging plant, **Sandia alumroot** is less likely to invade the lawn than ajuga (*Ajuga reptans*, Zones 3–10) or many spreading sedums (*Sedum* spp. and cvs., Zones 4–9).

Instead of: Russian sage



Photo: Michelle Gervais

Try: Pink butterfly mint



Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

Pink butterfly mint is drought tolerant and adaptable to most well-drained soils, like Russian sage (*Salvia yangii*, Zones 5–9), but without its invasive tendencies. Or try it as an easier-to-grow substitute for lavender (*Lavandula* spp. and cvs., Zones 5–8).

Instead of: Eurasian sedums



Photo: FG staff

Try: Old man's bones



Photo: Joshua McCullough

Old man's bones tolerates shade and is a noninvasive alternative to Eurasian sedums such as moss stonecrop (*Sedum acre*, Zones 4–9) and stringy stonecrop (*S. sarmentosum*, Zones 4–9).

Instead of: 'Karl Foerster' feather reed grass



Photo: Jennifer Benner

Try: Undaunted® ruby muhly grass



Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

Hardier than most muhlies, **Undaunted®** makes a sophisticated replacement for overused 'Karl Foerster' (*Calamagrostis* × *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster', Zones 5–9).

Instead of: Spanish bluebell

Photo: Steve Aitken

Try: Giant camas

Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

This Northwestern beauty is less invasive than Spanish bluebell (*Hyacinthoides hispanica*, Zones 3–8) and certain ornamental onions (*Allium* cvs.), which can become ineradicable garden pests.

Instead of: Calamint

Photo: FG staff

Try: 'Marian Sampson' scarlet horsemint

Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

With cultural needs similar to those of garden mints like calamint (*Calamintha nepeta*, Zones 5–7) and savories (*Satureja* spp. and cvs., Zones 6–8), **'Marian Sampson'** is showier and has a much longer bloom time.

Instead of: Catmint

Photo: Michelle Gervais

Try: Pineleaf penstemon

Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

Pineleaf penstemon's unique color makes it an instant garden attraction. It can be used in the same way as catmints (*Nepeta* spp. and cvs., Zones 3–9), but it is more restrained.

Instead of: Eurasian salvias

Photo: Jennifer Benner

Try: Mojave sage

Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

Mojave sage is much more tolerant of heat and drought than commonly grown Eurasian salvias such as woodland sage (*Salvia nemorosa*, Zones 4–8) and meadow sage (*S. pratensis*, Zones 4–8).

Instead of: Spirea

Photo: Michelle Gervais

Try: Fernbush

Photo: millettephotomedia.com

Fernbush is an extremely tough customer, is more restrained than spireas (*Spiraea* spp. and cvs., Zones 3–9) or forsythias (*Forsythia* spp. and cvs., Zones 3–9), and has good midsummer color.

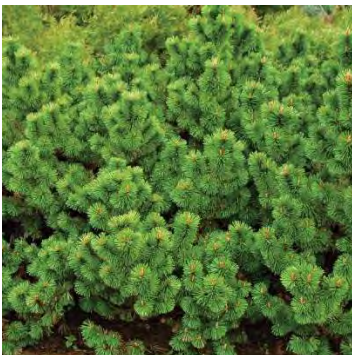
Instead of: Mugo pine

Photo: Jennifer Benner

Try: Dwarf pinyon pine

Photo: Mark Turner/gapphotos.com

Perfect for very sunny exposures with excellent drainage, **dwarf pinyon pine** is more restrained and drought tolerant than mugo pine (*Pinus mugo*, Zones 2–7).

Instead of: Yarrow



Photo: Jennifer Benner

Try: Kannah Creek® buckwheat



Photo: courtesy of Panayoti Kelaidis

Yarrows (*Achillea* spp. and cvs., Zones 3–8) and some spurges (*Euphorbia* spp. and cvs., Zones 3–10) can be weedy, seedy garden thugs. **Kannah Creek® buckwheat** provides carefree color without becoming invasive.

Panayoti Kelaidis is senior curator and director of outreach at Denver Botanic Gardens.

Identifying Holiday Cacti

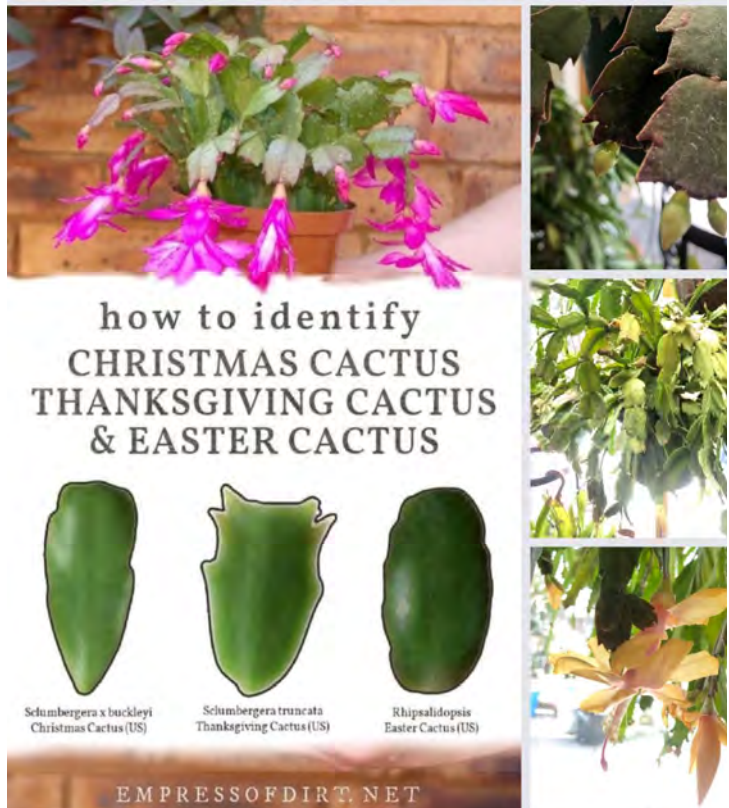
Schlumbergera is a small genus of cacti with six to nine species. These plants grow on trees or rocks in habitats that are generally shady with high humidity, and can be quite different in appearance from their desert-dwelling cousins. The three main types of holiday cacti generally bloom according to this schedule:

Thanksgiving cacti (*Schlumbergera x buckleyi*) are the earliest and longest bloomers, typically producing flowers from late fall through mid-winter.

Christmas cacti (*Schlumbergera x truncata*) tend to bloom from early winter to mid-winter.

Easter cacti (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*) bloom from late winter to mid-spring.

Whichever cactus you have, an almost no fail way to make sure your cactus blooms, is to take it outside for the summer. Bring it back inside before the first frost and then watch the beautiful blooms explode at Thanksgiving or Christmas or Easter. There are so many colors of cactus it's hard to choose just one.



Easy, Picture-Perfect Roses

These varieties don't need lots of primping and pampering to thrive

By Peter E. Kukielski *Fine Gardening* – Issue 156
<https://www.finegardening.com/>

Have you ever looked through a rose catalog and longed for those gorgeous blooms? You order one, wait impatiently for the day it arrives, and then finally get to give it a home in your garden. You do everything right. But the rose in your garden never seems to look like the one pictured in the catalog. Your rose, in fact, might end up being diseased, dropping its leaves, or having a host of other problems that you just can't get ahead of.

It might not be your fault. Not all roses are created equal. In more than 20 years of growing roses, writing and lecturing about roses, leading rose trials, and curating a major botanical garden's rose garden, I've learned that there are many great roses but even worse roses. Maybe the rose you bought, planted, and lovingly cared for wasn't a great rose to start with. Or maybe it wasn't a rose that would thrive in your area of the country and you were doomed from the start.

I love the 'Knock Out' rose for the simple reason that it got people growing roses again. But there are a lot more roses that guarantee just as much success. With careful selection, you can have beautiful roses without a ton of fuss. Let me introduce you to some roses that I have found completely satisfying on several levels.

'Poseidon' Is A Lavender for Warm Climates



In my experience of growing roses, I have found that, in hot, humid climates, lavender roses are prone to black spot. But I've finally discovered a lavender rose that is resistant to disease: 'Poseidon'. The growth on this rose is strong, healthy, and full. Its flowers are borne in clusters and have charm and presence. The buds are a darker color—almost the color of plum wine—which contrasts beautifully with lavender. The bloom is fully petaled, and the edges of the petals are almost scalloped, making the blooms look somewhat old-fashioned in a wonderfully modern way. And 'Poseidon' has a subtle, pleasant scent.

USDA Hardiness Zones: 6 (5 with mulching) to 9

Size: Up to 4 feet tall and wide

Zones: 4 to 9

'Peach Drift' Is Nearly Always Blooming



'Peach Drift' is one of the most consistent roses in the garden. It is

specimens. 'Peach Drift' receives, year after year, superior scores

from rose trailers. Its blooms are about the size of a quarter. They open up in a soft cupped form to reveal a ruff of stamens. Some people have described a light fragrance with the Drift group of roses, but I have never noticed much.

Zones: 5 to 9

Size: Up to 2 feet tall and 3 feet wide

'Tequila' Changes Colors with Shifting Temperatures



With 'Bonica'—a classic powerhouse of a shrub rose—in its parentage, 'Tequila' demonstrates the same characteristics of that strong grower with seemingly constant color, reliability, and disease resistance. 'Tequila' is a sturdy grower with wonderfully healthy green leaves, which provide a lovely background to the flower display. The fragrance-free flowers are about 2 to 3 inches wide and are generally produced in clusters. I have found that its color can be affected by temperature: Cool temperatures give it more of an apricot color, and hotter temperatures result in a softer yellow. The new flowers are saturated in color, and the older blooms are a bit more faded. 'Tequila' grows particularly well in hot, dry climates.

Zones: 5 to 9

Size: Up to 4 feet tall and wide

'Black Forest Rose' Is a Promising Newcomer



'Black Forest Rose' has only been around for a few years but has already established itself as one of the most disease-resistant roses around. I have yet to see any black spot even come near this rose in the gardens or in the trials I am involved with in the Northeast. The healthy, deep green foliage is a beautiful background for the fragrance-free flowers—if, that is, you can see the forest for the trees; this variety produces so many flowers on long sturdy stems that they almost completely cover the foliage. I have seen, for example, up to 50 blooms per cluster on a stem.

‘Carefree Beauty’ Lives Up to Its Name

‘Carefree Beauty’ is wonderful for northern climates where hardiness is an issue. It was bred in the 1970s by Griffith Buck at Iowa State University, who sought to create a collection of roses that would survive the region’s harsh prairie winters; in this case, hardiness implies toughness. And ‘Carefree Beauty’ lives up to its name with exceptional disease resistance. Its sweetly scented blooms are somewhat soft in appearance, with only about 15 to 20 petals that open up to a soft cuplike shape. I have often given ‘Carefree Beauty’ as a gift, knowing that it will succeed in almost any garden. We all know the success of ‘Knock Out’, so it should come as no surprise that ‘Knock Out’ has ‘Carefree Beauty’ in its parentage.

Zones: 4 to 9

Size: 4 to 5 feet tall and wide

‘Cinderella Fairy Tale’ Is Romantic and Old-Fashioned

‘Cinderella Fairy Tale’ has clusters of wonderfully frilly, full, pretty pale pink old-fashioned flowers that cover the plant like a big ball gown worn to the prince’s palace. It is a fantastic grower with healthy, deep green foliage. In all my years of growing this rose, I can’t remember ever seeing black spot on it. The fragrance is described as a powdery fresh, fruity rose fragrance.

Zones: 6 (5 with mulching) to 9

Size: Up to 6 feet tall and 5 feet wide

‘Innocencia Vigorosa’ Is Covered in Blooms

I was struck, from the start, by the health and vigor of this rose. ‘Innocencia Vigorosa’, as the name implies, grows vigorously and is consistently healthy, and the plant has super shiny dark green leaves. I have never seen any black spot on this rose since I’ve had it. As beautiful as the foliage is, however, there is such a sea of softly scented blooms on this plant that, sometimes, you can’t see the leaves. The individual blooms are the purest of white and about 2 inches wide. The white of the petals and the golden color of the stamens is a color match made in heaven; it’s like an elegant white dress dotted with gold beads.

Zones: 6 (5 with mulching) to 9

You Can Grow Roses Without Chemicals

If the genetics of a rose doesn’t provide great disease resistance, then your rose-growing experience might also involve fungicide. But there are a few things you can do to stack the deck in your favor.

Choose A Rose That Is Suited to Your Climate

Florida and Iowa have vastly different climates, but for some reason, the same roses are sold in both states. The part of the country in which you live will help dictate which varieties of rose you choose. Ask your regional botanical garden which varieties it is having success with. This information should give you a good starting place when choosing a rose for your backyard.

Give It What It Wants

The first step in growing a happy rose is giving it exactly what it wants, rather than watching it struggle under less-than-ideal conditions. Give it at least six hours of full sun per day in soil with good drainage. Give it supplemental water the first year to help it get established; after that, water it only during extreme heat or drought, which will encourage it to develop a strong root system that searches for water. Maintain a 3-inch-deep layer of mulch around the plant, which will preserve moisture, block weeds, and slowly break down to feed your soil and your plant.

Feed The Soil, Not Your Rose

Just as eating a healthy, balanced diet is better for you than relying on vitamin supplements, growing your roses in healthy, nutrient-rich soil is better than relying on synthetic fertilizers. If you take fertilizer out of the equation and focus on doing whatever you can to continuously benefit your soil, then your roses should thrive. Add compost to the entire planting bed before planting, and top-dress with compost each season. Apply, on a regular basis, organic fertilizers and amendments, such as fish and seaweed emulsions, composted manures, and chipped

*Peter E. Kukielski, an independent rose consultant, is the former curator and present senior advisor to the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden at the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, New York. He is the author of the forthcoming book *Roses without Chemicals*.*

Photos: Peter E. Kukielski; millettephotomedia.com;

Kor!An/courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org; Jerry Pavia; gapphotos.com

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