

YOUTH GARDEN CLUB HANDBOOK



(2025 – 2027)

**“CHATTERING WITH NATURE
THROUGH GARDENING”**

LOVING NATURE’S CHATTERBOX

Frances G. Cain
3rd Vice-President, GCNC

2025-2027 Officers

President, Charles McLendon

1st Vice President: Marilyn Wright

2nd Vice President: Suzanne Gurski

3rd Vice President: Frances G. Cain

Affiliated with:

National Garden Clubs, Inc.

The South Atlantic Region (SAR) of Garden Clubs

Youth Chairs and Contacts

NGC Youth Committee Chair: Bob Markey

NGC Smokey Bear Poster National Coordinator:

Terry Critchlow at tchritchlow@aol.com

Forest Service National Coordinator:

Iris Velez at iris.velez@usda.gov

SAR High School Essay:

Heidi Sage hbsage@aol.com, 540-878-8162.

SAR Smokey Bear/Woodsey Owl:

Darene Honeycutt honeycuttdarene@gmail.com

910-385-8398.

GCNC Youth Chair: Frances G. Cain

francescain02@yahoo.com 703-217-6975

GCNC: www.gardenclubofnc.org/youth

NGC: www.gardenclub.org/youth

SAR: www.southatlanticregiongardenclubs.org.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-------|
| The 2025-2027 GCNC Officers | 2 |
| Youth Chairs and Contacts | 2 |
| Table of Contents | 3 |
| GCNC President’s Message | 4 |
| Third Vice-President’s Message | 5 |
| Junior Garden Club Collect | 6 |
| District Youth Chairs | 6 |
| 2025 – 2026 Youth Leader of the Year | 7 |
| 2025 – 2026 First Place Youth Clubs of the Year | 8-11 |
| GCNC Youth Membership Guidelines | 12-13 |
| GCNC Youth By-Laws | 14 |
| GCNC Youth Garden Club Directory | 15-26 |
| GCNC Youth Awards Rules 2025-2027 | 27-28 |
| Awards Deadline Submission Dates | 29 |
| GCNC Youth Awards | 30-44 |
| SAR & NGC Contests | 45-52 |
| SAR Youth Awards | 52-53 |
| NGC Youth Awards | 54-55 |
| Programs, Ideas, Resources | 56-58 |
| Earth Sciences (for GCNC Award #20, or educational resources | 59-64 |
| Summation | 65 |

2025-2027

The Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc.

P. O. Box 3350

Raleigh, NC 27636-33520

E-mail: theGCofNC1@aol.com

Website: www.gardenclubofnc.org



President: Charles McLendon

As President, I extend a heartfelt thank you to the youth leaders who guide, encourage, and inspire our young gardeners. Your leadership, dedication, and positive influence are shaping not only strong gardeners but also responsible citizens who will continue to nurture both people and the earth for years to come. I encourage each of our youths to keep planting, learning, growing, and becoming future stewards of a greener tomorrow. Happy Gardening.

3rd Vice President, Youth Clubs Chair
“Chattering with Nature through Gardening”



Gardening can be a form of “chattering with nature:” **fostering a deep connection through mindful engagement with the natural world.** Gardening engages all the senses – the feel of the soil, the scent of herbs and flowers, the sight of new growth, and the sounds of nature.

You are much appreciated as you teach the importance, appreciation, and the understanding of living things. Gardening provides a unique opportunity to “chat” with nature through reciprocal relationship between the gardener and the natural world. “Hats off” to you – volunteers, youth leaders, sponsoring clubs, and award sponsors for the contributions you are making in the lives, growth, enthusiasm, and dedication of our youth experiences and for a brighter future and environment. THANK YOU for ALL that you do.

Junior Garden Club Collect

*Our Heavenly Father God of all beauty, we thank
Thee for thy goodness and loving kindness, which we
can see expressed in the flowers, birds, and trees.
Grant that we may show gratitude to Thee by
cultivating in our hearts blossoms of love the
fragrance of sympathy, and tenderness towards all
growing things; uprooting in our lives weeds of
bitterness, thorns of criticism and tares of
unkindness. Amen*



Healthy soil has good soil structure,
can cycle nutrients, filters and retains water, is easily
penetrated by roots, and has a variety of living organisms.

District Youth Chairs

District 1- 2: TBA

District 3: TBA

District 4: TBA

District 5: TBA

District 8: TBA

District 9: TBA

District 10: Michelle Ayers, ayersmichelle@sbcglobal.net

Phone: 216-509-1068

District 11: TBA

District 12: TBA

Youth Leader(s) of the Year



Barbara Ketchum

Sandy Purvis

Sandy Purvis and Barbara Ketchum

It has been 9 years since Sandy and Barbara became the powerful “duo” for “The Raleigh Garden Club’s,” youth Club, “The Rosey Girls,” They start the Rosey Girls team’s year planning in August, resulting in a clear plan for each of the 10 months with an approach of consistency, simplicity, and meaningful projects. They are animated in their leadership to combine the strengths of the volunteers to blend strategic vision and opportunities for the girls to learn and experience the world of gardening and the many truths and beauty of nature. Their leadership depicts and creates a warm and loving interaction with the girls, and a welcoming and supportive space that encourages learning and personal growth for the girls at the “Raleigh Girls’ Club.” The “Rosey Girls Crew” of volunteers continues to grow, as members see the meaningful work that is getting done through the club’s monthly newsletter, excited sharing members, and winning award announcements. Award #19.

First Place Youth Clubs of the Year - 2024-2025:

Given to the club participating in all facets of Youth Gardening and achieving outstanding results as indicated on the Youth Rating Sheet: \$25 Award.



1A - PK-2: “Wee Planter,” Mary C. Williams Elementary School. Laura Elliott, Barb Cowan Co-Chair Leader, Suzanne Huggins, and Jen Strum Co-Chair Leader. Sponsors: “Cape Fear Garden Club, Wilmington, NC, District 11.

First Place Youth Clubs of the Year, Continued



1B- K-5: “Bee Fresh Garden Club,” Leader Erin Redfern.
South Elementary School, Sponsor: “Roxboro Garden Club,”
Roxboro, NC, District 9.



There are podcasts named “Life in the Soil,” which discuss soil science, biodiversity, and conservation.

First Place Youth Clubs of the Year - Continued



ID- 9-12: “Croasdaile Therapy Jr. Garden Club,” Linda Steward, Leader. Sponsor: The Croasdaile Garden Club, Durham, NC, District 9.

First Place Youth Clubs of the Year, Continued



1E – Special Needs: “Just for Fun Garden Club,” Leader, Phyllis Pompeo-Phelps. Sponsor: “Troutman Garden Club, Statesville, NC; District 3.



To play “I spy creatures in the soil,” focus on the world of microscopic and macroscopic organisms that live under our feet. Adapt to a simple, observational activity for young children or a more detailed exploration for older kids.

The GCNC Youth Clubs Membership Guidelines

Youth Garden Clubs can be organized through schools by class or student group; through pre-established clubs, home-school groups, daycare centers, after school centers, Head Start programs, neighborhood associations, scouts, and even an adult garden club member's own children or grandchildren. Clubs may even be organized for the children of migrant workers or participants in hospital rehabilitation, disease treatment centers, homes for domestic violence, or children's homes.

GCNC youth clubs are grouped according to grade level:

Pre-K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and Special Needs.

Special Needs clubs may apply for all GCNC youth awards. Awards 16 and 17A & B are awards exclusively for special needs.

Requirements - Youth Clubs Must:

1. Be sponsored by a senior club of The Garden Club of NC.
2. Maintain a minimum of 4 members.
3. Hold at least 5 meetings per year.
4. Complete the Youth Garden Club Application and pay an initiation fee of \$1.00.
5. Pay yearly dues of \$10.00 per club. Deadline for dues is March 1st. *If a club starts in October of one year, dues must be paid again by March of the following year.*
6. Complete Annual Rating Sheet. Points determine Club of the Year, Best All-Around Clubs, Honor Roll status,

and Special Achievement Clubs. The Rating Form is on the GCNC website under Youth Initiative.

The Senior Club is expected to provide enthusiasm, guidance, and support as needed and be in contact with the youth club on a regular basis.

Download the application from the GCNC website and mail check for \$11.00 (\$1 initiation fee and \$10.00 for annual dues) to the GCNC Office (\$10.00 for renewals).

For additional information see:

<https://gardenclubofnc.org/Youth>

VERY IMPORTANT: WHEN MAILING YOUR ANNUAL DUES AND RATING SHEETS, PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THE YOUTH GARDEN CLUB HANDBOOK AND THE GARDENER - Deadline: March 1st



From soil, we get food, clothing, and shelter through plants and animals that grow in it. Soil also provides essential resources like clean water, building materials, and even medicine, while supporting a healthy environment by filtering water, cycling nutrients, and storing carbon.

GCNC Youth Bylaws

The North Carolina Gardener Yearbook

Article XIV

Section 7

- A) Youth gardening activities shall be coordinated by the Third Vice President. Youth Gardeners shall follow the National guidelines as the structure and make up of youth clubs.
- B) Each group shall coordinate their work under the direction of the Third Vice President including rating sheets and awards. The Third Vice President shall keep records of all initiation fees and forward these monies to the State Headquarters' Office. In each district a Youth Gardener Chairman shall be appointed by the District Director to work under the direction of the Third Vice President.
- C) To be eligible for membership, each youth club must be sponsored by a senior club, have a minimum of four members, and hold at least five meetings during the year. An initiation fee shall be paid by the sponsoring club. Funds from this source shall be used exclusively for promoting youth work.
- D) The Annual dues of each youth club shall be payable by March 1. Checks shall be made payable to and sent to The Garden Club of North Carolina, Inc. Funds from this source shall be used exclusively for promoting youth work.

GCNC Youth Garden Clubs Directory

District 1

City: **Brevard**

Name: **Brevard HS Gardening Club**

Amara Campanini catswithdrums@icloud.com

828-556-1189

Sponsor: Transylvania Garden Club

Grades: 9-12

City: **Sherrills Ford, NC**

Name: **Sherrills Ford Elementary Garden Club**

Brittany Burgin Brittany_burgin@catawbасschools.net

Amanda Currin Amanda_currie@catawbасschools.net

828-478-2662

Sponsor: Lake Norman Garden Club

Grades: 6-8

District 3

City: **Charlotte**

Name: **Blazing Bees Youth Garden Club**, Neighborhood

Helen M. Mayhew helen@helenmayhew.com

704-756-3579

Sponsor: "Flower Power Garden Club"

Grades: K-2, 3-5

District 3, Continued

City: **Charlotte**

Name: **Snapdragons**, Fletcher Ranking Institute

Sharrone Robinson ZETA1920@hotmail.com

704-488-8097

Sponsor: Sardis Wood Garden Club

Grades: 3-5 Special Needs

City: **Troutman**

Name: **Have Fun Club**, Mitchell College, Ext. Edu.

Phyllis A PompeoPhelps phei1252@gmail.com

305-761-7606

Nancy Ulven nju012148@gmail.com

704-380-4239

Sponsor: Troutman Garden Club

Special Needs

City: **Mooresville**

Name: **HEAL Gardening Club**

Alessa Addo alessaaddo@gmail.com

704-450-7616

Sponsor: Mooresville Garden Club

Grades: 9-12

District 4

City: **Bermuda Run**

Name: **Ellis Pollinator Agents**, Ellis Middle School

Amy Bridges amybtag@gmail.com

336-793-7125

Sponsor: Bermuda Run Garden Club

Grades: 6-8

City: **Winston-Salem**

Name: **Puppywood Youth Club**

Mary Craig Tennille marycraigtennille@hotmail.com

336-391-7656

Sponsor: Dogwood Garden Club

Grade: Pre-K

Districts 5

No Youth Garden Clubs

(Districts 6 and 7 are closed numbers)

District 8

City: **Dunn**

Name: **The Sonshine Gardeners**

Darene Honeycutt honeycuttdarene@gmail.com

910-385-8398

Sponsor: GC of Spivery's Corners

Grades: Pre-K-2

District 8, Continued

City: **Fayetteville**

Name: **Junior Fayetteville Garden Club**

Becky Lee beckyleeart48@gmail.com

910-489-1110

Sponsor: Fayetteville Garden Club

Grades: K-8

City: **Lillington**

Name: **Four Seasons Junior Garden Club** Robin Paige Boys
and Girls Club

Becky Blair Rebeccablairnc@gmail.com

919-812-7861

Sponsor: Four Seasons Garden Club

Grades: 1-5

District 9

City: **Durham**

Name: **Croadsdaile Therapy Junior Garden Club**, Riverside
High School

Linda Stewart lindastewart@gmail.com

919-516-6566

Sponsor: Croadsdaile GC

Special Needs – High School (9-12)

District 9, Continued

City: **Roxboro**

Name: **Bee Fresh Garden Club**, South Elementary School

Erin Redfern redferne@person.k12.nc.us

919-323-9920

Sponsor: Roxboro Garden Club

Grades: **K-2**

City: **Roxboro**

Name: **Bee Fresh Garden Club**, South Elementary School

Erin Redfern redferne@person.k12.nc.us

919-323-9920

Sponsor: Roxboro Garden Club

Grades: **K-5**

City: **Roxboro**

Name: **Bulldog Designs #1**, Roxboro Charter School

Cheryl Allen cwallennc@gmail.com

336-322-0259

Jill Clayton claytonjc1@roxborocommunityschool.org

336-597-0020

Sponsor: Roxboro Garden Club

Grades: **6—8**

District 9, Continued

City: **Roxboro**

Name: **Bulldog Designs# 2**, Roxboro Charter School

Cheryl Allen cwallennc@gmail.com

336-322-0259

Jill Clayton claytonjc1@roxborocommunityschool.org

336-597-0020

Sponsor: Roxboro Garden Club

Grades: 9-12

District 10

City: **Knightdale**

Name: **Boy Scout Troop 365**

Colleen Yeager sugar4ulips@gmail.com

913-710-7599

Sponsor: Two Green Thumbs Garden Club

Grade: K-2

City: **Knightdale**

Name: **Scouts BSA Troop 365**

Colleen Yeager sugar4ulips@gmail.com

913-710-7599

Sponsor: Two Green Thumbs Garden Club

Grades: 3-5

District 10, Continued

City: **Knightdale**

Name: **Ladybugs and Grasshoppers**

Stefanie Despagni sdespagni@gmail.com

919-449-7830

Sponsor: Two Green Thumbs Garden Club

Pre-K

City: **Raleigh**

Name: **The Buggy Bunch**

Trish Harrill harrilltrish@gmail.com

919-264-8889

Sponsor: Laurel Hills Garden Club

Grades: K-2, 3-5, 6-8

City: **Raleigh**

Name: **The Rosey Girls, Raleigh Girls Club**

Sandy Purvis handrightingink@gmail.com

610-213-3334

Barbara Ketchum barbaraketchum@mindspring.com

919-280-7648

Sponsor: Raleigh Garden Club

Grades: 3-5

District 10, Continued

City: **Raleigh**

Name: **Jeffrey's Grove School Club, #1**

Angie Carden

angiescarden@gmail.com

919-815-9074

Sponsor: Raleigh Garden Club

Grades K-2

City: **Raleigh**

Name: **Jeffrey's Grove School, #2**

Angie Carden

angiescarden@gmail.com

919-815-9074

Sponsor: Raleigh Garden Club

Grades 3-5

City: **Zebulon**

Name: **Dirt Diggers, Moorehead Governor's School**

Karyn Farmer

karyn8910@gmail.com

240-779-1346

Sponsor: Steel Magnolias Garden Club

Special Needs – Ages 8-18 (15 students) Grades 9-12

District 11

City: **Emerald Isle**

Name: **Green Thumb GC #1**, White Oak Elementary School

Sheila Fisher

Shelia.825@hotmail.com

201-264-1903

Sponsor: Emerald Isle Garden Club

Grades: K-2

City: **Emerald Isle**

Name: **Green Thumb GC #2**, White Oak Elementary School

Sheila Fisher

Shelia.825@hotmail.com

201-264-1903

Sponsor: Emerald Isle Garden Club

Grades: 3-5

City: **New Berm**

Name: **Garden Bees**, Girls and Boys Club of New Bern

Karen Powers

kpowers913@gmail.com

585-797-8209

Sponsor: Trent Woods Garden Club

Grades: 3-5

District 11, Continued

City: **Shallotte**

Name: **The Carolina Bees** (mixed groups)

Becky Todd Rebecca46edwards@yahoo.com

910-532-4810

Sponsor: Coastal Garden Club

Grades: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 (10)

City: **Whiteville**

Name: **Little Sprouts**, Whiteville Methodist Preschool

Sue Hawkes suehawkes2016@gmail.com

910-640-7954

Sponsor: Aza Melia Garden Club

Grades: PreK - 5

City: **Wilmington**

Name: **Busy Bees**

Anne Eitelman aeitelman@ec.rr.com

302-743-1240

Sponsor: New Hanover Garden Club

Grade: Pre-K

City: **Wilmington**

Name: **Busy Little Caterpillars**, St Andrews on the Sound

Manuela DuPisanie manuela@dupisanie.com

910-200-2350

Sponsor: New Hanover Garden Club

Grade: Pre-K

District 11, Continued

City: **Wilmington**

Name: **Friends of the Earth Junior GC**

Bradley Creek Elementary School

Jill Wilson

jillpillnc67@gmail.com

910-262-4997

Laura Elliott

lauraajo40@me.com

910-297-5219

Sponsor: Cape Fear Garden Club

Grades K-2

City: **Wilmington**

Name: **The Little Sprouts**, Ogden Elementary

Leader: Sheila Wilson

Swilson17@ec.rr.com

910-620-4462

Sponsor: New Hanover Garden Club

Grades 3-5

City: **Wilmington**

Name: **Wee Planters**, Mary C. Williams Elementary

Jill Wilson

jillpillnc67@gmail.com

910-262-4997

Laura Elliott

lauraajo40@me.com

910-297-5219

Sponsor: Cape Fear Garden Club

Grades K-2

District 11, Continued

City: **Wrightsville Beach**

Name: **Rooty Rascals**, Wrightsville Beach Elementary

Heidi Lee heidilee@me.com

910-232-4725

Katy Cofer katycofer@gmail.com

910-232-4725

Sponsor: Harbor Island Garden Club

Grades 3-5

District 12

City: **Ahoskie**

Name: **Cardinal Junior Garden Club** (mixed schools and churches)

Nancy Baker nobb417@gmail.com

252-287-5740

Jamie Burns jnburns1983@yahoo.com

252-332-9461

Sponsor: Ahoskie Garden Club

Grades: 3-5

City: **Manteo**

Name: **Dare Diggers Youth Garden Club**

Beverly Firme Beverly.firme@yahoo.com

202-549-4398

Sponsor: Roanoke Island Garden Club

Grade: 3



Written by Brenda Moore, previous National Past President, “Network with Nature” is a K-4 children’s book, but applies to all ages. It is available online on the National Garden Club website.

GCNC Youth Awards 2025-27 Rules

1. Entries for the GCNC youth awards **MUST** be received by the state youth chair no later than March 1st. Entries received after that date will not be judged. Applications should be sent to the current youth chair listed in the youth handbook or GCNC website.
2. **For Awards 2,3,4,5,6,7,10,11,13,14,15,16 & 18: The entry should include a brief** narrative form: percentage of members participating, approximate number of hours spent, cost, publicity, before and after pictures, and a description of what was accomplished with a completed Youth Awards Application attached to the outside.
3. Special Needs Clubs may compete for all awards.

4. Youth Awards Application Form is available at www.gardenclubnc.org
5. Entries will be returned at the State Annual Meeting to the Youth Leader, Club President, or District Director. The person receiving the entries and award checks must sign as receiving these documents.
6. SAR and NGC awards are listed respectively at: www.southatlanticregiongardenclubs.org/awards-2/ and www.gardenclub.org/youth-awards

Award #20, The Sunflower Achievement Award or Daisy

Patch: This personal achievement award can be earned while participating in a group and/or while working individually as a club member, to achieve the required work of each category. The activity of the group can apply to an individual's efforts of participation if the eligible activity is recorded, per directives. Also, the group may apply for any club awards if the activity meets other award criteria.



Important Deadline Dates:

ALL Awards are due to Youth Chair by indicated dates. First Place winning awards are forwarded to SAR and NGC through GCNC's Youth Chair.

December 1: SAR Essay Contest (Grades 9-12)

January 1:

Poetry Contest (K – 9th Grade)

Youth Recyclable Sculpture Contest (Grades 4-8)

College Scholarship to GCNC Scholarship Chair
(Vicki Corporon)

January 20:

Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest (Grades 1-5); Five state winners to SAR by February 15 by GCNC's Youth Chair.

January 25:

Other State winners to SAR by Youth Chair.

March 1:

GCNC Youth Club Awards (K-12)

Youth Club Dues

Annual Youth Rating Sheet

GCNC Youth Awards

Find GCNC Youth Entry Form on GCNC Website under the Youth Category.

All cash awards are \$20.00 cash except where noted at 1, 16, & 19. Rule #2 Applies to All Awards Except 1,8,9,12,17 & 18. Award #19 must be submitted by the adult sponsoring garden club. #20 is an individual accomplishment award. A youth's progress must be monitored and signed-off by an adult.

#1 Club of the Year: Given to the club participating in all facets of Youth Gardening & achieving outstanding results as indicated on the Youth Rating Sheet - **Award is \$25**

1A, PK-2 Sponsor: Robin Weisner

1B, 3-5 Sponsor: Ruth Yarbrough

1C, 6-8 Sponsor: Jenene Smith

1D, 9-12 Sponsor: Marie Schaedler

1E, Special Needs: Sunshine Williams

#2 Horticulture: Given to the club with the most outstanding work in horticulture.

2A, PK-2 Sponsor: Judy Barnes

2B, 3-5 Sponsor: Land of Sky GC

2C, 6-8 Sponsor: Rita Mercer

2D, 9-12 Sponsor: Janet O'Neil

#3 Edible Horticulture: Given to the club with the most outstanding edible gardening project.

3A, PK-2 Sponsor: Cathy Green

3B, 6-8 Sponsor: Kathy Perretta

3C, 6-8 Sponsor: Deborah Thompson

3D, 9-12 Sponsor: Joyce Moses

#4 Civic Development/Beautification: Given to the club executing the most outstanding project(s) in the areas of beautification, conservation, ecology, or litter control.

GCNC Youth Awards, Continued

#4 Civic Development/Beautification, Continued:

4A, PK-2 Sponsor: Phebe Kirkman

4B, 3-5 Sponsor: Phebe Kirkman

4C, 6-8 Sponsor: Two Green Thumbs GC, Phebe Kirkman

4D, 9-12 Sponsor: Mooresville GC

#5 Conservation/Ecology: Given to the club executing the most outstanding conservation, ecology, or litter control project.

5A, PK-2 Sponsor: Pine Knolls GC

5B, 3-5 Sponsor: In Honor of Joan Eccard

5C, 6-8 Sponsor: Trish Stewart

5D, 9-12 Sponsor: District 12

#6 Wildflowers: Given to the club or individual member having the most outstanding wildflower, native plant, or nectar plant project.

6A, PK-2 Sponsor: Jenene Smith

6B, 3-5 Sponsor: Suzanne Gurski

6C, 6-8 Sponsor: Joan Eccard

6D, 9-12 Sponsor: Faye Canupp

#7 Bird Project: Given to the club with the most outstanding bird project

7A, PK-2 Sponsor: Judy Barnes

7B, 3-5 Sponsor: Flower Power GC

7C, 6-8 Sponsor: Sandy Purvis

7D, 9-12 Sponsor: Barbara Haynes

#8 Bluebird Drawing: Given to an individual member for the best drawing of a bluebird, must be freehand, no computer or photocopied templates. Must be colored and signed by the artist.

8A, PK-2 Sponsor: Frances Eder

8B, 3-5 Sponsor: Pat Cashwell

GCNC Youth Awards, Continued

#8 Bluebird Drawing, Continued

8C, 6-8 Sponsor: Betty Wright

8D, 9-12 Sponsor: Mary Lou Goodman

#9 Cardinal Drawing: Given to an individual member for the best drawing of a cardinal. Must be freehand, no computer or photocopied templates. Must be colored and signed by the artist.

9A, PK-2 Sponsor: Robin Weisner

9B, 3-5 Sponsor: Robin Weisner

9C, 6-8 Sponsor: Banner Elk GC

9D, 9-12 Sponsor: Gail Hill

#10 Bird Essay: Given to an individual member writing the best essay about a bird found in North Carolina.

10A, PK-2 Sponsor: Adaline Pasour

10B, 3-5 Sponsor: Cheryl Allen

10C, 6-8 Sponsor: Diane Harkness

10D, 9-12 Sponsor: In Honor of Barbara Blackwelder

#11 Flower Show: Given to the club entering the competitive classes of a youth section in an adult Standard Flower Show or staging its own Flower Show.

11A, PK-2 Sponsor: Mary Reeves

11B, 3-5 Sponsor: Mary Reeves

11C, 6-8 Sponsor: Mary Reeves

11D, 9-12 Sponsor: Mary Reeves

#12 Scrapbooks: Given to the club submitting the best and most complete scrapbook.

12A, PK-2 Sponsor: Two Green Thumbs GC

12B, 3-5 Sponsor: Judy Gurtner

12C, 6-8 Sponsor: Jenene Smith

12D, 9-12 Sponsor: Two Green Thumbs GC

GCNC Youth Awards, Continued

#13 Arbor Day: Given to the club executing the most outstanding tree project

13A, PK-2 Sponsor: Gail Hill

13B, 3-5 Sponsor: Betty Wright

13C, 6-8 Sponsor: Teresa Langley

13D, 9-12 Sponsor: New Hanover GC

#14 Butterfly: Given to the club executing the most outstanding butterfly project.

14A, PK-2 Sponsor: Ruth Garver

14B, 3-5 Sponsor: Shirley Turner

14C, 6-8 Sponsor: Shirley Turner

14D, 9-12 Sponsor: Shirley Turner

#15 Pollinators: Given to the club executing the most outstanding pollinator project.

15A, PK-2 Sponsor: Kathy Perretta

15B, 3-5 Sponsor: Ruth Garver

15C, 6-8: Sponsor: Charlotte Council of GC

15D, 9-12 Sponsor: Transylvania GC

\$100 Award

#16A, Special Needs Project: Given to the Special Needs Club that executes the most outstanding garden, pollinator, or environmental project.

Special Needs Sponsor: Evergreen Garden Club of Goldsboro

#17A, Special Needs Club: Open to Only Special Needs Clubs.

All grade levels are eligible. *“My Favorite Flower”* submitted as a poster

Sponsor: Linda McLendon

GCNC Youth Awards, Continued

#18 National Contests Award: Given to the club submitting the most entries for National Garden Clubs, Inc. awards to include: Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl poster contests, Essay, Poetry, and Sculpture contests.

18A, PK-2 Sponsor: In honor of Carol Yee by Beth Richards

18B, 3-5 Sponsor: honor of Sunshine Williams by Jo Goodson

18C, 6-8 Sponsor: Frances Cain

18D, 9-12 Sponsor: Sue Ellen Bennett

\$50 Award

#19 Youth Garden Club Leader of the Year: Given to the outstanding Youth Garden Club leader. Entries must be submitted by the sponsoring GCNC federated garden club. Include a detailed description of projects and information about the youth garden club and why the leader is outstanding. Sponsor: Jill Rogers

#20 GCNC Sunflower Achievement Award (Certificate) or Daisy Patch Award

All grade levels are eligible. Given to the individual youth who has completed the requirements in the specified period.

Note: See requirements for this individual accomplishment award starting on the next page for the titled award.



Soil organisms are the diverse life forms in soil, needed for breaking down organic matter, cycling nutrients, improving matter, and supporting plant growth.

Award #20: GCNC
Sunflower Youth Achievement Award
(Established 2025 – 2026 garden club year)
and
The Daisy Day Achievement Patch

These are achievement awards developed for inquisitive and motivated gardening students in grades K-12, who are willing to perform the required projects and find the “joy of gardening.” These are Garden Club of NC Awards given to individuals, not clubs. The youth must be a member of a local youth federated club of GCNC. The requirements for both awards are the same. The youth achiever selects to receive either a Sunflower Certificate of Achievement or a Daisy Day Scout Patch by naming either award program on the Youth Award Application.

The “**Sunflower Youth Achievement Award**” named by Frances Cain, 3rd Vice President, is a spin-off of the “**Daisy Day Patch Award**” developed by Darene Honeycutt, Past GCNC President, for “The Daisy Girl Scout.” The program has been revised with additional tasks to select, guidelines, and extended to **all youth members** including scouts (for badges) and reviewed and edited by Darene Honeycutt.

CREDITS: Sandy Purvis, Co-Leader of “Rosey Girls Youth Garden Club” of the Raleigh Garden Club, and a GCNC’s 2025 “Leader of the Year” saw the possibility of developing the Daisy Day Patch Award to be a measurable and educational tool for all school-age garden club youths in NC, who wanted to develop skills in horticulture. Frances Cain asked Sandy Purvis to join her to build on the design by Darene Honeycutt to make this a reality. As always, Sandy’s creativeness, groundbreaking ingenuity, and love for children’s development proved to be insightful and invaluable. The plan was sanctioned by President Charles McLendon, added to the awards program, and first offered for the 2025-2026 program year.

Description and Qualification:

These are achievement awards that are related to horticulture, the environment, floral design, and birds. Youth must complete the requirements within a two-year period within the same grade level category. (k-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12) (The young gardener may be able to complete the program in less than two years). The award is available to all youths enrolled in a youth GCNC garden club. As the young gardener advances in grade levels, the award can be achieved more than once. This process allows the young gardener to earn the Daisy Day Patch or/and the Sunflower Achievement Award, but not at the same time; OR to earn two Sunflower Achievement Awards.

Each youth category has a specific number of tasks to complete. Allow a maximum of **ONE** 8" x 11.5" sheet (front and back allowed) for each chosen task in a category with pictures executing the work and the finished product. This will become the "Book of Evidence." Include in the book of evidence (1/2-inch three ring binder): Youth Award Application and a "photo release" signed by the guardian and leader/advisor/supervisor. The release is required to give recognition for these personal achievements.

WE CANNOT STRESS ENOUGH, THE IMPORTANCE OF PICTURES OF THE YOUNG GARDENER EXECUTING THE PROJECT AND A PHOTO OF THE COMPLETED PROJECT. HOWEVER, EVERY TASK NEEDS AT LEAST ONE PICTURE AND SOME WILL REQUIRE UP TO THREE OR MORE, UNLESS THE TASK REQUESTS A WRITTEN DOCUMENT.

Grades K-2: Must complete 1 requirement from each of the nine categories.

Grades 3-5: Must complete 2 requirements from each of the first 7 categories, and 1 requirement for categories 8 and 9.

Grades: 6-8: Must complete 3 requirements from the first 7 categories, and 1 requirement from categories 8 and 9.

Grades: 9-12: Must complete 4 requirements from each of the first 7 categories and 1 requirement from categories 8 and 9.

Please be sure the following are included on each task page:

- The category number, task letter and description must be written at the top of each page submitted.
- For each task, a write-up of what was done is required.
- Leaders (or supervisor's) name, signature, and date must reside at the bottom of the page of each completed task. This information will be used to certify the youth's work and determine the date the project was completed.

Tasks for All Grade Groups: Based on your grade, choose the task(s) you desire to complete under each of the nine categories:

Category 1: Garden Club Research

- View (by Zoom) a pre-recorded local adult NC garden club meeting** prepared by your local NC Garden Club or attend an adult club meeting. Include group photo.
- Learn about the history of your sponsoring Garden Club.** When and how did it start? How has it changed over the years? Include group photo.
- Learn the mission and goals of the Garden Club of North Carolina.** Go online to GardenClubofNC.org. Include group photo.
- Invite your sponsoring NC Garden Club president to your youth meeting** to give a short talk (to describe the focus, mission, and activities of the club and to praise the work of the kids in the youth group). Include group photo.

Category 2: Gardens

- Plant a tree and watch it grow.** Record the data each season, that is, every 3 months until the binder is submitted. Measurement evidence: Dates and heights of tree in inches at the start time of the project and while achieving the Award, seasonally

(every 3 months) until the award work is completed.
Include photo at time of planting and most recent photo of tree.

- b. Plant a flowerpot** and grow a plant for at least 2 months. Discuss the plant chosen and the importance of sun, water, and fertilizer. For evidence, show photo of potting and two months later.
- c. Plant an outdoor vegetable or flower in a container or an in-ground garden.** Describe how and what you planted in it and what care you gave it. Describe its growth or what happened. Display photo with vegetable or flower in the pot or in-ground and again, 2 months later.
- d. Volunteer to work** in a community garden, church, or school garden for 3 hours or more. Describe for evidence what was done in detail. Include photos.
- e. Plant an outdoor evergreen herbal garden using at least 3 different herbs.** This herbal garden may be in-ground or in pots. Describe your plant selection, soil type, care, and results. How did you use the herbs? Label the herbs. Include photos.
- f. Plant an outdoor sensory garden** with one or two plants for each sensory quality:
 - 1) Texture: fuzzy, fine, coarse, prickly (lamb's ear, hostas)
 - 2) thick, squishy leaves (like aloe or succulents)
 - 3) fragrant plants (herbs)
 - 4) visual interest (sea holly, buttonbush, hostas).Evidence: List the names of the plants that you chose, describe your selection of choices and why. Label the plants using popsicle sticks. Describe what happened after 2 months. Photo of the freshly planted garden and again two months later with the young gardener.

Category 3: Design

- a. **Plant a fairy garden** using a pot or deep dish, potting soil, 2-3 small plants, a miniature sized house, fairies and/or gnomes, rocks painted or unpainted, and small treasures. Allow it to be outside at least 6 hours per day, for the plants' benefit. Check for proper drainage. Document growth or failure of any plants. Include photos.
- b. **Visit a flower show, farmers market, garden center or arboretum.** Evidence: Write what you saw and what impressed you. Include a photo of your favorite floral designs or whatever impressed you. Include photos.
- c. **Make a floral arrangement.** Evidence: Describe what, why and how you chose the flowers and greens for your arrangement. How did you arrange them? Include photo.
- d. **Participate in a floral design show for kids.** Check with the organizers of this flower show to make sure you know the requirements of a beautiful display and what the judge will be looking for. Your local adult garden club can steer you in the right direction. (Leaders: consider setting up your own in-house flower show with an approved flower show judge.)

Category 4: Community

- a. **Celebrate Arbor Day or Earth Day.** For grades K-2 and 3-5: Youth Garden leaders will research both days and decide how their young gardeners will celebrate it. What did you decide? To the kids: Describe what, how, and where you celebrated either of these days. Attach evidence of your work. Include Photos.
- b. **Complete a community service project,** such as weeding or picking up litter (wear gloves and recycle where possible). Describe where, and what you did. How much and what kind of litter did you mostly collect? Did

- bystanders react to your actions? Explain the task details and reactions. Include pictures.
- c. **Complete a garden therapy project** with a sick or elderly person, such as an older friend or family member. What project did you do with them and describe how they enjoyed the project. Include pictures.
 - d. **Promote National Garden Week** (1st week in June) by making a poster mentioning that “It’s National Garden Week!” at the top and add at the bottom, “The Many Joys of Gardening!” Then talk to a gardener about why they like to garden. Incorporate some of these ideas into your poster. Draw someone involved in a garden. Sign your drawing. Put the word out! Consider hanging up your poster in a garden center’s front window or other location where many people will see it. Talk to the store manager or other responsible person to see if this would be acceptable. Evidence: Describe what you did and what happened in the process. Attach a photo of your poster hanging in a window or wherever it was posted.

Category 5: Horticulture

- a. **Draw a picture of a fruit tree** (using an example from the internet) including the leaves, branches, trunk, flowers, fruit, roots, twigs, and crown. Add arrows to identify these parts. Evidence: write the function of each part of the tree on the back of the page. Place drawing in binder.
- b. **Start a seedling or propagate a plant** by starting a seed in a cup with moist soil and very bright lights, if available. When it grows to 3 inches tall, transplant it into a bigger pot or plant it outside in soil. Document how it grows; **OR** take a cutting from a plant and root it in moist soil or water. Document what happens after a month, **OR** research various other methods of propagating a plant on YouTube.com. Explain what you did in writing. Evidence: Provide a written story explaining the name of the plant,

- whether you put it in water, soil, or some other “stuff” (medium). Did it grow roots? When were you able to transplant it into soil? (At one month?) Did it continue to grow? Provide “before” and “after” photos.
- c. **Learn about native plants.** Research and explain what is/are unique about native plants in relation to insects. Why are they important to our gardens and how do native plants fit into conservation, including the food we eat. Evidence: Write about your findings.
 - d. **Learn about plants’ preferences for different soils and moisture levels.** First, research 2 plants that prefer each of 3 distinct kinds of soils: clay, loam, and sand, then write down your findings. Then write down 2 plants that prefer each of three distinct kinds of moisture levels: very wet, mildly wet, and very little water. Write down your answers as evidence and place them in your binder.

Category 6: Bird Project

- a. **Select pictures of 8 different birds** living in your area and memorize their names. Make a copy of these pictures and write the names of these birds under their picture as evidence to place in your binder.
- b. **Identify which bird you like the most, then learn more about it.** Write about what it eats, where and what they use to make their nests, and how many families are created in a nest in one season. Report if they migrate in the winter or summer, and where they go? Why do you like them? Place this information in your binder.
- c. **Learn about how birds help our garden** and write about it and place it in your binder. Try to be complete.
- d. **Research the Northern Cardinal** and write 6 facts about them. Place your list in your binder. Try to be complete.
- e. **Research the Eastern Bluebird** and write 6 facts about them. Place this list in your binder. Try to be complete.

- f. **Build a birdhouse** using recycled materials. Attach it outside on a sturdy post. Include a photo of the birdhouse where it's placed outside.

Category 7: Education

- a. **Read “The Frightened Frog,”** a book from the National Garden Club. Purchase this book from gardenclub.org/store. This book is about a frog who lost his habitat from inadvertent human destruction. (Draw a picture of two frogs who found their happy habitat and include a source of water, some very small bugs, like flies, and plants for shade. Sign your name on your drawing. Label your picture “Two Happy Frogs.” Place your drawing as evidence in your binder.
- b. **Visit a native garden** to note what you see there. Write down the name of one flowering plant with adult help for identifying the name of the flower; or use a free “app” on a cell phone that identifies a plant’s name by using the phone’s camera to take a picture to reveal the plant’s name. (Go to <https://www.backgarden.org/plant-identification-apps> get free app for your cell phone.) Then describe what you see at this native garden. Are some plants attracting more insects than others? Name the plant that attracts the most insects. **Draw a picture of a single flowering plant** and the insects that are visiting it. Write down the name of the plant and the type of insect, for example, flies, wasps, bees, beetles, etc. Evidence: Submit 2 photos, (1) the native garden visited and (2) the single flowering with an insect on it, (2) add your drawing for evidence. Place these items in your binder.
- c. **Read “What Are Earth’s Natural Cycles and Why Are they Important?”** By Muhammad Tuhin. Study it from this booklet or you can access the article for print:

“<https://www.sciencenewstoday.org/what-are-earths-natural-cycles-and-why-are-they-important>.” Place this webpage address into your browser to read it. It will help you make sense of the rain and the water cycle and other cycles, too. Learn about these additional cycles: the carbon cycle, oxygen cycle, phosphate cycle, rock cycle, and energy cycle. Take your time reading this and have a conversation within your youth garden group about what it means for the imbalance of our weather, climate, and forces seen and unseen. Is there a way to reduce what is going on? What if we do nothing? Is there a price to be paid and are we now suffering with signs of natural cycles that are out of balance? **Write up your thoughts on any one of these cycles and what it means for our gardens and our planet and submit it as evidence in your binder.**

- d. **Celebrate “National Garden Week” June 1-7** (same dates every year) and select an activity to do. **Check out the gardenclub.org website** for ideas. Here is a suggested list:

- Beautify a manageable blighted area or enhance an existing garden.
- Beautify a home, school, or church garden.
- Do research on the kinds of plants you are considering planting and make sure they are native plants. Consider if the plants are for birds’ or pollinators’ needs. Is there enough space? Decide on soil amendments, watering, and time of year and season to plant.

Category 8: Enter a Garden Club of NC youth program contest for individuals.

Go to www.gardenclubofnc.org to learn about the important details for entering, completing, and submitting your work. Submit

your work with a Youth Award Entry Form by **March 1, to the GCNC Youth Awards Chair**. The list of contests:

- Wildflowers.
- Eastern Bluebird Drawing.
- Northern Cardinal Drawing.
- Bird Essay.

Category 9: Enter a National Youth Contest.

Go to GardenClubofnc.org Youth Handbook section or see the Youth Club Handbook for list and description of contests:

- Smokey Bear and/or Woodsy Owl Poster Contests
- Sculpture Contest
- Youth Poetry Contest
- Youth Essay Contest (Available at the State and Region levels)

Document which contest was entered, the date submitted, and a picture of the poster for Smokey Bear, Woodsy Owl or Sculpture Contest. Submit a copy of the poetry or essay as part of your evidence in the binder. **Submit to GCNC Youth Chair by deadline date.**

The leader has an option to substitute up to two tasks in two categories to make it possible for a grade level to complete, or if there is interest in another worthy task, at the approval of the 3rd Vice President. Permission must be given before working on the substitute task.

Have fun and great experiences.



The soil is home to a vast community of tiny, essential creatures: bacteria and fungi, nematodes, mites, springtails, and protozoa.

**SAR & NGC Contests for All Youths,
(Club membership is not required, but participate must be
sponsored by an adult NGC federated club)
Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl Posters**

Poetry Contest

Sculpture

SAR Essay

National Garden Clubs provides many educational opportunities through competitions for the youth at the pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest:

All first through fifth grade students are invited to demonstrate through original drawings of Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl, their understanding of fire prevention and basic environmental conservation principles.

The Grand Prize Winner will be celebrated with ceremony with National Forestry facilitation. \$50 will also be awarded to the First Place National Winners from each grade level sponsored by National Garden Club. Please follow all rules listed on NGC website. <https://gardenclub.org/contests-and-activities>

Must be received by GCNC Youth Chair - January 20th.

Poetry Contest: NGC's Poetry Contest is open to ALL students in kindergarten through ninth grade. This competition enables youth to embrace their creativity through the art of writing. All winning entries will be compiled into a booklet available to the winners.

2025-27 Theme: **Outside I Spy with My Little Eye,
Something Green Celebrating Our Green World.**

Must be received by GCNC Youth Chair by January 1st.

**** Scoring guidelines are on the NGC website***

<https://gardenclub.org/contests-and-activities>

Youth Sculpture Contest: This contest encourages students to keep our planet green and to get involved with saving the environment. Students in grades 4 through 8 are eligible to create a sculpture of recyclable, reused and reduced materials.

Rules and Guidelines: <https://gardenclub.org/youth-sculpture-contest>

“Encouraging youth to keep our planet green.”

Must be received by GCNC Youth Chair - January 1st.

SAR Essay Contest: The South Atlantic Region Essay Contest is open to ALL high school (9th – 12th grades) students. This competition allows students to creatively address the theme question: **“How Can We Use Native Planting for Climate Adaptation?”**

The Grand Prize winner receives **\$200 prize.**

Entries must be received by GCNC Youth Chair by December 1st.

College Scholarships are available through Garden Club of North Carolina, South Atlantic Region and National Garden Clubs. Applications are due to the GCNC Scholarship Chair by January 1st. GCNC website:

<https://gardenclubofnc.org/scholarship> and NGC website:
<https://gardenclub.org/college-scholarship>

Check other SAR & NGC awards in this booklet, and the SAR and GCNC websites for grants.



Scale of Points for All Youth Group Awards

(unless noted in award)

Presentation:

5 Points

Neat, concise, includes all required information on the GCNC Awards Application form and Book of Evidence.

Achievement:

65 Points

Scope of project need and fulfillment, benefit, accomplishment, comprehensiveness of work, activities to attain goals, evaluation of goals reached, educational, prior planning, very brief history if continuing project, financial report, other.

Participation:

15 Points

Size of club, involvement of members, community, government agencies, professionals, other. Not all these have to be involved.

Record and Documentation: 15 Points

Supporting data (as applicable): clear, well labeled and neatly attached before and after photographs (if applicable); landscape plan (does not have to be professionally drawn); financial report; letters of appreciation; community awards; newspaper/magazine articles and radio script/internet, etc. Photocopies permitted.

Scale of Points for Essays:

Content:

How thoroughly is the topic examined? **35 Points**

Grammar: How well is the essay written - sentence and paragraph construction? Spelling? **30 Points**

Style: Does the essay show creativity, imagination, and development of the topic in a logical and compelling style? **35 Points**

Scale of Points for Drawings: GCNC

Freehand Drawing: 20 Points

Coloring Technique: 20 Points

Creativity & Artistic Expression: 50 Points

Signature of Artist: 10 Points

Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest

Entries due to State Chair by January 20.



Hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and the National Garden Clubs, Inc., this contest is an opportunity for clubs to connect with their communities and may be used to promote their local or State garden Club, attract children and their parents, and raise awareness of the importance of caring for the environment and preventing wildfires.

Children from first through fifth grades can participate. The promotional package can be downloaded from the National Garden Clubs, Inc., website:

www.gardenclubs.org or www.symbols.gov/ngc-poster-contest



GCNC Requirements: Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest

Eligibility: YES ____ NO ____ Grade Level: _____

- All entries must be sponsored by a local GCNC Garden Club.
- No three-dimensional posters, computer scanned, or electronically generated images will be accepted. Posters must be flat.
- Posters are to be completed by individual student artists.
- The competition may include students from 1st to 5th grades.
- Poster must be submitted by state deadline.

Requirements by NGC (10 points maximum for each requirements)

Poster must feature Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl but not feature both together.

Featured Message!

***Smokey Bear posters must include Smokey's Wildfire Prevention message: "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!"**

***Woodsy Owl posters must include Woodsy's conservation message: "Lend a Hand, Care for the Land!"**

Each entry should be 11 X 17 inches in size.

Materials that can be used includes crayons, markers, poster paints, watercolors, etc.

Posters may include artwork pasted upon a second piece of paper. However, they must be flat. 3D posters are not allowed.

The following information should be written on the back of the poster in the lower right corner:

(1) the artist's name, address, **(2)** home phone number, **(3)** grade level, **(4)** school, **(5)** teacher's name, **(6)** city & state. Should the school policy preclude giving the students' address and phone number - Please include the school address and phone number. **(7)** Each poster must also show the name of the sponsoring local Garden Club, **(8)** as well as an address, phone number, and email for the local Garden Club. (Do not use a dark marker for this information it may show through).

*Labels for this information are available online, if desired.

Since Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl are official icons protected by law, the colors of their clothing need to be accurate.

* A poster may include just the head of Woodsy or Smokey.

*Check the colors on the web site:

www.fs.usda.gov/learn/kids.

Students should be reminded to check spelling. Posters with spelling errors will be disqualified.

Points for creativity and artistic expression (30 Points).

SAR (South Atlantic Region) Youth Awards

#Y1: YOUTH EDUCATION AWARD

\$25 Cash award to a garden club member or senior garden club providing an educational program /activity that promotes NGC objective for youth in any setting: classroom, 4-H Club, Scouts, Junior, Intermediate or High School Gardeners. Type of program, meeting date and number of youths involved should be included in application.

#Y2: YOUTH CLUB AWARD

\$25 Cash award to the Member Garden Club sponsoring the youth club for the most successful promotion of all phases of garden club work. List of programs, meeting dates and number of youths involved should be included in the application.

#Y3: SAR HIGH SCHOOL ESSAY CONTEST

\$200 CASH AWARD to the winner – open to all high school students. **The 2025 – 2026 SAR High School Essay Title: “How Can We Use Native Plants for Climate Adaptation?”**

The 2026-2027 title to be determined. **See the full criteria at:** www.southatlanticregiongardenclubs.org

The following #Y4, #Y5, & #Y6 must be sent to the designated chairperson listed with the award THROUGH THE GCNC Youth Chair. Students must follow NGC rules for these contests on NGC website.

#Y4: YOUTH POETRY CONTEST

\$10 Cash Award will be presented to each of the winners in Grades K-9th as well as Special Education & ESL Students.

2025 - 2026: “Plant America for the Next 100 Years.”

#Y5: YOUTH RECYCLABLE SCULPTURE CONTEST

\$10 Cash Award will be awarded to each of the youth sculpture winners of Grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8th. “Encouraging Youth to Keep Our Planet Green.”

#Y6: SMOKEY BEAR

\$10 Cash Award to each of the poster winners in each grade 1st – 5th. States may send only one (s) winner per grade. Rules on NGC & US Forest Service websites.



Some creatures living in the soil are easy to spot with the naked eye: earthworms, ants, beetles, and their larvae, millipedes and centipedes, spiders, slugs, and snails.

National Youth Awards - \$100 First Place Awards

National Youth Awards Chair: Tricia Mitchell

trcamitchell@aol.com

All award applications must go through the State Youth Awards Chair

(Check requirements on GCNC Website for cover sheet, grade(s), sponsor or club names, list of programs, meeting dates, number of youth participants, etc.)

YM-1 Youth Garden Club Outstanding Sponsor: Given to member club sponsor of youth club which has been most successful in promoting all phases of garden club work with youth.

YM-2 Horticulture Activity for Youth Garden Club: Given to club sponsor for the most outstanding horticulture activity.

YM-3 Outdoor Planting with Youth Garden Club: Given to sponsor of a youth club for the most significant effort in planting and growing horticulture in an outdoor area.

YM-4 Environmental Activity with Youth Garden Club: Given to sponsor for the most outstanding project in the field of environmental concerns, e.g. horticultural, landscaping, anti-litter, restoration, conservation, other.

YM-5 Junior Garden Club Wildlife Gardening Education Project: Given to “youth club” with the most notable project or project educating the public on the benefits of wildlife.

YM-6 High School Garden Club Outstanding Sponsor: Given to club sponsor of a high school garden club that has carried out the best all-around gardening project.

YM-7 High School Distinguished Service Project: Given to the high school student, for an outstanding civic project making a significant improvement for public benefit, e.g. environmental, conservation, landscape, horticulture, recycling, horticultural therapy, other. May be sponsored by NGC club, group of clubs, district, or state club. Second place - \$50.

YM-8 Horticulture Education for Youth: Given to club for the best gardening for youth, based on the belief that youth should be educated to become future horticulturists.

YM-9 Environmental Education Project: Given to club for the most outstanding project in the field of environmental education involving youth.

YM-10 Individual Outstanding Service to Youth: Given to the individual member who has given outstanding service to youth as a leader of a youth garden club in any grade category through high school.

Program and Award Ideas

The National Garden Clubs website:

<https://gardenclub.org/contests-and-activities> is a wealth of information and materials for activities for children of all ages.

Youth Resources

Do Something Green Workbook

Pollinator Power Book

Ecology Warriors /workbook

Need Funding for Projects?

Lila Petersen Fund:

<https://gardenclubofnc.org/lila-petersen-grant>

Walmart Community Grants

AMES Tools Grant: www.gardenclub.org

Home Depot- local stores give gift cards for projects

Seek local sponsors for in-kind grants (services and supplies)

National Garden Clubs Youth Pollinator Garden Grants

Up to \$200 are available. Up to \$500 available to be used for direct expenses for an educational program on native plants and wildflowers. <https://gardenclubs.org/operation-wildflower>

Useful Websites

Garden Club of North Carolina
www.gardenclubofnc.org/youth

National Garden Club
www.gardenclub.org/youth

National Forest Service for Kids
www.fs.fed.us/kids

Smokey Bear
www.smokeybear.com

Kids Gardening
www.kidsgardening.org

Links to garden related sites
www.homeseeds.com

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu/kindergarden/index.html>
[www.enchantedlearning.com/links/plants\(K-3\)](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/links/plants(K-3))
www.kidsturncentral/links/gardenlinks.htm

Children's Gardening Books

National Graden Clubs publishes books for kids to begin a lifelong love of gardening, caring for the environment and more.

50 Gardening Projects for Kids Clare Bradley
Step by step instructions and beautiful color pictures of projects by season.

Busy Buzzy Bee Karen Wallace
A DK Reader book all about bees. Illustrations and picture word list. Pre-K – 1st grade.

Butterflies Emily Neye
Non-fiction. Level 2 Reader

Kid's Container Gardening Cindy Krezel
Fun & exciting projects for all ages incorporating creative ideas.

Kid's First Gardening Jenny Hendy
For ages 5-12. Grow fruit, veggies, flowers & make crafts.

Project Garden

Stacy Torino

Tips on how to grow food, recipes for kids and garden art.

Difficulty levels included.

The Great Garden Escape

Erica Clymer

Gardening Lab for Kids

Renata Brown

Gardening for Kids: Learn, Grow and Get Messy with fun

STEAM projects

Brandy Stone

What If There Were No Bees

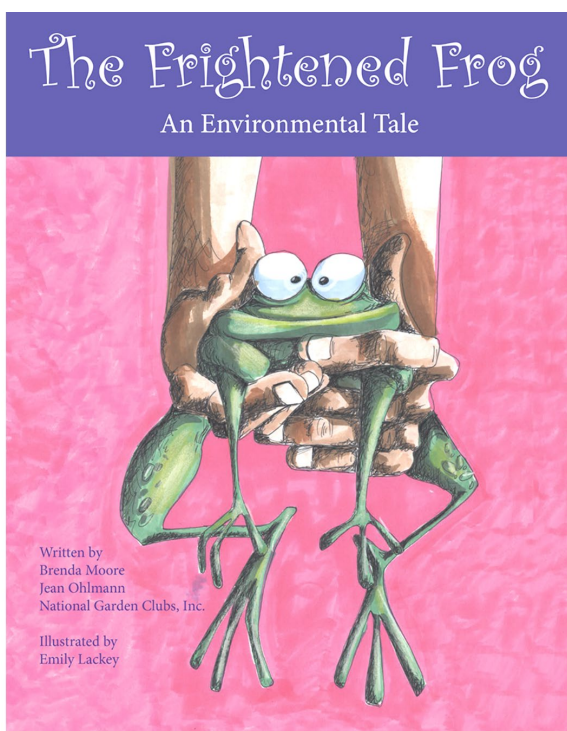
Susan Buckingham Slade

Carol Schwartz

The Frightened Frog

Benda Moore, Jea Ohlmann,

National Garden Clubs, Inc.



***Use this for the Sunshine Achievement and Daisy Patch, GCNC Award No. 20, Category 7: Education, item C. (Article Found and submitted by Sandy Purvis, Youth Leader)

Earth Sciences

“What Are Earth’s Natural Cycles and Why Are They Important?” By Muhammad Tuhin, NC State University.

There’s a kind of magic happening all around us—quiet, powerful, and ancient. You don’t see it when you look out your window. You don’t hear it when you walk through a forest or along a shoreline. Yet it’s there, humming behind the scenes. The Earth breathes, not like we do, but through invisible rhythms that span continents and centuries. These rhythms—called natural cycles—are the planet’s most vital systems. They move water from ocean to sky and back again. They recycle nutrients in the soil. They drive the winds, feed the forests, and balance the air we breathe. They are the Earth’s way of keeping life in motion.

But why should we care? Because when these cycles are healthy, life thrives. And when they’re broken or thrown off balance, we begin to feel the consequences—floods, droughts, deadly heat waves, food insecurity, and rising seas. Understanding Earth’s natural cycles isn’t just for scientists—it’s something that touches every part of our lives.

The Water Cycle: Earth’s Lifeblood in Motion

Water is never still. It flows, evaporates, falls, freezes, and flows again. The water cycle is perhaps the most familiar of Earth’s systems. But it’s far more complex

than just rain and rivers. It’s the eternal journey of water through the oceans, the sky, the land, and back again. This journey begins with sunlight. When the sun’s rays hit oceans, lakes, and rivers, water transforms into vapor and rises into the atmosphere. There, it cools, condenses into clouds, and eventually returns to the Earth as rain or snow.

Once it falls, the water takes many paths. Some flows into rivers and back to the sea. Some soaks into the soil, feeding plants and underground aquifers. Some freezes into glaciers or sits quietly in lakes. And some becomes part of living things—circulating through the sap of trees, the blood of animals, and the cells of your own body.

This cycle doesn't just move water. It shapes the climate, carves the landscape, and sustains every form of life. Without it, Earth would be a dead rock. And yet today, this cycle is under strain. Climate change intensifies storms, accelerates evaporation, and disrupts rainfall patterns, putting entire ecosystems at risk.

The Carbon Cycle: Nature's Breath

Take a deep breath. The carbon in the air you just inhaled might have once been inside a tree, or deep in the ocean, or trapped in ancient rocks. Carbon is the foundation of life, and the carbon cycle is the Earth's way of moving it around. Plants absorb carbon dioxide during photosynthesis. Animals eat the plants, and the carbon becomes part of their bodies. When living things breathe, decay, or burn, carbon is released back into the atmosphere. Oceans also play a massive role, absorbing and storing huge amounts of carbon.

For millions of years, this cycle remained in balance. But human activity—especially burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas—has overloaded the atmosphere with carbon dioxide. This extra carbon traps heat, causing global temperatures to rise. It's why the carbon cycle is at the heart of the climate crisis.

Fixing this imbalance isn't just about cutting emissions. It's about restoring forests, protecting soils, and understanding how carbon naturally moves through the Earth. Because carbon, though invisible, holds the power to either sustain life—or threaten it.

The Nitrogen Cycle: Feeding the Planet

Nitrogen is everywhere. It makes up nearly 80% of the air we breathe. But in that form, it's useless to most life. For nitrogen to help build proteins, DNA, and other vital molecules, it has to be "fixed"—converted into compounds like ammonia or nitrates that plants can absorb. This is where the nitrogen cycle comes in.

Lightning can fix nitrogen in small amounts. But most of this work is done by bacteria in the soil and water. These microbes convert atmospheric nitrogen into usable forms, which are then taken up by plants. Animals eat the plants, and nitrogen continues moving through food webs. When plants and animals die, decomposers return the nitrogen to the soil—and some of it back to the air.

This cycle is delicate, and humans have disrupted it dramatically. By using synthetic fertilizers and burning fossil fuels, we've pumped enormous amounts of reactive nitrogen into the environment. This causes pollution, dead zones in oceans, and contributes to climate change. Once again, understanding the natural cycle is key to restoring balance. Because while nitrogen feeds the world, too much of it can poison it.

The Oxygen Cycle: The Breath of Life

Oxygen is life. Every breath you take is a testament to the oxygen cycle. Like the carbon and nitrogen cycles, it's driven by the interactions between living organisms and the atmosphere. Plants, algae, and cyanobacteria release oxygen during photosynthesis. Animals and other organisms consume it through respiration, converting it back into carbon dioxide.

This cycle also involves the oceans, where tiny phytoplankton produce much of the Earth's oxygen supply—more than all the forests combined. Deep in the Earth, oxygen interacts with minerals, and in the upper atmosphere, it helps form the ozone layer that shields life from harmful radiation.

Disruptions to this cycle—such as deforestation, ocean acidification, and climate change—can reduce the planet’s oxygen-producing capacity. It’s a reminder that even the air we breathe depends on a complex dance of natural systems we often take for granted.

The Phosphorus Cycle: A Slow, Steady Essential

Unlike other cycles, phosphorus doesn’t have a gaseous phase. It doesn’t circulate through the air. Instead, it moves slowly through rocks, soil, water, and living things. But don’t let that fool you. The phosphorus cycle is essential to life. Phosphorus forms part of DNA, RNA, and ATP—the energy currency of cells.

It begins with weathering. Rain and wind break down rocks, releasing phosphorus into the soil and water. Plants absorb it, animals eat the plants, and it cycles through ecosystems. When organisms die, decomposers return phosphorus to the earth. Some ends up in rivers and oceans, where it may settle into sediments and eventually become rock again—a process that takes millions of years.

The problem arises when humans speed up this cycle. We mine phosphate rocks to make fertilizers, and runoff from agriculture overloads rivers and lakes with phosphorus. This causes algal blooms, which choke ecosystems and create dead zones. The phosphorus cycle must be respected. It’s a finite resource, and without it, life as we know it cannot exist.

The Rock Cycle: Earth’s Long Memory

Beneath our feet, another cycle moves at a geological pace. The rock cycle is the transformation of Earth’s crust through time—igneous rock forming from molten magma, then weathering into sediment, compressing into sedimentary rock, and being altered by heat and pressure into metamorphic rock. Eventually, any rock can melt again and restart the cycle.

It’s slow, but powerful. This cycle recycles Earth’s crust, builds mountains, opens ocean basins, and influences the carbon and

water cycles. Volcanic eruptions release gases into the atmosphere, while tectonic movements shape the climate over eons.

Understanding this cycle helps us grasp Earth's history and predict future changes. It reminds us that the planet is not a static ball of stone—it is dynamic, alive in its own way, and always evolving.

The Energy Cycle: Powering the Planet

Every natural cycle on Earth is ultimately driven by energy—from the sun and from within the Earth. The energy cycle isn't a traditional biogeochemical cycle, but it's what makes all the others possible. Sunlight powers photosynthesis and drives the water cycle. Geothermal energy stirs the mantle and fuels volcanic activity.

Energy flows, not recycles. Once used, it disperses. But the way energy moves through ecosystems—from the sun, to plants, to herbivores, to predators, and finally to decomposers—shapes the very structure of life. Human society, too, depends on energy: fossil fuels, electricity, solar power. And our energy choices determine how we impact other natural cycles.

Recognizing how energy flows through Earth helps us make wiser decisions. Because in every beam of sunlight, every wave crashing on a shore, and every bolt of lightning, the Earth whispers its power—and its limits.

Why These Cycles Matter More Than Ever

It's tempting to think of natural cycles as background processes—things that just happen. But they are anything but passive. They are Earth's survival systems, and they depend on balance. For millions of years, these cycles kept the planet habitable through ice ages, asteroid strikes, and tectonic upheavals. Life adapted and endured.

But today, something different is happening. Human activity is altering these cycles faster and more dramatically than nature can compensate. The carbon cycle is overwhelmed with greenhouse gases. The water cycle is thrown off by melting ice and changing rainfall. Nitrogen and phosphorus cycles are overloaded by agriculture. Oceans are acidifying, forests are shrinking, and species are disappearing.

We are not separate from these cycles. We are part of them. Every breath, every bite of food, every drop of water we use connects us to Earth's natural rhythms. And every action we take—whether building cities, burning fuel, or farming land—ripples through these systems.

Understanding these cycles is the first step to healing them. And healing them is the only way to ensure a future where life can still thrive.

A Planet in Balance

When we look at Earth from space—a blue marble suspended in darkness—we see beauty. But what we don't see are the cycles that make that beauty possible. The invisible flows of carbon and nitrogen, the endless cycling of water and rock, the quiet pulse of oxygen and phosphorus. These are not just scientific concepts. They are Earth's poetry, written in chemistry and time.

They are the reason trees grow, rivers run, and clouds form. They are the threads that connect rainforests to oceans, deserts to glaciers, and you to every other living thing. They are fragile, and they are powerful. And now, more than ever, they need our attention.

Earth's natural cycles are not ancient relics to be admired from afar. They are living systems we must understand, protect, and live in harmony with. Because in the end, the health of these cycles is the health of our world – and ourselves.



“CHATTERING WITH NATURE THROUGH GARDENING”

Chattering with nature through gardening means engaging in a reciprocal relationship with the natural world by tending a garden, which involves observing, interacting with, and caring for plants and their environment.

This action participation allows the usage of all senses to connect with nature, leading to a deeper understanding of natural cycles like growth and renewal. This involves hands-on care that fosters a sense of purpose, a calmer state of mind, skills for life through play, building confidence, strength, creativity, and resilience.

Youth leaders are inspiring young minds and helping to cultivate green spaces and wonderful memories. We value your work, commitment, and the creative uniqueness of clubs and programs. We thank you and celebrate you.

Best wishes that all your teachings be life nourishing
And with gratitude for all that you do,
On behalf of President Charles McLendon and myself,
Have a wonderous garden club year,

Frances



South Atlantic Regional

