



MISSION: BEAUTIFICATION ... CONSERVATION ... EDUCATION

## *Planting and Growing with Challenges*

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*Environmental Issue: Mary Lovings, Editor*

*Environmental Edition: May, August, November, February - Mary Lovings, Editor*

*Gardening Edition: June, September, December, March - Linda Doiron, Editor*

*Landscape Design: July, October, January, April - Suzanne Finger, Editor*

**As we have entered a new Garden Club Term: the GCG Mission of *Beautification ...Conservation ... Education*** (in alphabetical order, please) describes what we as an organization are about.

**Welcome:** Since the last issue of this publication, many clubs have installed new Presidents, each one of whom is genuinely appreciated, encouraged, and asked to share these messages with members of their clubs.

**Background:** This publication is intended to supplement National Garden Clubs schools in three areas of interest: Landscape Design, Environmental, and Gardening. Each school consists of four courses - with tests - and can be taken in any order. With ongoing accommodation to COVID restraints, only a few are offered at this time. Let's all hope that these enjoyable, purposed opportunities for increasing knowledge can be and are resumed soon.

Latest schedules and more details for the courses can be found on the NGC website. Current state locations and dates follow. For additional details, go to the NGC website.

**ENVIRONMENTAL:** Course 1: not currently offered; Course 2: in Texas 7/18-7/18;  
Course 3: in Michigan 9/8-9/9; Course 4: ZOOM in Connecticut 9/22 -9/23.

**GARDENING:** Course 1: not currently offered; Course 2: 9/1-9/2 in California;  
Course 3: not currently offered; Course 4: not currently offered

**LANDSCAPE:** Course 1: 6/9-6/10 in New York as a hybrid (undefined) course;  
Course 2: 6/22-6/24 in Missouri; Course 3: 10/26-10/27 in Illinois; 3/12-3/13 in California.

### **Special Areas for Conservation:**

**Plastics:** Bags, wrapping materials such as bubble wrap, constantly end up in waterways. Many forms of wildlife ingest plastic products, causing harm if not death. Additionally, plastics also restrain and entangle animal species in ropes and nets. if you buy six packs of anything connected by plastic ringed conveniences, please make sure that you cut each ring before disposing of the item to prevent animals getting their heads caught in one of the rings. A wide variety of plastics collect astoundingly along shorelines in all parts of the world that are increasingly covered with plastic items. Roadsides are littered with them. Please, use as few plastic items as possible and

reuse and recycle them - they take forever to disintegrate; moreover, if your local government does not have effective recycling systems insist on them. Garden club community service efforts often include convincing local governments to establish recycling systems. if they do not have them and improving existing ones. Good news is that some grocery chains will accept used plastic grocery bags. Plastic products are notoriously slow to decompose; therefore, keeping them off property and streets and out of landfills and public lands whenever possible is beyond important. Think about the hiking mantra: *pack it in; pack it out.*

**Water:** It seems especially common now to have periods of excessive rain alternating with ones of insufficient rain. Here in Georgia, hurricane remnants often stop droughts and often cause flooding, functioning as a plus and/or a minus to the environment.

Rivers continue to be vital, providing water needed for drinking, fishing, swimming, crops, bathing, navigation, plumbing, manufacturing, and recreation. From a recent issue of National Geographic: **There was time when humans were so grateful for rivers that they made them into divinities.** Not entirely facetiously, maybe that could help. Warming temperatures worldwide are melting glaciers and polar ice melt resulting in rising water levels making some areas unlivable. Islands simply disappear.

One effort of the outstanding Georgia Water Coalition [*individual garden clubs are welcomed as members*] - is its Green Thirteen yearly recognition of positive wise, and forward-looking water conservation practices. This was created as a positive balance to its long-term Dirty Dozen list of offenders. Check its website. [Home - Georgia Water Coalition \(gawater.org\)](http://gawater.org) GCG is a partner in this group.

**Air Quality:** Continuing to reduce air pollutants and actively seeking energy sources that do not pollute are highly worthwhile goals for conservation organizations and their members. Exhaust from vehicles, power plants, manufacturing, and exhaling all contribute to air pollution that reaches and increases serious crisis levels worldwide. Purchasing and using more energy efficient appliances can help. Electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles do reduce emissions and are better for air quality than gasoline powered ones, but power is needed to produce the electricity. Solar energy can help greatly as does wind generated electricity.

Pay close attention to indoor air quality. One thing all garden club members can do is to add indoor plants to improve air quality. At least one plant per room can be helpful.

A bit oddly, spiked snake plants/mother-in-law tongues/Sansevieria (*Dracaena trifasciata*) are among the plants that produce oxygen at night, making them especially good for placement in bedrooms. Because their growth is primarily vertical, they take proportionally little horizontal space Not only do they thrive with low and indirect light, they also have low water needs. Moreover, they are also supposed to bring good luck to those who have them.



Two other attractive and inexpensive indoor plants to consider are 1. holiday cacti (Schlumbergia) that bloom in a wide variety of colors indoors at the winter holiday season, according to their individual and somewhat whimsical schedules.

Another blooming plant is shamrocks (Oxalis) that bloom - if you are lucky - for St. Patrick's Day.



Both the cactus and the shamrocks have survived Covid, quarantined. (The flamingo - in honor of a daughter who lives in Florida - refused to move.)



**Energy:** Vehicles, even electric ones, consume energy. Try to use vehicles less and less often. Heat and air conditioning systems require great amounts of energy. Part of the expanding population of Atlanta after World War II is accounted for by one major factor, the development of air conditioning. Survival without it now usually seems like - survival. As a conservation measure, do try setting heat in winter and air conditioning in summer at least four or five degrees lower/higher than usual for your home temperature. That is easily survivable, with perhaps a heavier sweater in winter or a lighter weight shirt or top for summer.

GCG is dedicated to following its Mission Statement and encourages its members to do the same. You can help by doing what you can to keep the garden we call Georgia thriving by applying as many conservation practices as possible.