



The Garden Path

Contents

President's Letter	2
June 2025 Meeting Minutes	3 – 4
Installation Ceremony 2025.....	5 – 7
Happy Birthday Don't Forget! Calendar.....	8
WTGC 2025–2026 Programs Preview	9
Flower Show Prep Workshop	10
WTGC 2025 Garden Tour Mark Your Calendars!.....	11
WTGC Flower Show Prep	12 – 13
WTGC Website Refresh!	14
Ewing Blooms!.....	15
Gallery July at Birmingham Park	16 – 18
Gallery Found Flowers	19

Anne Skalka
President

Linda Reasoner
Vice President

Rick Lazarick
Treasurer

Karen Lewandowski
Recording Secretary

Victoria River Cruz
Corresponding Secretary

Lorrain Persiani
Immediate Past President

Maggie Kramer
Club Parliamentarian

Jeff Tryon
Newsletter Editor

Lynn Grillo
Newsletter Design



President's Letter

Anne Skalka | August 2025

Dear Garden Club Members,

As your ambassador to Wales, I find I'm in a land of misty, cool mornings, stone walls draped in moss, and green upon green — as far as the eye can see.

The wonders of gardening in Wales are evident. Where else can you find foxgloves blooming freely along the hedgerows, or orange and red crocosmia spilling over a slate wall? Even the smallest village garden seems to burst with a kind of wild beauty — a mixture of skill and deliberate inattention.

The generous rainfall and mild climate may pose challenges with slugs, snails and boundless growth, but they also reward a gardener with deep green foliage, healthy perennials, and mossy treasures. Ferns flourish here, hydrangeas, foxgloves and poppies abound in my mid-summer garden. With its many sheltered cottage gardens overflowing with color, Wales offers endless inspiration.

I welcome our members back to the West Trenton Garden Club as we begin another year of sharing and caring of our own gardens.

Take a quiet moment in your own garden — listen to the bees, feel the damp earth, and notice what is thriving without your hand. That, too, is a wonder. Gardens are our hope and belief in the future.

*Warmly,
Anne Skalka*

President, West Trenton Garden Club

Photo taken in Wales, by Anne Skalka

June 2025 Meeting Minutes

Prepared by Lynn Grillo, for Karen Lewandowski, Recording Secretary

President's Report

The West Trenton Garden Club meeting of June 2, 2025, was called to order at 6:26 pm by President [Anne Skalka](#). She welcomed everyone to this special meeting and installation of new officers.

Secretary's Report

The minutes of the regular May meeting were printed in the monthly Newsletter. Hearing no additions or corrections, the minutes were filed as reported.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, [Rick Lazarick](#), reported a current balance of \$11,760.55. Income of \$2,727.75 included revenue from the Flower Sale, the Scholarship Breakfast, dues collected so far, and 50/50. There were \$5,906.08 in expenses, including:

- \$4,208.75 Davino - flower purchase
- \$56.58 May Program expense
- \$70.54 Scholarship breakfast expense
- \$101.12 Scholarship breakfast expense
- \$84.00 Birmingham Park perennials
- \$266.00 Natural Disaster donation
- \$106.63 Birmingham Park mulch
- \$1,012.46 Website license fees – 3 years

Rick is still collecting dues from members. There are 51 confirmed, and 8 pending.

Correspondence

Long time member Eileen Keenan passed away. We will send condolences and prepare a memorial in the memory book for her.

Announcements

[Anne Skalka](#) acknowledged the June birthdays of Helga and Nancy Fontus.

She thanked Ida Cahill, and members of the hospitality committee for coordinating this month's spread. Anne noted that Linda Gerasimowicz is leaving as hospitality chair, and that this is an extremely important role that we need to fill. She then shared the new sign-up board for hospitality.

Next, Anne presented special awards & certificates acknowledging long time members:

- [Maggie Kramer](#) – 40 years
- [Carol Bozarth](#) – 30 years
- [Terry Palise](#) – 20 years
- [Barbara Bernard](#) – 10 years
- [Susan Fair](#) – 10 years
- [Linda Gerasimowicz](#) – 10 years
- [Nancy Grant](#) – 10 years
- [Alicia Magee](#) – 10 years

June 2025 Meeting Minutes

Prepared by Lynn Grillo, for Karen Lewandowski, Recording Secretary

Special acknowledgements went to:

- **Iliana Okum** – for her work as Corresponding Secretary
- **Linda Gerasimowicz** – for “everything”.
- **Camille Rainero** – for “everything”.

Anne gave members a few minutes to finish putting raffle tickets into the cups and then began drawing numbers for the Jersey Fresh raffle items. The raffle proceeded with members delightfully claiming their wins.

Next, Anne announced the winners of the place settings competition:

- **Modern Minimalist** – June Miller
- **Tropical Paradise** – Jeff Tryon
- **Vintage Charm** – Sandi Mullaney
- **Fairy Tale Fantasy** – Lynn Grillo

Installation of Officers

Anne Chmielewski provided an invocation and gave thanks to outgoing board member and Corresponding Secretary, **Iliana Okum**. She then acknowledged the current executive board and gave each one a special plant that had been chosen to illustrate the person's unique qualities. She began by welcoming the new Corresponding Secretary, **Victoria Rivera-Cruz**, and then provided a tribute to each current member while giving them their plant. The full text of Anne's remarks.

After the installation, **Linda Reasoner** announced that we won two awards at from The Garden Club of New Jersey:

- **The Hazel Bowen Sternat Civic Beautification Trophy**, for the Birmingham Park Enhancement
- **The Woodbridge Garden Club Trophy**, for Beautification of the Mill Hill Child & Family Development Center.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned by **Anne Skalka** at 7:40 pm.



Installation Ceremony 2025

Full text of ceremony, written and presented by Anne Chmielewski

Members of the West Trenton Garden Club, it is most fitting and proper that we, on this special occasion, express gratitude to our outgoing officer. Corresponding Secretary Iliana; please rise and come forward at this time. We present to you a Perennial Daisy, the flower of the West Trenton Garden Club. May this addition to your garden serve as a reminder of our thanks and appreciation for six years of leadership. You have given so generously of your time and talents to advance



the programs and spirit of the West Trenton Garden Club. You have exhibited the qualities of leadership and dedication so vital to the mission of our club. We challenge you to continue to serve our club, the incoming Corresponding Secretary, our current officers and the board with your experience and enthusiasm. May your days be filled with beautiful flowers, special memories and gardening friends.

This evening, as the West Trenton Garden Club celebrates its annual installation ceremony, we

honor our current officers and our new officer. We also celebrate all of you, our Garden Club members, who generously share your unique qualities and talents. Diversity, creativity and willingness to grow together are the traits that make the West Trenton Garden Club an outstanding organization.

Tonight's installation theme is based on selected native plants highlighting their unique and informative aspects. Each native has a personality all their own. They set root, reach to the light, attract pollinators and curious

gardeners. Pay close attention, as interesting secrets about each plant have been laced throughout this presentation.

In gathering the plants for this evening, I thought about what each plant was saying to me. I looked at their names, puzzled over their shape, smelled their leaves and reached into my memory bank, conjuring thoughts of seed catalogs, flower shows and wildflower meadows. At the end of the day each plant illustrated their unique qualities enlightening me to showcase them this evening, I share their secrets. Get ready to listen to the story they tell.

Now I invite our current officers and our newly elected Corresponding Secretary to step forward.

Our first native plant is *Liatris spicata* commonly known as blazing star or gay feather. It is a striking herbaceous perennial native to the eastern United States. It has frilly purple/lavender flower spikes. What is unique is that the flowers bloom from the top downward unlike most plants. Blazing Star blooms from mid to late summer and into fall, offering a crucial nectar source for pollinators when many other flowers have finished blooming. It supports birds such as goldfinch that feast on the seeds in late fall and winter providing a valuable food source. In our club the Blazing Star represents the Corresponding Secretary. The attributes of kindness and acknowledgment are needed in this role. The unique trait of this flower that blooms from the top downward represents the ability to present kind and positive words from the very top of your correspondence to its conclusion, with final words of true care. Your duties will include writing cards and letters and taking care of the



Installation Ceremony 2025

Full text of ceremony, written and presented by Anne Chmielewski

club's correspondence. Vickie, as you write your cards and letters, let your words provide nectar and nurturing good thoughts. May the vibrant Blazing Star be a source of joy that you share with others. Best wishes for a year of remembering.

Now we recognize are current leaders who continue to serve in the year ahead.

The next native plant is *Asclepias tuberosa* commonly known as Butterfly Weed. It produces bright orange flat top flower clusters in early June. The flowering goes on for many weeks. Green pods full of seeds with silky white hairs follow the flowers. Monarch butterfly caterpillars feed exclusively on milkweed plants. Without milkweed, Monarch caterpillars cannot survive. Butterfly weed is vital for the Monarchs life cycle. This plant signifies the duties of the Recording Secretary.

The minutes of each meeting are vital to the continuing cycle of our club. Karen, this past year, you documented the club's various actions and activities. You correctly recorded all that occurred. We thank you for keeping the vital records on track and in excellent order. Karen, I present you with the Butterfly Weed. Best wishes for a calm and thoughtful year.

The next Native plant highlighted is *Zizia aurea* commonly known as Golden Alexanders. This native is a powerhouse for pollinators, attracting a wide array of beneficial insects. It attracts various bees including specialist mining bees. It's early bloom time in late spring to early summer, provides a crucial nectar source when other plants may not yet be flowering. The attractive early blooms of bright flat topped clusters of tiny yellow flowers provide a cheerful splash of color. It is a vital host plant for the caterpillars of the black swallowtail butterfly. In our club Golden Alexanders symbolizes the Treasurer. The bright yellow flowers provide nectar just as our treasury provides resources for the club's many activities. Rick, this past year you collected and deposited money, wrote checks, gave monthly financial statements and worked on the

annual budget. We thank you for keeping the finances in sound order. Rick, I present you with the Golden Alexanders. Best wishes for a flourishing year.

The next native plant is *Phlox paniculata* commonly known as Garden Phlox. This native is a popular herbaceous perennial admired for its vibrant blooms and pleasant fragrance especially in mid to late summer and early fall. It is a dearly loved traditional garden flower that is highly attractive to butterflies, hummingbirds and moths making them a valuable addition to many landscapes. One of the most significant benefits of garden Phlox is that they are very highly attractive to such a wide range of pollinators. This contributes to biodiversity in the garden and the surrounding environment. The Garden Phlox represents the Vice President who fosters the interaction between all members. Linda, you have faithfully chaired board meetings and worked

closely with the President. You helped the new members and supported the seasoned members. We thank you for taking care of the details. Linda, I present you with the Garden Phlox. Wishing you a year of fidelity and genuine leadership.

(continued next page)



Installation Ceremony 2025

Full text of ceremony, written and presented by Anne Chmielewski

The final native plant this evening is *Scutellaria* 'Appalachian Blues' commonly known as Skullcap. The Appalachian Blues skullcap is a little known, but a wonderful landscape performer. It has deep green lustrous foliage and forms a spreading mound in the landscape in early summer. It is lined with bi-color purple and white skullcap flowers that bloom up to 8 weeks....simply a color machine! It attracts butterflies and native bumblebees in addition to being deer and rabbit resistant. Also heat and drought tolerant. Who could ask for more? The Appalachian Blue represents the President with a surprise combination of so many sought after attributes. Of course this plant is truly symbolic of the role of President. The traits shared with this plant include beauty, color, strength, health, uniqueness, productivity, heat and drought resistance. Annie, you have faithfully presided at club meetings,

appointed committees and chairpersons, kept up on all club matters, statewide events and represented the West Trenton Garden Club. Annie, we thank you and we offer you our full support. I present you with the Appalachian Blues skullcap. May you feel the golden blessings of our support, friendship and gratitude. Wishing you another year of energy and joy. We are all here for you.

Members, you are my fine flowering friends in this garden club. Your attributes are important and needed in order for the club to achieve its goals. When we support each other, listen with kindness and work together, the club will flourish, grow and present the image of elegance, excellence, excitement and above all, caring. My kindest wishes to all, as we celebrate our year together. I'll see you in the fresh air, under blue skies as we work together in the garden of friendship.



Happy Birthday | Don't Forget! | Calendar

August 2025

Happy Birthday!

- Matt Kowalski - August 1
- Marcia Felcone - August 6
- Anne Skalka - August 7
- Diane Sanchez - August 9
- June Rosso - August 13
- Susan Fair - August 17
- Ginny Sari - August 18
- Iliana Okum - August 19
- Angela Proctor-Weaver - August 24
- Alicia Magee - August 25

Don't Forget!

Flowers for Ewing Library

Ingrid Fair

Hospitality Committee

Linda Gerasimowicz (Chair)
Carol Bozarth, Alicia Magee, Gerry Pecht,
Linda Reasoner, and Jill Voorhees.

Newsletter Deadline

Submit all info to Jeff Tryon by the 15th
of the month via email at:
wtgcnewsletter@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendar

August 4, 6:30 PM, Hollowbrook CC

WTGC Monthly Meeting
Program: *"Flower Show Prep: From
Creative Practices and Ideas to Fabulous
Designs!"* Presenter: Ingrid Fair



Echinacea at Birmingham Park, photo by George McElrath

WTGC 2025–2026 Programs Preview

By Linda Reasoner

Welcome back, everyone! We hope you are having a restful and healthy summer.

The Program Committee, chaired by Iliana Okum, met in June at her home to exchange ideas and plan interesting and informative programs for our upcoming meetings. After much discussion, we're excited to present a new direction for this year's programs.

Since our Flower Show has been postponed to September 2026, we're using this opportunity to introduce new members—and refresh our experienced ones—on how to create and design entries for the various Flower Show classes in horticulture and design. We know it can sometimes be difficult for new members to follow conversations about the Flower Show, its horticulture displays, design categories, and photography entries.

To help with this, we've invited several experienced presenters from New Jersey Garden Clubs, as well as some of our own members, to create demonstrations that correspond with specific design classes from the Flower Show. This year's theme will be: *"Color Me Autumn."* Thank you to Pat Bowker for her excellent work in creating a show schedule, which will be submitted for State Garden Club approval.

To highlight our theme throughout the year, we're inviting 3–4 members each month to show us what a specific horticulture or design class looks like in practice.

We'll kick things off on **August 4** with a special hands-on demonstration and practice session led by Ingrid Fair, one of our most talented designers. She will walk us through the steps of creating a traditional design in a small container. All members are asked to bring a container of their choice. (See the flyer next page.)

In **September**, we'll focus on horticulture entries.

Our speaker will explain how to display horticulture following National Garden Club (NGC) manual guidelines. Members are invited to bring in samples from their gardens—tree branches, shrubs, and other plants—to help everyone visualize what's needed for the 2026 show.

In **October**, we'll welcome a speaker who specializes in crafts. They will guide us in making a festive fall holiday mask.

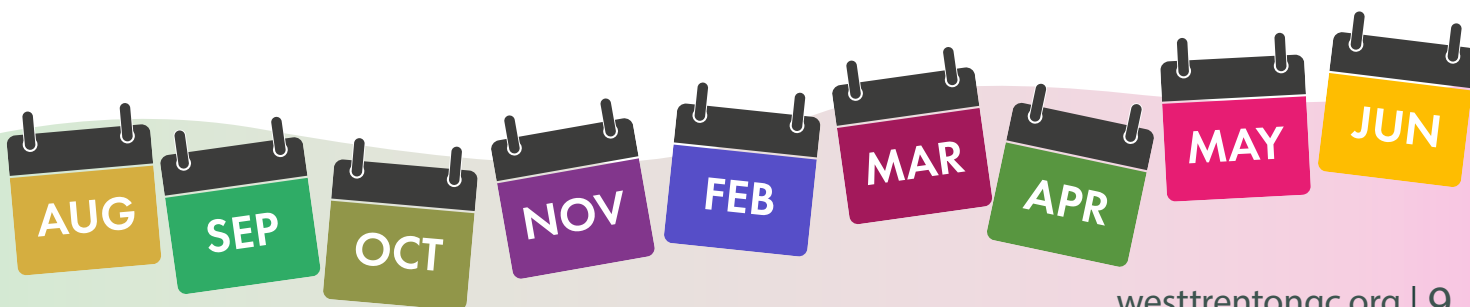
In **November**, we are pleased to welcome back Deborah Pomroy. She'll review NGC guidelines for floral design and demonstrate both a standard design and a small-scale design arranged on a functional dinner table for two. Once again, 2–3 members will be asked to set up card tables with functional dinner arrangements.

During the **winter months**, we'll feature seasonal programs to help members plan their spring gardens.

Looking ahead to **May**, we're thrilled to welcome award-winning designer Pat Bowker. She'll demonstrate how to create petite designs in three Flower Show classes, ranging from 8 to 12 inches tall. We encourage members to bring their own petite designs for inclusion in a group display under the Tea Tray category.

We hope you'll enjoy and benefit from this year's presentations. Many thanks to the Program Committee for creating such an educational and engaging schedule. Special thanks to Anne Skalka, Lynn Grillo, Lorraine Persiani, Helga Fontus, Nancy Fontus, and Iliana Okum for chairing and hosting this summer's planning sessions.

See you at the August 4, 2025 meeting!

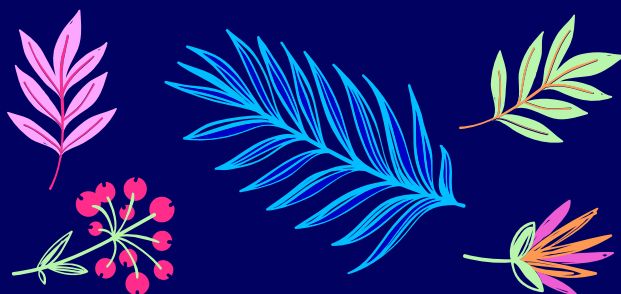


Flower Show Prep Workshop at the August Meeting!

Presented by Ingrid Fair | August 4, 6:30 PM



FLOWER SHOW PREP WORKSHOP AUGUST 4TH GARDEN CLUB MEETING



Join us in an evening
of floral design.

The WTGC will provide
flowers and oasis

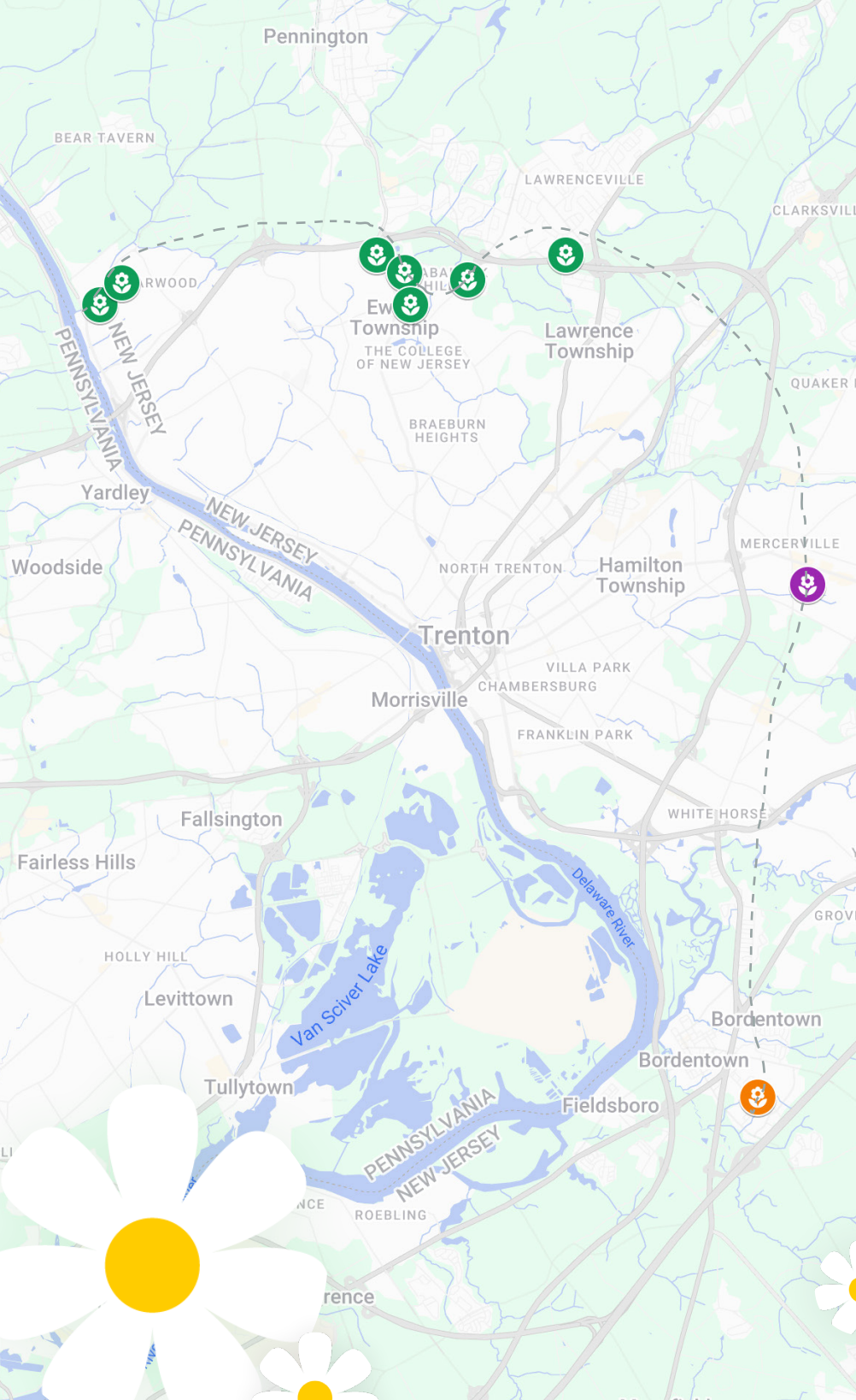
Bring your own container (about the
size of a mug) clippers, a knife to cut
the oasis, and newspaper

Also feel free to bring cuttings from your
garden to add uniqueness to your design

WTGC 2025 Garden Tour | Mark Your Calendars!



Saturday, September 27, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM | Rain Date - September 28



We're delighted to invite you to our September Garden Tour, a highlight of our club calendar and a celebration of late summer's beauty! This year's tour will feature the following outstanding local gardens, each with its own unique charm and design. Tour gardens include:

- Monique Bonnier
- Ida Cahill
- Ingrid Fair
- Zofia Fuelner
- Iliana Okum
- Terry Palise
- Camille Rainiero
- Linda Reasoner
- Anne Skalka

On the tour you'll enjoy inspiring landscapes, creative plantings, and plenty of ideas to take home. Garden owners and club volunteers will be on hand to share stories, answer questions, and welcome you warmly.

The tour will be self-guided and free to all. The full tour map will be available beginning September 10th. Details will be sent by email and posted on our website.

Come for inspiration, connection, and a lovely day among friends and flowers. We can't wait to see you there!

Comfortable walking shoes recommended.

WTGC Flower Show Prep | “Color Me Autumn!”

Anticipated Show Dates – Sept 18–19, 2026

As we look ahead to our Color Me Autumn Flower Show in 2026, this series will share small pieces of the schedule during months when we have a related program. It’s a great way to build your confidence with the show’s classes—one step at a time. Many thanks to WTGC member, Pat Bowker, the creator of this wonderful flower show schedule!

DIVISION II - DESIGN SECTIONS AND CLASSES - DRAFT

Section A. “Happy Fall, Ya’ All”

Eligible for Petite Award

Consultant:

Class 1 **“Back to School”** (4 entries)

Learn, laugh and have fun!

A Design (freedom of style) – No larger than 6” in height, 6” in width, and 6” in depth. Staging panel and underlay provided by Committee (6”W x 6”D x 6”H), may be covered by designer. Staging PENDING. Designer’s choice of plant material and other components. Viewed from the front. HB, p. 73.

Class 2 **“Fall Festival”** (4 entries)

The start of fall festivals brings cooler brisk days filled with the colors of the season, enjoy all this time of year offers.

A Design in the Manor of a Traditional Mass – Not to exceed 8” in height, 8” in width, and 8” in depth. Staging panel and underlay provided by Committee (8”W x 8”D x 8”H), may be covered by designer. Staging PENDING. Designer’s choice of plant material and other components. Viewed from the front. HB, p. 73.

Class 3 **“Harvest Moon”** (4 entries)

This orange-red moon that occurs every September represents abundance, transformation, and a transition period.

A Design (freedom of style) – Not to exceed 12” in height, 12” in width, and 12” in depth. Staging panel and underlay provided by Committee (12”W x 12”D x 12”H), may be covered by designer. Staging PENDING. Designer’s choice of plant material and other components. Viewed from the front. HB, p. 73.

SECTION B. “Sweater Weather”

Eligible for Designer’s Choice Award

Consultant:

Class 4 **“Woodsy”** (4 entries)

The beauty of nature is calling, take a walk in the woods for inspiration.

A Creative Design – Staged on a table 29” from the floor, against a neutral wall. Space allotted 30”W x 30”D. Designer’s choice of plant material and other components. Staging panel and underlay provided by the exhibitor required. Viewed from the front. HB, pp. 71-72.

(continued next page....)

Anticipated Show Dates – Sept 18-19, 2026

WTGC Website Refresh!

Visit westtrentongc.org

The WTGC website has gotten a refresh!

Whether you're looking for the latest club news, event info, or how to become a member, you'll find it all at westtrentongc.org.

We'll be adding more features and resources throughout the year, so be sure to visit often—and bookmark the page while you're at it!

Questions, comments? Email:

Pat Bowker – **Web Manager**, or Lynn Grillo – **Web Editor**



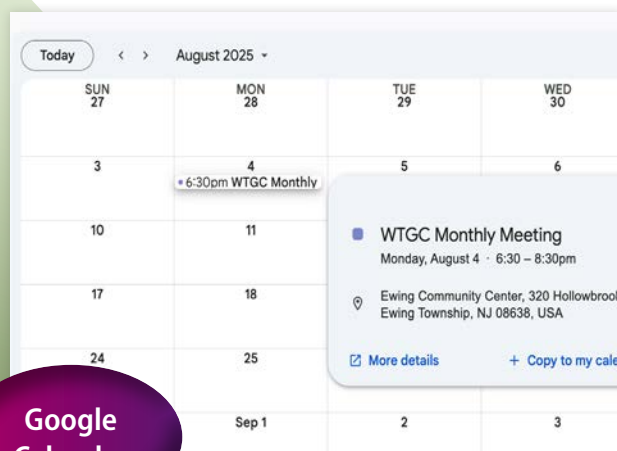
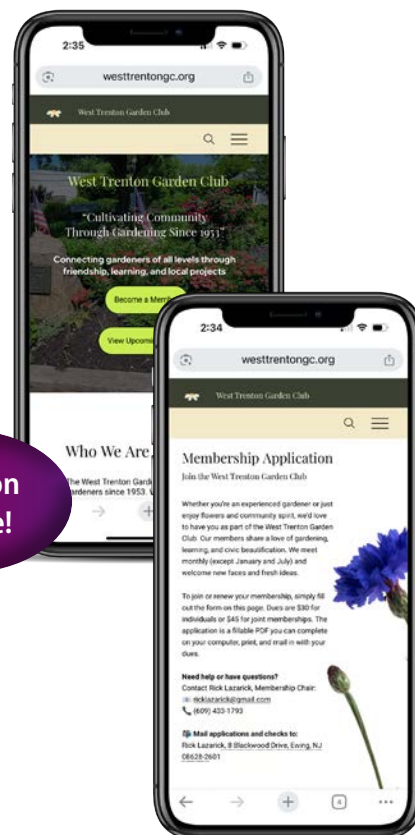
Works on mobile!

Simplified Navigation

Interactive Features



Newsletter Archive



Google Calendar

Ewing Blooms!

Highlighting the Beauty of our Town

Several of our members were highlighted in Ewing Township's Ewing Blooms initiative. You can view the full gallery of photos on Facebook using the link below—plus, we've included a few featured images here. [Visit the Facebook Gallery.](#)



Fireworks!

From left, Columbine, Dahlia, Linda Reasoner, Mt. View; daylily, Anne Cheslock

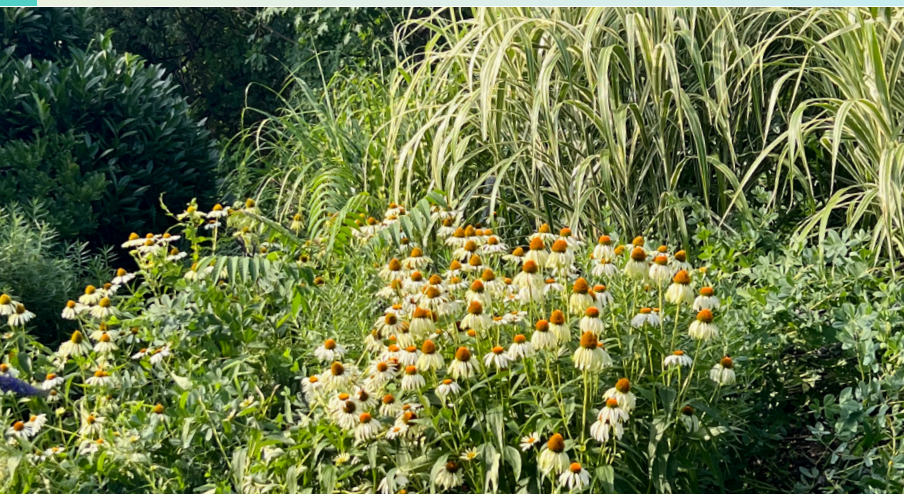
Gallery | July at Birmingham Park

Photos by George McElrath



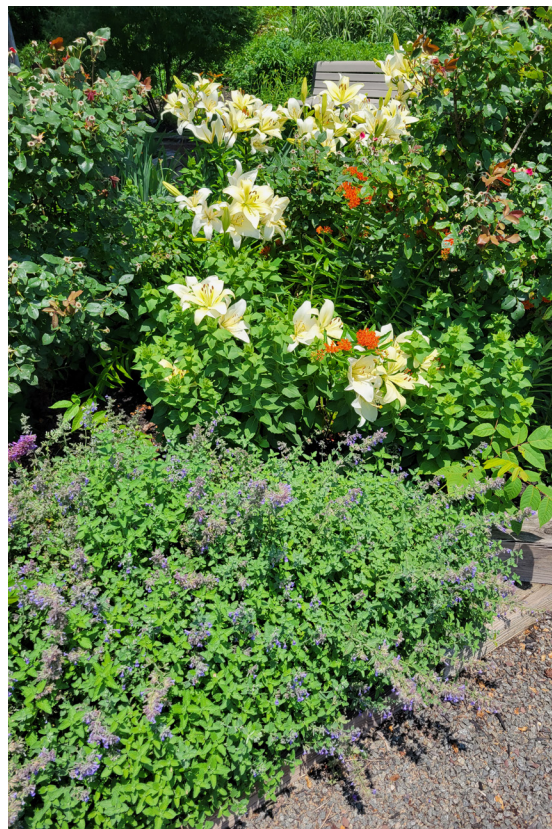
Gallery | July at Birmingham Park

Photos by George McElrath



Gallery | July at Birmingham Park

Photos by Rick Lazarick



Gallery | Found Flowers

Photos by Jeff Tryon

