



MAY 2026

COMPOST HEAP

An Official Publication of Rumson Garden Club



**We look forward to seeing you at our
Annual Meeting!**

**Tuesday, May 19, 2026
at RCC Riverhouse**

RSVP TO MAY MEETING [HERE](#)

Schedule:

8:00 a.m. Passing

9:00 a.m. Judging

12:00 p.m. Lunch and Business Meeting, Scholarship and GCA Awards

***pls bring check for \$30 made out to RGC or make payment [here](#)**



MAY SCHEDULE

STAGING: MARION MORAN, JANE ORR

PASSERS:

FLORAL: BARBARA BATTING, TAPHY HARCSAR, LOUISA RENN

HORT: SARAH FLEMING, CYNTHIA LABRECQUE

PHOTOGRAPHY: GAIL VAN WINKLE*

CLERKS:

FLORAL: SUSAN SOROKOLIT, AMY MCCOOEY

HORT: LAURA WALLACH, MACHIKO MAKI, (ELAINE EADON)

PHOTOGRAPHY: BONNIE TORCIVIA, ULANA JOSLIN, GAIL VAN WINKLE*

JUDGES:

FLORAL: GCA JUDGES: SUKY BRACKEN, LISA GADSEN, WOODNEY WACHTER (PROSPECTIVE), SUSAN D'AMOUR (CLERK)

HORT: GCA JUDGES: ANNE GATES, KATHLEEN BOURKE, HEATHER CADRANELL, CATHERINE WEDGBURY (CANDIDATE CLERK)

PHOTOGRAPHY: JULIE TENNANT, ELENA FISTI, SUSAN VAN TASSEL, JILL MUDGE*

*NOTE THAT THE PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW WILL BE JUDGED AT BINGHAM HALL ON MAY 18TH

Please take a moment to download, print, and fill out your entry cards prior to dropping off your entries. If you need entry cards or have questions, contact our Staging Chairs: Laura Haaren (lahaaren1118@verizon.net) or Lisa Atallah (lisa3atallah@gmail.com)

MAY SCHEDULE

FLORAL

FLORAL DESIGN

Designing for Formal Dining A Patriotic Colonial Celebration

(GCA Judges)

MARY OWEN BORDEN BOWL

A silver bowl awarded to the member with the best formal dining table design. The exhibitor awarded Best in Show from among the first-place winners will be designated the winner of the Mary Owen Borden Bowl.

- Class 1 Create a Period Design* for an imagined dinner and ball held at Philadelphia's Independence Hall in 1776 celebrating the signing of the Declaration of Independence by the 2nd Continental Congress. Design is to be staged on a 66" round diameter by 30" high dining table covered with a floor-length white tablecloth. Accessories, properly treated fruit, and multiple containers are allowed.
Viewed and judged from all sides. **(6) Entries**
- Class 2 Novice. Same as above, however, design to be staged on a 6' long by 30" wide by 30" high rectangular table covered with a floor-length white tablecloth. Exhibitors are given a staging space of 30" width by 30" depth. Accessories, properly treated fruit, and multiple containers are allowed. Viewed and judged from all sides. **(6) Entries**

Pre-registration is required by May 17, 2026.

Class consultant, Mary Jane O'Hare, ohare.maryjane@gmail.com.

* Period Designs are designs with characteristics typical of a historic period; plant material need not be authentic but must interpret the class dictated by the schedule. FS & JG, Book 5, p. 9.

MAY SCHEDULE

HORTICULTURE

(GCA Judges)

All entries must be properly identified with species and cultivar information.

RITCHIE-MOORE TROPHY

- Class 1 Open to all members. Any plant propagated since June 2025. Clay or plastic pots are permitted. Pots not to exceed 4" in diameter. Maximum three pots per member. Points from October 2025 and May 2026 exhibits will be combined to award the Ritchie-Moore Trophy in June. Propagation cards are required.

Class 2 MARY OWEN BORDEN AWARD

Open to all members. Four different kinds (genera) of flowering specimens. One stem or branch of each, to be displayed in **four** RGC containers. A 4"X6" white key card is required. *This Class may not be subdivided.*

Class 3 CONTAINER GARDEN AWARD (Hardy, Har, Har)

Open to all members. A silver bowl awarded to the member exhibiting the best Perennial container garden wintered over in a pot outside. Bulbs may be included. Must be owned since November of 2025. The maximum size 14" measured height and width. To be judged by point scale listed below. A 4"X6" white key card is required. *This Class may not be subdivided.*

PAEONIA (PEONY)

- Class 4 One stem, disbudded*, with foliage, to be displayed in a RGC container.
Class 5 Novice. Same as above. *This class may be subdivided.*

SYRINGA (LILAC)

- Class 6 One branch with foliage not to exceed 18" from lip of container to tip of branch, to be displayed in a RGC container.
Class 7 Novice. Same as above.

ALLIUM

- Class 8 One stem to be displayed in a RGC container. Flower head up to 4" in diameter.
Class 9 Novice. Same as above.
Class 10 One stem to be displayed in a RGC container. Flower head larger than 4" in diameter.
Class 11 Novice. Same as above.

MAY SCHEDULE

HORTICULTURE CONT.

(GCA Judges)

All entries must be properly identified with species and cultivar information.

IRIS

Class 12 Bearded

Class 13 Novice. Same as above

Class 14 Non-bearded

Class 15 Novice. Same as above.

FANTASTIC FOLIAGE

Class 16 One leaf or stem of a herbaceous plant grown primarily for its foliage. (Heuchera, Lamb's Ears, Artemisia, etc.) *This class may be subdivided.*

Class 17 Novice. Same as above.

Class 18 Three **different** varieties of Hosta leaves displayed in three **separate** RGC containers. A 4"X6" white key card is required.

Class 19 Novice. Same as above.

RHODODENDRON

Class 20 One truss (flower cluster); should be shown half in blossom and half in bud; Leaves should entirely surround the bloom.

Class 21 Novice. Same as above.

NATIVE PLANTS**

Class 22 Three **different** flowering native plant stems or branches, arranged in **ONE** RGC container. A 4"X6" white key card is required.

Class 23 Novice. Same as above.

Class 24 VIBURNUM

One stem or branch of any type of flowering viburnum. To be displayed in a RGC container. *This class may be subdivided.*

Class 25 Novice. Same as above.

MAY SCHEDULE

HORTICULTURE CONT.

(GCA Judges)

All entries must be properly identified with species and cultivar information.

Class 26 PAR

A rooted plant of exceptional horticultural merit, which does not qualify for entry elsewhere in the Horticultural Division. Please see page 12 for PAR definition.

***** Native plants, for the purpose of this schedule, will be defined as “native to New Jersey” according to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center or the JerseyYards.org Native Plant Database. Please visit those sites to verify the eligibility of your specimens.***

******Scale of Points by which Arrangement is to be judged:***

<i>Cultural perfection</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Design</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Diversity</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Key card</i>	<i><u>10</u></i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

PHOTOGRAPHY

250 Celebration of Red, White and Blue

(GCA Judges)

- Class 1 Celebrating the semiquincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Plants or flowers in red, white and blue. A color photo of a still life or outside in the garden.
- Class 2 Novice. Same as Class 1.
- Class 3 Using the lyrics from “America the Beautiful” as inspiration: “O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain, For purple mountains majesties, Above the fruited plain... From sea to shining sea!”
- Class 4 Novice. Same as Class 3.

Happy May!

I hope to see you all next week for our annual meeting. It is always a wonderful celebration of RGC, our members and our community. We will be awarding our scholarship to a high school senior and giving our GCA awards and commendations. And we are also excited to include our four new members, whose photos and bios are included in this heap so you can welcome them.

Let's not forget that this is our biggest show of the year as well! We have GCA judges for horticulture, floral and photography and some of our major awards are up for grabs including the Mary Owen Borden Bowl for floral and the Ritchie-Moore Trophy for propagation in horticulture.

Looking ahead we are getting ready for our plant sale on June 6th. We will also be marching in the Memorial Day Parade on May 25th to help promote the plant sale, so please let me know if you can join us!

I want to congratulate our RGC members who have taken on leadership roles for next year: Sarah Fleming as GCA Communications Chair, Susan Olson as Zone Horticulture Rep, Anne Reiss as Zone Communications Rep and Ann Rossbach as Zone Scholarship Rep. Well deserved recognition to them all!

Keep growing,
Heather

Here are a few photos from our activity with the 3rd grade garden club last week



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

May 18, 9 am, May Show Photography Judging at Bingham Hall (Photography)

May 25, 9 am, Rumson Memorial Day Parade

June 6, 9 am-12 pm, Native Plant Sale, Rumson Borough Hall

June 6, 9 am - 12 pm, Rally for the Rivers EcoFest at Victory Park (Conservation)

June 8, 12 pm, New Members luncheon, McLoone's restaurant, Sea Bright (New Members)

June 18, Rutgers Univ. Rain Garden Road Trip (Visiting Gardens)

FLORAL DESIGN

Hey Floral Design friends!

On May 19th, floral design plans to celebrate the 250th birthday of our country and the **Mary Owen Borden Bowl** with a patriotic theme. There are only **6 spots for novices and 6 spots for regular exhibitors**; all exhibitors will be vying for floral's "Best in Show" and Borden's beautiful silver bowl and mahogany box. **Registration for this final flower show of the year is now open. Contact louisarenn@gmail.com to enter.**

GCA judges are planned, so please refer to the RGC website for the show schedule and class specifics - including all those pesky pages of fine print listed at the beginning of the schedule. Specifically, don't include invasive plants or prohibited items in your design and use black ink on your entry cards (or fill and print from the website) and on your 25 words or less statement of intent, if you include one.

May will be your last chance to earn points for end-of-the-year awards and for novices to accumulate necessary points to move to the regular member division. Novices need 16 total points or two first place awards in a Club year (September – June), to graduate from novice to regular exhibitor. If you aren't sure of your showing status, go to the RGC website – highlight the "Directory" tab, then "Club Members", then highlight "Member Novice Status 25-26." If there is a discrepancy, contact Heather.

Club News:

Thanks to members who stayed after our April Show to meet with next year's floral chairs, Betsy Ford and Jane Orr, to talk about ideas for the 2026-2027 floral schedule. Betsy and Jane will take the next 2 months to finalize their plan with Heather and the Zone IV Floral Chair. Based on ideas discussed at the meeting, 2026-2027 is going to be an exciting year!

Congrats to Barbara Batting and Louisa Renn for their entries in floral design at the Zone IV Show at the Grounds for Sculpture. The RGC had a good day with a first in the "Back to the Future!" two-sided class and a third in the interpretive GFS sculpture class. Congrats also on all the Horticulture and Photography entries and winners. Your floral teammates are proud of you!

Thank you also to all who entered our April Club Show honoring Arbor and Earth Day. We had some beautiful and creative designs displayed... recycling and trees never looked so good! Here are the results:

Class 1 -

1st – Louisa Renn

HM – Mary Jane O'Hare

Class 2 -

1st and floral "Best in Show" – Jane Orr

2nd – Amy McCooley

3rd – Machiko Maki

Class 3 –

1st – Betsy Ford

2nd – Bonnie Torcivia

3rd – Taphy Harcsar

Class 4 –

1st – Marion Moran

2nd – Ulana Joslin

3rd – Alexandra Smith

FLORAL DESIGN

GCA News:

The Englewood Garden Club is hosting a GCA Flower Show called Classic on October 28-29, 2026. Registration in all divisions (FD, PH, BA, Hort) for Zone IV members only opened May 1st. On May 15th, any GCA member may register. Englewood is about 1 hour 15 minutes away from Rumson -- so similar distance to the Zone IV show in Princeton. Interestingly, one of the floral classes offered requires a parallel line design; A different class requires an underwater design style. Since we know this stuff, please consider entering! Let Jane, Betsy, and Heather know if you do register, so they can keep track of participation and points in outside shows.

Other Floral Workshop News:

To attend some amazing free or low-cost floral design workshops next year, often with GCA judges, consider following the PHS, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society - the folks who put on the Philadelphia Flower Show. Sign up now for future email notices or just periodically check the PHS website for upcoming events. <https://phsonline.org/>

PHS should start posting dates and registration links for Fall and Winter floral workshops later this summer. You don't have to be a PHS member to attend or be planning to enter the 2027 Philadelphia Flower Show. It is an easy 1 hour and a half drive and parking is not terribly difficult.

Hope you are enjoying your days of spring planting and we can't wait to see you at the May Show.
Happy designing everyone!



HORTICULTURE

The beautiful weather has us outside in our gardens looking for the perfect specimens to enter into the May show. Hopefully we will have propagated entries for the **Richie-Moore Trophy**. This special award is for any plant propagated since June of 2025. Plants entered in October can be re-entered in May. Pots are not exceed 4" in diameter. A maximum of three pots per member. Points from October and May will be combined.

Please review the schedule for specifics on the **Mary Owen Borden Award** and the **Container Garden Award**. Note that key cards (4x6 unlined index cards) are needed for Classes 2, 3, 18, 19, 22 and 23. Details on completing a key card can be found [HERE](#).

There are many opportunities for novices to advance to regular exhibitors in this show.

Please have your horticulture entry cards filled out BEFORE you come. The timing is critical for the passers to finish passing before the GCA judges arrive.

Proper grooming and appropriate top dressing for rooted plants will keep the judges happy and garner points!

PHOTOGRAPHY



PHOTOGRAPHY SHOW May 19th, 2026

Class 1: **Celebration of Red, White and Blue**

Celebrating the semiquincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Plants or flowers in red, white and blue.

A color photo of a still life or outside in the garden.

Class 2: Novice, same as Class 1

Class 3: **250 Years of Patriotism**

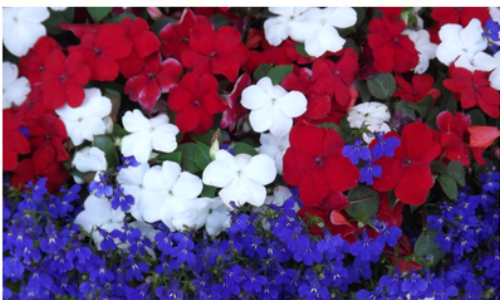
Using the lyrics from "America the Beautiful" as inspiration: "O beautiful for spacious skies, For amber waves of grain, For purple mountains majesties, Above the fruited plain... From sea to shining sea!"

Class 4 Novice, same as Class 3

All entries must be submitted by May 12th to

Gail Van Winkle - 51 Lippincott Rd., Little Silver. Follow mounting rules in the By-Laws.

4 Entries per class, Contact Gail at gailfvw@gmail.com to reserve a spot today.



A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

****Collection of 2026-2027 Annual Dues****

Please bring cash, check or credit card for 2026-2027 Annual Dues to the May meeting or mail a check to P.O. Box 121, Rumson, NJ 07760 made out to Rumson Garden Club.

Dues for the 2026-2027 year will be \$225 for all members and \$75 for Life Member status.

All payments are due by 30 June 2026 to avoid a \$25 late fee. Please contact Christina Weber or Christiane McNamara if you have any questions.



Another great planting at Sandy Hook Park to restore habitat. Many thanks to the volunteers!

NEW MEMBERS

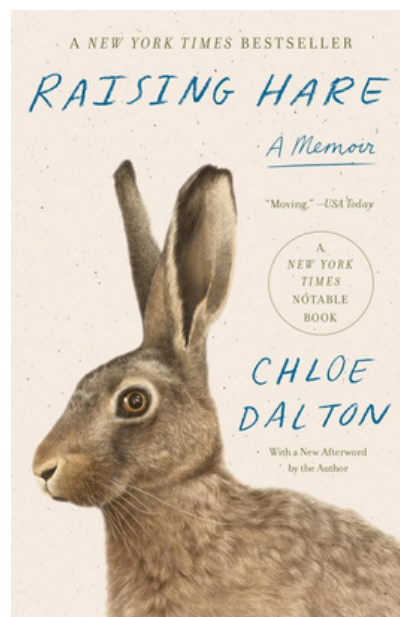
Our final New Member meeting will take place June 8th at 12 noon at McLoone's restaurant in Sea Bright. Our guest speaker, Kathy Donnelly, will bring us the news from our Civics committee.

What a group of wonderful new women! It has been a privilege to work with them this year.

Susan Sorolokit and Taphy Harsar.

RGC ON AMAZON!

RGC's Amazon shop is up and running! Access it through the RGC website, click the product image, or click [here](#) to start shopping! Future shopping suggestions welcome!



*This month's featured product

RGC ON INSTAGRAM!

Please send Pari photos of any events, workshops, or special plants you encounter, including pictures from your garden or others.

Text Pari Harrison @ 732-915-3051

To all my Readers:

This essay was written a few years ago. I thought it timely to reproduce it now while folks are thinking about contacting their pesticide companies. As many of you know, many creatures are harmed by pesticides, their reproductive systems irreparably damaged. And pollinators are essential to our food chain. They are also killed by night lights. To further protect fireflies, outdoor bulbs can be replaced with warm yellow bulbs, found at hardware stores, because they do not attract or interfere with night flying insects.

"No Mow May" helps insects raise their families.

Just a few thoughts.

It was a warm dark summer evening. The moon was riding high in the rich velvety sky, pale wispy clouds straggling across its face. The river a pale silvery glow. The air sweet smelling with wild roses and honeysuckle. The dog was minding her own business when a light flickered near her nose. She paused for a second, opened her jaws wide to snatch it only to find it had disappeared. Her deep brown eyes took on a mystified look. Then it twinkled again right near her eye. She took another stab at what she thought would be an interesting meal, when it vanished again. And a solitary cormorant flying home to roost stretched his angular neck to see the strange twinkling lights below. Twinkling, floating and dancing in a wonderfully sparkling magical show. It almost seems as if the sky has tossed down a host of stars to dazzle us.

There are 200 hundred species of fireflies, lampyridae. In fact, they are not actually flies, they are beetles. They are found in the moist areas of Asia and the Americas and of course in our own humid New Jersey. And we are lucky here on the East Coast because on the West Coast fireflies do not usually light up. They need moisture to hatch their eggs so our marshlands here at the Shore are perfect for them. They very cleverly carry bioluminescence on the undersides of their abdomens which is controlled by their nervous system. Their flashes can be orange, green or yellow. They use these light signals to attract prospective mates. The females are wingless but are bioluminescent, too. They lay seductively in the grass watching out for the appropriate male of their species. At which point they flash, signaling their acceptance.

The female lays her eggs in moist areas in grass, near ponds, rivers, and lakes. Even their eggs glow. Firefly larvae eat snails, worms, and slugs, which they inject with a numbing chemical to disable. So, they are extremely useful in our gardens. Adults eat other fireflies, nectar, or pollen, although some do not eat at all. Predators such as spiders, frogs, lizards, and birds do not eat them because fireflies release toxic foul-tasting blood. Stay away you predators, they warn.

They are not endangered yet, but there are activities that could change all that. Night lights interfere with their migration and mating habits. Loss of habitat. Draining marshland. Pesticide applications. All contribute to their endangerment. The "Dark Sky Initiative" is one environmental group that is trying to help them.

We can do much for their survival. Forgoing the pesticides is the most important thing we can do. Mow lawns less often or leave sections of tall grass. Woody debris and water features also help. Turn off unnecessary outside lights. Plant native trees like pine, whose canopy creates dimmer conditions so that the fireflies can light up earlier in the evening.

They are enchanting creatures, only living from one to three weeks. The perfect collective noun for fireflies is "glow." Lighting our darkness with their twinkling, glimmering, and dancing.

When summer evenings are warm and quiet is the time to revel in this most glorious of nature's offerings. And for that we have cherished memories.

We are born of stardust, scientists tell us. Fireflies seem to embody this idea.

Haiku
Twinkling fireflies
Lighting up warm summer nights
Enchantment abounds.

For further information:

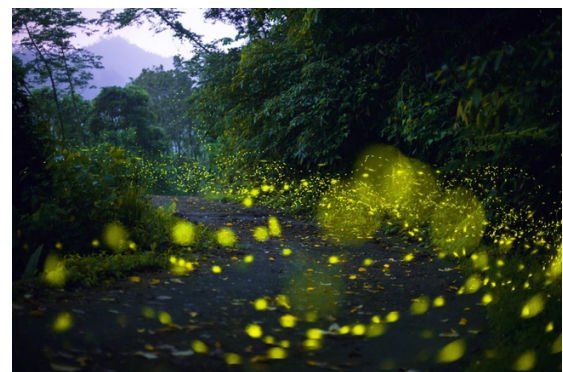
Dark Sky Initiative: darksky.org

NationalGeographicforkids.com

National Wildlife Federation: nfw.org

Jan Glass Bird Lady RGC. Janbglass13@gmail.com

May 2026





2026 | 2027

The New Jersey Committee of the Garden Club of America was founded in 1987 to utilize surplus funds from the GCA Annual Meeting hosted by Zone IV clubs. In 1994, **The Growing Fund** branched off to raise funds to provide Zone IV clubs with grant money to fund worthwhile projects within the state.

The Growing Fund generates about \$25,000 a year through the generous donations of the members of the Zone IV Garden Clubs.

Over the years, every club in Zone IV has received multiple **Growing Fund** grants that have allowed them to actively pursue local endeavors that help educate others as well as to beautify and restore our New Jersey environment. To date, **The Growing Fund** has gifted over \$594,000 to support over 96 projects.

We encourage all Zone IV Garden Club members to donate to help our Garden State flourish!

CLICK HERE TO
MAKE A
DONATION

VISIT

<http://www.njcommitteegca.org/>



SCAN

the QR code
with your
phone's
camera

OR

If you prefer to donate by mail, write a check to **'NJC of GCA'**

Mail to: **Rachael Lee**
4 Blue Spruce Drive, Pennington, NJ 08534

When you donate, please note your **Garden Club Affiliation**.

Contributions of \$100 and over will be acknowledged.

We are a 501(c)(3) organization. Please consider us if your employer has a matching gift program.

Deadline for donations is May 31, 2026.

NJC of GCA Executive Board

Beth P. Riley, Chair
Garden Club of Madison

Rachael Lee, Vice Chair
Stony Brook Garden Club of Princeton

Peter Simone, Treasurer
Plainfield Garden Club

Carolyn Von Meister, Corresponding Secretary
Garden Club of Somerset Hills

Lesley Hetherington, Recording Secretary
Garden Club of Somerset Hills



A POCKET GUIDE

WHO IS THE NEW JERSEY COMMITTEE?

- Established in 1987, The New Jersey Committee of The Garden Club of America (NJC) distinguishes Zone IV as
 - having 1 of only 4 area committees, nationally, throughout GCA
- Through its mission, NJC has donated \$595,000 to over 96 projects within the Garden State and provided scholarships to over 72 NJ students

WHAT IS THE NEW JERSEY COMMITTEE MISSION?

- Stimulate the knowledge and love of gardening,
- Restore, improve and protect the quality of the environment
- Fund projects that benefit the state of New Jersey

WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE?

- Two representatives from each of the 11 Zone IV clubs, for a term of two years
- The Committee is led by an Executive Committee, consisting of a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary

HOW DOES ZONE IV BENEFIT FROM THE NEW JERSEY COMMITTEE?

- A key focus of the Committee is to award Growing Fund grants that benefit local projects within the state of New Jersey. The original grant was awarded to Dr. Orton of Rutgers University to help with his hybridization studies which led to the development of the well-known Rutgers Dogwood Growing Fund grant money is raised through
- garden club members' and friends' generous donations (averaging \$85 per donation) to The Growing Fund. Gifts
- range from \$20 to \$2000. All gifts are appreciated. Every club within Zone IV has received multiple grants. Projects have included forest and greenhouse restoration, outdoor classrooms, rain and community gardens and urban farms. Grants may be submitted for consideration with a deadline of November 1 NJC helps small garden clubs do BIG things!
-

SCHOLARSHIPS

- The Millicent Mercer Johnsen Scholarship is supported by NJC's annual fall luncheon and lecture
 - This program has provided tuition funds totaling \$170,800 and supported 72 NJ students in a field of study
 - including horticulture, environmental studies, food systems, landscape architecture, plant and marine sciences
- This year, NJC supports 5 interns. These students would not have had the opportunity to include an internship experience in their portfolio without the contributions of the members of our Zone IV clubs



RUMSON GARDEN CLUB

NATIVE PLANT SALE

SATURDAY, JUNE 6
9AM-12PM

RUMSON BOROUGH HALL
BACK PARKING LOT

It's That Time of Year!



FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT SUSAN OLSON (917)699-7652

ALL PROCEEDS WILL GO TOWARDS THE RUMSON GARDEN CLUB'S COMMUNITY FUND



Please welcome our new members 2026!

Contact information for each new member can be found in the Membership Directory on the RGC website.



Kathryn Bauer lives in Rumson with her husband, two children, and an energetic chocolate lab puppy. She loves gardening, staying active, and creating pressed-flower artwork inspired by what she grows and gathers. A lifelong love of art and planting continues to shape her work, with a focus on natural, relaxed plantings and the beauty in everyday blooms.



Betsy Marx and husband Chris, a Monmouth County native, raised their children in Ridgewood, NJ, but spent many summers in Rumson and settled here full time five years ago. For more than three decades, Betsy worked as a shelter magazine editor producing stories that celebrated the beauty of homes, gardens, and the art of living. She and Chris have stayed committed to community service, the arts, sports and education. More recently, Betsy has been enjoying studio art classes and plein air painting in oils and pastels. Rumson Garden Club feels like a natural extension of her love of art and nature and lifelong interests in celebrating gardens, conservation, and community.



Colleen Fischer has called Rumson home for nearly 18 years, where she and her husband have raised their two children. She loves teaching, volunteering in her community, and spending time outdoors. Whether playing tennis, hiking, sailing, gardening, or creating pottery, she enjoys staying active and connected to nature while building meaningful connections with others.



Barbara Kirk grew up in Little Silver and now resides in Shrewsbury with her husband, Dave. They have 2 grown children, Colin and Erin. She went to Skidmore College and majored in Fine Arts and minored in Business. After a 41-year career in publishing, she retired in 2023 as the Creative Director of HarperCollins Children's Book Publishers. She is enjoying retirement by gardening, travelling, reading, playing golf, and learning bridge. She is excited to be a part of the Rumson Garden Club.

Many thanks to Louisa for sharing this Instagram find - “Cut Flower tips”!

Cut Angles & Water Temps

What actually matters (and what doesn't)



Cut at 45° is the default

It works for almost every flower you'll bring home.

More surface area means more water uptake, and the angled tip keeps the stem from sealing flat against the bottom of your vase.

There's only one group of flowers where you'd cut differently: *Swipe.*

The exception: bulb stems

Cut these straight across.

Tulips. Daffodils. Hyacinths. Irises.

Why: These have soft, often white bulb-base stems. A straight cut keeps the stem from collapsing or bending, and they drink just fine without an angle.

Always use sharp shears or floral knife, not dull scissors. Dull scissors crush the stem and block water uptake.

Bonus: hollow stems

Still cut at 45°. But fill them.

The hollow-stem flowers: delphinium, larkspur, amaryllis, bells of Ireland.

The trick: After cutting, turn the stem upside down and fill the hollow with water. Plug it with your thumb (or a small piece of cotton) and place it in the vase. The trapped water keeps the stem strong and feeding from the inside.

Skip this and you'll get droopy heads from air bubbles in the stem.

Now let's talk water temperature



Most people fill the vase with whatever comes out of the tap and call it good.

But the temperature actually changes how fast a flower drinks, opens, and lasts.

Three temperatures, three jobs.

Warm water

Woody stems & droopy revivals

Use it for: Roses, hydrangeas, lilac, dahlias, and any flower that arrived home droopy.

Why: Warm water moves through tight stems faster and pushes out the air bubbles that block water uptake. Dahlias especially benefit from a quick hot-water dip when first cut to kickstart drinking. It's also the fastest way to perk up a sad flower.

Not boiling. Not hot. About the temperature of a comfortable bath.

Room temp water

Almost everything else

Use it for: Ranunculus, carnations, lisianthus, alstroemeria, anemones, peonies, gerbera daisies, mums, snapdragons, scabiosa, stock.

Why: Room temp is the safe default for most flowers. Cold shocks them, hot ages them. The middle is steady and gentle.

Bonus: ranunculus want shallow room temp water. Two to three inches only. Their hollow stems get mushy if you fill the vase.

Cold water

Bulb stems & slowing the bloom

Use it for: Tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, irises. Or any flower that's opening too fast for an event you're saving it for.

Why: Cold slows everything down. Bulb flowers prefer it, and it'll buy you a day or two on a flower that's blooming faster than you want.

Heads up: daffodils ooze a sap that's toxic to other flowers. Soak them in their own bucket of cold water for a few hours before mixing with anything else.

Source: Instagram -  **rocklin flora** (aka, Ashley Metcalfe in Rocklin, CA)



**PART 6: ENJOY MORE OF OUR RGC HISTORY!
FROM RGC'S 2014 100TH ANNIVERSARY VIDEO**