



2023-2024 Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. Annual Report
Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. (MGC)
Member National Garden Clubs, Inc and NGC Central Region

2023-2024 At A Glance

Our Mission: "to provide leadership and education, resources, and network opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral and landscape design, civic and environmental responsibility."

Our Numbers

8 Districts

132 Member Clubs
4768 Members

Our Programs/Projects

Blue & Gold Star Memorials
Black Swallowtail for State Butterfly
Gardening With Purpose
Homegrown National Park
Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary

Our Monetary Support

MGC/NGC Awards \$3700
Grow & Share Grants \$3000
NGC Schools \$10,000
Scholarships \$30,000



President: Nancy J Ryan; Indian Hills and Kent Garden Club

2023-2024 was an exciting time to be a member of Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. The downsized Board of Directors, working with various committees accomplished the following:

- A re-design of the MGC website making it more user friendly
- A rebranding effort resulting in a new logo and a fresh look across all MGC social media
- Continued strengthening of the MGC financial position through strong stewardship of the budget and our investments
- Launch of the online store for MGC merchandise sales
- Club 50th and 100th Anniversary Monetary Recognition Awards Program approved
- Launch of the first digital issue of the quarterly newsletter "Thru the Garden Gate"
- Increased use and connection of our social media sites: -MGC website, MGC and District Facebook pages and MGC Facebook Groups
- Gardening With Purpose Initiative to combat food insecurity and reduce environmental impact of composting by sharing our excess produce with local food pantries
- Provided over \$30,000 in scholarships across Michigan's fifteen public universities
- Conducted three NGC schools and a Bi-Refresher
- Saw the passage of HB 4159 to designate the Black Swallowtail as the state butterfly
- Revised Club President's Report to simplify and streamline
- Welcomed four new clubs into MGC!

Thank you everyone for your ideas and your hard work to put them in place as we continue to look for opportunities to add value for our member clubs!

Treasurer: Rosemary (Bunny) LaDuke; Chula Vista Garden Club



Corporate Revenue/Expenses

Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc., is a Michigan incorporated nonprofit with a solid financial status in this inflationary economic environment. Our financial transactions are now wholly managed through our CPA firm, Seber Tans, and all checks are generated through Bill.com after review by our Finance Chair, Gail Taggart. This financial process continues to be streamlined and improved with the active participation on the Finance Committee of our Seber Tans Client Services Representative, Jessica Greene.

Current MGC Assets as of May 31, 2024

Checking:	\$ 29,374.18
Savings:	\$ 8,124.33
Morgan Stanley:	\$ 439,169.94
Raymond James:	\$ 212,251.04
Total Assets:	\$ 688,919.49

Since June 1, 2023, total MGC assets have increased a net of \$65,752

Investments

The Morgan Stanley investments began the fiscal year on June 1, 2023 with a balance of \$345,020. In July 2023 we moved \$45,000 from the checking account to a fixed 5.3 % 6-month CD at Morgan Stanley. When the CD expired, we moved \$10,000 to the checking account and moved the balance to a Morgan Stanley 5%+ savings account. During this fiscal year the Morgan Stanley account value increased \$49,159. The Raymond James investment account began the fiscal year on June 1, 2023, with \$187,050 which increased \$25,201 during this fiscal year.

Quarterly Reports

Quarterly summary treasury reports are provided to MGC Board and full monthly reports are also available on the MGC website.

Significant MGC Expense Projects during 2024 [read more](#)



**1st Vice President: Lisa Robinson;
Holland GC and West MI Flower Arrangers Guild**

The 2023-2024 term started with setting up District Director Meetings, planning Fall Meetings collecting Roster updates and dues payment reminders.

This Chairman has actively participated in the business of MGC committees including 2024 Conference; 2025 Conference; Bylaws, Policy & Procedure; Advisory Council; Gardening with a Purpose; President's Best Practice Awards: Finance; and Grow & Share Grant.

I have assisted in updates and improvements to the Presidents Report Form, District Meeting Checklists, Reserve Account Spending Policies and Position outline and Description for a Member Services Administrator. I've hosted monthly meetings of the District Directors and work with each District Director and her Treasurer and Team as needed to prepare for District meetings and budgets, keep each club and member informed and reminded of MGC activities, projects and events. In November 2023, the new District 3B Director and Team were introduced.

Unfortunately, we lost 5 clubs this year: Loch Alpine Garden Club, District 2A, Howell Garden Club, District 2B; Parchment Garden Club, District 3A,; Michiana Landscape Study Club, District 3B;. Mason Union Garden Club, District 3B; and Evening Bloomers Garden Club, District 6.

We also added 4 new clubs: Wyandotte GC, District 1 Patterson Park GC, District 1 Bedford Garden Club, District 2A Commons Garden Angels.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR ANNUAL REPORTS [read here](#)



2nd VP Civic Affairs: Carol McGregor; Lowell Showboat GC

See Committee Reports below



Legislative Chair: Jeanette Meyer; Western Hills GC

I would like to begin with a summary of the history of the Black Swallowtail bill, HB4159. As you may recall, the bill was introduced by Rep. Julie Brixie March 2, 2023. It is a bipartisan bill with 45 cosponsors. It was assigned to House Committee of Natural Resources, cosponsors. It was assigned to House Committee of Natural Resources, Environment, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation.

Michigan Garden Club members testified at the bill hearing. It was subsequently passed on to the House for a vote which it passed on June 14, 2023. Thus, the bill moved to the Senate where it was referred to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Agriculture. Initially, MGC was reassured that the bill would receive a hearing early in the 2024 legislative session. However, as time passed communication with our legislators became less and less reassuring for the bill to move forward. [read more](#)



Blue & Gold Star Chair: Trish Payne; member TouchThe Earth GC

To ensure we are respectfully paying tribute to our Armed Forces and Gold Star Families, MGC undertook an audit of our Blue and Gold Star markers. With resounding support from member clubs, favorable results were collected and will be shared with the MGC Board in September. With a few endorsed recommendations, I feel we can elevate our game even more.



Photos of Michigan markers - not already posted at the MGC website – have been added along with “base” information including the marker number within the state, the type of marker, who dedicated the marker, when it was dedicated and where it resides. This initiative increased our postings from 28% to 98%. In time, pins will be added as a more reliable way to locate the markers. Additions to the postings, verbiage and/or photos, are welcomed.

A new *MGC Dedication Guidance* document has been added to our website. This is a living document, so if member clubs feel additional content would be helpful, please reach out to me.

In fiscal year 2023-2024, the following markers were ordered: [read more](#)



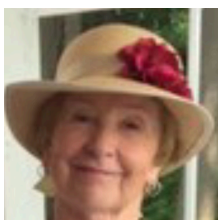
3rd VP Schools and Education: Denise Clegg; Western Hills GC

The 2024 year began with a Bi-Refresh held in February over Zoom led by me with support from Bethany Goodman and Deb Plichta. Attendees were from across the country. Working with Mary Wangler we revamped the speakers lists now available on the website. A new State School Chair Deb Plichta was provided an orientation and support to assume the State Landscape Design School Chair. A School Chairs’ Team which meets monthly to share ideas and problem solve was established. A Flower Show Team was set up which works in a similar fashion. Both teams are moving forward to identify and adapt to changes at the national level.

Artistic Crafts took a hiatus during the current year.

Environmental School completed Series 8 in April. Congratulations to the thirteen new Environmental Consultants. Thank you to District 5’s two clubs, Portage Lake Garden Club and Spirit of the Woods Garden Club for hosting this program led by Beth Markowski. Series 9 will be in the Kalamazoo area at MSU, W. K. Kellogg Biological Station, Hickory Corners, beginning April 7 & 8, 2025. The MGC Board of Directors would like to thank Bethany Goodman for her years of service as the Environmental School Chair.

Flower Show School presented Course 1 and 2 this year. There was a great learning curve with course one and many changes were made to ensure greater success with course 2. The new format, which broke the test into three parts, was well received by all who attended. All attendees taking the test were successful. If you took course one but did not test, maybe you would like to consider attending course 3. The committee led by Carol Brodbeck, Flower Show School Chair and Local Co-chairs Rita Crawley and Deb Emmons have been working diligently with NGC (National Garden Club) to put on a successful certified program. [read more](#)



**4th VP Gardening & Education:
Nancy Smith; Taylor GC**

Environmental Issues Advisors Kris Greve (Spirit of the Woods GC) & Ellen Herring; (Lakeshore GC)

Worked together to create a bookmark on Recycling and Doing Something Green. The bookmark was placed in the welcome package at the 2024 Annual MGC Conference.

The QR Code takes you to the MGC website where you can find additional information.

Homegrown National Park Advisor Susan Bailey; Indian Hills GC

Susan put together a Home-Grown National Park display placed in the educational section at the Conference. She brought additional HNP bookmarks to the Conference for garden club members to take back to their home clubs. The bookmarks have been popular and have had several re-printings since their creation.

Susan has also been converting data from the Homegrown National Park web- site reporting the number of gardens signed up from Michigan gardeners. She converts Michigan zip codes into MGC Districts and sends a report quarterly. I cannot imagine how much time this takes for her to do all that work. She says 2,793.7 acres of land was reported on the HNP website for the State of Michigan at the end of May.

Vegetable and Foodscaping Advisor Catherine Brenner, Saline Stone & Thistle GC, provided very informative articles for each Garden Gate issue throughout the year.

Sadly, we lost Pam Cater who was the Horticulture and Arboricultural Issues Advisor on my Standing Committee and member of Tri-Cities GC.

Committee Reports: Awards, Finance, GTEP and Scholarships



Awards Committee Sue Soderberg Awards Chair; The Friendly GC of Traverse City

All MGC and NGC Awards were distributed to District Directors at the June 6th Annual Meeting. Checks were mail to the presidents of each club who received a 1st place award. General Award applications were due October 1st, 2023, and Yearbook Award Applications were due on October 15th.

Youth Contest Awards deadlines were published when due, as dates for these applications were different.

Award judging was held on October 30th in Lansing. Approximately 40 MGC members helped to judge awards. In 2023 two Districts judged their own yearbooks and then sent the winners in each category to the judging day for further judging. We hope to add other Districts in judging their own yearbooks.

The Board voted to change the incentive payment for MGC first place awards to \$50 and to award 2nd Place MGC winners \$25.00. Yearbook Award winners would also receive \$50 for 1st Place 1st Place winners of NGC Awards would continue to receive \$25.00.

The Smokey Bear Woodsy Owl poster contest had entries from 9 clubs this year which totaled 635 entries. The Youth Sculpture Contest had 9 entries this year.

During the last year 29 Life Achievement awards were presented.

Finance Committee Gail Taggart Chair; Muskegon GC



The Finance Committee focuses on the business aspects of the MGC corporation; development of the next fiscal year's budget, reviewing budgets and final reports of School and District events, and monitoring MGC's assets. The Committee works alongside the Grants Administrator, and the GTEP, Loda Lake, and Scholarship Chairs. We have also brought our Seber Tans representative into our meetings in order to provide a better understanding of and working relationship with our accounting processes.

Treasurer's Reports, Grants, Investments, Scholarships, and GTEP are tracked and reviewed regularly enabling us to provide oversight on behalf of our member clubs and our Board of Directors. Together we were able to increase grant award amounts available for Blue/Gold Star memorial installations, support the President's monetary recognition of club milestones, and develop a Charitable Donations Policy and Gift Acceptance Policy. We assisted in the development of a position description with qualifications and tasks in the search for a contracted part-time Administrative Assistant.

In order to ensure that we will be able to fund this position appropriately, the Investment Subcommittee has consulted with our advisors at Raymond James. We continue to explore ways to improve internal processes to make life easier for our volunteer officers, chairs, and committee members, and to further support benefits to our member clubs and their club members. It's been a busy year.



**GTEP (Group Tax Exemption Program)
Chair Rose Houk; DeWitt Millenium GC**

MGC is the Central Organization for a tax-exempt group of member garden clubs, who are subordinates under the Central or Parent Organization. As the Parent Organization, MGC, Inc., GTEP must report annually to IRS with current information about each subordinate included in MGC, Inc.'s group.

MGC is charged with reviewing actions of each subordinate to determine that they continue to meet the IRS rules and regulations regarding charitable organizations.

MGC, Inc., currently has twenty-eight clubs in its GTE Program. All clubs approved in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022 will renew this year, (2023-2024) as none have indicated they wish to withdraw from GTEP. Each of them will complete the renewal process and file the appropriate forms with the State of Michigan and with the IRS. The annual report from MGC to IRS is due 90 days before the end of MGC, Inc.'s fiscal year which makes the due date March 1st or thereabouts. My goal is to file the report by February 1st, 2025 for the fiscal year June 1st, 2023 to May 31st 2024. All twenty-eight clubs will be included in the report to IRS. [read more](#)



Nominating Committee 2023-2025 Monica Taylor Chair and former MGC President 2021-2023; Tri-Cities GC and West MI Flower Arrangers Guild

August/September-Completed the list of District Nominating Committee Members.

October-Zoom meeting and/or individual contact with Nominating Committee members to review tasks & expectations

Fall/Winter- Committee to develop pool of potential candidates for MGC Elected Offices. DD shared names of potential candidates with Chair or District Nominating Committee Member.

Spring 2024- March 2024-Nominating Committee Chair contacted all the current MGC Elected Officers to determine their intention to stay in their current position or not. Those who will not continue offered names of potential candidates. Nominating Committee members met via Zoom on April 15, 2024, to review lists and make recommendations.

May 2024 Nominating Committee Chair, with discussion of Committee members, will begin to recruit candidates for 2025-2027 slate of Officers.



Scholarship Committee: Karin Maupin Chair; Kent GC

The 2023-2024 MGC Scholarship year was a great success. Fourteen Michigan public universities participated this year and twenty outstanding students including the named scholarships received a MGC scholarship. The enthusiasm and respect for our program continues to grow amongst the universities, students and those that make this all work i.e. sixteen MGC agents.

Our total spend which includes scholarships, a runner-up and consolation prize for the 2023-2024 season was \$30,000. The difference between the money raised and the overall budget is made up by the Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. Sustaining Scholarship Investment accounts.

This year our MGC representative to the NGC Scholarship was Mercedes Jimenez a University of Michigan-Dearborn student majoring in Environmental Sciences. Though she did not win the NGC scholarship she was awarded the Central Region Scholarship of \$500. Mercedes scholarship winnings through Garden Clubs this year was \$3,000. She was very pleased and grateful. The runner-up who received a total of \$2500 from MGC was Alexa Garnet from University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, a Master's Degree student in Landscape Architecture.

Thank you to everyone for these annual reports!

Respectfully Submitted on behalf of the 2023-2025 Board of Directors

Nancy J. Ryan, President

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