



September 2026

Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

www.maplewoodgardenclub.org
www.facebook.com/MaplewoodGardenClub



THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

ELIZABETH PAYNE *presents*

NATIVE (AND NOT SO NATIVE) PLANTS IN MUNICIPAL ENVIRONMENTS

SEPTEMBER 14 AT 7:30 PM

"Plant native plants, please!" is a frequent refrain from residents wanting input into plant installations around our municipalities. Sounds easy. The reality and practicality are very different. Oftentimes, what a homeowner can do versus what a municipality can do are vastly different. Elizabeth Payne is in her

7th season working for the South Orange DPW, balancing the many needs and wants of the community in making the town beautiful.

Elizabeth has been a lifelong gardener, learning classic garden design from her rosarian grandfather and vegetable gardening from her mother, and ultimately setting off for college intending to become a genetic engineer for plants. When that didn't work out, she continued keeping her fingers in the dirt, building gardens in all sun and moisture conditions. In 2017, she received her Master Gardener certificate from Rutgers University. Her professional experience includes working for a horticultural brokerage, selling plant starts to independent garden centers and greenhouses while staying on top of the latest breeding techniques and trends. She is a member of America in Bloom, a national organization of towns sharing information on beautification; AmericanHort, a trade association of horticulturalists; the Essex County Chapter of the Native Plant Society of NJ; and the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers; and love of trees since childhood.

"TREES ARE POEMS THAT THE
EARTH WRITES UPON THE SKY"

—Kahlil Gibran

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, Sept. 10
Greenhouse sign-up for
Maplewood residents

A sign-in sheet will be available
at the Municipal Building in the
Town Clerk's office starting at
9:00 am on Monday, Sept. 10
(See page 3)

Saturday, Sept. 12 at 9:30 am
Greenhouse Clean up
The Rahner Greenhouse

Monday, Sept. 14 at 7:30 pm
Monthly Meeting
The Woodland
60 Woodland Road, Maplewood



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

WELCOME BACK! I am excited to be taking on the mantle of President, as the Maplewood Garden Club celebrates its **99th year!** MGC is more than just a place to share plants and gardening knowledge – it is a place where friendships grow, ideas bloom and we work together to create something beautiful. Each of you brings unique energy, knowledge and experience, and that is what makes our Club special.

This year, I look forward to seeing our gardens flourish, our projects take shape, and our conversations inspire new ideas and lasting connections. Whether you are a longtime member or joining us for the first time, your presence and participation are deeply valued and greatly appreciated.

JOY. Maybe you spent time this summer:



Cleaning out the bird houses, watching the birds select their summer abode or listening to the chirping of the hatchlings.



Sitting in your favorite spot to read the books you meant to read for ages.

Watching the sun set.



Staying up late to experience the glory of a night blooming queen.



No matter what you did, I hope you did it with your whole heart and that it brought you joy.

HELPING HANDS. I encourage each of you to stay engaged, share ideas, and take part in the upcoming events and projects that make our Club so meaningful. Your participation helps the Club and our community continue to grow, bloom, and thrive.

Take a peek at the Committee directory in the Yearbook to see what sparks your interest, then reach out to the committee chair to learn how you can pitch in. Or maybe you can step up and chair a committee?

We have openings for: Garden Walk, Hospitality, Library Donations, Publicity, MGC Clothing, Garden Behind the Greenhouse.

Contact me directly if you would like to be the chairperson of one of these committees. Every helping hand makes a difference, and everyone is warmly welcome.

THANK YOU FOR your continued support, your time, and your commitment to making our Club a success. I am excited for all that we will learn, share, and accomplish together in the months ahead. Wishing all of you a joyful, productive, and blooming year! Let's dig in and continue to grow strong as we bloom into MGC's 99th year!

~ Juliet P. Powell

president@maplewoodgardenclub.org

GREENHOUSE SIGN-UP FOR MAPLEWOOD RESIDENTS 2026-2027

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

Maplewood Township residents have the unique opportunity to utilize a public greenhouse space for overwintering their plants. The Rahner Greenhouse was donated to the Township by the Maplewood Garden Club in 1974 and we continue to manage it. All rental fees go to the Township to help offset utilities and maintenance. There are 160 bench spaces available, each being approximately 9 sq. feet with the same area underneath and another 3 sq. feet on a shelf above. Greenhouse benches are available to Maplewood residents only, and only **one (1) space** is permitted for each **household** during the September offering. If spaces are still available after October 1, any current season renters may apply for additional bench spaces until all the bench spaces are rented.

An application is available at the bottom of the page at <https://maplewoodgardenclub.org/greenhouse/> or at the Municipal Building in the Town Clerk's office. Benches are allotted on a first come first served basis. A sign-in sheet will be available at the Municipal Building in the Town Clerk's office starting at **9:00 am** on **Thursday, September 10**. Each person in line may enter only one name on the sign-in sheet at a time. If you are also signing-in for another resident that is unable to attend the sign-in (neighbors, friends, family members), you may go back to the end of the line and sign-in for that person. **One person, one name on the sign-in sheet.** Your sign-in number is not your bench number.

You must return at 6:00 pm with your application and payment to choose and be assigned your bench number. The allocation of benches will start at 6:00 pm and they will be distributed ***in the order in which applicants have signed in on the sign-in sheet.***

All application forms must be filled out and be signed by the applicant along with the seasonal rental fee of **\$30**, either a check made out to 'Township of Maplewood' or cash will be accepted.

Residents unable to sign in earlier that day may come and sign in any time between **6:00 pm** and **7:00 pm** and still be assigned a bench.

Any remaining benches will be available for rent at the Division of Public Works located at 359 Boyden Avenue beginning after **12:00 pm** on **Monday, September 14th**.

This year the greenhouse season will be from **Saturday, October 3, 2025**, through **Memorial Day, May 31, 2027**.

Greenhouse regular hours are:

Monday	10:00 am to 7:00 pm
Tuesday	10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Thursday	10:00 am to 8:00 pm
Saturday	9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Sunday	10:00 am to 4:00 pm

~ *Bill Kohlman (973) 886-0681*
greenhouse@maplewoodgardenclub.org

PLANT SWAP

If you have been busily propagating over the summer, or have some plants in need of a new home before the cold weather sets in, please bring them to the **September meeting**. Plants, cuttings, seeds, all are welcome. Please make sure to bring home any materials that might be left at the meeting's end.



2025-26 ARTISTIC DESIGN & HORTICULTURE AWARDS

Challenge Artistic Design: **Sue Tully**

Jean Evans Intermediate Artistic Design:
Jennifer Richardson

Novice Artistic Design: **Susan Darwin & Lissy Grey**

Open Artistic Design: **Liz Demkin**

Horticulture Exhibits (Schedules 1, 2, 3 & 4):
Jennifer Richardson

Horticulture Assigned Exhibits (Schedules 1, 2 & 3):
Jennifer Richardson

Open Horticulture Exhibits (Schedule 4):
Jennifer Richardson



Sue Tully accepting the Challenge Artistic Design Award.



Jennifer Richardson accepting the Jean Evans Intermediate Artistic Design Award.



Susan Darwin accepting the Novice Artistic Design Award.



Liz Demkin, once again, won the Open Artistic Design Award.



Thank you to this years' judges, Judy Cronin, Mary Lou Phifer, and Kathy Kohlman.



Our fabulous End-of-the-Year Dinner hosts, Ginny Needham-Doyle and Kyrstina Mahoney.



Thank you and best wishes to Joanne Beckeridge as she embarks on her next chapter.



Thank you to our departing president, Virginia Nordberg. Fantastic job.

GREENHOUSE CLEAN UP

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12 AT 9:30 AM

The Maplewood Garden Club Greenhouse Committee is responsible for the management, housekeeping, and maintenance of the public greenhouse. Once a year we need help in preparing the space for the new season, so I'm asking you to come and lend a hand in our annual Greenhouse clean up, **Saturday, September 12th, 2026** at **9:30 am**. There are lots of weeds under the benches to be pulled and general cleaning up. Please bring a kneeling pad and gloves. With enough people it will only take an hour or so.

~ Bill Kohlman (973) 886-0681

THE RESCUE

We captured these images of the Swallowtail butterfly that started life on the parsley at the Herb Garden. Before leaving for vacation, on July 15, I pruned back the parsley, placed the debris in the trash can, and closed the lid. A week later, I opened the can to drag it to the curb and discovered three caterpillars on the parsley debris.

We brought the caterpillars home and placed them in our netted garden bed, and released the one that survived last week. It's kind of cool that pollinators are benefiting from the garden.

~ Maria Mulkern



MGC YOUTH GARDEN!

The MGC Youth Garden received a special writeup in the *Matters Magazine* Summer 2026 issue. Our own Monika Hannemann (coined 'enthusiastic translator of the natural world' by *Matters*) received widespread recognition for raising young new garden hobbyists over the last 15+ years while running the program. You can read more about it at the *Matters Magazine* website.

Congratulations Monika on receiving well deserved local recognition!

“GARDENING SIMPLY
DOES NOT ALLOW ONE TO
BE MENTALLY OLD,
BECAUSE TOO MANY HOPES
AND DREAMS ARE YET
TO BE REALIZED.”

~Alan Armitage



CALL FOR COLEUS

If you have MGC coleus mother plants—or an unusual coleus plant—spending the summer in your yard, please take a photo of each, and send them to liz@uffcorp.com. This way, Jennifer Richardson and I will know which varieties will be available to propagate for next year. Thank you !

~ Liz Demkin (973) 906-1511 liz@uffcorp.com

“GARDEN AS THOUGH
YOU WILL LIVE FOREVER.”

—William Kent

~ REMINDER ~

The deadline for the October newsletter is **September 16**.

Send your news items and photos to dianemcollins@yahoo.com

EXHIBITS CORNER

I'm delighted to be stepping into the role of Exhibits Chair this season, with Olapeju Adeniji as our new Exhibits Clerk. I'm looking forward to seeing the creativity our members bring to this year's Artistic Design and Horticulture exhibits, and especially to our monthly themes inspired by the decades. From the **Roaring '20s** to the groovy, folksy **'60s**, there should be plenty of inspiration for floral arrangements at every level of experience!

I regret that, while I'm learning the ropes of my new role, I didn't feel I could take on Sue Tully's wonderful idea of introducing **Natural Garden Crafts** this year. Thankfully, we've captured the idea, and it will be ready and waiting for us in a year or so, once I've mastered the basics of being Exhibits Chair.

As I begin, I'm especially grateful for the generous training and guidance I've received from Sue and former Exhibits Clerk Vicky Borrone, as well as the encouragement and support of so many other Club members. And, of course, a very special thank you goes to our judges, **Judy Cronin**, **Kathy Kohlman**, and **Mary Lou Phifer**, who have graciously agreed to judge again this year. We truly could not do it without them.

I hope everyone will join in this season—whether you're an experienced exhibitor or trying an exhibit for the very first time. **I can't wait to see what you create!**

~ Susan Darwin (971) 545-5428 mail@susandarwin.com



A blooming Cleome from Judy Cronin.

THEME FOR ARTISTIC DESIGN EXHIBITS:

“MUSICAL INSPIRATION OF THE 20TH CENTURY”

This year's theme for the Artistic Design schedule is “Musical Inspiration of the 20th Century.” Each month we will express our interpretation of different musical genres of the 20th century through floral design. Let the rhythm and emotion of music through the decades influence your creativity when designing your arrangement. Think of “Attributes of Design” such as expression and harmony, “Elements of Design” such as use of color and advancing and receding colors, and “Principles of Design” such as balance and contrast, while you listen to music for inspiration. Join the fun by participating in the Design and/or Horticulture Exhibits. **We look forward to seeing what you have grown, nurtured and created this season!**

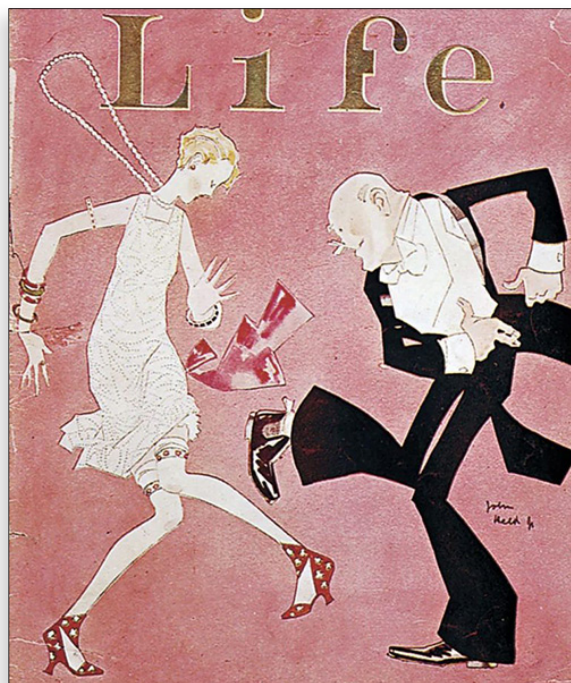
Remember to review ‘Chapter 6 Horticulture’ and ‘Chapter 7 Design’ of the *National Garden Clubs, Inc., Handbook for Flower Shows* for regulations on how to exhibit horticultural exhibits and floral designs. Also, refer to Chapter 7 for attributes, elements, and principles of floral design and for characteristics of the Design Types requested for each month's schedule. A link to the updated version of the *National Garden Clubs, Inc., Handbook for Flower Shows* is on the MGC website maplewoodgardenclub.org under, **Calendars -> Design Exhibit Schedule -> National Garden Club-Handbook for Flower Shows** ([blue link](#)). Please see an Exhibits representative if you don't have access to a computer or smartphone.

~ [Olapeju Adeniji \(973\) 280-4248 \[abikeola1967@gmail.com\]\(mailto:abikeola1967@gmail.com\)](#)
[Susan Darwin \(971\) 545-5428 \[mail@susandarwin.com\]\(mailto:mail@susandarwin.com\)](#)

REMINDERS:

- Be sure to follow the schedule for each month. If the criteria calls for a sprig, do not bring a potted plant.
- Only two (2) entries are allowed per member in the Horticultural Open category unless otherwise stated.
- **Judging starts at 7:15 pm.** Please clear the area of the exhibit tables so the judge and exhibit team can score your plant material and designs.
- Please do not interrupt the team while they are judging; they are working as quickly as possible so that the guest speaker can begin.

SEPTEMBER DESIGN EXHIBITS



ARTISTIC DESIGN

Please read “Artistic Division Rules” on page 12 in the current yearbook, as well as the 2017 revised edition of the *Handbook for Flower Shows*.

Theme: Roaring ‘20s Swing Movement

Challenge: Creative Transparency Design, see *Handbook*, pages 72, 77.

Intermediate: Creative Line-Mass Design, see *Handbook*, pages 72, 74.

Novice: American Traditional Mass: Asymmetrical L-Shaped Triangle Design, see *Handbook*, pages 70-71.

Open: Designer's Choice (one entry per member)

HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITS

Please read “Horticulture Division Rules” on page 12 in the current yearbook, as well as the 2017 revised edition of the *Handbook for Flower Shows*.

1. **Tomato** (maximum 3 varieties per member); if Cherry Tomatoes, must have minimum of 5 of each variety on separate plates
2. **Annual**, 1 cut specimen in a vase/container
3. **Perennial**, potted plant or cut specimen in a vase/container
4. **Open** (maximum 2 entries per person)

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Maplewood Garden Club Scholarship Committee is very pleased to present these thank you notes from the 2026 recipients of the Maplewood Garden Club Scholarships.

~ Jen Lieberman

June 7, 2026

Dear Ms. Jennifer Lieberman & Ms. Virginia Nordberg,

Thank you so much for the Maplewood Garden Club Jean Evans Scholarship award! It truly means a lot to me and will make a significant difference in my education. I am attending Rutgers University, studying Environmental Planning. I am also pursuing sustainable design, non-profit leadership, and ecology/natural resource management!

Thank you for your support, which allows me to continue on my journey!

Esther Van Doornik

June 20, 2026

Hello Ms. Jennifer Lieberman and Ms. Virginia Nordberg,

I am Rex Freedman, the CHS alumni who received the Maplewood Gardening Club scholarship last year. Thank you for selecting me for the Maplewood Garden Club scholarship once again. It's greatly appreciated.

This scholarship will aid and support my ability to attend Virginia Tech university to pursue a major in geography. At the moment I'm planning to minor in GIS, a widely used form of mapping technology and eventually use my abilities with this to protect the environment in the wilderness and around people, on a state or national level.

At Virginia Tech I have joined a co-ed environmental volunteering service fraternity called Lambda Iota Mu where I have been doing volunteer work removing invasive plants from local parks as well as planting trees for the local community. There were days when we worked with an organization to plant over 300 trees restoring local riparian ecosystems along different streams around campus.

Your support helps provide this opportunity for me and I am incredibly thankful for this scholarship.

Thanks again,
Rex Freedman



Jane Brick captured this busy bee in her Dahlia.

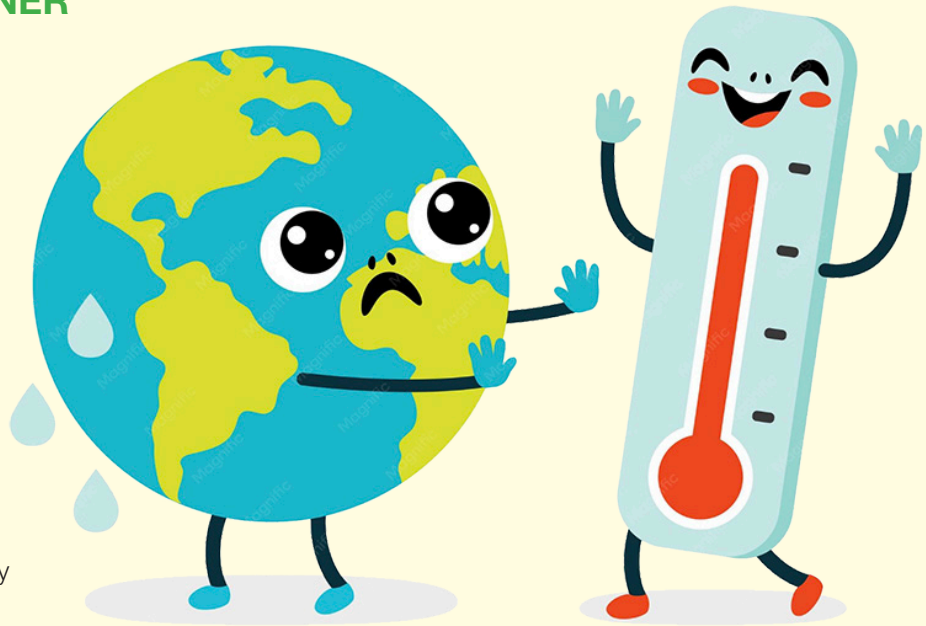


Beautiful Persian Shield grown by Jane Brick.

CONSERVATION CORNER

SEPTEMBER 2026

This summer has been one for the books, not only in our region but across the globe—record heat and humidity, heavy rainfall and flash floods, dangerous air quality from wildfires. This followed a spring of extreme heat and freezes that resulted in widespread crop losses. These extremes affect us not only as gardeners, but they affect our every day lives in myriad ways.



In conversations people now routinely say “this weather is so weird!” As Dr. David Robinson, NJ State Climatologist, points out, there is a difference between **weather**, which is what’s happening today, and **climate change**, which are trends resulting from our warming planet. In natural systems there are always highs and lows in heat and precipitation, but by burning fossil fuels and increasing greenhouse gases, we are tilting the balance to more record-breaking heat, rain, drought and extreme storms.

Although this warming trend has been clearly documented and predicted since at least the 1980s, at some point the issue became weirdly politicized, with people who didn’t accept the reality being labeled “climate deniers”. Unfortunately, many leaders in our federal government are “deniers”, and are actively dismantling the transition to renewable energy like wind and solar, by drastically cutting funding for incentives, as well as paying billions in our taxpayer dollars to cancel permitted wind and solar projects. In addition, public lands are being opened up to drilling for fossil fuel extraction. This is all idiotic, as we absolutely need renewable energy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and slow climate change.

Climate solutions are going to involve both **mitigation** (reducing the factors causing the change), and **adaptation** (learning to live with the changes). Mitigation needs to happen both on the individual level and on national and global levels. We urgently need policies that promote the transition to a clean energy future. This is challenging given the federal government’s opposition, but it is not impossible. Local and regional governments and businesses can have huge impacts, but we need to act NOW. Individuals can conserve energy, compost food scraps, install solar panels, while at the same time calling our representatives to urge them to support the clean energy transition. Locally **SOMA Action Climate** and **Electrify SOMA** are making great strides in community-wide clean energy. Check them out!

Noted climate journalist Bill McKibben’s group **Third Act** focuses on people over 60, and “harnesses an unparalleled generational power to safeguard our climate and democracy.” Go to thirdact.org for more information on how you can get involved and let your voice be heard. We all can play a part in finding solutions!

~ Virginia Lamb virginialamb1@yahoo.com



MONTHLY RAFFLE

At every in-person meeting we have a raffle of fun items that I try to coordinate with the season or the speaker. If you have something new or like new (a gift you really don't need or an accidental purchase) that you would like to donate to the raffle, you can bring it to a meeting or drop it on my front porch.

Thanks for your help and good luck at this year's raffles!

~ Karen Donovan (973) 762-5484

