

District I

Debbie Nagy, GCI District Director

Cindy McIntyre, Incoming GCI District Director

The **Bull Valley Garden Club** continues to support horticulture, conservation, and community outreach through active member involvement and meaningful civic projects. Members recently gathered for a wonderful Valentine's English tea with a dedicated committee, where creative floral displays, beautifully presented teas, and cherished china created a warm and memorable experience.

Civic projects remain a primary focus. The PLANT AMERICA project continues to develop with the addition of a birdwatching station, birdhouses, and updates to educational materials. The project also received national recognition through an article highlighting its growth from a small effort into a thriving initiative supported by more than 100 volunteers. Seasonal work at Stickney Gardens has been completed and will resume in the spring. Fundraising efforts continue through commemorative brick sales for the Memorial Garden, encouraging members and the community to honor loved ones while supporting future projects. The annual daffodil project concluded with money raised through donations and sales, supporting future club initiatives and preparations for the upcoming 80th anniversary celebration.

Community outreach includes plans to assist with landscaping for a Habitat for Humanity home, creating a welcoming environment for new homeowners with a flowering tree and front garden plantings scheduled for spring 2026. Members are collaborating with the homeowner to incorporate personal preferences, exploring grant opportunities for soil preparation materials, and engaging local youth volunteers to support the project.

Members are still advancing conservation education by supporting sustainable landscaping methods, wildlife-friendly gardening, and winter bird care. Using safe natural pest deterrents, keeping feeders and bird baths in good condition throughout the winter, and being aware of regional environmental concerns like groundwater protection were all examples of seasonal reminders. The club looks forward to future anniversary celebrations, more service, and more award submissions recognizing member achievements.

The **Green Gate Garden Club of Crystal Lake** closed out the year of 2025 with our annual Christmas party at the Col. Palmer House in Crystal Lake. After a cold few months, our first meeting of 2026 was in March. We received a thank you note from the recipient awarded our scholarship at McHenry County Community College. Three major projects discussed at our first meeting were our display at the Crystal Lake Public Library this April, our annual plant sale in May, and the District I GCI meeting we will

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host in the spring of 2027. Suggestions for the library display layout were considered, and we came up with our theme. The annual plant sale is our only fundraiser of the year and preparations will keep members busy this spring. At the plant sale, we offer more than just plants. We also sell used garden equipment, gardening books, vases, and other things related to gardening. It helps members clean out their garages and bookcases while benefitting the club. This spring is also the time to decide where and when we will host the spring 2027 GCI meeting. Once we have decided our venue and date, we can spend the summer planning the event.

McHenry Garden Club had a wonderful 2025. Our annual holiday floral show in November was very well attended and raised money for our various community contributions. In December, members hand-made ornaments and decorated a tree for the Festival of Trees at the McHenry Parks and Recreation Department. Donated items of non-perishable food put under the trees went to Veterans Path of Hope. Last June, the club donated a Blue Star Memorial Marker which was installed at Veteran's Park in McHenry. Our club outings included a visit to Rose Innovations in Greenfield, Wisconsin where we met and talked to the inventor of Knockout Roses. Our club's plans for 2026 include community projects, outings, and informative programs at our meetings. We are already preparing for our spring container gala on April 21 which is held at the McHenry High School. We are excited to search for our Garden of the Month in May. We find outstanding McHenry resident's gardens each month and recognize them as the garden of the month, with a sign for their front yard and a gift certificate to a local garden center. Visit our Facebook page and our website mchenrygardenclub.com Members of the **Tri-City Garden Club** are busy with winter clean-up and with planting perennials in the five public community gardens they support. The May meeting includes the annual plant sale where members share plant divisions and cuttings, used tools, and garden books. The May luncheon program is "Cutting Floral Gardens." In June, four members will open their gardens for the annual garden walk ending for lunch at the Moline Public Library and a tour of their new literature garden. Later in June, members will travel to southwest Wisconsin on the annual bus trip to visit several public and private gardens and end the day with shopping at a regional nursery center. The club does not meet formally during the summer but will have a summer gathering in August. TCGC member and retired art teacher, Kit Sayles, will conduct a botanical print making workshop for interested members.

Woodstock Garden Club is excited to begin a new project, in partnership with the Friends of the Woodstock Library, wherein we adopted two, 25 square feet each, raised

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beds within the library's new Bayton outdoor space. Over 200 bulbs were planted last fall; summer annuals will be planted in May; autumn mums will be planted in September; and the beds will be covered in greens for the holidays. This is part of the library's Prairie Roots landscaping project, and a festive dedication celebration will be held in the afternoon on May 30. Club members will be attending Wine and Design, also in May, at TOM'S Farm Market in Huntley. In July, we'll be visiting a private nine-acre prairie awash in prairie flowers, and we're again partnering with the Friends of the Library to hold the annual fall plant sale on September 12.