

DIII Program Suggestions

For changes, additions, or corrections, contact Janice Meissner at meissnerjanice@yahoo.com.

Although setting up programs for a club for the year can be intimidating, it is not quite as difficult as you would think. The important thing to remember is to make your meetings interesting and informative. Think about what you would like to see or do.

There is no requirement regarding programs for your club to be members of TFGC. However, in order to be a club of excellence, your club must have at least six programs on gardening and related subjects to promote the concerns and interests of TFGC, DSGC, and NGC during the year. This allows for a lot of room to explore the topics your members find interesting. Programs can be workshops or garden tours.

From the reports that club presidents must submit each year, the following is a list of subjects that garden club programs can address:

- Air Quality**
- Bees**
- Birds**
- Butterflies**
- Conservation**
- Design**
- Ecology**
- Environment**
- Energy**
- Horticulture**
- Historic Preservation**
- Landscape**
- Pollinators**
- Recycling**
- Trees**
- Water**
- Wildlife**
- Any other garden-related topic**

There is no requirement as to how long these programs must be, what the qualification for the speakers should be, or how they must be organized. You can have a short program of 10 minutes by one of your members to explain a topic of

interest, to fulfill the program requirements.

Most of the names and places from the list below have been gathered from local clubs who have used these successfully in their programming. We have not necessarily asked the individuals if they would like to be included in this list. You will, of course, need to contact each one to make arrangements for your club.

We have also included program ideas that do not require a speaker, but have participation from all members.

Hopefully, the following list will help you to find appropriate programs and places to visit. Remember that your own members or friends can provide the program or workshops to fill your calendar in a way that will make your members excited about programs and eager to bring guests.

Speakers & Speaker Organizations

[Tennessee Dahlia Society](#)—President Joe Pietrantone, JNP7356@hotmail.com,

[Green | Spaces](#)—Green | Spaces is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Their mission is to work toward regional sustainability by progressing the way we live, work, and build in Chattanooga and the surrounding region.

The impetus of Green | Spaces is to address the lack of awareness and application of sustainable best practices in Chattanooga and the surrounding region.

Green | Spaces serves as a forum in which people are always welcome to gather and discuss all things ecologically sound. Their public outreach campaigns, such as Empower Chattanooga, focus on neighborhoods that are the most in need of support to ensure that sustainability serves everyone in Chattanooga.

[Master Gardeners of Hamilton County](#)—Tom Stebbins, Retired UT/Hamilton County Extension Agent

[Rose Society](#)—Jeff and Cindy Garrett, Master Rosarians

[Southeastern Grasslands Institute](#), Austin Peay State University

SGI is out of Austin Peay in Clarksville, Tennessee, where they have developed an herbarium and botanical garden. They are working on promoting grassland and

prairie areas all over the Southeast, including a project at Heritage Park in Chattanooga. Zack Irik, one of their staff members, is headquartered in Chattanooga. Reach them through their website.

[Tennessee Wild Ones](#)—Tennessee Wild Ones promotes environmentally sound landscaping practices to preserve biodiversity through the preservation, restoration, and establishment of native plant communities.

They have also started the Chattanooga Area Pollinator Partnership to help conserve bees and other native pollinators.

Margaret Armour, owner of I Go Tokyo Boutique in Chattanooga & **Kesami Holmes**, president of the Ikenobo South Five Chapter, 931-247-3461

Ikenobo Ikebana is Japanese Design Style using minimalist techniques.

Judy Driggins—Judy is a member of the Christ United Methodist Church “Green Team,” which is responsible for planting and maintaining the prayer garden at CUMC.

Scott Drucker—owner of Dream Garden Landscape Design, founder of the Heirloom Plant and Garden Club, member of HBAGC, Chattanooga Association of Landscape Professionals, and the American Horticulture Society.

Scott speaks on a variety of topics from “Hydrangea Tours” to “Designing Your Dream Garden.”

Allison Janes—423-708-5543, Operations Manager for Urban Horticultural Supply, allison@urbanhorticulturesupply.com

Allison has a B.S. in Agriculture. UHS specializes in organic gardening and hydroponics

Savana Keeton—931-456-6259 & board member **Dreama Campbell**—423-313-6302, [Cumberland Trail Conference](#)

They organize and fund the trail builders and have a lively presentation about the trail.

Chip Kelly—chipkelly@epbfi.com, 423-665-9101
Owner, Harrison Bay Bee Farm; President, Tennessee Valley Beekeepers Association

Scott Martin—Director, [Chattanooga Parks and Outdoors](#),
smartin@chattanooga.gov, 423-643-7866

Angel Miller—Owner of Two Angels Mushroom Farm & manager at Ooltewah Nursery

Angel does a great presentation on mushrooms, their uses, why they are beneficial, and how to grow them. If you meet at Ooltewah Nursery, she or one of their horticulturists can lead your presentation on a variety of topics.

Charlene Nash—Senior horticulturist for the [Tennessee Aquarium](#), 800-262-0695

Charlene is not only responsible for all the plants in and around our aquarium, she also volunteers in Africa, teaching farmers how to improve their soil quality and agricultural practices.

Diane Shelly—Master Gardener, Founding member of the Tri-State Bluebird Society, TriStateBluebirds@gmail.com, 941-721-2631.

Leads a fun, interactive talk about setting up your bluebird house. She will discuss what other birds may occupy your house, the joy and drama of watching birds start their families, and how you can become a citizen scientist.

Pete Stuart—Chattanooga City Arborist (replaced Gene Hyde)
pstuart@chattanooga.gov, 423-316-5434

Can talk about tree selection, tree health, city landscaping efforts, etc.

Brandon Wear—Tennessee Wildlife Resource Agency, Program Manager for Region 3, 24 counties in East Tennessee, <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/twra.html>,
<https://www.facebook.com/tnwildlife>
464 Industrial Blvd., Crossville, TN 38555, 931-456-3064

Speaks about managing forests, prairies, and wildlife in our area. He recommends the UT Extension website for downloadable information, e.g., [“Landowners Guide to Wildlife Food Plots.”](#)

Mighty Members

We all have lots of members who enjoy sharing their hobbies and expertise. Here are a few:

Ann Brown—State Pollinator Chair, Lookout Mountain Garden Club, brownw01@yahoo.com, 901-482-5903

Anne does wonderful presentations on bees or pollinator gardens, and can also discuss the Initiative for Backyard National Parks.

Maggi Burns—Master Judge; Past President of TFGC; Past Director, DIII, Member of Crestwood Garden Club, MaggiTFGC@epbfi.com, 423-838-4380

Maggi knows everything about garden clubs, especially in Tennessee. She is also an excellent designer and can discuss design basics in a way that makes every member comfortable.

Margha Davis—Member of Garden Club of Signal Mountain, alturadrive@yahoo.com

“Compost Happens” details how to start and maintain a compost pile and how to determine if the compost is working up to its potential.

Linda Davenport—Master Gardener, Member of Garden Club of Signal Mountain, mrsdgarden@epbfi.com

Presentations include various aspects of landscape design.

Jane Diamantis—Board of Directors, American Horticulture Society; President and Designer, Diamantis Landscape Design; Member of Hickory Valley Garden Club, 423-667-19975

Jane speaks about the American Horticulture Society and its mission and benefits, as well as Landscape Design topics.

Jeanette Eigelsbach—Director, Scenic Cities Beautiful; Program Director, City of Chattanooga; DIII Litter/Recycling and Waste Management Chair; Member of Hickory Valley Garden Club, Eigelsbach_j@mail.chattanooga.gov, 423-643-6834

Jeanette can speak about city beautification and volunteer programs, river cleanup

efforts, legislation, and more.

Kathy Kulak—Member of Hickory Valley Garden Club, krkulak@gmail.com

Kokedama Demonstration—Kokedama is the Japanese art of suspended moss ball planters. Kathy can demonstrate how to make them and the best plants to use.

Anne Leonard—Past President, TFGC, Member of Garden Club of Signal Mountain, leonardtfgc2003@comcast.net, 423-886-2117

Anne can speak on a variety of topics, but she is on the board for McCoy Farms, so if you visit there, ask her to speak. She is also very creative and is great with coming up with craft workshops.

Janice Meissner—Past TFGC Treasurer, TFGC Finance Committee; Member of Hickory Valley Garden Club, meissnerjanice@yahoo.com, 423-242-5514

Janice does frequent programs. Topics include “Migratory Birds,” “Plant Propagation,” “Putting Your Garden to Bed for the Winter,” “Seed Bomb Workshop,” and “Garden Crafts,” as well as discussing the TFGC State Endowment fund and how it can be used.

Gail Roberts—Master Judge; Member of Hickory Valley Garden Club, 79hvgc@gmail.com, 906-458-5243

Gail is a gifted designer and can speak on a variety of design topics, as well as discuss flower shows and how they are judged. She also does an excellent program on camellias.

Diane Ryder—DIII Director, President of Garden Club of Signal Mountain, dianeryder@epbfi.com, 423-505-5604

Diane can present on a variety of topics. She has done presentations on the history of garden clubs, as well as planning for flower shows.

Crystal Rymer—President of Ocoee Garden Club, crymer46@gmail.com

Crystal does an excellent presentation on water gardening, using ponds and other water features, as well as containers. If you visit [AquaNooga](#), try coordinating with Crystal to lead your program.

Debbie Shaver—State and District Awards Chair, buffiescorner@bellsouth.net, 423-322-8565

Debbie has talents with design, both for flower shows and for home use, such as wreaths, swags, etc. She grows gourds and often incorporates them into her design. She is also invaluable in discussing projects, awards, and books of evidence.

Marilyn Smith—DIII Treasurer, mgsmith50@aol.com

Marilyn is a wonderful designer. She specializes in miniature design. She can also do a program on holly.

Valerie Tipps—Former President of TFGC, Master Judge, tippstfgc@gmail.com, 423-605-2616

Valerie can talk about anything related to TFGC, garden clubs, or design.

‘Everyone Participates’ Program Ideas

- Everyone brings in one found or recycled object or group of objects to create a design. The odder the item, the better, including containers, strangely shaped objects, etc. Wrap them up to do a blind exchange. Provide cut flowers and have all bring in their design tools. A prize goes to the most creative design/tallest design/strangest design, etc. Hopefully, this should help members become less intimidated with design.
- Each member brings in their favorite gardening tool and explains how they use it.
- Garden Cocktail party—Each member brings in a cocktail incorporating ingredients from the garden for tasting. Give a prize for the tastiest. Put all the recipes together for a recipe book. Be sure to have designated drivers.
- The same idea can be used for desserts.
- Each member brings in several spring bulbs for sharing, dirt, containers, and tools for a [layered planting workshop](#). This activity is best done in October or November for spring planting and is a great activity for those with limited gardening access or experience.

Places to Visit

[AquaNooga](#)—2314 Bliss Ave, Chattanooga, TN 37406, 423-870-2838,
Erik Tate, Operations Manager

AquaNooga is the leading nursery and supplier for water gardens in the Chattanooga area. They have a variety of displays of containers for water gardens, fish, and plants.

[Audubon Acres](#)—900 N Sanctuary Rd, Chattanooga, TN 37421, 423-892-1499

Audubon Acres is the headquarters for the Chattanooga Audubon Society.

The 130-acre Audubon Acres Nature Sanctuary is bisected by the South Chickamauga Creek and contains a rich diversity of plant and animal life. There are five miles of walking and hiking trails running on both sides of the creek.

Some of the trees are labeled with green signs as part of the Cherokee Arboretum. These signs include their scientific common and Cherokee names written in the Cherokee syllabary, as well as uses that the native peoples made of the plants. The southeastern corner of the property is home to the Little Owl Village, which was the site of an archeological dig in the early 1990s. Strong evidence exists that this corner of present-day Audubon Acres was the site of a Napochi village in the 1560s that was encountered by the Tristan DeLuna expedition during their travels north from Florida.

The Spring Frog Cabin is a restored cabin thought to have been built in the mid-1700s with native construction techniques. The cabin is named for Spring Frog, a Cherokee naturalist and was later occupied by the Walker family. Robert Sparks Walker, the noted naturalist, author, and poet, was born in the cabin and is buried in the side yard.

In addition, the Walker Hall Meeting space behind Spring Frog Cabin is available for use by garden clubs and houses classroom-style seating and the “Avian Jewel” collection of bird’s eggs.

Walker Hall does not have heating or cooling, so plan for a spring or fall meeting.

[The Barn Nursery](#)—1801 E 24th St Pl, Chattanooga, TN 37407, 423-698-2276

The Barn is our area's largest nursery. They have speakers available on a variety of subjects from native plants to creating a planter design. They have trained horticulturists and designers.

They will also provide meeting space and tables for picnics. Their presentations are made better because they have a huge variety of plants to use for demonstration purposes.

[Barnsley Gardens](#)—597 Barnsley Gardens Rd NW, Adairsville, GA 30103, 877-773-2447

Godfrey Barnsley created this estate for his beloved bride, Julia. The manor house is a ruin today due to a tornado. Their unbelievable family drama has been documented in their museum in the old kitchens, where you can see the bullet holes from when one grandson killed another, as well as learn how the staff and family took to the forest to survive Union occupation.

For garden clubbers, there are formal gardens done in the Italianate style, as well as the walking trails created when the estate was purchased by Prince Hubertus Fugger of Bulgaria. There are over 200 varieties of roses on the estate. The resort is elaborately decorated for Christmas, as well.

The parking fees tend to be a little high, but if you have a reservation at the Woodlands Grill, parking is free. You can eat and have drinks there or have lunch at Maggie Mae's Tea Room and antique mall in the 1902 Stock Exchange building in Adairsville.

Ask in the lodge about a golf cart ride for those who don't want to walk so much.

[Bethlehem Gardens](#)—423 Appaloosa Drive, Dalton, GA, 706-280-5911

This is a garden and nursery outside the private home of Ruby Rhymer in Varnell, GA. Ruby is president of the Chattanooga Hosta Society and has an unbelievable garden, featuring hostas, daylilies, and much more. She integrates whimsical folk art with her flowers and plants.

You can bring a picnic lunch or stop at the Farm to Fork restaurant at the Ft. Oglethorpe exit.

[Calhoun Rock Garden](#)—1411 Rome Rd SW, Calhoun, GA, 706-263-1937

This is not technically a flower garden, but it is fascinating. It is filled with more than 50 miniature historical and iconic buildings built of concrete, shells, pebbles, colored glass, and much more. The garden is placed alongside a stream behind the Calhoun Seventh Day Adventist Church. The landscape is beautiful.

Unfortunately, the garden is not handicapped-accessible. Infirm members may have some problems seeing all of the structures. You have to drive through the church's parking lot to get to the garden in the back.

[Chattanooga Food Bank Garden](#)—2009 Curtain Pole Rd, Chattanooga, TN 37406, 423-622-1800

The Chattanooga Food Bank offers tours of their warehouse and operations and gardens. For garden clubs, the draw is the vegetable garden and greenhouse located behind the building. The garden is maintained by volunteers from Chattanooga Master Gardeners and have crops year round.

You can contact Master Gardeners to have one of their volunteers lead the garden portion of the tour.

[Chief Vann House](#)—82 GA-225, Chatsworth, GA 30705, 706-695-2598

Chief Vann's historic plantation house and grounds serve as a physical connection to present-day visitors of the early nineteenth-century Cherokee cultural assimilation efforts planned to counter Georgia's early expansion. This ultimately led to the Cherokee Trail of Tears. Features include:

- Half-mile nature trail (one way)
- Guided house tour
- Physicians garden (seasonal)
- 19th-century Cherokee farmstead
- 1920s Bradford Spring House
- Three-Sisters Garden (seasonal)
- Former site of the 19th-century Springplace Moravian mission and cemetery

[Gibbs Gardens](#)—1987 Gibbs Dr, Ball Ground, GA 30107, 770-893-1880

Jim Gibbs traveled for 15 years over the nation and the world viewing gardens of every style and decided that he wanted to design and build a world class garden. He spent six years looking for a suitable site with a strong source of water and beautiful mature trees covering a rolling topography. It was truly “a dream come true” when he found the most beautiful site in the nation to construct the garden. The property is 376 acres and the house and gardens include 300-plus acres, making it one of the nation’s largest residential estate gardens.

Most of the gardens are handicapped-accessible; however, many of the paths are dirt, so if there is rain, they get soft. There are a lot of paths, but lots of resting places.

There is a takeout café with salads and sandwiches on the grounds near the entrance. Be sure to stop at the Bell’s Family Pharmacy at the depot in Tate, GA, on the way home for ice cream.

[GreenFaith](#)—Grace Episcopal Church, 20 Belvoir Ave., Chattanooga, TN 37411, 423-698-2433

Green Grace Gardens & Grounds is a two-acre area surrounding Grace Episcopal Church as part of the GreenFaith national religious environmental initiative. The church grounds function as a public park and meeting space and are open to the community daily from dawn till dusk. The gardens and grounds were certified as a level-two arboretum by the Tennessee Urban Forestry Council in 2021.

Features include:

- A 21-raised bed community garden
- A 3-bin community compost drop-off station
- A pavilion with a living green roof, open to the public
- Free, “U-Pick” vegetable, cutting, and berry gardens
- Five certified butterfly/pollinator gardens that are being transitioned to native plant gardens

Project Leaders have hosted numerous classes, plant sales, plant giveaways, and two large-scale pollinator protection rallies, all for the general public. The gardens and grounds have been on several local garden tours, including that of the annual national conference of the North American Butterfly Association (NABA).

[Cheekwood Gardens](#)—1200 Forrest Park Dr, Nashville, TN 37205, 615-356-8000

Once the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, this extraordinary 1930s estate, with its historic mansion and 55 acres of cultivated gardens and expansive vistas, today serves the public as a botanic garden, arboretum, and museum.

Enjoy a visually enticing stroll along a 1.5-mile woodland sculpture trail or a meandering walk through 13 distinct gardens and delight in an extraordinary array of horticultural displays. Visit the Cheek mansion, now a museum, for a look at the lifestyle of the American Country Place Era, and walk through family rooms restored to showcase original furnishings and are converted to galleries.

There is a café on the grounds.

[Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge](#)—545 Priddy Rd, Birchwood, TN 37308, 423-614-3018, Manager Jason Jackson

The Hiwassee Wildlife Refuge is located on 6,000 acres of land encircling the confluence of the Tennessee and Hiwassee Rivers.

In the summer months, the public can access all lands and waters within the refuge to observe resident and migrating birds and seasonal wildflower blooms, including great swaths of water hyacinths in Hiwassee Island's inlets.

During the winter, migrating waterfowl, including 50,000 Sandhill Cranes and some endangered Whooping Cranes, stop over at the refuge on their way south.

[Lorenzen Farm](#)—1374 New Bethel Road, Dayton, TN, 423-883-4400

Owner and grower Kristen Lorenzen, U-pick flowers, strawberries, etc.

[McCoy Farms](#)—1604 Taft Hwy, Signal Mountain, TN 37377

McCoy Farm and Gardens is where history, community, and pollinators converge on Walden's Ridge. Step back in time at this lovely mountain property with its renovated country manor, woodland walking trails, apple orchard, and recently restored gardens.

This has been a popular venue for TFGC meetings for several years. The grounds are beautiful and change all the time as they add new things. Stop by Signal Mountain Nursery while you are there. Bring a picnic or eat at the deli at Pruett's.

Ooltewah Nursery—5829 Main St, Collegedale, TN 37363, 423-238-9775

Ooltewah Nursery is a full-service nursery and landscaping service. They can provide speakers from their staff and will set up tables in the nursery for picnicking.

Raburn Acres —710 Payne Lane, Evensville, TN

Owner, grower Lacey Raburn, local farm and farm stand for flowers and produce near Dayton, GA.

Racheff House and Gardens—1943 Tennessee Ave., Knoxville, TN
RacheffHouseandGardens@gmail.com, 865-522-6210

The Ivan Racheff House is a national historical landmark with beautiful gardens that proves that beauty and industry can coexist. The gardens and arboretum are free to the public and provide a unique and educational environment for children and adults. The Ivan Racheff House is the state headquarters for the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs (TFGC).

Stroll through the 3.5-acre gardens and arboretum, enjoy the variety of trees, admire the fish ponds, and observe the Japanese Tea House. View the time capsule that is the upstairs apartment in the house, which served as Ivan Racheff's home.

Reflection Riding Arboretum & Nature Center—400 Garden Rd, Chattanooga, TN 37419, 423-821-1160

This is Chattanooga's nature center, native plant nursery, arboretum and more, with 300-plus acres to explore. They can provide speakers on a variety of horticultural topics.

You can walk along their trails, see red wolves, hawks, and other animals, or explore the Nature Center and gardens. You should take a picnic for this one.

Rhea County High School—Hydroponics facility, Highway 27, Evensville, 423-285-6833

Scott Shaver, Agriculture Instructor, shavers@rheacounty.org

This program has involved students from several different classes besides Agriculture, e.g., Chemistry, Physics, Carpentry, and Culinary Arts. Students engineered and built benches and tables that support tanks weighing more than a

ton. They teach the importance of these growing methods for the future of world food production. They have been visited by people far away from Rhea County.

The director of schools from the Republic of Zimbabwe sees this as a school program that could also provide food for students' families. The owner of a fish farm in Panama thinks it could be a way to start their young fish. The director of schools from the Capistrano Unified School District in California (twelfth largest in the state) has also paid a visit.

[River Gallery Sculpture Gardens at Bluff View](#)—400 E 2nd St, Chattanooga, TN 37403, 423-682-1287

The garden was designed by landscape architect Joe Baasch and is located on a two-acre outdoor space. Overlooking the beautiful Tennessee River, the garden features a formal garden, meditation area, and an informal garden with a recycling mountain stream.

Have lunch at Tony's and dessert at Rembrandt's.

[Smith-Perry Berries](#)—9626 Ooltewah Georgetown Rd., Ooltewah, TN 37363, 423-228-0774

Smith-Perry is a joint family farm that has crops coming in year-round. They have a farm stand where you can buy their products. The best times to go are in May to early June for strawberries, July for sunflowers, and October for pumpkins. You can pick your own strawberries and sunflowers, or just buy them from the farm stand.

The sunflower fields are unbelievable and are a great opportunity to take lots of pictures, as well as cut some flowers to take home. They always decorate their fields with vintage vehicles and hay sculptures for photo opportunities.

Have lunch at the Whistle Stop or the Mountain Oaks Tea Room in Ooltewah.

[Southerly Flower Farm](#)—Graysville, TN, 423-618-7838, owner-grower Sarah Erwin

This is a flower farm committed to sustainable growing procedures.

[Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute](#)—175 Baylor School Road, Chattanooga, 800-262-0695

Guided tour, Adam Kennon, AKennon@tnaqua.org, 865-306-2327

Serving as a freshwater field station for scientists and students alike, the Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute's 14,000 square foot facility offers fully-equipped lab space in which researchers can physically work in proximity to each other to advance conservation science.

[Tennessee River Gardens](#)—22573 U.S. Hwy 41, Chattanooga, TN 37419, 423-821-7341

The Tennessee River Gardens and Nature Preserve is a gated wildflower garden and wildlife preserve in the heart of the Tennessee River Gorge at the bottom of Raccoon Mountain. It features a butterfly pavilion and a wildflower trail.

The land was the last territory controlled by the remnants of the Cherokee Indian nation under Chief Dragging Canoe until the 1790s. The property later served as the river embarkation point for the infamous Cherokee "Trail of Tears" to Oklahoma in 1838.

During the Civil war, the Kelly's Ferry location on the edge of the property was the unloading and starting point of the "Cracker Line," which supplied the beleaguered Union troops, surrounded by the Rebel forces in Chattanooga in 1863, with basic supplies for their survival.

Bring a picnic lunch.

[Wasawillow Farm](#)—751 Creek Rd, Wildwood, GA 30757, 423-596-4049

Wasawillow Farms has lots of vegetables and animals, but the best thing for garden clubs are the daylilies. You will see a lot and can purchase them. Daylilies bloom in June, so that is the best time for a visit.

Lunch options are limited, so ask about bringing a picnic. Otherwise, drive to Trenton for lunch or head back to Chattanooga.