



*Historic Garden Week in Virginia
Celebrates 85 years*

April 21-28, 2018

For one week in April, nearly 25,000 visitors tour beautiful homes and gardens across Virginia during the height of the spring blooming season. Presented by the Garden Club of Virginia, Historic Garden Week encompasses 25 tours organized and hosted by member clubs. For 85 years, the nation's only statewide house and garden tour has contributed to our state and regional economies. The economic impact of Historic Garden Week over the last 45 years is estimated to be over \$425 million.

For nearly a century the Garden Club of Virginia (GCV) has been committed to preserving the beauty of Virginia for all to enjoy. The GCV advocated for maintaining the pristine beauty of Goshen Pass and the wilderness of the Great Dismal Swamp. It has worked to preserve the natural beauty of landscapes along Virginia's highways and promoted the elimination of billboard blight. It has prioritized education about the importance of clean air and water. Over the last decade, the GCV has supported and recognized conservation projects along many of Virginia's rivers and waterways. Each year, the Garden Club of Virginia sponsors workshops and a Forum that takes a balanced look at environmental issues. These efforts go hand in hand with educating members and the public about relevant topics, like using native plants in the landscape.

Its most well-known public event, Historic Garden Week is a beloved spring tradition with a fascinating history. Coming originally from England, early Virginians brought with them an inherent love of the land. They created splendid plantations with noble homes and handsome gardens. Without organized protection of this irreplaceable inheritance, the Garden Club of Virginia foresaw its inevitable destruction. Starting in 1929, they made it their most important work to preserve our state's historic public gardens. The first tours were organized to support restoration work at Kenmore in Fredericksburg. From Monticello, Mount Vernon, Bacon's Castle, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, to the State Arboretum in Winchester, to name just a few – a full diversity of gardens is represented in the GCV's projects. Tour proceeds continue to fund the restoration and preservation of more than 40 of Virginia's historic public gardens and landscapes, a research fellowship program and a new initiative with Virginia State Parks. The Garden Club of Virginia was instrumental in establishing these parks, also in 1929, the year of the first Historic Garden Week.

Every April the properties opened and the tours offered during Historic Garden Week are different, making each year a unique experience. For those interested in horticulture, there are formal gardens, cottage gardens, herb gardens and water gardens. Visitors interested in architecture and interior design will enjoy beautifully renovated historic properties as well as stunning contemporary residences, exceptional art collections and outstanding antique collections. Many properties have fascinating histories intertwined with the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Tours typically offer an engaging variety of four to six private homes and gardens, many open for the very first time to the public, as well as several historic sites of local interest.

Since 1920 the Garden Club of Virginia has grown from a nucleus of eight founding clubs to 47 clubs with over 3,300 members. It is the coordinated efforts of these talented volunteers, along with the generosity of nearly 200 private home owners across our Commonwealth, who make Historic Garden Week possible. The Garden Club of Virginia's horticultural programming and flower shows inspire one of Historic Garden Week's greatest attractions, the world-class floral arrangements created by club members featured in every home on tour. We estimate over 2,300 will be created especially for Historic Garden Week this spring.

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