



# GARDEN CLUB

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HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK

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## **The Nation's Only Statewide House and Garden Tour Continues to Keep Virginia Beautiful**

**Takes Place April 27 – May 4, 2019**

(RICHMOND, VA) – “Historic Garden Week is unprecedented as a fundraiser that underwrites restoration projects and supports our centennial project with the state parks,” explains Jean Gilpin, President of the Garden Club of Virginia (GCV), the event’s sponsoring organization. With 40 active restoration sites and 24 grants to Virginia’s parks in the past three years, the work of the Garden Club of Virginia has broad and significant statewide impact.

While Virginia might be the “Mother of Presidents,” Historic Garden Week, as the oldest and largest house and garden tour in the nation, is surely the “Mother of House and Garden Tours” as well. The inspiration happened early in the organization’s history when a flower show organized by GCV volunteers raised \$7,000 to save trees planted by Thomas Jefferson at Monticello. The first tours, known as “pilgrimages,” took place two years later. Tour proceeds have continued to fund the restoration and preservation of the Commonwealth’s significant historic public gardens ever since.

“Historic Garden Week has raised millions of dollars to keep Virginia beautiful,” notes Lynn McCashin, the Garden Club of Virginia’s Executive Director. “The grounds of our most cherished landmarks including Mount Vernon and Stratford Hall have been restored with tour proceeds.” Additionally, this annual event funds a historic landscape research fellowship program that is building a comprehensive library of Virginia’s important gardens and landscapes. Since its inception in 1996, it has documented twenty-five.

“Much more than a benefit, Historic Garden Week is a beloved springtime tradition – for both our members and for the nearly 24,000 people that attend,” Stephie Broadwater, the event’s State Chair, shares. The only statewide house and garden tour in the nation, it promotes tourism while showcasing communities both large and small across the commonwealth. “Perhaps most importantly, this enduring legacy brings our membership together towards a common goal,” Gilpin adds. “Historic Garden Week would not be possible without the hard work of our 3,300 members.”

“Virginia is especially beautiful during Historic Garden Week,” Gilpin continues. “For eight days at the end of April and early May visitors from all over the world will tour beautiful homes and gardens and enjoy all Virginia has to offer.” The 2019 event encompasses 31 tours organized and hosted by 47 member clubs. Approximately 200 private homes, gardens and historical places will be open especially for Historic Garden Week. “Every year the properties opened and the tours offered are different, making each year a unique experience,” she explains.

“It’s hard to conceive of the scope of Historic Garden Week, so we like to share some surprising numbers,” Broadwater notes. “In addition to the amazing interiors and gardens on display, our volunteers will design over 2,200 spectacular floral arrangements to decorate rooms open to the public. Most of the plant materials will come from their very own gardens.”

The event’s 2019 marketing materials will showcase the Virginia bluebell and Waverley Hill, the former home of the President of the Garden Club of Virginia from 1928 to 1930. “Designed by William Lawrence Bottomley, with gardens by the landscape architect that did the restoration at Colonial Williamsburg, Arthur Shurcliff, this gorgeous Georgian-Revival country house was completed in 1929 – aptly, the year of the first Historic Garden Week,” Broadwater shares.

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*The Garden Club of Virginia celebrates the beauty of the land, conserves the gifts of nature and challenges future generations to build on this heritage. The member organization presents educational programs and makes awards to encourage community conservation and beautification projects. Most notably, the Garden Club of Virginia is recognized for its Historic Garden Week.*