



GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA

HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK

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Unexpected March Madness

Historic Garden Week Canceled for First Time Since WWII

(RICHMOND, VA) – Historic Garden Week 2020 is officially canceled. Like so many events that have been on calendars for months, the Garden Club of Virginia (GCV) recognizes that the health and safety of its 3,500 members, homeowners, and the public would be in jeopardy if this statewide event, scheduled for mid-April, were held.

“It is clear that we must act responsibly and proactively to protect the well-being of our members, staff, volunteers, and homeowners as well as the 26,000 visitors who travel from all over the world to enjoy the gardens and hospitality of Virginia during this unique springtime event,” says Jean Gilpin, President of the female-led non-profit.

In 87 years, Historic Garden Week has been cancelled only once before. “At that time, we were in the middle of World War II. Now, we face challenges here at home,” Gilpin continues. “It is important that we follow the advice of experts, adhere to guidelines established by the CDC, and take special care to keep our families and communities safe and healthy.”

“We thank the 154 homeowners who so graciously agreed to welcome visitors to their homes and gardens in support of our mission,” Tricia Garner, State Chair of the statewide event explains. “We are very appreciative of all of the sponsors, advertisers, vendors and partners who have been so supportive of our efforts.”

Historic Garden Week proceeds fund the restoration and preservation of nearly 50 of Virginia’s historic public gardens and landscapes, as well as a research fellowship program in landscape architecture that documents significant gardens. “Monticello, Mount Vernon, Bacon’s Castle, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, and The State Arboretum in Boyce, to name just a few,

represent the diversity of gardens of GCV's projects," states Lynn McCashin, the non-profit's Executive Director.

The Garden Club of Virginia was recently recognized, and unanimously supported by Republicans and Democrats, in a Joint Resolution from the Virginia Senate for its many contributions, including "its partnership with Virginia State Parks to support programs and land stewardship throughout the commonwealth," notes Gilpin. This nationally recognized and award-winning five-year program, funded through Historic Garden Week, celebrates the Garden Club of Virginia's 100th anniversary, taking place this year, 2020. "The Garden Club of Virginia was instrumental in establishing these parks in 1929. Coincidentally, this is also the year of the first Historic Garden Week tours," McCashin adds.

For a century, the Garden Club of Virginia 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.

Since its formation in 1920, GCV has grown from a nucleus of eight founding clubs to 47 clubs across the commonwealth. "It is the coordinated efforts of these talented volunteers, along with the generosity of homeowners in communities across the state, who make Historic Garden Week possible," Garner explains. It is estimated by Chmura Analytics that Historic Garden Week has an annual economic impact of \$12.5 million to Virginia.

"Much more than a fundraiser, Historic Garden Week is a cherished springtime tradition," Gilpin explains. "It promotes tourism while showcasing communities both large and small across the commonwealth. Perhaps most importantly, this enduring legacy brings the GCV membership together towards a common goal," she says. "While this was a heart-breaking decision for our Board to make, we hope Historic Garden Week fans will use this occasion to pause and take a walk, enjoy digging in the dirt, listen to the birds, and relish all that nature presents to us."

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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, which will take place April 17 – 24, 2021.