

STATEWIDE TRADITION
HELPS VIRGINIA THRIVE

Impact



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

*Historic
Garden Week*

As the country's only statewide house and garden tour, the Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week (HGW) draws nearly 26,000 visitors to 30 Virginia communities each spring and contributes significantly to state and regional economies.

The Garden Club of Virginia (GCV), an active association of 48 garden clubs with over 3,400 members, dedicates the net proceeds from HGW to the restoration of public historic gardens and landscapes, and also to landscape architecture fellowships, enhancing Virginia's appeal for tourism.

In partnership with Virginia Tourism Corporation and through a generous sponsorship from Bartlett Tree Experts, consulting firm Chmura conducted our first survey in 2014 to determine HGW's economic impact. Among the methods of data-gathering were statewide intercept surveys, in-person interviews with 540 tour attendees, electronic surveys of ticket purchasers, paper surveys of homeowners and an email survey of executive directors of GCV's restoration properties.

2013

Our First survey of visitors to Historic Garden Week by Virginia Tourism Corporation

2014

Our First economic impact study of HGW funded by Bartlett Tree Experts and done by Chmura

2019

Updated economic impact study by Chmura

2021

Visitor survey by Virginia Tourism Corporation

In 2019, as we approached GCV's Centennial, Bartlett Tree Experts sponsored an update of Chmura's original economic impact study. In May 2021, Virginia Tourism Corporation conducted a post-Historic Garden Week survey of ticket purchasers, yielding 1,576 responses.

Combined, these four projects over nine years provide important data and insights on the Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week.



VISITOR SPENDING ON TOURS AND IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT VIRGINIA

An estimated 25,112 visitors attended Historic Garden Week in 2019. Total HGW visitor spending was \$831,278, including ticket sales, shopping, transportation, recreation, and more. The total economic impact (direct, indirect, and induced) of spending was estimated at \$3.9 million.



"For the garden lover this event is an unparalleled feast. For the state's heritage, it is a lifeline."

— Tom Christopher, author of *The Artful Garden*

Snapshot of the Average HGW Visitor

- Female, Virginian, age 55-74
- 93% are empty nesters
- Estimated annual household income exceeds \$120,000
- HGW is the primary motivation for the trip
- Planned their trip using the HGW website and *Guidebook*
- 33% of visitors attend their local tours in addition to tours outside of their community
- 25% of visitors stay overnight and spend an average of \$1,209 on their HGW trip

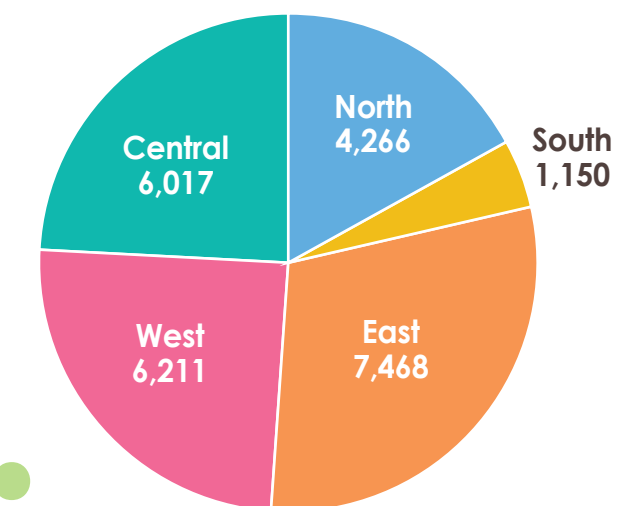
HGW visitors spent **\$3.9 million** in 2019 alone. Visitors dine, shop, and spend the night, generating significant economic impact throughout Virginia.

"Gorgeous homes, wonderful people, and so well organized. It's my favorite week of the year!" — Caroline



"If you love gardens and stunning flower arrangements, you will see it all on tours throughout the state. There are multiple tours every day to choose from. Eye candy everywhere!" — Betsy

Number of Visitors by Region in 2019



\$3.9 million



The annual economic impact of Historic Garden Week in Virginia is estimated to be **\$12.5 million**. The cumulative economic impact over the last 50 years is an impressive **\$518 million**.

Based on data collected from surveys by Chmura in 2014 and 2019



RESTORATION AND VOLUNTEER IMPACT OF HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK



RESTORATION IMPACT

Virginia is graced with important historic properties. Preservation of these public landscapes and gardens became a focus for the GCV in the late 1920s. Beginning with Kenmore, George Washington's sister's property in Fredericksburg, our work has expanded to over 40 historic properties through the commonwealth. The GCV maintains a relationship and offers ongoing support to each of these restorations. Recent major projects include collaborations with Stratford Hall, Poplar Forest and the Reveley Garden at William & Mary. In addition, HGW proceeds fund two research fellowships annually to graduate students in historical landscape architecture. Now in its 25th year, this program's important documentation of historic public and private sites throughout the commonwealth has received both national and international recognition.

"Since 2013, garden visitation has exhibited one of the highest and most significant growth rates in the tourism industry, growing at 7% per annum." — Dr. Richard Benfield in *New Directions in Garden Tourism*



In a continuing effort to build a comprehensive record of historic gardens, the GCV offers two research fellowships in landscape architecture, made possible through proceeds from Historic Garden Week tours.

Survey of Restoration Property Owners

Leaders from properties restored by GCV said that funded projects were crucial to their budgets, gardens or landscapes and they would not be able to do or complete projects without help from the GCV. They also stressed the importance of their relationship with the GCV as valuable to their organizations. Exposure in the *HGW Guidebook* and website was valuable to them as well.

The GCV estimates that **3,075 volunteers** are involved in the planning and production of HGW in approximately 30 communities across the state each spring. These dedicated members and friends volunteer an estimated **76,972 hours**.*

VOLUNTEER HOURS



The Power of Volunteers

Volunteerism contributes to the economy, builds safer and stronger communities, and promotes civic engagement. As the oldest ongoing volunteer effort in the state that supports tourism, Historic Garden Week requires many individuals to organize it and provide hospitality for "America's Largest Open House."

"I love being part of Historic Garden Week and all that the Garden Club of Virginia is able to do because of the time and hard work that goes into it. HGW is one of my favorite weeks of the year, even if it is also one of the busiest!" — Mary, HGW volunteer

but the numbers

*An hour of volunteer time is valued at \$28.54, according to Independent Sector in partnership with the University of Maryland.

MEASURING THE IMPACT

In 2014 and in 2019, the Garden Club of Virginia commissioned Chmura to estimate the economic impact of Historic Garden Week on the Virginia economy. The highly respected data scientists used a variety of survey metrics to measure the economic impact of HGW. In 2014, Chmura reported that the cumulative impact of HGW on Virginia from our earliest verifiable data of 45 years was \$425 million. Translated to current dollars, that becomes \$455 million. Tour proceeds and the economic ripple effect from 2015 through 2019 adds \$63 million more. This includes the GCV's Centennial gift of 54 grants to Virginia State Parks, as well as significant restoration projects. We are proud to share the current cumulative economic impact through 2019 is \$518 million.



CONSERVATION & RESTORATION. Over the years, the GCV has provided professional landscape architectural services and project funding to historical sites throughout Virginia for restoration of their public gardens and landscapes. Local businesses and contractors often collaborate with the GCV on these projects.



STATE PARKS. The GCV was instrumental in establishing the Virginia State Parks in 1929. To celebrate its 2020 Centennial, the GCV awarded \$500,000 in grants for 54 projects in several state parks to create or enhance conservation stewardship and educational programs.



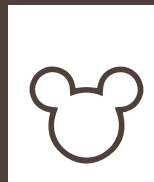
VISITOR SPENDING. HGW attracts 25,000 to 30,000 visitors annually who spend a significant amount of money in Virginia. Visitors travel from all across the country, Canada and Europe.



TOUR EXPENSES. It is the combined efforts of nearly 200 private homeowners and hundreds of GCV members that make HGW possible. Economists trace the course of spending in technical terms. Together, the direct, indirect, and induced impact was \$7.5 million in 2019. Most of this spending benefits local businesses since 87% is spent within the county or city where the tours take place each spring.

Americans Tour Gardens More than Disney!

78 m



100 m



Given that more tourists visit gardens than attend Disneyland and Walt Disney World combined (78 million annually), it's no surprise that the GCV's HGW creates a significant beneficial impact on Virginia's economy.

"Today, gardening is the #1 outdoor activity in the U.S., and garden-oriented tourism generates the highest revenue of any tourism activity."

According to garden tourism expert and author Dr. Richard Benfield



CONSERVATION, RESTORATION & PRESERVATION FOR OVER 100 YEARS



VIRGINIA'S EARLIEST ADVOCATE FOR ESTABLISHING STATE PARKS For nearly a century the Garden Club of Virginia has been committed to preserving the beauty of Virginia for all to enjoy. GCV members were early leaders in conservation and environmental concerns and even advocated in the 1920s for the establishment of Virginia State Parks.



VIRGINIA'S FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION Each year we sponsor workshops and a Conservation Forum to explore environmental issues within the Commonwealth. These efforts go hand in hand with educating members and the public about relevant topics like clean air and water, and planting and protecting native plants.



INSPIRING THE COMMUNITY Our horticultural programming and annual flower shows inspire one of HGW's greatest attractions, the world-class floral arrangements created by club members. The coordinated efforts of these talented volunteers, along with the generosity of homeowners, make Historic Garden Week possible.



FUNDING THE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA'S HISTORIC PUBLIC GARDENS, AND A RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM From the restoration of the oldest English formal garden in North America at Bacon's Castle to recreating an 18th-century garden at Stratford Hall, proceeds from Historic Garden Week have funded a variety of ongoing projects across Virginia since 1929. Whether researching, documenting, or restoring important landscapes across our Commonwealth, the work of the Garden Club of Virginia impacts communities both large and small.

To celebrate our Centennial in 2020, we looked to the past to build for the future and committed to supporting Virginia's State Parks. Wildflower walks, children's natural play areas and pollinator habitats are just a few of the 54 projects funded by proceeds from Historic Garden Week. Through this Centennial partnership we renewed our affiliation with and our support of Virginia's State Parks.

GCV Restoration Projects and Research Fellowships throughout Virginia

- GCV Restoration Projects
- GCV Centennial Project: State Parks
- GCV Research Fellowships



Photos courtesy of Roger Foley, Donna Moulton, Todd Wright, Karen Ellsworth, Ben Greenberg, Diane Ginsberg, Jane Cowles, Melinda Morgan and Scenic Virginia

Historic Garden Week is a beloved springtime tradition for people who come from all over the world to attend tours. HGW promotes tourism while showcasing communities across Virginia.

For more than a century, the Garden Club of Virginia has been an advocate for our commonwealth. GCV has held fast to its core values: to educate, beautify, share a love of horticulture, increase awareness of important environmental and conservation issues, and to preserve historic public landscapes. As we look toward the future, we will continue to build upon these tenets.

THE STATEWIDE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK OVER THE PAST

50 years is estimated to be over

\$518 million



Historic Garden Week in Virginia got its inspiration when a flower show organized by the Garden Club of Virginia raised an impressive **\$7,000** to save trees planted by Thomas Jefferson on the lawn at Monticello.

Numerous **national** and **international** publications have written about HGW, including

The Wall Street Journal
and *Garden & Gun*



Historic Garden Week has been recognized by **Virginia's** **governors**, **American Bus Association** and the **Virginia Tourism Corporation** as an important source of tourism to the state.

90% of 2021 tour guests said they would recommend the tours to others



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA • GCVIRGINIA.ORG or 804-643-4137
HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK • VAGardenWeek.org or 804-644-7776

Cover photo is of the Grace Arents Garden at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond, a GCV restoration project made possible by funds from Historic Garden Week. Photo by Roger Foley