

Northwest District December 2023 Report

Crown Point Garden Club Summary for 2023

Civic Projects:

The Courthouse Garden

The improvements made this year were in honor of so many women (and some of our very own members) who have battled Breast Cancer. Everything planted this year was in honor of that and was pink. Azaleas, astilbe, angel wing begonias.

The Covered Bridge Garden

Some of the changes in this garden were adding more shrubs, lilac bushes, smoke bushes so watering could be done less often. Do It Yourself Drip Irrigation was installed on the four concrete pots, so this garden only needs to be watered every (give or take) 4 days.

Arts & Science Pollinator Garden

This Garden went through a huge upset here in 2023. Due to the enlargement of the Culvert next to this bed, it became a safety concern and we were forced to relocate it. Working with the Fairgrounds Staff we found a fresh new area to plant in. One of the benefits of having to go through this huge change was it is now close to a spigot, should watering become necessary. It's now located on the main drag inside the Lake County Fairgrounds and is considerably larger than before. We planted Black eyed susan's, several different types of grasses: little bluestem grasses, prairie fountain grass, lucerne blue eyed grass, Agastache, russian sage, coneflower, butterfly weed and catmint. The Fairgrounds staff is also helping with watering this garden as well, because they have planted in other areas of the Fairgrounds. We grew some 12 foot tall Sunflowers from seed and those were a huge hit. We will definitely have to do those again next year!

One of the new challenges we faced with this new garden was with the annual County Fair. The food truck vendors placed their food trucks right inside the beds, on top of plants thereby doing some damage.

Youth Initiative

Ecology Warrior Program

On April 29th, our club kicked off our 2023 Youth Initiative with an Ecology Warrior workshop, offered in partnership with our Crown Point Library. We invited kids ages 8-12 to join us making gallon jug greenhouses to start their own vegetables or flowers, which they could then take home. We also offered a recycled sculpture contest which kids could bring something they made out of household items.

The kids planted seeds of lettuce, radishes or zinnias; then they learned about how to recycle things like plastic straws and Hershey kiss wrappers, then they got to creating their own butterflies. At the final table, kids were certified as Ecology Warriors and received their handbooks.

Fundraising:

We have three fundraisers every year. The Mother's Day Flower sale, a Yard Sale in June and a Mum Sale in September. We are now seeing a lot of repeat customers and local faces come out to these events. We pass out flyers giving out info, business cards that direct people to social media, and we are now investigating on taking credit card payments as so many young people do not carry cash.

Sincerely,

Christine Graves
President

Duneland Garden Club

Duneland Garden Club, like many others, spent the summer attending to our community garden and hosted the district walkabout in July.

Throughout the summer, we held our monthly meetings at the Homes of our members, enjoying their gardens stories and light refreshments. Trying to encourage others to host meetings, I pushed for outside meetings only, requesting members to bring their own chair and beverage. hostesses supplied finger foods with no need for plates, forks, etc. This plan intrigued others to host meetings as it was simple and efficient and no need to have the house party ready.

Our August meeting included a craft night. The club provided a wooden head on a post including arms. Members attached hair, hats, scarves, and dresses to create our she crows for the garden. Supplies were provided and club artists in assisted members to draw or paint faces. See our Facebook page for pictures. The evening included a butterfly release, given by our own member who has Nurtured and released some 300 monarchs annually.

Members donated items for district raffle baskets in October.

Meeting topics included a local flower farm presentation on growing flowers for markets, and a demonstration on creating paper notecards. Members created thank you cards for veterans and delivered to the American Legion.

November included another generous donation Of 100's of plants, 2 trees and shrubs from Chesterton Feed And Garden

Members also filled hanging baskets and street planters with fresh greens, crabapple, branches, red twig, Dogwood, and the like.

And just yesterday club members hosted a booth at the Chesterton Chambers mistletoe market. With the support of the Garden Club of Indiana, our club, printed bookmarks, vinyl stickers with our logo, and created small bouquets of mistletoe and greens boasting "free kisses" as handouts for the public. Fresh cut red twig dogwood Branches from our community garden were bundled and donations were accepted. Bluebird houses were built by our club member and husband from reclaimed cedar boards. 13. Houses were donated for the markets fundraising.

We will end the year with a holiday party at one of our members homes and enjoying each other's company and a large variety of potluck dishes. Looking forward to seeing everyone next year in January at the Porter County master gardeners annual seed exchange.

Hobart Garden Club report

The Hobart Garden Club has had a very busy summer and fall. We wanted to work on community awareness to help increase our membership. We made a garden float for the 4th of July parade to promote becoming a member and won 2nd place. We also held a floral design class for seniors at the Maria Rhiner center 15 people attended and a wreath making class was

added in November as the seniors requested. We made arrangements and favors for the MEALS on Wheels for Fall, Thanksgiving , and Christmas. Fall clean -up of the 4 gardens we take care of was done.(Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Senior Center entrance, and Memorial garden and rest stop on the Bike /walking trail. We have a decorated the Chamber of Commerce (Old Pensy Rail-Road Station which is on the Historic Landmark status of U.S.) for Christmas(inside and outside (ginger bread house and letters for Santa and garden craft for children and a fundraiser to have pictures with Santa (club president Jim Pavelka) for those who can't afford the mall pictures as a service for the community and hopefully gain some new members. Our TGCI president and NW district director will be visiting the club to talk about membership and enjoy visiting our members with a special tour of the historical society and landscaping the club does. The club is working with 3 different Jr, Garden clubs and entering several contests and mostly helping the students at the New Vistas High school build the new green house and groom the wildflower walk and butterfly garden and vegetable garden for next year and hope to possibly be on the Master Garden walk or Hobart Garden Walk next summer when we want to show off our hard work to the other clubs. Were a small club , but we get the job done and love to Garden.

Munster Garden Club

This past May, the club held one of its annual fundraisers- the plant sale. It was a great success. Members donate plants from their gardens and buyers love the deal they get on great plants. In July, the club held their popular garden walk where 350 garden lovers came through and enjoyed 8 lovely gardens. Two members manned each home and had membership information to share. This past August, the club participated in the Munster Night Out Against Crime and our butterfly photo screen was a bit hit with families looking for adorable photos for their social media pages. The club members offer gardening advice and we share information about the club.

In October, some of our members attended the NW District Fall Meeting in Porter, Indiana where Munster Garden Club President Mariellen Smith presided over her first district meeting since becoming district director. The club began a major project at the historic 1910 Kaske House. This project will totally clean out all landscaping in the front of the home and replace it with native shrubs and plants. The house was looking tired and the beds were all overgrown. Because of this project, the town has begun other projects on the outside of the house to improve its appearance. The club has pledged \$5000 and have received additional grants from the town of Munster. We have also applied for a NGC grant for this project. Finally, for the third year in a row, the club has won first place in the Festival of Trees competition. Our theme was Our Feathered Friends. The tree was loaded with various types of birds, nests, birdhouses and more. The addition of bird sounds emanating from the tree put us over the top.

VALE OF PARADISE GARDEN CLUB

Vale of Paradise has kept itself busy with programs and projects.

In April we participated at the Porter County Expo “Earth Day”. Our theme was “Trees, Bees and Natives. We had a handout/quiz for the kids about the tallest tree, info about what to plant for bees plus a poster about the circle of life with natives.

We also took a trip to Perennials Galore (nursery) in LaPorte. We came at closing and shopped the owners fixed a light dinner and talked about how they plant their nursery.

Several of us also attended the State Convention in Montgomery.

May we decorate one of the libraries display windows promoting gardening and ourselves. We always use library books in the display case. We had Angel Gochee-Goins from Friends of the Dunes speak about attracting pollinators to our homescape. We also helped with the NW District Spring luncheon. Place a wreath at our Blue Star Memorial on Memorial Day.

June Chuck Roth from Chesterton Feed and Garden spoke to us about the “Importance of Native Trees”. We planted the library planters and window boxes.

We had a plant sale with plants from our gardens. We also had a table at the NWI Fairy Festival where the kids made mini make and take fairy gardens (through the Isaac Walton).

July we visited Meadowbrook Nature Preserve part of the Shirley Heinze Land Trust. We learned about their Bring Nature Home Program and took a walking tour of the new trails. We also attended the Summer Walkabout. This year it was with Duneland GC.

August road trip to Hickory Hills Flower Farm. We had a tailgate breakfast then Emma owner took us on a tour of the flower farm and picked/cut flowers.

September After our meeting at the park (Sunset Hill Farm County Park) where we hold our meetings and maintain 4 gardens. Memorial to Colonel Murray, Monarch way station, pollinator garden and native garden. The park provided us with a wagon tour of the park. So, members who don't walk the park were able to see the gardens, the sculptured tree we maintain, all the of the park.

October one of our garden club member shared one of her hobbies with us. We made cards and envelopes with designer paper; appliques applied and taught us on how to make an Origami Masu box.

November we had Bill Ashcraft from Marie Corp League come speak to us about what the league does for veterans now and those who passed. Also, this time year they collect "Toys for Tots". On Veteran's Day we placed flags and wreath on BSM. We will have a table at "Family Nature Night", we will provide acorns and instructions for the kids to grow oak trees in a pot (through the Isaac Walton). I'm also talking with the horticulturist from Valparaiso Park Dept about donating tree for "Plant Trees for Hope".

December Christmas lunch out.

January booth/table at the Master Gardeners Garden show. It's our annual membership drive with raffle basket to raise funds for TGCI scholarship.

Linda Dingee
President