

Northwest District Director  
Mariellen Smith  
Embassy Suites, Indianapolis  
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The Northwest District has had several planning meetings for the 2026 Garden Club of Indiana Convention. We have an enthusiastic, creative group of people working on this event and plans are moving along well. Mariellen Smith is Chairman and Christine Graves and James Pavelka are co-chairs. Members from other clubs in the district are part of the planning committee.

#### Club Reports:

**Crown Point Garden Club** - The Crown Point Garden Club held their first meeting of 2025 in February. As members approached the door, they were welcomed by one of our new mascots "Petunia the Garden Lady". She created a lot of chatter and excitement for the upcoming year. What a joy it was to begin the year seeing old friends and welcoming four new friends that all became new members at the end of the meeting!

We also celebrated with three of our members finishing the Master Gardener program and are officially Master Gardener interns.

Vice-President and Program Chairman Tish Vater introduced us on how to force Paper White bulbs to get us all in the mood for the coming of Spring. Each member brought a jar, pebbles and bulbs and small branches were supplied to complete the project. Each member was also given a small packet of Verbena seeds for sowing in outside pots as a Winter Garden project.

**Duneland Garden Club** - In September, our club toured the Gabis Arboretum and created a relationship with Gabis to prune non-deciduous trees and shrubs for the Chesterton downtown planters. Additionally, 80 boxwoods shrubs were transplanted from Brinca Cross Gardens and replanted in Thomas Park by a few fabulous members and husbands.

October set the stage for getting ready for the holidays as several members scraped and painted the gazebo in Thomas Centennial Park in Chesterton.

In November, we decorated 20 planters downtown Chesterton for the holidays, as well as 20 hanging baskets. We wrapped the library, for the 30<sup>th</sup> year in a row, with Christmas lights.

For their member holiday party, their president prepared 10 raffle baskets .Throughout the year, members received raffle tickets for participating in club activities. Some members had 100 tickets!!

**Hobart Garden Club** – Several members attended the popular Porter County Seeds and Bulb exchange in January. They enjoyed the garden shopping and the speakers.

The first meeting of the year was held on the first Friday and Meals on Wheels Valentines and Easter/Spring favors were made. A club member is asking for fresh flowers to make arrangements for seniors in three facilities in Hobart.

In March, the club will tour Johnson's and Remus Garden Center to see new varieties and have a planting workshop for our June 7 plant sale during National Garden Week which will have Ken and Barbie working on environmental awareness with native plants to follow incoming President Wanda Zhart's project.

Members were notified that the club is up for three national awards at the April convention. Members will help President James Pavelka in a group consolidation arrangement honoring outgoing president Jayne Kessler.

Seven students sponsored by the Hobart Garden Club will be receiving awards in poetry, one state award for a poster and essay contest and a state and regional award for the sculpture contest.

**Munster Garden Club** is focusing this year on increasing membership. We have changed our meetings to 6pm at night to hopefully encourage those who work to join the club.

We have had difficulty filling leadership positions and the future of the club is dependent on increasing membership. Our first meeting was held in February on a cold evening , but we were thrilled that 22 members attended. One of our members brought a friend, who then joined the club.

This year we hope to be a presence at more area events, push our door hanger campaign that recognizes beautiful landscaping and gardens and having a stronger presence on social media to encourage new members.

**Vale of Paradise club** had a table at the hugely popular Porter County Master Gardeners Garden Show. It is our annual membership drive where we sponsored a raffle basket to

raise money for scholarships. It was a successful day with one new member and a potential second one.

We held a social get together and welcomed new members and visited with the current ones.

March 13<sup>th</sup> will be our first formal meeting of the year. One of our new members will be presenting on the medicinal properties of common plants.

In April, several of our members will be attending the TGCI convention in Indianapolis and we will also have a booth at the Expo for Earth Day with the theme “ Our Power, Our Planet”.