

Thank you, Barbara, for sharing your passion, creativity, and supplies cross-country!

—Margaret Eustace

## Stonington Garden Club

Stonington, CT

*Gardens by the Sea* tour is Stonington Garden Club's triennial fundraiser. Postponed twice due to the pandemic, the event was held June 10–11, 2022, under crystal blue skies. It was all-hands-on-deck as the club welcomed over 2,800 visitors who explored eight residential gardens and the Children's Garden at Stonington Community Center—the primary community project of SGC. The gardens featured plant labels and landscape garden plans. Knowledgeable garden club members were on hand to answer questions.

New to the tour this year

was a celebrity speaker, Charlie Nardozzi, a regional Emmy Award-winning television and radio personality and garden writer. His entertaining presentations on cottage and pollinator gardens delighted attendees. Another feature of the tour was *Artists in the Borough*, a showcase of 11 juried New England plein-air artists who painted in selected gardens. In addition, the event featured a tented marketplace with 30 vendors offering clothing, jewelry, garden-inspired gift items, and home décor.

Since the first tour in 1996, *Gardens by the Sea* has been SGC's primary source of funds to support community gardens, programs, grants, and scholarships. Thanks to the countless hours of planning over the past two years and the hard work of 200 volunteers, it was the most successful tour in the club's history.

—Dodie Bump



Stonington GC members from left: Kirby Williams and Ann Lobdell and volunteer Kathleen Snoddon show off the *Gardens by the Sea* tour guidebook. Photo by Dodie Bump

## Zone III

### Garden Club of Lawrence

Lawrence, NY

As a GCA club located on the south shore of Long Island, Garden Club of Lawrence has recently undertaken a project to use native fauna to improve our Atlantic coastal ecosystem. On September 19, 2022, GCL members joined with the Town of Hempstead Shellfish Hatchery to propagate oysters to use as ecosystem engineers and move them into a permanent home.

As the first stage of our journey, oysters were spawned in the hatchery in July and delivered to the Cedarhurst Yacht Club a week later. Measuring .80 cm, they were suspended into the water in nets where they grew for seven weeks. When remeasured, they had increased in length by 165 percent and had a 97.6 percent survival rate. Combined with additional spat (attached oyster larvae) on shell oysters, they were moved to a protected area nearby.

Now in their new oyster bed, they will grow and develop a more complex living structure. Our 16,000 adult oysters will filter 800,000 gallons of water per day, an ability that has earned the oyster its title of ecosystem engineer. In addition, the new oyster bed will act as a spawner sanctuary producing hundreds of millions of oyster larvae each



GC of Lawrence's oyster launch site. Photo by Catherine Kerr

year. They will spread to find new homes elsewhere.

GCL members working on the project are in awe of the role our oysters play in filtering, cleaning, and increasing the biodiversity of our local waters.

—Catherine Kerr

### Philipstown Garden Club

Garrison, NY

The GCA's encouragement to member clubs to develop a road map for the future led Philipstown Garden Club to establish a Strategic Planning Committee charged with surveying members to identify needs, interests, and priorities. The committee checked with other Zone III clubs that had done similar surveys. They graciously shared their experiences and results. PGC also used feedback from a recent SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis