

February 2026

Columbia Underground



COLUMBIA GARDEN CLUB

Columbia Underground

President's Message

Who is tired of winter already? I am raising my hand! At the time of this writing, we certainly experienced a fair amount of snowfall and bitter cold temperatures. On the bright side, both are good for moisture of the earth and zapping pesty bugs. It is also the perfect time to sow native seeds outdoors you might have collected during the fall, especially since we had a decent snowfall. If you have not already, please check on your neighbors and elderly family and friends. It is always comforting knowing someone will check in on you during any type of storm during the year.

Please make note that our February meeting's location has changed **from** Jefferson Farm and Garden as printed in the yearbook **to** Trinity Presbyterian Church at 1 pm. During our January meeting, we chose to change locations because February could be quite cold. And as it turns out, we made the right decision. State Extension Master Gardener and Field Specialist in Horticulture, Debi Kelly will have a PowerPoint presentation on Key Practices in Pruning.

Yearbook evaluations will take place in Jefferson City on Saturday, February 7th. We may not know how our club's yearbook fared, but our representatives that attended will give us a brief report on the overall evaluations. As mentioned in our January newsletter, now is the time to start some seeds indoors. This is a great way to beat cabin fever and support our April plant sale. Herbs to start indoors now include rosemary, oregano, parsley, sage, thyme, and basil. All of those might be a terrific addition to the selection at our plant sale. But it is time to start them now as some have longer germination than others. Google is a wonderful tool!

Stay safe and warm! And remember your pets need tender loving care now, too.

Donna

There is always in February some one day,
at least, when one smells the yet distant,
but surely coming, summer. Gertrude Jekyll

January Meeting Minutes

CGC met on January 12, 2026. Darlene Rasberry introduced our guest speaker Elaine Bezold. Elaine presented a very informative program "Creating Terrariums." She put together a terrarium as part of her program. Elaine is also a professional photographer specializing in taking pictures of pets.

Following the program Donna Puleo called the meeting to order, we had 31 members, 1 guest (Cathy Judy friend of Mary Nesladek) and Elaine Bezold (our speaker who stayed for the meeting) in attendance. Those recognized with January birthdays were Marsha Magnino, Evette Nissen and Rebecca Smith. Linda Houston gave a horticulture tip in follow up to the question (how do you plant seeds this early in the year?). Linda gave instructions on how to use a gallon milk jug as a little green house to get seeds started.

Donna Puleo noted that now is the time to start plants for the Plant Sale, which is on Saturday, April 25, 2026, with set up Friday, April 24, 2026. Donna asked everyone to please grow something for the plant sale. Minutes from the December meeting were approved as distributed. Mary Nesladek gave the treasurer's report with a balance of 11,653.61 as of 12/31/25. Mary noted that our club donated \$580 to the Food Bank in December. Last month the "Life Membership Award" was given to Donna Puleo. Mary explained that proceeds from the Life Membership Awards fund the FGCM scholarships.

Committee Reports:

Betty Conley reported the Flower Show committee will meet next week. The Flower show will be in July this year. The theme will be Red, White, and Blue to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary.

Marie Pasley reported we will now be volunteering at the Food Bank on the 4th Tuesday of each month from 12:30 – 2:30. Marie also asked members to try growing "Jack Be Little" pumpkins to use on the tables for our Meals on Wheels project.

Old Business:

Linda Antal - Vote for Charitable Donations. Proposal #1 was accepted.

38%=\$760 The Food Bank for Central and Northeast Missouri

33%=\$660 Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture

29%=\$580 Mizzou Botanic Garden

New Business:

Extension Master Gardner – January 28, 2026

CGC Plant Sale – April 25, 2026

FGCM 93rd Annual Convention - April 27th, 28th, 29th and 30th in Independence, MO

April 25th-26th – 2026 Art in Bloom

Donna Puleo shared information about the NGC Plant America/Keep America Beautiful Initiative and the FGCM President's Project for 2025-2027.

Reminder: Next month (February) our meeting will be at the church, not Jefferson Farm and Garden as noted in the yearbook.

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Linneman

Native Plant Corner-Prairie Smoke-*Geum triflorum*

Prairie smoke is a native perennial found in about half of North America. It is low maintenance, drought tolerant and deer resistant. Prairie smoke starts with green leaves, low to the ground. In the late spring (May/June) flowers appear on delicate stalks, looking like tiny fairy bells. After the flowers open and fade, the smoke appears in the form of long strands of feathery hairs. These seed plumes stay on the plant for 4-6 weeks. While not truly evergreen, the leaves can persist through winter, turning attractive shades of red and crimson. As early-bloomers, they are especially valuable to bumble bee queens that have overwintered and are in need of resources in the spring. In fact, these are the primary pollinators of the flower.

Zone: 3-7

Height: 6"-18"

Spread 6"-12"

Bloom Description: Reddish Pink to Purple

Sun: Full sun

Water: Dry to medium



January Program—Elaine Bezold



Great Garden Webinars

The National Garden Bureau (NGB) is a non-profit organization founded in 1920 that promotes gardening in North America by educating, inspiring, and motivating consumers to increase the use of garden seeds, plants, and products in homes, gardens, and workplaces by being the marketing arm of the gardening industry. Their members are experts in the field of horticulture and the information comes directly from these sources. The NGB provides free resources to the public, including educational articles, fact sheets, and photos. One of those resources is their “Ask Me Anything” webinars. This series of virtual meetups are free to anyone who wants to learn more about the specific gardening topics featured in each “Ask Me Anything” event. If you have a webinar you would like to attend but can’t attend live, you can still register and you will receive an email with the link to the recording after the webinar. Some of the subjects of the upcoming webinars include: tomatoes, hydrangeas, vertical gardening and more. To see all of the topics available and to register, click on the following link: <https://ngb.org/great-garden-webinars>

February is National Bird Feeding Month

On February 23, 1994, Congressman John Porter announced National Bird Feeding Month. “I would like to recognize February, one of the most difficult months in the United States for wild birds, as National Bird-Feeding Month. During this month, individuals are encouraged to provide food, water, and shelter to help wild birds survive. This assistance benefits the environment by supplementing the wild bird’s natural diet of weed seeds and insects.”

There are 3 things you can do to help the birds survive the winter.

Offer High Energy Bird Food **1.** Oil sunflower is a great overall seed to offer in the winter. It has a high calorie/ounce ratio due to its high fat and protein content and its relatively thin shell. Oil sunflower has twice the calories per pound than striped sunflower and its smaller shells make less mess when discarded by the birds. **2.** Suet is a great food to offer many of the birds that will visit backyards in the winter. Suet is a high energy, pure fat substance which is invaluable in winter when insects are harder to find and birds need many more calories to keep their bodies warm. **3.** Peanuts are another great food to offer birds in the wintertime. Peanuts have high protein and fat levels and are often an ingredient in suet products. Offering peanuts in a peanut feeder can provide a good source of protein for birds.

Offer Water Consider a heated birdbath so birds can have access to a fresh source of water during freezing temperatures. Backyards that provide fresh, clean, liquid water during winter tend to host more avian visitors than do frozen yards.

Offer Safety Provide nest boxes during cold seasons so wild birds have a place to shelter and stay warm. Evergreens and brush piles also offer shelter from wind and predators.

“Feed the birds in winter; in return, they will feed your soul with the look of gratitude!” – Mehmet Murat Ildan

New Plants for 2026

‘Sundial’ False Sunflower *Heliopsis helianthoides*

Height-48-54”

Spread-36-42”

Blooms Early-Late Summer

Full Sun

Water-Medium

Soil-Normal, Clay

Beneficial for Pollinators

Attracts Butterflies

Good for Cut Flowers

Attracts Hummingbirds

Long Blooming



‘Golden Needles’ Prairie Dropseed *Sporobolus heterolepis*

Height-1-2 ft.

Spread-1.5-2 ft.

Blooms-Tan-Brown

Full Sun

Water-Drought Tolerant

Soil-Well drained

Deer Resistant

Native Cultivar

Fragrant Flowers

Year round visual interest



‘Chance Encounter’ Hosta

Height-1-1.5 ft.

Spread-3-3.5 ft.

Blooms-White

Part Sun/Shade

Water-Average

Soil-Average

Rare watermark halos brighten the center of each leaf

Heart-shaped green leaves with golden margins.

Long-lasting appeal with pest resistance.



‘Spice Cowboy’ Koreanspice Viburnum *Viburnum carlesii*

Height-6-10 ft.

Spread-4-5 ft.

Blooms-White

Part Sun/Sun

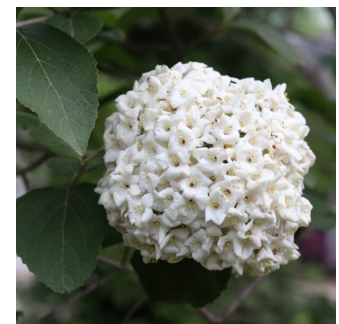
Water-Average

Soil-Medium, well drained

Flowers are massive, snowball-like, and have an incredibly intense fragrance.

Foliage delivers vibrant fall color in shades of red, burgundy, and orange.

Produces berries.



February Meeting

Columbia Garden Club will meet on Monday, February 9th at 1:00 at Trinity Presbyterian Church. Our speaker will be Debi Kelly-State Extension Master Gardener and Field Specialist in Horticulture. She will be talking to us about pruning. Hospitality will be provided by Betty Connelly and Darlene Rasberry.

February Events

February 24th-12:30-2:30-Volunteer Food Bank

February's Promise

By Patricia Denise Newman

Little by little, day by day
the darkness of winter is peeled away
revealing beneath it, fresh and bright
the promise of Springtime to our sight.

Slowly daylight stretches it's arm
wakening itself from winter's em-
balm
the dark days of winter are almost
done soon we will feel the warmth of
the sun.

Enticingly white drifts of snowdrops
appear with bright pink cyclamen
circling near spikes of green push
through the soil our anticipation
nothing can spoil.

The earth is stirring from its long
sleep freeing itself from the cold, icy
keep, soon winter will release it's
hold welcoming Spring as warmer
days unfold.



Columbia Garden Club

President: Donna Puleo

1st VP: Darlene Rasberry

2nd VP: Linda Antal

Secretary: Diane Linneman

Treasurer: Mary Nesladek

Parliamentarian: Alice Havard

Columbia Garden Club meets the second Monday of each month at 1:00 at Trinity Presbyterian Church

Website:

<https://www.kewpie.net/colgrdnclub/cgc.html>

Facebook: Columbia Garden Club

Newsletter Editor-Evette Nissen-
enissen57@gmail.com