THE INDIANAPOLIS GARDEN CLUB

2024–2025

Our Indianapolis Garden Club year was filled with achievement, purpose, and joy. Together, we embraced a full calendar of educational programming, engaging workshops, memorable travels, a GCA Zone X President's Council meeting, a Flower Show, and a Garden Walk—all while funding impactful projects throughout our community. Our dedicated Board of Directors worked tirelessly to make it all possible. We should be very proud of what was accomplished.

Endowment Chair Sally Lanham organized a memorable Endowment Luncheon and Workshop at Holiday Farms, featuring internationally recognized floral designer Bruno Duarte from Toronto, who both inspired and delighted us with his artistry.

Conservation Chair Sally Rowland kept us engaged throughout the year with conservation trivia, practical tips, and creative solutions that helped us become better stewards of the environment.

The Les Belles Fleurs "Swing into Spring" Flower Show, under the leadership of Amy Cooke and Michelle Rogers, held at The Woodstock Club was an extraordinary success. Many IGC members were recognized with GCA awards:

- **Horticulture:** "Best in Show" – Jan Sweeney; "Clarissa Willemsen Propagation" Award – Amy Cooke; "Novice" Award – Theresa Altemeyer
- **Photography:** "Novice" Award – Lynn Dimond
- **Floral Design:** "Best in Show" – Dede Wamberg; "Harriet Dewaele Puckett Creativity" Award – Lara Knitter & Sara Welsh; "Dorothy Vietor Munger" Award – Amy Cooke; "Sandra Baylor Novice" Award – Sally Perlstein

The 29th Annual Garden Walk drew over 700 enthusiastic visitors to four beautiful gardens in the Zionsville area. We generated $75,000 from ticket sales and sponsorships! Chairs Lynn Dimond, Carolyn Siderys, Molly Sturman, and Erin Baker led with grace, ensuring every detail was handled perfectly—and even seemed to keep the rain at bay!

1st Vice President and Community Projects Chair Marta Gross along with her committee, our club awarded an impressive $76,950 in community grants to the following organizations:

- Amazing Women Standing United in Motherhood – $2,500
- Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site – $1,500
- Butler University – $10,000
- Crown Hill Heritage Foundation – $4,000
- Eskenazi Health Foundation – $5,000
- Friends of Garfield Park – $10,000
- Holliday Park Foundation – $6,000
- Indiana Medical History Museum – $19,950
- James Whitcomb Riley Museum Home – $5,000
- Newfields – $8,000
- Parks Alliance of Indianapolis (Indy Urban Acres) – $2,500
- Random Acts of Flowers – $2,500

We closed the year with our June Annual Meeting and Luncheon at Meridian Hills, a fitting celebration of our many successes. We welcomed three new members Cami Huth O'Herren, Lisa Paunicka, and Shandon Whistler. The ABCD (Above and Beyond the Call of Duty) Awards were presented to Lynn Dimond, Carolyn Siderys, Marita Tuohy, Katy McMurray, Marta Gross, Michelle Rogers, and Amy Cooke. The prestigious Carey Award was presented to Claudia Hapak. We also celebrated milestone memberships: Jan Sweeney and Ray Wilson (40 years), and Katie Betley, Ellen Lee, and Anne Pantzer (25 years). What an honor it has been to work along side our membership these last two years as your president. I am thrilled to leave you in excellent hands under the upcoming leadership of Marta Gross.

Lindsay Elder Thornton
President

2025-2026

The Indianapolis Garden Club's 2025–2026 year featured a full calendar of meetings, educational programs, field trips, workshops, fundraising activities, community support, member recognition, and GCA involvement.

General meetings brought members together for presentations on horticulture, floral design, landscape trends, conservation, birds, wildlife, and preparation for the 2027 Zone Meeting and Zone Flower Show.

- The year opened with the September general meeting at Newfields and a presentation by Lisa Milton (Newfields Director of Natural Resources) focused on the club-supported bioretention rain garden.
- Tracy Holt hosted the members at her home for the October meeting where members were treated to a fall tablescape presentation by Sally Perlstein and Kim Dickman (co-chairs, Floral Design).
- In November the club gathered at the Indiana Historical Society for a presentation on Landscaping Trends by IGC Honorary Member David Gorden. The members were also given a sneak peak of the Festival of Trees, which was in the final stage of setup. Kasey Wakefield treated the members to complimentary tickets to see the festival with friends and family during the holiday season.
- The December Holiday Luncheon featured Awards (see below), the Garden Walk Reveal of the five gardens on the 2026 Garden Walk along with a reading of original poem "T'was the Night Before Garden Walk" by Erin Baker (co-chair Garden Walk).
- The first meeting of 2027 was in February by ZOOM and included a talk (with lots of garden pictures) by GCA Scholar Adam Banks on the gardens he worked at during his GCA/RHS fellowship in England. Adam's talk was followed by a club Amaryllis show which included Horticulture and Photography Divisions and was judged by Jan Sweeney and Pam Mahoney.
- The club gathered in March 2027 at Highland Country Club. Lindsay Thornton and Sally Lanham presented about the Zone X Meeting and Zone Flower Show the club will be

hosting in April 2027. Jan Sweeney educated the club about Division II Horticulture in flower shows and provided the members with many tips for next year's entries.

- Pam Baxter (Educational Endowment chair) arranged for the delightful April events, which included the club's Educational Endowment Luncheon featuring Kathryn Aalto's program on the landscape and people behind the Hundred Acre Wood, as well as a welcoming wine and cheese event the evening before the luncheon and a writing in nature workshop the following day.
- The conservation committee hosted the May meeting and program at Holliday Park, featuring Ken Keffer speaking on Indiana birds and plants through the seasons and followed by the first ever Electric Vehicle Show. The Horticulture committee joined the fun with the first ever Plant Swap.
- The year concluded in June at the Annual Luncheon at Meridian Hills, which featured awards, a year in review, and a lot of good conversation. And we welcomed three new members to the club Julia Clark, Darcy Griffin, and Paige Miller!

Field Trips and Other Programming: Educational and hands-on programming was a central theme. Members attended outings at Sweet Peas Flower Farm, Conner Prairie's "The Promised Land" exhibit, Newfields' Wake Up Woods Story Walk to see spring ephemerals, and a Spring Mill State Park walk arranged for by CILTI. Cathy Lawson opened her property and treated members to a March Daffodil Walk. The Floral Design Committee (Kim Dickman and Sally Perlstein) offered floral design workshops for holiday centerpieces, woodland centerpieces, and Garden Walk hats as well as a multi-day floral design trip to New York City, that included a tour of the NYC Flower Market and a floral Design presentation at the workshop of Bella Meyer (granddaughter of Marc Chagall) of fleursBELLA.

Community support and fundraising remained strong throughout the year. Members approved 11 community project grants totaling $73,975 (Friends of Garfield Park, Inc. $20,000 - sunken garden; Newfields $12,000 - tree support; The Children's Museum of Indianapolis $10,000 - new school group entrance; Crown Hill Foundation $8,250 – Helen Link Garden; Marian University $6,500 - Riverdale Garden enhancements and restoration; Butler University $5,750 - story walk; AWSUM (Amazing Women Standing United in Motherhood)$3,000 - community garden; Conner Prairie $3,000 - pollinator garden; Random Acts of Flowers $2,500 - composting supplies; and Indianapolis Public Library Foundation $1,775 - seed library) recommended by Lara Knitter (1st VP and Community Projects chair) and her committee.

The GCA Hull Award was presented to Amanda Smith of Hamilton County Parks & Recreation, in recognition of her programs with children to impart a love and concern for the natural environment. She was awarded $1,000. The club's proposal of Amanda to the GCA was prepared by Gini Hupfer (Civic Improvement chair).

The 30th Annual Garden Walk drew almost 700 visitors to five beautiful gardens in Indianapolis. We generated a little over $73,000 from ticket sales and sponsorships. Co-chairs Erin Baker, Molly Sturman, Mary Quinn, and Debbie Falk created and delivered a "pearl" of an event and even convinced Mother Nature to cooperate in providing a glorious spring day for all. Newfields once again hit it out of the park for the club, not only being one of the five gardens, but also providing the venue for a spectacular reception after the walk.

The Conservation committee supported Indiana Native Plant Month. Gifts were collected for Riley Kids and $2,295 through IGC shopping days at Marigold and 8FIFTEEN.

Awards: The club also celebrated individual member achievements. There were GCA Zone awards presented at the October Zone X Meeting to Amy Cooke (Communications) and Jan Sweeney (Horticulture). GCA Club awards were presented at the December 2025 Holiday Luncheon to Katie Kruse (Medal of Merit), Sally Lanham (Club Appreciation), and Jess Stokely (Conservation). At the June 2026 Annual Meeting, 25-year Service Awards were presented to Cindy Eiteljorg and Anne Shane. The Carey Award was presented to Lindsay Thornton and ABCD awards were presented to: Kim Dickman and Sally Perlstein (Floral Design): Susie McClain and Elizabeth Rudolph (Horticulture) Erin Baker and Molly Sturman (Garden Walk) and Sally Rowland (Conservation). Special thank you's went to: Pam Hazelet (for creating the beautiful awards); Tracy Holt (for hosting the club at her home); and executive board members who are rotating off: Liz Brainard (Treasurer) and Mary Kay Leicht (Recording Secretary).

GCA Activities: The club was active in the GCA. Members had an enjoyable time at two watch parties for GCA virtual conferences: The Garden History & Design Virtual Conference in November, hosted by Sue Combs (Chair Garden History & Design) and the Photography Virtual Conference in February hosted by Pam Mahoney and Carolyn Siderys (Photography Chair).

Six IGC members held GCA positions: Betsy Bosway (Zone X Representative for Visiting Gardens), Anne Shane (Co-chair Zone X), Amy MacDonell Shepard (Vice Chair Scholarship), Jess Stokely (Zone X Representative for Conservation & NAL), Jan Sweeney (Chair Flower Show), and Sue Welch (Chair Communications).

In October 2025, Lindsay Thornton, Lara Knitter, and Marta Gross attended the Zone X Meeting hosted by the Shaker Lakes Garden Club in Cleveland. In January 2026, Lynn Dimond and Sally Rowland (IGC Conservation co-chairs) along with Jess Stokely (Zone X rep) attended the GCA Conservation Study Group in Miami, Florida. In March 2026, Lynn Dimond and Jess Stokely attended NAL in Washington, D.C. In April 2026, Marta Gross attended the GCA Annual Meeting in NYC as club president. Also attending the Annual Meeting were: Anne Shane, Jan Sweeney, and Sue Welch.

Overall, the year reflected broad committee participation, strong volunteer leadership, meaningful educational opportunities, and sustained commitment to horticulture, conservation, civic improvement, and fellowship. The year's closing tally records 37 activities: nine general meetings, nine field trips, seven board meetings, four GCA meetings, four special activities, two GCA conference watch parties, two IGC shopping days, and one Garden Walk and reception.

I would like to thank the 2025-26 Board for their service this year. I appreciated your input and at times spirited discussion, that is what makes things happen. You have been a very productive board for the club.

Respectfully submitted,
Marta E. Gross, *President*