



# The MESSENGER

Fall/Winter 2023



**Welcome**  
new members  
and hello to our  
continuing  
members of  
SDFGC, Inc. It  
will be an ex-  
citing year for  
us because we  
are hosting the  
2024 Rocky

Mountain Region Convention next fall. That includes Kansas, Nebraska, Utah, Colorado, North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana and South Dakota. We have already started planning the event. We are currently narrowing down a location, dates, etc. If you are interested in joining the planning group, let me know.

I did not share my experience at the NGC convention in West Virginia at the Greenbrier Hotel in the last newsletter. I choose to share the NGC President's message so I will give you a few notes from the convention here.

The Greenbrier is huge so it was a lot of walking. Initially I thought it would be priced reasonably since the room rates sounded good but then we found out about all the "add on's"! It was quite expensive if you wanted to eat, etc. The area was beautiful even though we were in meetings most of the time. A little over 600 gardeners registered for the event. Much of the time was spent on bylaw changes and such.

We did have a number of speakers on topics such as "Night Sounds of the Appalachians", How to Grow Orchids in the

Home", "Birding Essentials" and floral demonstrations.

I learned that the old wife's tale about using ice cubes to water orchids is not good. You should use warm water and soak them for 30 seconds every week. You should use the smallest pot possible. They get their nutrients from the air so don't worry about roots sticking out of the soil in the pot.

We were reminded to limit tilling, disturb the soil as little as possible and keep it covered with mulch, straw, etc. There were lovely extravagant floral arrangements that could not fit in most of our houses!

I renewed my friendship with an old friend that I met at an earlier convention and had a good visit with her. She is now the official NGC parliamentarian.

Again, I encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and offer your time to be a state officer; whether it be president, newsletter, secretary, etc. It is rewarding and fun! What an opportunity to meet fellow gardeners and go to new places and part of it is funded by SDFGC, Inc.!

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Lerssen,  
SDFGC, Inc. President



## In this issue...

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National Garden Clubs, Inc.

highest honor, is the  
*Award of Excellence.*

This award recognizes exceptional individuals, organizations, or institutions that reflect and advance the goals and purposes of National Garden Clubs, Inc.

**ANNOUNCEMENT:** The Award of Excellence deadline date has been changed from January 1, 2024 to December 15, 2023. The Award of Excellence new date is listed in the Award Handbook.

Contact SD Awards Chair, Linda Witt for more information. Her contact information is on page 8.

[NGC Awards link here](#)

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**Fall 2023 Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl**

Notify schools and children’s organizations of the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl fire prevention program and poster contest. Posters from SD grades 1 thru 5 that win at our Rocky Mountain Region level receive \$25 from SDFGC, Inc. Ask your club president for rules.

Certificates and prize money (\$50) for the five **national winners** will be mailed following the National Garden Clubs’ 2024 annual meeting. The national grand prize winner will get the certificate, a trophy, and a framed copy of the winning poster during a recognition ceremony in Washington, DC .



**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024**

**February 1, 2024**—NGC scholarship deadline. Page 4 Contact Scholarship Chair-Connie Earley with questions (contact information is on page 8).

**March 1, 2024**—submission deadline for *The MESSENGER*, (contact information on page 8).

South Dakota Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. Members 2023-2024

CLUB NAME members—>	Oct. 2023
Friendship Garden Club/Andover	5
Dell Rapids Area Garden Club	26
Mitchell Area Garden Club	41
Sioux Falls Area Garden Club	53
At-large members	3
SDFGC, Inc. membership totals	<b>128</b>



- DO NOT FEED BIRDS**
- |               |                 |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. BACON      | 9. MILK         |
| 2. SALT       | 10. HONEY       |
| 3. AVOCADO    | 11. DRIED BEANS |
| 4. CHOCOLATE  | 12. MUSHROOMS   |
| 5. ONIONS     | 13. GARLIC      |
| 6. BREAD      | 14. JUNK FOOD   |
| 7. FATS       | 15. RAW MEAT    |
| 8. FRUIT PITS |                 |
- [WWW.BIRDSANDWILD.COM](http://WWW.BIRDSANDWILD.COM)

**HANDMADE SUET RECIPES WINTER BIRD FEEDING**

**Peanut Butter Suet Recipe**

- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup lard
- 2 cups quick cooking oats
- 2 cups bird seed mix
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1 cup flour



Melt peanut butter and lard over low heat. In a large bowl, mix quick oats, birdseed mix, yellow cornmeal and flour. Stir melted ingredients into the dry mix. Once cool, press into molds and refrigerate.

**Pseudo Suet Recipe** Here’s is a simple method for making “suet-type food.”

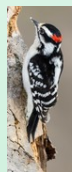
- 2 cups shelled, unsalted peanuts
- ½ cup raisins
- 2 to 3 tablespoons cornmeal

Process peanuts in a food processor until they’re the consistency of peanut butter. Then add the raisins and process for another minute. Add the corn meal and process again. Press this mixture into a mold of your

choice. This recipe will have the greatest nutritional value for your feathered friends.

**Spreadable Suet Recipe** You can spread this suet on tree limbs so more birds can get to it at one time.

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup flour
- ¾ cup water
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup lard
- 1 cup raisins



In a medium bowl, mix the dry ingredients. Then add the water, and mix. Put peanut butter and lard in a small bowl and microwave for 2 minutes. Add to the cornmeal mixture along with the raisins. Refrigerate for about two hours.

**Suet Treat Recipe** Attract woodpeckers, as well as chickadees and nuthatches, with this homemade suet recipe. The best part is this suet mix won’t melt when it’s warm outside.”

- 1 cup lard
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 2 ½ cups oats
- 2 ½ cups cornmeal

Raisins, nuts or birdseed, option Melt lard and peanut butter. Stir in oats and cornmeal. Add optional ingredients. Pour the mixture into a pan and chill in refrigerator over-night. Cut into squares and wrap in plastic for easy storage and removal.

Recipes above from *Birds & Blooms Magazine*, Hannah Holtz *Updated: 12-13-2021*

- 1 1/2 cups shortening (look for palm oil free options)
- 3/4 cups nut butter (any kind)
- 3 1/2 cups wild bird seed
- 1 cup quick oats
- 1/2 cup corn meal

1. Mix the dry ingredients of bird seed, oats, and corn meal together and set aside.
2. Combine the shortening and nut butter in a separate bowl and melt. Stir until completely combined.
3. Pour the melted mixture into the dry ingredients and stir until combined.
4. Spoon mixture into the ice cube tray.
5. Freeze for one to two hours and place in your suet feeder!

[www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)

# Rocky Mountain Region 2023 Awards

2A Kansas Award—Conservation Educational Activity  
**Dell Rapids Area Garden Club** 2<sup>nd</sup> Place

11g Conservation and Environmental Concerns Project that incorporates  
wildflowers or native plant materials: **Dell Rapids Area Garden Club**  
1<sup>st</sup> place

1a Colorado Award—Garden Therapy Includes Gardens of Different Abilities or  
Seniors, **Dell Rapids Area Garden Club** 2<sup>nd</sup> place

26c Photograph—camera **Linsey Duffy, Dell Rapids Area Garden Club,**  
Birds 1st place [SEE PHOTOS BELOW](#)

2a Kansas Award—Conservation Award: Educational Activity Mary Lerssen, **Sioux Falls Area Garden Club** 1<sup>st</sup> place

3a Montana Award –Writing: Yearbook. **Mitchell Area Garden Club** 3<sup>rd</sup> place

1b Colorado Award: Garden Therapy: Teaches gardeners with Different Abilities or Senior Citizens  
**Mitchell Area Garden Club** 1<sup>st</sup> place

10e Civic Development: Project that has been ongoing for several years. **Mitchell Area Garden Club:**  
Honorable Mention Carnegie Resource Center's

10e Civic Development: Project that has been ongoing for several years. **Mitchell Area Garden Club**  
Honorable Mention: Mitchell's Veteran's Park

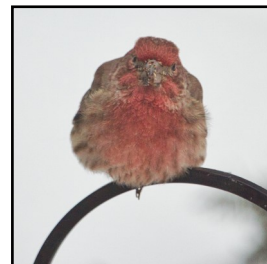
10e Civic Development: Project that has been ongoing for several years. **Mitchell Area Garden Club:**  
1<sup>st</sup> place Maintaining flower pots on main street

6c South Dakota Award—Birds Design and Installation and Maintenance of Public Or Private Gardens:  
**Mitchell Area Garden Club** 1<sup>st</sup> place

**RMR Photography Contest** —Nature, Linsey Duffy—**Dell Rapids Area Garden Club**, Prairie Winter Asters 2<sup>nd</sup> place



Congratulations to Linsey Duffy  
Photography 1st place—Birds



## AWARDS are also available from National Garden Clubs, Inc.

The NGC Awards handbook has been modified to clarify the requirements of a photo release.

This information can be found on p. 6 of the NGC Awards Handbook and is also listed below:

"By submitting this application, you affirm that you have any required permissions/releases and that the images, photos, and /or videos do not violate or infringe the copyright or other proprietary or intellectual property rights of others. You are giving the National Garden Clubs Inc. (NGC) permission to use the images, photos and/or videos to promote NGC in the future. Images/photos taken at a public event or in a public space do not need photo releases."

Thank you for your support of the NGC Awards program.

Diane Harbin, NGC Awards Chairmen

Marilyn McDonnell, NGC Awards Co-Chairman

[Link to NGC awards list and information on how to apply here.](#)

Questions: Linda Witt, SD Awards Chair

### National Garden Clubs, Inc (NGC) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 1, 2024

- The number and amount of scholarships will be determined annually. Up to 45 NGC Scholarships are available, each in an amount up to **\$4,500**.

- One-year scholarships are available to juniors, seniors and graduate students.

- Equal Opportunity shall be provided to all applicants.

- Sophomores may apply for their junior year.

- College/university must be accredited and listed on the official website of the U.S. Department of Education <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx>.

#### Applicant Eligibility

Applications under the following conditions are not eligible:

- International or Foreign Exchange Students.

- Study abroad on fellowships or internships.

#### Applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- Must be a US Citizen or Permanent Legal Resident of the United States.

- Must be attending school full-time or as defined by NGC:

- Undergraduate students must be enrolled for a minimum of 12 graded hours of classes.

- Graduate students must be enrolled for a minimum of 6 graded hours of classes.

- funds may be applied to studies overseas provided that the study is a condition of the recipient's degree plan and that payment continues to be made to the accredited U.S. college or university.

- Must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.25 (on a 4.0 scale).

- Must be planning a career related to gardening, landscape design, environmental issues, floral design or horticulture

- Previous applicants may re-apply (whether awarded or not)

- Must be majoring in one of the following fields of study:

- Agronomy
- Agriculture Education
- Floriculture
- Horticulture
- Landscape Design
- Botany, Biology
- Forestry
- Wildlife Science

#### Selection Criteria

- Plant Pathology/Science
- City (Rural & Urban) Planning
- Habitat or Forest/Systems Ecology
- Environmental Concerns (Management: Environmental, Horticulture Resource/Environmental Behavior)
- Environmental Conservation (inc. Engineering, Law etc.)
- Land Management and/or other related or allied subjects

- All applications received by February 1 will be judged by a committee in order to choose one

winning application per state. (Two applications for states with 8,000+ membership.)

- After judging has been completed at the state level, the applications will be judged by the

NGC Scholarship Committee, after the deadline of March 1.

- The following sample Scale of Points may be used for the evaluation of each application:

Academic Record 40%  
Applicant's Letter 25%  
Listing of Honors/Extracurricular Activities/Work Experience 13%  
Financial Need 15%  
Recommendations 5%  
Conformance 2%

Applications are evaluated and winners chosen by the NGC Scholarship Committee, which consists of the Scholarship Chairman and the eight Regional Directors of NGC. Final judging takes place prior to the annual NGC Convention.

Winners are announced during NGC Convention. The National Garden Clubs, Inc. Headquarters staff will notify all applicants in writing of the Committee's decisions immediately following the NGC Convention.

CONTACT SD Award Chair **Connie Earley** for information before applying. See last page for her email/phone.

## HOLIDAY CACTUS

### Best Growing Conditions Here's what they need.

#### Schlumberger Plant History—

The Christmas cactus origin is steeped in sultry, tropical temperatures in the country of Brazil. A plant in the Schlumbergera family, (the genus name is a tribute to Frederic Schlumberger, a French collector of exotic botanical species). The group of holiday cacti were discovered by Allen Cunningham in the early 1800s, and by the 1900s, there were several hybrids.

Adopted into the Christian holiday traditions Holiday cacti are so named because of their flowering time in the

Do I have a Thanksgiving,  
Christmas or Easter Cactus?

Northern Hemisphere.

Are Christmas cactus and Thanksgiving cactus the same? They are in the same genus but a different species. Both are short day cacti, which means they need long periods of cool temperatures and darkness to bloom. Both these plants need six weeks of at least 12 hours per day in cool, dim conditions before they set buds

But the Easter cactus is a different bird altogether. Learn how to identify Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter cactus, and their slightly different care needs.

- ◇ Thanksgiving Cactus: clawed edges on the leaf and sometimes called the **Crab** cactus.
- ◇ Christmas Cactus: has notched edges on the leaves but not as pointed.
- ◇ Easter Cactus: smoother leaf edges with no notches.

All three are broadly termed Zygocactus, an umbrella term for holiday cacti. There are around 300 hybrid varieties of these cacti. None of them are true cactus, but they are succulents that grow wild in South American jungles.

**Light** | Bright, indirect natural light. Too much light stresses the plant.

**Water** | Allow potting mix to dry between watering. Empty saucer after watering. Over-watering will stress the plant and cause buds to drop off. In most homes watering is needed every 1-3 weeks.

**Air Temperature** | 65-75 °F (18-23 °C) until it's time to force into bloom.

**Soil** | Use a **potting medium made for cacti**

**Root Space** | Prefers to be slightly pot-bound. Repot every few years.

**Humidity** | 50-60% is ideal. Plants often like it higher but your house would get moldy and higher humidity can attract pests. Despite popular advice, a tray of pebbles covered in water does not really humidify a room.

**Fertilize** | A few months after flowering is done, begin using **organic cactus plant food** following instructions on container. Stop during budding and flowering cycles.

**Pruning** | Leaf segments, which are actually modified branches called cladodes or "clades," can be removed (and **rooted as cuttings**) to encourage a bushier plant. You can also remove old flower buds by hand.

#### Common Problems

**Wilting or limp leaves:** This can be due to several different things.

*Are you over-watering?* Let the potting mix dry out between watering.

*Under-watering?* Use the finger test and water if the soil is dry one inch below surface. Also avoid placing the plant near a

heat source.

*Is there adequate light?* Provide bright, indirect natural light unless forcing blooms.

*Is the plant rootbound?* There may not be enough room in the pot for the amount of water needed. Time to move it to a larger container.

**Black or rotting stems:** Too much water.

**Dark red or pink leaves:** Can occur when light is too intense. Also when soil is too dry for an extended period of time. Water thoroughly when the soil is drying out, reaching the full depth of the soil and drain excess from saucer.

**Buds dropping before blooming:** Also a sign of over-watering or extreme temperature fluctuations. Is your plant in a drafty location or have you moved it inside or outside?

**Yellow stems or leaves:** Check for thrips which transmit a virus in the plant. The treatment is insecticidal soap. If it's extensive, dispose of the plant.

**Distorted leaves:** Could be an insect infestation. Check for mealy bugs—they are small and white and hide where it's dark and moist.



how to identify  
CHRISTMAS CACTUS  
THANKSGIVING CACTUS  
& EASTER CACTUS



Submitted by: Linda Mortimore  
References: [www.gardeningknowhow.com](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)  
[www.empressofdirtnet.com](http://www.empressofdirtnet.com),  
[www.dayliliesinaustralia.com.au](http://www.dayliliesinaustralia.com.au)



# Pumpkins

www.universityofcalifornia.edu

**DID YOU KNOW** these 10 facts about pumpkins?

The word “pumpkin” originates from “pepon,” which means “large melon” in Greek. It then evolved to “pompon” in French and “pumpion” in Britain. The Americans later changed it to “pumpkin,” the name we still use today.

Every year, the US produces 1.5 billion pounds of pumpkin. 80 percent of this crop (around 800 million pumpkins) are ripe for picking in one single month of the year — October.

Over 45 different varieties of pumpkin exist. They range in color including orange, red, yellow and green, and they boast names like Hooligan, Cotton Candy, and Orange Smoothie.

Technically a fruit, the pumpkin is a winter squash in the family Cucurbita-

ceae which includes cucumbers and melons.

Every single part of a pumpkin is edible: the skin, leaves, flowers, pulp, seeds, and stems.

Interestingly, pumpkins are 92 percent water.

Naturally low in energy density, pumpkins are an excellent source of potassium, vitamin A and beta-carotene, the powerful antioxidant that gives orange vegetables and fruits their color.

Scientists believe that pumpkins originated in North America about 9000 years ago. The oldest pumpkin seeds have been found in Mexico and date back to somewhere between 7000-5550 B.C..

Pumpkins (along with other forms of squash) were a historically important food staple among Native Americans. They would grow the

squash along river banks next to maize and beans, a planting technique that was called the “Three Sisters Method,” which allowed the three crops to sustain each other. Corn served as the trellis upon which the beans could climb; beans were nourished by the sunlight and kept the corn stalks stable on windy days, while also nourishing their soil; and pumpkins sheltered the corn’s shallow roots and prevented weeds from taking hold.

The practice of carving Jack-O’-Lanterns was brought to America by Irish immigrants. In their homeland, the Irish used to carve Jack-O’-Lanterns out of potatoes or turnips, but upon arrival in America, they began to use pumpkins instead because they were far easier to carve. The tradition of the “Jack-O’-Lantern” stems from an Irish legend about a man named Stingy Jack who was a somewhat unpleasant character famous for playing tricks on people.

## Pumpkin: Nutrition, Benefits

Healthline.com Updated on 5-19-23

Pumpkin is a healthy, versatile vegetable that’s loaded with a variety of nutrients, including fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Most of the health benefits of pumpkin are focused on its fiber content and micro-nutrients, including beta carotene and vitamin A.

Pumpkin is a favorite autumn ingredient, but you may wonder whether it’s healthy.

Indeed, pumpkin is very nutritious and low in calories. Plus, it’s more versatile than you may think. It can be cooked into savory and sweet dishes alike.

### What is pumpkin?

Pumpkin is a type of winter squash

that’s in the same plant family as cucumbers and melons. It’s technically a [fruit](#) since it contains seeds. Yet, in terms of nutrition, it’s more like a vegetable.

These squash are native to North America and play a big role in two holidays. They are carved into jack-o’-lanterns for Halloween and cooked into pies for Thanksgiving dessert in the United States and Canada

However, they’re also grown around the world on every continent except Antarctica.

Their seeds, leaves, and flesh are all edible.

### Pumpkin varieties

There are many varieties of pumpkins, including:

**Jack-o’-lantern:** a large variety that’s used for carving

**Pie pumpkins:** a smaller, sweeter variety

**Miniature:** used for decoration but also edible

**White:** used for decoration but can be cooked

**Giant:** mostly grown for contests; technically edible but less flavorful than smaller pumpkins

Most of the pumpkin that’s sold in the United States is [canned](#).

Interestingly, the variety of pumpkin that’s most typically canned looks more similar to a butternut squash than a jack-o’-lantern.

The distinction between pumpkin and other types of squash can be a bit fuzzy, as there are many different but closely related varieties.



### Pumpkin Fluff

1 (15 ounce) can solid pack pumpkin  
1 (5 ounce) package instant vanilla pudding mix  
1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice  
1 (16 ounce) container frozen whipped topping, thawed

Mix 1st three ingredients. Fold in whipped topping. Serve with apples, cinnamon crackers etc.

### 2-Ingredient Pumpkin Cake

1 (18.25 ounce) package spice cake mix  
1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Generously grease a 9x13-inch baking pan with cooking spray.

Mix spice cake mix and canned pumpkin together in a large bowl until well combined; spread evenly into the prepared pan.

Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 25 to 30 minutes.

Cool and serve, or store in the refrigerator to serve the next day. Add favorite frosting or powdered sugar if desired.

[www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)



“What good is the  
warmth of summer,  
without the  
cold of Winter,  
to give it sweetness.”

—John Steinbeck

garden  therapy

## Fall Garden Checklist

-  Leave the leaves, remove diseased materials, & mulch
-  Divide perennials
-  Plant spring bulbs
-  Harvest this year's crop
-  Grow fall and winter vegetables
-  Clean garden tools
-  Save seeds & preserve flower, leaves, & seed pods for crafting
-  Plant shrubs & perennials
-  Amend soil
-  Winterize your water feature
-  Move tender plants inside

Step-by-step instructions for all these tasks and more can be found at:  
<https://gardentherapy.ca/the-complete-fall-garden-checklist/>

## How to Clean and Care for Your Gardening Tools

There's more to gardening than tending to weeds and plants. It also requires proper tool maintenance and care.

A quality garden starts with quality care—and that doesn't just mean keeping up with your weeding. Maintaining your garden tools will ensure that any chore you complete gets done with the highest potential for accuracy and precision. Not only do tools need to be sharp, they also need to be clean and sterile, so they don't accidentally spread disease or viruses across your garden beds. And of course, stored in a dry location, not just left in the grass for tomorrow's chores!

Here's how to keep your tools in good shape for any gardening issue that comes up.

### Cleaning Garden Tools

Not only does a thorough cleaning mean sterile tools, it also ensures your tools will last longer. Just think of it as protecting your investment.

Start by scrubbing your tools with a wire brush. This is the fastest and best way to get the dirt off.

Next, dip the tools in a diluted solution of household bleach. Turpentine can be used for any items that might be covered in sap, while vinegar can be used to soak items coated in rust.



Give wooden handles a

light rubbing with linseed oil.

### Sharpening Garden Tools

Hoes, shears, scissors, knives, loppers, prunes, and shovels all need an occasional sharpening.

Wipe the blades down with WD-40 or another lubricant.

File at a 20 to 45 degree angle; for most tools, it's usually easiest to follow the original bevel. (Most blades can be filed with a 10" flat mill file.) For items that need a finer edge (pruners or shears), use a whetstone to finish the edge.



### Storing Garden Tools

Even when you know you'll be using your tools the next day, it's best not to leave them out in the elements. After cleaning them, return used items to the shed, where they will be kept dry and are more likely to remain rust-free. A great way to store small spades and trowels is by keeping them in a pot filled with sand that's been soaked with motor oil. This helps keep the metal well-conditioned. Your larger tools will do best hanging in a dry, ventilated shed. A pegboard will keep everything organized and easy to access. Keep the tools you frequently use within arm's reach, and place less-utilized items as you wish.

[www.bobvila.com](http://www.bobvila.com)

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**Address Correction** : If your address or email changes, contact *The MESSENGER* editors. Comments, suggestions, questions?

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