

Germantown Garden Clubs

Germantown is proud to be the home of four very active garden clubs. Of the 1,000 members in the 20 counties that make up District I of the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs, Germantown alone claims over 200 of these members.

Suburban, our oldest garden club, was formed in 1930 by a small group of ladies who lived in Germantown and the Forest Hill area. These five original members were: Mrs. John Larkin, Mrs. Katherine Dickey, Mrs. Margaret Mitchell, Mrs. S.R. Hungerford and Mrs. Dorothy Kirby. They wanted their Club to be special – a group that would hold to high principles and standards. Since they were friends with many members in the Memphis Garden Club, they were able to get a lot of advice and assistance. The decision was made to name the Club Suburban and Margaret Mitchell served as the first president. For many years, the Club was limited to only twelve members and there were many projects right from the start – planting flowers around Bailey Station, Forest Hill and Germantown.

In 1941, Mrs. L.E. Dickey of Germantown became the state president and national defense became an important part of her program. She initiated the idea of planting vegetable gardens - their economic contribution to the war. They also set aside one day on which all garden clubs would work for the Red Cross. After the war, Suburban's membership began to flourish and today it reaches over 100 members. It continues to hold to its high principles and standards with a biennial flower show and participates in TFGC statewide projects. These include the Guest Designer program to provide floral arrangements for special occasions for the Executive Residence in Nashville and Racheff House and Garden. Suburban spearheaded the master plan to develop the Germantown Museum, the purpose of which is to collect, preserve, and display documents and objects of historical, educational, social, economic and cultural importance to Germantown and to document the chronological history of the city for public information and education. Members of Suburban contributed \$3500.00 to sponsor a painted fiberglass horse, Bloomers, to help celebrate Germantown Charity Horse Show's 60th anniversary and to raise money for charity. The Club provides large flower arrangements in the GPAC lobby for three performances of the Iris Symphony each year and helps the PTSA maintain the garden in the turnaround behind the Germantown High School. Suburban maintains its rating as a Club of Excellence in the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs.

Poplar Estates Garden Club was formed in 1966, with Annie Laurie Hall as the originator, and Jean Fleenor, the first president. During these first years, only residents who lived in Poplar Estates were eligible for membership, but later the Club expanded to include members from all parts of the city. Annie Laurie served as president for four – two year terms. The club is fortunate to continue to have five of its original members: Annie Laurie Hall, Joan Norsworthy, Barbara Dodge, Mary Sandvig and Tina Hunt. It currently has seventeen members – two of whom are men.

The Club decorates the Poplar entrance to Poplar Estates Pkwy., at Christmas and Easter, sponsors a Princess for the Germantown Charity Horseshow, presents a Flower Show every two years (either in a home or with the district), and participates in all District, State, and National Projects, which includes National Garden Week. For many years, the Club sponsored the “Yard of the Month” until it was assumed by the local Homeowners Association. The Club has two Master Gardeners and two National Flower Show Judges and maintains its rating as a Club of Excellence in the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs.

Kimrough Woods Home & Garden Club was formed in 1977 and was sponsored by Eastover Garden Club in Memphis. June Elliott served as the Club’s first president. The Club sponsored the landscaping of the medians at the entrance of Kimrough Woods and worked with the City of Germantown to develop the landscaping in the city’s medians. Each year, the members sponsor a Germantown Charity Horses Princess, line the streets with luminaries and give carriage rides during the Christmas Holidays. This past year, during Lynn Huggins administration, Kimrough Woods sponsored projects to help the Battered Women’s Shelter and Welcome Baskets to give to new neighbors who move into the Kimrough Woods neighborhood. Because of the Club’s desire to have a greater mixture of activities that expanded beyond garden Club projects, they have resigned from the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs with a membership of thirty-five members.

Germantown, our newest garden club, was formed twenty-one years ago, on October 4th, 1988, with Jerry Tubb as President; Dorothy Chandler, 1st Vice President; Neva Crow, 2nd Vice President; Barbara Doyle, Recording Secretary; Virginia Dickerson, Corresponding Secretary; and Dean Elledge as Treasurer. The Club was admitted into the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs on Oct. 18th, 1988 with dues of \$3.00 per member, and met in the Presbyterian Church. By January of 1989, the membership had risen to 81 members with a goal of 100 members by March. In June, 1989, the dues rose to \$12.00 per member plus .49 cents to save to install a Blue Star Marker on Germantown Road at City Hall. Both Jerry Tubb and Dorothy Chandler rose to become State Presidents of TFGC, with Jerry becoming Director of the Deep South Region of

Garden Clubs. Many members have served on the District Board, with Pat Smith serving as immediate past District I Director.

Germantown has always been a strong advocate of projects promoted by the District, State and National Garden Clubs: a biennial flower show providing multi-media activities/supplies to the Germantown Public Library; sponsor of a Germantown Charity Horseshow Princess; provider of large floral arrangements at GPAC for the Iris Concerts; provider of maintenance for landscaping for the Blue Star Marker on Germantown Parkway, the exterior needs of the Germantown Community Theater and the butterfly garden at Madonna Learning Center; presenter of programs on gardening techniques for mobile and wheelchair bound residents at Southerland Place; participant in "National Garden Week" and provider of maintenance for memberships in Racheff House and Gardens, Memphis Botanic Garden and Magevney Gardens. Germantown Garden Club was recognized as Tennessee's Garden Club of the Year in 2004 and Garden Club of the Year for the Deep South Region. The Club sponsors the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest at Dogwood School which has produced the National Poster Winners three times during the past five years. These posters are sent to all of the national parks across the country. They also won the School Grounds Improvement Award in 2006, for Tennessee and the Deep South Region, for their work at Dogwood Elementary School. Germantown Garden Club maintains its rating as a Club of Excellence in the Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs.

Submitted by Pat Smith

Germantown Museum Board Member