

KS Gardener

Volume 87, No. 4

December 31, 2025

President's Message

As we close out 2025 and look toward a new year, I am excited to see what is in store for 2026. In this edition, you will find the minutes of our recent KAGC Fall Board meeting and some garden club reports. I am encouraged by the vibrant activity still blooming in our garden clubs.

We have much to look forward to in the coming year. Please mark your calendars for the National Garden Club Convention in St. Louis, MO, from May 4–6, 2026.

We pause to remember Caroline Wittman, a past KAGC President who gave so much to our gardening community over her 99 beautiful years. Her legacy of mentorship and love for the garden remains an inspiration to us all.

Our organization relies on the "many hands" that make work light. Currently, we have several vital leadership and committee positions open, including Vice President, Parliamentarian, and various chair roles for Birds, Butterflies, and more. Please consider stepping forward to share your talents. If you would like to contribute stories, poems, drawings, pictures, or other material to the KS Gardener, please reach out to Heather McCain or upload the files to the Google Drive (pg. 15). To continue to have a fun and informative KS Gardener, we need content from all of you!

Wishing you a peaceful winter season of planning and a flourishing 2026.

Penny Morgan

President - KAGC

President's Message	1
KAGC Meeting	6
Club Reports	11
Volunteers Needed	15
Board of Directors	18



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To order from Member Services,

1-800-550-6007 for orders

NGC President

2025-2027

Donna Donnelly

Theme: Go Green—Plant America

Elloree, SC

Rocky Mt. Region Director

2025-2027

Shirley Pursel

Theme: Many Hands make all work light

307-851-2966

shirleypursel@yahoo.com

Dates to Remember

May 4-6, 2026 NGC Convention



Guardian

Moving? Email Change?

Send Changes to:

HeatherMcC@aol.com

Website: ksgardenclub.com

National Garden Club Convention

The National Garden Club Convention will be held from May 4 – 6, 2026 in St. Louis, MO. Registration, tentative schedule, and hotel information will be available in January. Keep checking this website for more information:

<https://gardenclub.org/events/2026-convention>



Freedom of Style — October 2025 Design Workshop



Members of the Kansas Associated Garden Clubs Council of Flower Show Judges met on October 20, 2025, at the Preston Hale Room at Ward-Meade Garden Center in Topeka. The group held a brunch business meeting, which included a critical discussion of the KAGC Council of Flower Show Judges Bylaws and Robert's Rules, followed by a design workshop. The featured design, created on a natural coconut base, encourages participants to explore more creative "Freedom of Style" in floral construction.

Photo and design guest lead supplied by Janette Eliza "Beth" Lassiter-Smith

How to Become a Flower Show Judge

The Flower Show School is a comprehensive program that teaches all you need to know about judging, entering, competing and chairing a NGC flower show. There is more information on the courses to take at <https://gardenclub.org/school/flower-show-school-courses>. General information can be found here: <https://gardenclub.org/flower-show-school>.

Some courses are virtual, but most are in various locations. We need more judges so please consider becoming a flower show judge!

Kansas Flower Show Judges

The following judges are eligible to serve in all Standard Flower Shows, including those applying for state or national awards.

Master Judges in Good Standing with National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Karen Booker, 1340 Engel Rd., Lawrence 66044; 785-841-2365

Floanna Crowley, 1341 N Valleyview St, Wichita 67212; 316-641-0082

Elaine Holmstrom, 4042 SE 34th St, Topeka 66605; 785-267-6316

Sally Love, 101 East 1st St, Caney 67333; 620-877-2501

Officer and Chairman/Committee Interest

Please indicate as many Committees or Chair/Director positions you might be interested in. This doesn't commit you to anything. We will contact you to discuss further. Please send this form to Penny Morgan.

NAME: _____ email: _____

Club: _____ Cell Phone: _____

KAGC Board of Directors

- ☐ President
- ☐ Vice President
- ☐ Secretary
- ☐ Treasurer
- ☐ Historian
- ☐ Parliamentarian
- ☐ Editor of KS Gardener

District Director:

- ☐ Sunflower District
- ☐ East Central

Committees

- ☐ Awards
- ☐ BeeGap and Backyard Habitat
- ☐ Birds
- ☐ Blue Star
- ☐ Butterflies
- ☐ Environmental Posters
- ☐ Flower Show Awards
- ☐ Flower Show Judges Credentials
- ☐ Flower Show Schools
- ☐ Judges Council
- ☐ Life Members
- ☐ Membership
- ☐ Litter, Reclamation & Recycling
- ☐ National Garden Week
- ☐ NGC President's Project
- ☐ Protocol
- ☐ Remembrance
- ☐ RMR Award of Excellence Project
- ☐ Scholarship
- ☐ Social Media Chair
- ☐ Sustainability Committee
- ☐ Trees and Shrubs
- ☐ Webmaster
- ☐ Wildflowers

Remembering Caroline Wittman



Caroline Marie Wittman, died in her home on September 26, 2025, after a long, beautiful life. She was 99. She was born July 30, 1926, in St. Peter, Kansas, to Michael Vincent Billinger and Barbara (Richmeier) Billinger.

Caroline married Victor Frank Wittman on August 16, 1944. They celebrated 61 years together before his passing in 2006.

Caroline was known for her kind heart, always willing to mentor all. She was a homemaker and bookkeeper for Vic Wittman Construction Company. She was a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church, Kansas 4-H Leader (knitting instructor) for 24 years, Past Regent and over 70-year member of Daughters of Isabella Little Flower Circle 503, Queen of Spades Garden Club for 65+ years, National Garden Club, Rocky Mountain Region Garden Club and the Kansas Associated Garden Club. Caroline served as officers in all of these clubs throughout her years.

Caroline enjoyed gardening, flowers, cooking, baking, sewing, oil painting, and knitting. Many nieces and nephews have enjoyed her original oil paintings received as wedding gifts.

Survivors include a daughter, Theresa Wittman of Topeka, KS; sisters, Maryann Rome of Golden, CO, Barbara Rome of Aurora, CO, Anges Rome of Aurora, CO, Shirley Kuppetz of Ellis, KS; seven grandchildren, thirteen great grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren.

Caroline was preceded in death by her parents; husband; son, Eugene Wittman; daughter, Vicky Jensen; siblings, Bridget Mann, Luciene Horak, Adolph Billinger, John Billinger, Dorothy Fagan, Peter Billinger, Clara Herman, Louis Billinger, and Elaine Knoll.

A Memorial Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated in July 2026, in her honor of her 100th birthday. Service details will be shared at a later date.

One thing is for sure... Caroline did life her way.

<https://www.brennanmathenafh.com/obituaries/caroline-wittman>

Kansas Associated Garden Clubs Fall Meeting

The KAGC Fall Board Hybrid Meeting was called to order by President, Penny Morgan in her conference room at 1:40 after the ZOOM connections with several members. (Half on ZOOM and half present).

The minutes from the last meeting at the June KAGC Convention were printed in the Kansas Gardener. There were no corrections; motion to approve by Floanna Crowley, seconded and approved.

The Treasurer's report was emailed to the board in advance by Treasurer, Margaret Endecott. She then went over the report. A question was raised about her entry for credit card service of \$9.00 per month. This was corrected to read the charge for the KAGC web site, IONAS. The KAGC Judges Council money was listed as a line item. Treasurer's report was then approved with corrections and filed for review.

Margaret reported that the Intrust Bank is requiring that the KAGC President and Secretary's names be added to the signature card. Intrust Banks are located in Topeka for President Penny and in Wichita for Secretary Carolyn Hartman. Each can go to their location bank to sign the card.

Margaret asked about the security bond for the treasurer. Penny informed her to check past records and get it renewed. It had previously been with Travelers with an annual renewal.

Old Business:

Penny has been informed that the East Central District has dis-banned effective December 31, 2025. The clubs voted to split the balance, \$2,596.68, in their account with both remaining clubs.

Club Reports:

Reports were sent in by Garden City Garden Club and Suburban Garden Club. Penny read the report from Garden City and because of the length of the Suburban report, it will be posted in the next Kansas Gardener.

Chairman Reports:

Sherryl Fitzpatrick, Membership Chairman, report emphasized the decline in members. These numbers were all listed in the program at the KAGC Convention – 110 active members and 5 at large.

Sherryl, as Chairman of the June KAGC Convention, gave the final report of finances. The convention costs went over the intake by \$413.03 mainly because Botanica charged a discounted amount of \$480 for room rental. This overage was received from the Sunflower District account which was set up for this purpose.

Kansas Associated Garden Clubs Fall Meeting

Discussion followed concerning the dis-banning of the Sunflower District. It was decided that Penny would contact each club president of the Sunflower District to vote on how the remaining money was to be handled. It is currently a Cashier's check from the Hays Bank.

Kay Catlin, Blue Star Chairman, announced that she has tried to find the Kansas markers and hasn't been able to find any. Discussion was that there was one in Arkansas City, Philson, Solomon and Junction City.

New Business:

Announcement was made of the death of Caroline Wittman. (She served two terms as KAGC President: 2005-2009). A notice will be placed in the next *Kansas Gardener*.

Heather McCain, editor of the *Kansas Gardener* announced that the deadline for the next edition will be December 15, 2025.

Penny announced a special program of NGC asking clubs to plant red, white, and blue flowers next year for the country's 250th anniversary, especially around Blue Star memorials. Clubs can check with NGC for possible funding. She asked that each club promote this project. For more information, Penny announced that she would send the link for the *NGC Gardner* to each club president. The Plant America project for 2026 is a project worth checking. NGC is also giving prize money for outstanding projects.

The 2025 Club President's Reports are due November 1-15, 2025.

The 2026 Convention was discussed. Club Presidents are to bring it to their clubs and ask for suggestions for location and time. A flower show was also discussed.

Beth discussed the Rose Book, which she had digitized a few years ago with a grant, will be retrieved from Caroline's and delivered to the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka.

With no other new business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:10; motion by Heather and approved.

Submitted by Floanna Crowley for Carolyn Hartman



Photo from
Margaret Endecott

Kansas Associated Garden Clubs Fall Meeting

Treasurer Report by Margaret Endecott

Intrust Savings Account	10/2/25	\$6,457.28
Intrust Checking Account	10/20/25	\$26,781.50
Capitol Federal CD No 1	6/30/25	\$3,245.03
Capitol Federal CD No 2	6/30/25	\$14,771.85

June 7, 2025 Report Balance \$19,170.67

Deposit 121.25

Suburban Garden Club

State Convention Basket

Sales

Judges Council 6443.68

Judges Council 1295.90

Checks

NGC Dues -114.00

RMR Dues -100.00

Charge for Website - 36.00

Service \$9.00 per month

Balance \$26781.50

The KAGC Membership Report 2025 by Sherryl Fitzpatrick

Garden City Garden Club	10	Sunflower District
Olathe Garden & Civic Club	30	East Central District
Prairie Acres Garden Club	5	Sunflower District
Queen of Spades	8	Sunflower District
Santa Fe Trail Garden Club	18	East Central District
Suburban Garden Club	39	Sunflower District
At Large	5	
Total	115	State Memberships

Innovative Approaches Inspire Greater Enthusiasm For Gardening

The Evolution of Gardening Methods

Gardening has undergone significant changes over the years, welcoming a variety of new techniques and tools that make the activity more accessible and rewarding. A key advancement is the widespread use of seed packets. These packets offer gardeners clear, practical instructions for planting seeds, whether in traditional garden plots or larger field settings. Information such as recommended planting depth, proper spacing, and ongoing care serves as a foundation for successful gardening, helping individuals achieve the best possible results.

Structured Garden Beds and Creative Design

Alongside the helpful guidance from seed packets, the trend toward structured garden beds has become increasingly prevalent. These beds are available in various sizes and shapes, providing flexibility for garden design and maintenance. Organizing plants within structured beds allows gardeners to exert greater control over layouts, encouraging creativity and simplifying the management of different plant types. This approach not only enhances the garden's appearance but also fosters greater enthusiasm for gardening.

Optimizing Garden Beds

To make the best use of available space, gardeners are encouraged to plant additional seeds in open areas, reducing the likelihood of weeds taking hold. A strategic arrangement—placing larger plants in the center, medium-sized plants on either side, and smaller plants or root crops along the ends or edges—ensures that every part of the bed is used efficiently. This organization supports a healthy, productive garden environment.

Gardeners are also experimenting with innovative methods such as vertical gardening and raised bed systems to maximize limited space and improve soil conditions. These approaches help boost yields, reduce weed pressure, and provide easier access for planting and harvesting. By combining modern techniques with time-tested traditions, gardening becomes both efficient and enjoyable, appealing to enthusiasts of all skill levels.

Companion Planting and Pollinator Attraction

Companion planting is a valuable technique, involving the cultivation of different plant types together to benefit one another. By interspersing flowers among vegetable crops, gardeners can attract pollinators and helpful insects. These beneficial visitors play a vital role in supporting the health and productivity of garden plants, contributing to gardening success.



Continued on the
next page

<https://gardenclub.org/our-schools>

Innovative Approaches Inspire Greater Enthusiasm For Gardening (continued)

Saving Seeds for Future Gardens

As fall arrives, gardeners begin saving seeds for the following year. Seeds are carefully dried and stored in envelopes or empty prescription bottles to preserve them until needed. This practice ensures gardeners are well-prepared for the next planting season and supports the ongoing cycle of growth and renewal in the garden.

Creative Winter Projects for Spring Gardens

Fall also offers opportunities for creative gardening projects. Discovering unique items at estate sales, flea markets, craft shows, and garage sales can inspire projects that refresh gardens for spring, whether designing a cottage garden, balcony, kitchen garden, or patio. Planting bulbs now will ensure early spring showing; while making and painting bird houses may provide shelter and places to raise their young for garden birds. As you remove the annual plants from the garden beds, or planters to get them ready for the winter months, remember to pull plants and weeds from the roots, rake the area well, then apply layers of fall leaves over the bed or planter as nature's blanket of warmth for the soil. As leaves decompose, they return nutrients to the soil; in spring, just add compost or organic fertilizer to prepare for planting.

During the winter months, gardeners often plan layouts, research plant choices, and sort seeds indoors. Serious gardeners plan winter seed starting and create schedules as part of fall preparations. Making plant markers or decorating indoor planters helps keep gardening enjoyable and productive until outdoor work resumes. What new things will you bring to your happy place in the garden?

Anne Shiever

Suburban Garden Club Member

Interested in saving seeds? Check out this website: <https://seedsavers.org/learn/seed-saving/>



Olathe Garden and Civic Club Report

After another successful flower show, the Olathe Garden and Civic Club wiped their brows and facilitated a few meetings and outings. Some of the club attended the Dahlia Show at the Suburban Lawn and Garden located in historic Martin City of south Kansas City, this 40-acre nursery has been a destination for gardeners and professional landscapers since 1990. The show had many beautiful flowers.



The October program focused on Spectacular Garden Shows and was presented by Cheryl Graan with a little help from Heather McCain. Cheryl has attended many garden shows and has hundreds of pictures and videos. Some of the flower shows she has attended include the Philadelphia Flower Show, the Seattle Flower Show, and the Northwest Flower Show.



For November Beth Gillis provided a program on Kokedama Designs and Pumpkin Planter. The club members were able to create cute pumpkin planters. Kokedama is formed by covering the roots of the chosen plant with moss. Kokedama is an elegant Japanese-style bonsai.

December was our Christmas Luncheon and Gift exchange at Julie Pickerill's. We had a fabulous lunch and a fun gift exchange!

Programs have been established for 2026. The first program in January is a group activity where we will create bouquets from old arrangements. The speaker is Charli Kinerk from Unexpected Blooms. <https://www.unexpectedblooms.org/>

Looking forward to a wonderful 2026!

Heather McCain, OGCC Vice President



Suburban Garden Club Report

Our garden club report will start back in July where we met at one of our members' home where we toured her beautiful flower garden. Her love of the beauty of flowers was everywhere. (I have no pictures as I had COVID and was unable to attend). Members also enjoyed a pot luck lunch. From comments from members, this was not a garden to have missed.

In August we toured the Riverside Community Garden led by a local master gardener. They have worked out a deal with the city for water. This is very close to the old water processing plant. The sections had raised beds which were leased out to various gardeners. Most sections were growing vegetables – tomatoes, peppers, squash, etc. Each is responsible for their own weeding and general maintenance. They are also collecting any extra produce for the “Plant a Row for the Hungry” program.



With cooling weather, our program in September was preparing houseplants to be brought inside for the winter. One of our members, Carolyn Hartman, gave important information on her success with this process through the years. She talked about how she has been successful in preventing insects from coming inside on plants and how to control them if some are missed. She brought several plants for examples and chose to give away.



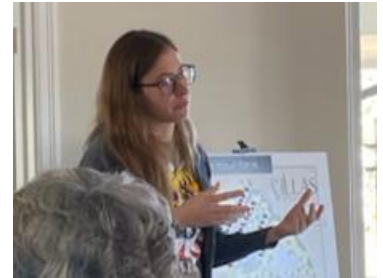
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Suburban Garden Club Report

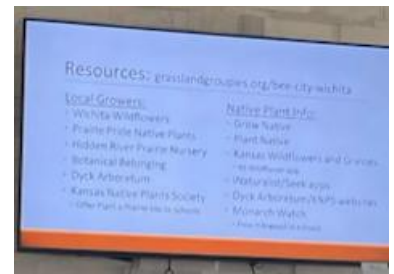
October was a surprisingly warm month and our scheduled program on succulents didn't work out. How lucky we were to be able to have Lauren and Kate, Botanica gardeners, to guide us out to the gardens. The very special highlight was the abundance of the migrating Monarch butterflies that were also enjoying the weather and the beautiful flowering plants. These gals struggled to get the group to move on. Cameras were clicking constantly. What a pleasing experience!



In November we learned from Nicole Brown of the Grassland Groupies about the Kansas native grasses and how important it is to grow natives. When we look at what is growing locally, we can see why these grasses adapted here. Considering the soil, temperature variances, rainfall and wind, we can see that these grasses really grow well here. This program was a great reminder of our responsibility for our environment.



December is our special social – just a relaxing lunch with our friends and members. We also continued with our greenery fundraiser. Throughout the year, members collected Christmas related mugs. Botanica trimmed greenery so that we could make arrangements in these mugs. We then set up a display to sell them during Illuminations. Our sales were down this year as we adjust for the new Botanica management.



We wish everyone a very Merry Christmas holiday season and prosperous Happy New Year.

Submitted by Floanna Crowley



THE HUMMINGBIRD

I thought he was silent
And never made a sound
But that strange little buzz
Let's me know when he's around
Sitting very quiet
I wait happily to see
That tiny little HUMMINGBIRD
Fly swiftly around me
So gracefully he moves
Up and down in and out
Back and forth
But I shan't dare shout
Oh he's here he's here
Such a magnificent sight
Watching him move
Is sweet pure delight
He has to eat fast
Before competition moves in
But I will be ready with camera
When he comes back again!

Anne Shiever 2025



Volunteers Needed!!



The following positions are also open and need volunteers:

- ***Vice President***
- Parliamentarian
- Protocol
- BeeGAP and Backyard Habitat
- Birds
- Butterflies
- Flower Show Awards
- Historian
- Judges Council
- Litter, Reclamation, & Recycling
- NGC President's Project
- Remembrance
- RMR Award of Excellence Project
- Trees and Shrubs

Please consider volunteering!

Do you have articles, information, or pictures for the Kansas Gardener? If so, you can drop them into this Google Drive and I'll work them into future editions.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1McgpSUqUtqaFak98ighlKWyzRzfRk4pZ?usp=sharing>



RELEASE FORM

The RMR release form must be filled out and sent in with any Award applications if the face of an individual is present in a photograph. This also includes any pictures sent in to the Rocky Mountain Rambler or in to the Kansas Gardener or any other publication.

See the last page of this edition. The form is also available on the website.

Rocky Mountain Region Garden Clubs, a member of National Garden Clubs, Inc.



Release for Publication

Before sharing a name, information and photograph in one of our digital, written publications or on our social media accounts, the above-listed organizations require a signed release form from all adults and from the parent or legal guardian of any youth under 18. Please include the release forms below with your Award Application.

ADULT:

I, _____ (print name),

being over 18 years of age, hereby grant the above-listed organization, the right to use the name, photograph, biography, city, state, country and article information, without compensation on their social media sites, digital, written publications and or written material. Please print below as you wish your name to appear.

DATE: _____

PRINT NAME: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Address and phone number:

Email optional: _____



Release for Publication

**MINOR YOUTH SECTION: YOUTH UNDER 18 YEARS OF AGE
PLEASE INITIAL BESIDE ANY INFORMATION TO BE USED BY THIS RELEASE**

_____ **my child's photograph**
_____ **my child's biography**
_____ **my child's work or contest entry submitted to the above organization(s)**
_____ **other:** _____
_____ **my child's city, state and country (specific addresses never used)**

I UNDERSTAND THAT THE ABOVE-LISTED ORGANIZATIONS WILL USE MY OR MY CHILD'S INFORMATION, MY OR MY CHILD'S SUBMITTED TEXT, AND MY OR MY CHILD'S LIKENESS ONLY FOR EDUCATIONAL, INFORMATIONAL AND/OR PROMOTIONAL PURPOSES. I HEREBY AGREE TO HOLD THE ABOVE LISTED ORGANIZATIONS, THEIR LICENSEES AND AFFILIATES HARMLESS FROM ANY LIABILITY RESULTING FROM MY OR MY CHILD'S STATEMENTS AND ACTION DEPICTED OR DESCRIBED IN THE INFORMATION, TEXT AND GRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS.

DATE: _____

Printed Name of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian: _____

Address and phone number:

Email optional:

Rocky Mountain Region Garden Clubs

Revised January 2022

KAGC Board of Directors

June 2025 to May 2027

Contact Information:

President: Penny Morgan, 1321 SW Pin Oak Pkwy, Topeka, KS 66615, pmorganks@aol.com, 785-250-8219

Past Co-Presidents: Sherryl Fitzpatrick, 2869 Tee Time Ct, Wichita, 67205, sfitpat3@att.net, 316-640-5331
Floanna Crowley, 1341 N Valley View St, Wichita, 67212, Floanna@cox.net, 316-722-8868

Vice-President: NEED!

Secretary: Carolyn Hartman, 1924 N 135 W Wichita Ks. 67235, coco_pup@sbcglobal.net, 316-259-5168

Treasurer: Margaret Endecott, 728 W Loula, Olathe, 66061, mendecott1@sbcglobal.net, 913-626-4104

Historian: NEED!

Parliamentarian: NEED!

Editor: Heather McCain, 11830 S Pine St., Olathe, KS 66061, HeatherMcC@aol.com, 913-302-9350

District Directors:

Sunflower District: **NEED!** Sherryl Fitzpatrick, 2869 TeeTime Ct, Wichita 67205, sfitzpat3@att.net, 316-640-5331

East Central: Roxann Kosmicki, 16459 Loring Rd., Linwood, KS 66052, sobelizard@rocketmail.com, 913-742-1787

Chairmen:

Awards: Cindy Booth, 9751 Montclair Dr., Lenexa, KS 66227, Cindyjfox@gmail.com, 913-706-8250

BeeGAP and Backyard Habitat: **NEED!**

Birds: **NEED!**

Blue Star: Kay Catlin, 5173 N. Jasmine St., Bel Aire, Kansas, 67226, kay62catlin@gmail.com, 316-613-1055

Butterflies **NEED!**

Environmental Poster: Elaine Childers, 510 N Taylor Ave, Garden City 67846, childerselaine22@gmail.com, 620-640-3570

Flower Show Awards: **NEED!**

Flower Show Schools: Floanna Crowley, 1341 N Valley View St, Wichita, 67212, Floanna@cox.net, 316-722-8868

Judges Council: **NEED!**

Life Members: Sherryl Fitzpatrick, 2869 Tee Time Ct, Wichita, 67205, sfitpat3@att.net, 316-640-5331

Membership: Sherryl Fitzpatrick, 2869 Tee Time Ct, Wichita, 67205, sfitpat3@att.net, 316-640-5331

Litter, Reclamation, & Recycling **NEED!**

National Garden Week: Jessi Gaven, 147 Hedge Rd., Wellsville, KS 66092 jessigraven1@gmail.com, 913-579-3723

NGC President's Project: **NEED!**

Protocol: **NEED!**

Remembrance.....**NEED!**

RMR Award of Excellence Project**NEED!**

Scholarship: Debra McDaniel, 7412 Nall, Prairie Village 66208, ask4debra@gmail.com, 913-207-4100

Social Media Chair: Roxann Kosmicki, 16459 Loring Rd., Linwood 66052, sobelizard@rocketmail.com, 913-742-1787

Sustainability CommitteeCindy Miller, 148 Courtleigh, Wichita 67218 cynthia.miller1@cox.net

Trees and Shrubs...**NEED!**

Webmaster: Roxann Kosmicki, 16459 Loring Rd., Linwood, KS 66052, sobelizard@rocketmail.com, 913-742-1787

Wildflowers: Jean Tinberg, 13830 Grove Ave., Bonner Springs 66012, jeananntinberg@gmail.com, 913-908-8815

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