

Lake Minnetonka Garden Club April 18, 2024, Meeting

The meeting was held at the Wayzata Community Room, Wayzata, Minnesota.

President Kate Bryant called the meeting to order at 1:04 PM.

Announcements from Kate:

Special welcome to Maryjo Garre, past president of GCA.

**May 23 is the new date of the regular member meeting for May in Wayzata Community Room.** See [this link](#) on the LMGC website for Maryjo Hoffman's May meeting presentation and to register for the June 5 workshop she is doing for LMGC.

June is coming, so watch your email for popup gardens coming this summer.

Changes for the 2024-25 yearbook are needed NOW, send address or name changes to Laura Inglis or Kate.

Congratulations to Ellen Phelps in obtaining Governor Waltz's proclamation for April as Native Plant Month.

Becky Rom was a super speaker at the GCA NAL meeting this spring, she was very impactful in bringing attention to her preservation work for the Boundary Waters.

June 13 is the Arboretum Gala, look for an email on a table being organized for the LMGC at the Gala.

Long Lake Waters is having a rain barrel sale. See handouts at the back of the meeting room.

Kate asked for introduction of several guests.

Heather Haeg also reminded us about the May meeting date changing to May 23.

Heather introduced today's program and speakers: *Celebrating the Seasonal Flower Movement and Cultivating Beauty Sustainably with Robin Ross Farm* with farmer florists, Meredith Ross Heithoff and Betsy Hawn (daughter of Chichi Steiner) who shared their passion for growing unique and unusual flowers.

Their farm started out of COVID lockdown with the dream of starting a cut flower farm. From pandemic passion to local cut flowers was their goal. They realized the need for local, more sustainable cut flowers. Grown (locally) not flown (from South America). They took a six-week flower training online with Erin Benzakein of [Floret Flowers](#), for farming less

than ½ an acre. They watched over a hundred videos with intense training. The first year they grew about 40 annuals (!! ) and anticipated not selling anything, just get equipment in place and experience. They learned what would grow well AND what they liked and could sell. By mid-July however, they did have a lot of flowers. Now they directed their work to combining flowers. What looked good together and had the same bloom time and availability..somewhat complex!!! They set up an 8-week (changed to 5-week later) subscription service. By the second year they could do subscriptions along with a few special event arrangements. Year 3 was rough (2023) the non-spring and difficult weather, so some subscriptions had to be cancelled. You cannot control weather and farming! Tulips were especially challenging, going from 300 to 3,000 was not a good idea!

For 2024 and beyond their goals are: growing specialty narcissus, a perennial early sign of spring, grow more perennials that can be used as focal flowers such as peonies. They invested in 500 peony roots and hope to offer 30 varieties for a long season with dry cold storage. They recommend wrapping cut peonies in newspaper with a paper towel and roll up the peony buds (marshmallow stage) and store in a flower cooler with no sources of ethylene. Ranunculus is also a focus, although it is not a perennial.

They use an electric fence to keep out deer. Weeding is their biggest time-consuming job, along with harvesting. Greenery they recommend: [Apple of Peru](#) is a great green and amaranth Autumn Touch. This summer they hope to do tours of the farm and will have a 5-week season. Sign-up for weekly updates on their website: [Robin Ross Farm](#).

The meeting adjourned at 2:05. Minutes submitted by Mary Meyer.