

Jean Dovenberg Scholarship Report May 2025

We are proud to announce that we have awarded three scholarships this year. Two undergraduate, \$2,000 and one graduate, \$3,000. Our candidates came from private and public institutions and all have done impressive research. Their areas of study include the rise of temperature and its relationship to the numbers and health of insects, the water quality of lake surface water, and techniques for reclaiming and use of downed wood.

Lukus Lock-Scamp has studied in both tropical Madagascar doing fire recovery research and in Northern Norway where he served on a National Science Foundation research team studying arctic plants. He has held a summer job working on the neighborhood impact of ash tree removal and the fate of new street tree saplings in St. Paul. He completed a semester-long internship with Dovetail, a Minneapolis based environmental think tank which again focused on the role of prescribed burns in forest management.

Jenna Duncan is a second year applicant and we are so pleased to offer her an award this year. Her honors thesis is on the application of different types of biochar on contaminated soils and specifically how it impacts copper uptake in plants. One component of her research is on commercial mushroom fungal biochar in soil amendments and plant growth.

She has studied shade gradients for lupine nutrition and the subsequent effect shade has on the rare Karmer Blue Butterfly. Carrying her insect study further she has looked into grassland succession age and insect diversity and abundance and how human disturbances affect the results. She has also studied urban environments in Germany.

Hazel Schrader, a specialist in native woody plants, is our graduate student winner. She received the Montine M. Freeman Scholarship last year from GCA. She is primarily working on propagation techniques for the prairie willow and is presently preparing a trade publication on the plant. The hope is this southwestern plant will be useful in midwestern yards as we become more susceptible to drought. She is working under the curator of Plant Collections at the Minnesota Arboretum on a curated willow field plot as well as being a research assistant, teaching assistant and the University of Minnesota Garden Manager. As a horticultural advisor she is supporting the Tree Campus Higher Education program. Hazel is also a respected presenter. She has spoken at the American Society of Horticultural Sciences as well as presented a number of academic posters.

Finding our Scholars

This is an abbreviated version of our scholarship process. We email a letter to professors, and college departments three times during the first semester. This announces and advertises our scholarships and allows us to update any information. For example, last year we added an extra local scholarship. These messages not only contain specifics on our local scholarships and the internet location

of our application but particulars on the National Garden Club of America scholarships. Professors do pass our messages on to students.

Calling professors is not out of line and this can be important at the four year colleges. Professors do move around so we attempt to keep an updated list for the schools. Sometimes zone 11 is helpful on this.

The University of Minnesota also has a publication called the Twig Bender. If you send a note to this publication they will print all necessary information on our local and national scholarships. We think it would be worth asking if other schools have such a publication.

Most schools have a scholarship posting board. It is worth getting our information up on the board. For posting scholarship opportunities at larger universities it is important to have the correct academic department, usually horticulture or environment.

In the last two years we have had three national winners from Minnesota. Some of these applicants have applied for both local and national. Since they are separate scholarships and from different garden club groups a student could conceivably win both a local and national in the same year. It hasn't happened yet. The only restriction is someone cannot win the same scholarship two years in a row.

We have asked the applicants to send their information to our local LMGC website. I have also included my personal email on the application as some students and professors have sent notes to me through email on a number of subjects.

Evaluations of the students are done by both members of the scholarship committee, our president and vice president. We include four or five finalists in our final evaluation with our president and vice chair. We do have a criteria set up for evaluating applications and it is very helpful.

Sometimes getting the scholarship money to the student or their school varies so it is important to work with the student on this process. Professors have been helpful. We also remind students that we would like them to present a short summary of their research at a LMGC meeting.

Undergraduate students have a more generic background in their field. Thus, they are at a disadvantage writing about specific research projects. When evaluating undergraduates we have looked for academic presentations, work projects, and involvement in honors research. I have also been informed that undergraduates have less opportunity for funding than graduates. This may change but something to consider when handing out scholarships.