

Garden Club of Mountain Lakes Flower Show

Fall is in the Air

Throughout this program year, members of the Flower Show committee have presented demonstrations and educational segments at our club meetings to introduce and familiarize members with flower show concepts, design types, and entry requirements. Our hope is that members have come away inspired and confident to enter our show, 'Fall is in the Air', planned for October 16-17, 2026, at Mountain Lakes Borough Hall. Staging a flower show is a major endeavor for any garden club, and its success depends on robust member participation. If most of our members enter two classes each, we will have a successful show. Browse through the classes in the schedule and see what piques your interest!

The schedule for our flower show was distributed at our club's annual meeting and luncheon in May and mailed or hand-delivered to members who were not present at the meeting. If you haven't received yours, please contact Flower Show Chair, Cindy Shaw.

Our show is *open for registration now for GCML members only through July 1*. After that, exhibitors from other clubs may be invited to enter. Members may register now for classes in Division I: Design, Division III: Botanical Arts, and Division IV: Invitational (if eligible). Entries in Division II: Horticulture do not require advance registration. To register, contact the chair of the division you wish to enter. Chairs' names and contact information appear in the General Rules on pp. 6-7 of the schedule. The chairs are a great source of information to help you plan, so don't hesitate to ask them any questions you may have.

Division I: Design

Four (4) entries will be accepted in each class. Members must register (before July 1, for exclusive access) to enter any of the three classes.

- Class 1: 'Falling in Line' is open only to those who have never won a blue ribbon in a Design category. Exhibits in this class are eligible for the **Helen Connell Award**, a club award recognizing work by a novice designer.
- Class 2: 'Leaf it to You' **Challenge Class**. No preplanning at all. All you need to do is register with Louise Davis, pick up the items to be used in the challenge and create your design from the materials provided.
- Class 3: 'Parallel to the 50 Yard Line' invites a **Creative Spatial Thrust** design.

Division II: Horticulture

Five (5) entries will be accepted in each class. Members do not need to register in advance. Any horticulture specimen(s) entered must have been in the exhibitor's possession for a minimum of 90 days before the show date. Our show is on October 16, 2026; the deadline for acquiring plant material to be entered is July 18, 2026.

Ideas for Horticulture entries:

- Look around your home and see if any of your current house plants could be entered.
- Plant some herbs that can become a cutting to enter in Section A.
- For Section B, select a fun Coleus at the nursery, put it in the correct sized container, and babysit it until the show.

Division III: Botanical Arts

There is no limit to the number of entries to be accepted in this division. Members must register in advance to enter in any class. Any horticulture specimen(s) entered must have been in the exhibitor's possession for a minimum of 180 days before the show date. Our show is on October 16, 2026; the deadline for acquiring new plant material to be entered has passed (April 19, 2026), but exhibitors may enter a specimen(s) from any established plant on your property.

Section A: Horticulture

Since this is a fall show we are looking at plant specimens as they fade in our gardens. Keep an eye out for that perfect hydrangea to cut once it reaches the ultimate fall color. Cut your alliums as they dry and store them in a cool place until the time of the show. Look around your yard for the ideal tree branch to enter in section A3 of this division. Oh, and don't forget those seed heads or Section A2.

Section B: Photography

Look through your photos, and see if any of them may fit into a class in this section? Only photos that have never won an NGC ribbon may be entered.

Show Rules

The ultimate authority of any National Garden Club flower show is the [Handbook for Flower Shows](#), which governs the conduct of the show. This along with the flower show schedule are the "law of the show." Exhibitors must follow all rules 'to the tee,' or risk their entry being disqualified for noncompliance. These rules include entry dimensions, permitted display elements, and plant labeling requirements. The current edition of the [Handbook \(July 2025\)](#)

is available online at [National Garden Clubs, Inc.](#) (login required) and also on our club website.

Entry Drop off

The show will be held October 16-17, 2026. Entries for Division II: Horticulture; Division III: Botanical Arts; Division IV: Youth; Division V: Education; and Division VI: Invitational are to be dropped off at Mountain Lakes Borough Hall, 400 Boulevard, ML, on **Thursday, October 15, 3-6pm**. Drop off for entries in Division I: Design is on **Friday, October 16, 9-10am**.