



Tempe Garden Club History at a Glance

The **Tempe Garden Club (TGC)** was founded in **1936** with **Helen Wexler** serving as its founding president. Since its beginning, the club has been dedicated to civic beautification, conservation, horticultural education, and community service throughout Tempe and Arizona. The club is affiliated with the **National Garden Clubs, Inc.**, established in **1929** and the **Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs** established in 1934.

1930s

- **1936:** Tempe Garden Club founded; Helen Wexler became the first president.
- **1936–1949:** The **Moeur Park Beautification Project**, introduced by Honor Anderson Moeur, transformed and enhanced Moeur Park over more than a decade.
- **1938:** The Town Flower Committee planted petunias along Mill Avenue and beautified Birchett Park with roses, Aleppo pines, and pyracantha.
- **1939:** Members promoted city beautification contests throughout the community.

1940s

- During World War II, members promoted **Victory Gardens** and rolled bandages during club meetings in support of the war effort.
- The club planted approximately **2,000 trees** and developed gardens around the hospital at **Williams Air Force Base**.
- **1947–1971:** Hosted the annual **Flower Fiesta** for 24 years.
- Conducted **Bird and Gardening Workshops** at the Guess Birchett "Bird House" for 21 years.
- Presented **Christmas Plants and Decorations** programs for 18 years.

1950s

- **1956–Present:** Began donating gardening books to the **Tempe Public Library**, a tradition that continues today.

1960s

- Refurbished the **Moeur Park** rest stop originally built during the Great Depression.
- Established and maintained the herb garden at the **Governor Benjamin B. Moeur Residence**.
- **1967–1968:** Hosted three flower design workshops.

1970s

- **1971–1974:** Continued the popular **Yard of the Month** program.
- **1972:** Planted citrus trees at **Boys Ranch** and **Tempe Getz School**.
- **1979:** Donated funds to install a sundial at the **Tempe Community Center** and contributed seeds and volunteer labor to the **Desert Botanical Garden**.

1980s

- **1980:** Moved club meetings from members' homes to the newly opened **Pyle Adult Center**.
- **1981:** Created Gardening Calendars as a fundraiser to promote education.
- Sponsored the "**You, Energy and the Environment**" Conference in partnership with **Salt River Project (SRP)**, **Arizona Public Service (APS)**, and **Arizona State University**, attended by more than 100 students and teachers.
- Created pinecone wreaths for **Tempe City Hall**.
- Crafted molded bread dough baskets and live ivy decorations for the **Arizona State Hospital**.
- **1982:** Conducted three flower arranging workshops at the Pyle Adult Center.

1990s

- **1992–1993:** Began a Garden Therapy project at **Westchester Care Center** and delivered plants through **Meals on Wheels**.
- **1993–1999:** Awarded civic and environmental grants supporting projects including wildlife habitat restoration and **Trees for Tempe** at **Rio Salado**, **Moeur Park**, and the **Desert Botanical Garden**.
- **1994:** Planted wildflower beds at **Tempe Women's Club Park**.
- **1995:** Established support for horticulture scholarships through the **Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs Scholarship Program**. Today this continues as the **Mary Leffler Cochran Scholarship** at **Mesa Community College**.
- **1997–2001:** Planted memorial trees in numerous Tempe parks and community locations, including Kiwanis, Harelson, Joyce, and Mitchell Parks, Grandpa Charlie's, Tempe Adult Day Care Center, the Niels Peterson House, and the Pyle Adult Center.
- **1998:** Expanded Garden Therapy at the **Tempe Center for the Handicapped** and landscaped the recreation area at the **Tempe Adult Day Care Center** with the assistance of an Eagle Scout troop.

2000s

- **2000:** Established a wildflower garden at **Mesa Community College** with a Brownie Girl Scout troop.
- **2001–Present:** Began participating in the **Penny Pines** program, collecting members' meeting change to purchase trees through the **USDA Forest Service**.
- **2003–2005:** Raised funds through numerous events to construct the **Tempe Garden Club Pavilion** at **Tempe Town Lake**.
- **2004:** Received a **National Garden Clubs** grant to restore and maintain the potted geraniums and Iris Garden at the **Petersen House**.

2010s

- **2010:** Hosted a Friendship Spring Tea at the Petersen House with approximately 80 participants and donated **\$1,000** to the **Tempe History Museum** toward renovations.
- **2011:** Planted **100 Desert Willow "Freedom Trees"** in memory of the September 11 attacks at **Tempe Town Lake**, along **Mill Avenue**, and at the **Arizona State Capitol**.
- **2013:** Installed the **Blue Star Memorial** designation at **Tempe Beach Park**.
- **2016:** Conducted a plant and yard sale to raise funds for educational programs.

- **2017:** Donated educational supplies to **Treasures4Teachers**.
- **2019:** Launched the "**Go Green: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**" educational initiative.

2020s

- **2020:** Monthly member meetings continued during the CoVid Pandemic using internet digital gatherings with Zoom.
- **2021:** Participated in the **Tempe 150 Celebration** and volunteered at **Double Butte Cemetery**.
- **2023:** Continued the club's **Seed Library** for members and participated in community seed swap events. The club also maintained a community garden plot at **Friendship Evergreen Garden in Friendship Village, Tempe**.
- **2025-26:** In celebration of the Tempe Garden Clubs 90 Anniversary the club has designed, constructed and planted a **Sensory Garden** within the Clark Park Community Garden. Volunteers included club members, Tempe Parks Staff and ASU horticulture students. Participated in **Tempe Blooms** event.
- **2026:** Resumed care of the **Rose Garden at Birchett Park**.
- **2027:** Continuing nine decades of community beautification, conservation, education, and service while supporting scholarships, environmental stewardship, and gardening programs throughout the Tempe community.