

History of WGCF Districts

Compiled by Judy Newman, 2021

The Wisconsin Garden Club Federation was organized in 1928. News of the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation was included in the Wisconsin Horticulture magazine until WGCF split from the Horticultural Society

Clubs represented at the October meeting in 1928 in Lake Geneva included the Beloit, Delevan, Elkhorn, Hawthorne of Hales Corners, Kenosha, Madison, Milwaukee Horticultural Society, Sun-Mer-Del, Waukesha and West Allis.

At the end of the first year there were fourteen clubs; Jefferson, Racine, Pierce County, Kenosha, Hawthorne, Milwaukee County Horticultural Society, Waukesha, West Allis, Elkhorn, Superior, Hilcrest, Oshkosh and Madison. In a National newsletter clipping dated 1929 with Mrs. R. H. Malish noted` there are 22 Clubs in the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation.

The Districts are first listed in the 1932-1934 Term of Office Report; Madison, Milwaukee, Southern (Elkhorn) and Fox River (Oshkosh).

In 1934-1935, there were 62 Garden Clubs with a total membership of 1734. Clubs having the largest memberships included; Superior 168; Racine 93; Oshkosh Horticultural Society 90; Art Institute 66; Lake Geneva Town & Country Garden Club 54.

The Summary of 1939 Term indicated there were 32 clubs with a membership of 2334. Thirteen new clubs joined; Namakagon, Germantown, Kaukauna, North Shore, Winneconne, Tess Corners, Scandi naira, New Richmond, Oconto Falls, Home and Garden of Milwaukee, Ravenswoods, De Forest, and Manitowoc.

A clipping dated 1940 lists the Districts as Fox Valley, Madison, Milwaukee, Sheboygan and South Central.

In the End of Term Summary by Mrs. Roy H, Smith in 1944, the membership had increased to 2026, 82 clubs with 6 new clubs,

In 1947, Ruth West noted "in spite the raise in due this year which was feared would result in a loss of membership, our list showed an increase of 8 clubs, total 102, and 245 members (Total membership WGCF of 2114).

First Issue of Wisconsin Gardens Summer 1949; before that WGCF Articles were included in the *Wisconsin Horticulture Magazine*.

Northwest District was organized in June 1949 with seven clubs; La Crosse, Eau Claire, Homemakers of Prentice, Namekagon of Hayward, Piney Ramblers of Wentworth, Superior and West Salem. The Federation had 106 clubs, 3,347 members. Six new clubs; Westfield, Poynette, Thiensville Rural, Mendota Gardeners, Blueskies of Colby, and Lake Shore of Sheboygan. Manitowoc Garden Club closed its membership of twenty.

Fox River, Madison, Milwaukee, Northwest, Sheboygan and South Central were the districts in 1949-1951. The 1954 Directory issue of Wisconsin Gardens listed the following: Fox River Valley, Madison, Milwaukee, Indianhead, Sheboygan, South Central and Coulee.

A list of "proposed changes and permanent boundaries went into effect with the beginning of the new administration; September 1967. These boundaries were mainly along highways. I have a copy of the list of the boundaries for each district.

Then in 1968, there was another name change the became Wisconsin Valley formerly Fox River Valley II. In 1975, the St. Croix District was formed from counties in the Coulee District.

Regrettably the South Central District left the Federation in 1999. At that time District boundaries were by county lines.

In 2012, the counties within the **Wisconsin Valley District** were divided into the following Districts; Counties added to the **Fox Valley District** included Lincoln, Marathon, Wood, Portage and Oneida. Counties added to the **Indianhead District** included Iron, Price and Vilas. Taylor and Clark Counties was added to the **St. Croix District**.

Therefore since 2014, the Districts in the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation have the following Counties:

Coulee included, Adams, Buffalo, Crawford, Jackson, Juneau, La Crosse, Monroe, Richland, Sauk, Trempealeau and Vernon

Fox River Valley included Brown, Florence, Fond du Lac, Forest, Green Lake, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Marinette, Marquette, Menomonie, Oconto, Oneida, Outagamie, Portage, Shawano, Waupaca, Waushara and Winnebago and Wood

Indianhead included Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Vilas and Washburn

Madison included Columbia, Dane, Grant, Green, Iowa, Lafayette and Rock

Milwaukee included Dodge, Jefferson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha

St. Croix included Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pepin, Pierce, Polk, St. Croix; and Taylor

Sheboygan included Calumet, Door, Kewaunee, Manitowoc and Sheboygan;

It is sad to note that as of June 2021, there is only one federated garden clubs in the Indianhead District.

There is so much more interesting information in the Directory issues of the Wisconsin Garden Magazine. For instance, membership numbers and when clubs joined and left the Federation. The listings of Clubs, District and State Officers and so much more. If you are interested in finding out about when your club joined WGCF please let me know. I welcome anyone interested in assisting in creating the 100 Year History of WGCF.

Judy Newman

WGCF Historian



WGCF Districts in 1951



WGCF Districts in 1971



Boundaries in 1991

, * was site of the 1991 Convention



Boundaries according to Counties in 1999