

# *Impact*

STATEWIDE TRADITION HELPS VIRGINIA THRIVE



GARDEN CLUB  
OF VIRGINIA

*Historic  
Garden Week*



As the country's only statewide house and garden tour, the Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week (HGW) draws **over 24,000 visitors** to **29 Virginia communities** each spring and contributes significantly to the state and regional economies.

The Garden Club of Virginia (GCV), an active association of 48 garden clubs with over 3,400 members, dedicates the net proceeds from HGW to the restoration of public historic gardens and landscapes, and also to historic landscape research fellowships, enhancing Virginia's appeal for tourism.

In partnership with Virginia Tourism Corporation and through a generous sponsorship from Bartlett Tree Experts, consulting firm Chmura Economics & Analytics conducted our first survey in 2014 to determine HGW's economic impact. Among the methods of data-gathering were statewide intercept surveys, in-person interviews with 540 tour attendees, surveys of ticket purchasers, homeowners and executive directors of GCV's restoration properties.

In 2019, as we approached GCV's Centennial, Bartlett Tree Experts sponsored an update of Chmura's original economic impact study. In May 2021, Virginia Tourism Corporation conducted a post-HGW survey of ticket purchasers, yielding 1,576 responses.

In 2024, after having had to cancel HGW in 2020 for only the second time since WWII due to Covid, the GCV hired Chmura again to update its report, adding 2020-2024 data.

Additionally, the GCV has conducted its own post-event survey of HGW visitors every year since Virginia Tourism's initial survey in 2013. Combined, these provide important data and insights on the GCV's signature event.



## VISITOR SPENDING ON TOURS AND IN COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT VIRGINIA

**ECONOMIC IMPACT** **AN ESTIMATED 24,164 VISITORS ATTENDED HGW IN 2024.**

Total visitor spending includes ticket sales, shopping, transportation, recreation, and more. The total economic impact (direct, indirect, and induced) of spending was estimated at \$4.5 million.



### SNAPSHOT: THE AVERAGE HGW VISITOR

- Female, Virginian, age 55-74
- 93% are empty nesters
- Estimated annual household income exceeds \$120,000
- HGW is the primary motivation for the trip
- Planned their trip using the HGW website and Guidebook
- 33% of visitors attend their local tours in addition to tours outside of their community
- 25% of visitors stay overnight and spend an average of \$1,209 on their HGW trip
- Visitors from 43 states and 16 countries attended Historic Garden Week in 2024

**2013**  
Our first survey of visitors to HGW by Virginia Tourism Corporation

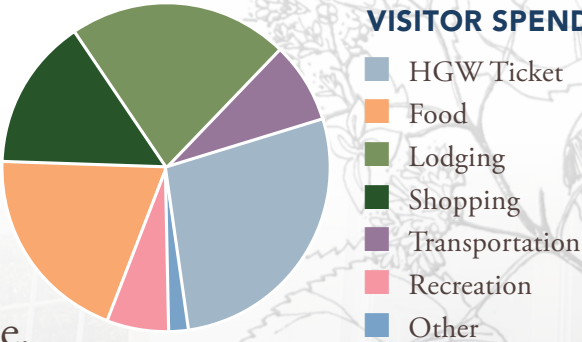
**2014**  
Our first economic impact study of HGW funded by Bartlett Tree Experts and conducted by Chmura

**2019**  
Updated economic impact study by Chmura

**2021**  
Visitor survey by Virginia Tourism Corporation

**2024**  
Updated economic impact study by Chmura

Historic Garden Week visitors spent **\$2.5 million** in Virginia, generating a total of **\$4.5 million** in economic impact in 2024 alone. Visitors dine, shop and stay overnight, generating significant economic impact throughout the state.



*“For the garden lover this event is an unparalleled feast. For the state's heritage, it is a lifeline.”* — Tom Christopher, author of *The Artful Garden*

*“Thank you for the truly memorable trip to Virginia. Amazingly beautiful properties and friendly and knowledgeable volunteers.”* — Betsy







The annual economic impact of Historic Garden Week in Virginia is estimated to be **\$13.3 million**. The cumulative economic impact over the last 55 years is an impressive **\$679 million**.

*Based on data collected from surveys by Chmura in 2014, 2019 and 2024*



## RESTORATION AND VOLUNTEER IMPACT OF HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK

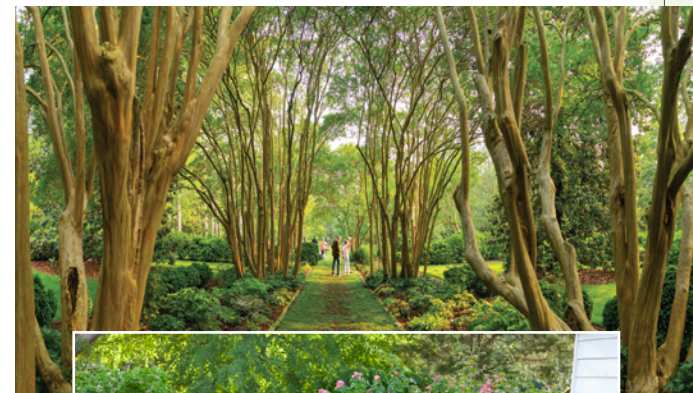


### RESORATION IMPACT

#### VIRGINIA IS GRACED WITH IMPORTANT HISTORIC PROPERTIES.

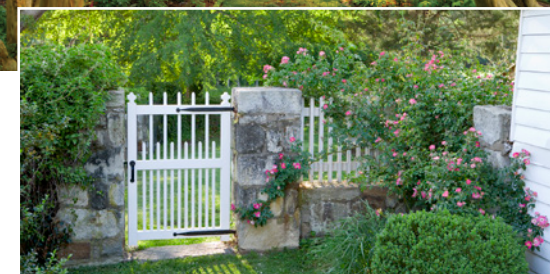
#### PRESERVATION OF THESE PUBLIC LANDSCAPES AND GARDENS BECAME A FOCUS FOR THE GCV IN THE LATE 1920s.

Beginning with Kenmore, George Washington's sister's property in Fredericksburg, our work has expanded to more than 50 historic properties throughout the commonwealth. The GCV maintains a relationship and offers ongoing support to each of these restorations. Recent major projects include collaborations with the Reveley Garden at William & Mary, Maymont's elm allée, and the University Chapel at Washington & Lee, as well as new landscape plans for the Kent-Valentine House, GCV's headquarters. In addition, HGW proceeds fund research fellowships to graduate students in historical landscape architecture. Established more than 30 years ago, this program's important documentation of historic public and private sites throughout the commonwealth has received both national and international recognition.



#### RESTORATION PROPERTY OWNERS SURVEY

Leaders from properties restored by GCV said that funded projects were crucial to their budgets, gardens or landscapes and they would not be able to do or complete projects without help from the GCV. They also stressed the importance of their relationship with the GCV as valuable to their organizations. Exposure in the HGW *Guidebook* and website was valuable to them as well.



### VOLUNTEER IMPACT

#### THE POWER OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteerism contributes to the economy, builds safer and stronger communities, and promotes civic engagement. As the oldest ongoing volunteer effort in the state that supports tourism, Historic Garden Week requires many individuals to organize it and provide hospitality for "America's Largest Open House."

*Volunteer hours add up to years!*

**3,207** days or **8.8** years  
valued at **\$2,577,792\***

The GCV estimates that **3,075 volunteers** are involved in the planning and production of HGW in communities across the state each spring. These members and friends volunteer an estimated **76,972 hours.\***

*"I love being part of HGW and all that the GCV is able to do because of the time and hard work that goes into it. HGW is one of my favorite weeks of the year, even if it is also one of the busiest!"* — Mary, HGW volunteer

\*An hour of volunteer time is valued at \$33.49 according to Independent Sector in partnership with the University of Maryland.



# MEASURING THE IMPACT

Local residents recognize the benefits of tourism to our communities but consistently underestimate its size and value. Tourism injects more than \$33 billion into Virginia communities every year, with Historic Garden Week estimated to contribute a total economic impact annually of \$13.3 million. This includes event preparation, visitor spending, and gift expenditure, and the impact of money spent on Garden Club of Virginia restoration projects made possible through Historic Garden Week.

In 2014, Chmura reported that the cumulative impact of HGW on Virginia from our earliest verifiable data dating back to 1969 was \$425 million. Translated to current dollars and adding in the years from 2015 to 2019 added \$63 million more, which includes the GCV's Centennial gift to Virginia's State Parks as well as significant restoration projects that took place during that time frame.

With the update completed in 2024, which includes 2020 through 2024 data, we are proud to share that the current cumulative economic impact of HGW is \$679 million.

**CONSERVATION & RESTORATION** Over the years, the GCV has provided professional landscape architectural services and project funding to historical sites throughout Virginia for restoration of their public gardens and landscapes. Local businesses and contractors often collaborate with the GCV on these projects.

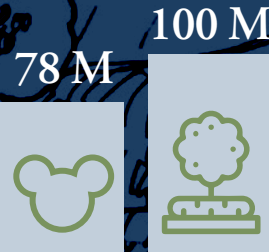
**STATE PARKS** The GCV was instrumental in establishing the Virginia State Parks in 1929. To celebrate its 2020 Centennial, the GCV awarded \$500,000 in grants for 54 projects in several state parks to create or enhance conservation stewardship and educational programs.

**VISITOR SPENDING** HGW attracts 20,000 to 30,000 visitors annually who spend a significant amount of money in Virginia. Visitors travel from all across the country, Canada and Europe.

**TOUR EXPENSES** It is the combined efforts of over 120 private homeowners and hundreds of GCV members that make HGW possible. Economists trace the course of spending in technical terms. Together, the direct, indirect, and induced impact was \$4.5 million in 2024. Most of this spending benefits local businesses since 87% is spent within the county or city where the tours take place each spring.

*Americans Tour Gardens More than Disney!*

Given that more tourists visit gardens than attend Disneyland and Walt Disney World combined (78 million annually), it's no surprise that the GCV's HGW creates a significant beneficial impact on Virginia's economy.



*"Gardening is the #1 outdoor activity in the U.S., and garden-oriented tourism generates the highest revenue of any tourism activity."*

According to garden tourism expert and author Dr. Richard Benfield



## CONSERVATION, RESTORATION & PRESERVATION FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS

### CONSERVATION

#### VIRGINIA'S FIRST ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION

Each year GCV sponsors workshops and a Conservation Forum to explore environmental issues within the commonwealth. These efforts go hand in hand with educating members and the public about relevant topics such as clean air and water, and planting and protecting native plants.



### HORTICULTURE & ARTISTIC DESIGN

#### INSPIRING THE COMMUNITY

Our horticultural programming and annual flower shows inspire one of HGW's greatest attractions, the world-class floral arrangements created by club members. The coordinated efforts of these talented volunteers, along with the generosity of homeowners, make HGW possible.



### RESTORATION & FELLOWSHIPS

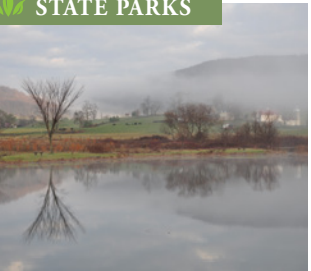
#### FUNDING THE RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION OF VIRGINIA'S HISTORIC PUBLIC GARDENS, AND A HISTORIC RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

From recreating an 18th-century garden at Stratford Hall, to restoring a walk and putto statuary at Belmont, the home and studio of Impressionist painter Gari Melchers, proceeds from HGW have funded various ongoing projects across Virginia since 1929. Whether researching, documenting, interpreting, or restoring important landscapes across our Commonwealth, the work of the GCV impacts communities both large and small.

To celebrate our Centennial in 2020, we looked to the past to build for the future and committed to supporting Virginia's State Parks. Wildflower walks, children's natural play areas, and pollinator habitats are just a few of the 54 projects that were funded by proceeds from HGW.



### STATE PARKS



#### VIRGINIA'S EARLIEST ADVOCATE FOR ESTABLISHING STATE PARKS

For nearly a century the GCV has been committed to preserving the beauty of Virginia for all to enjoy. GCV members were early leaders in conservation and environmental concerns and even advocated in the 1920s for the establishment of Virginia State Parks.

The below map shows GCV Restoration Projects and Research Fellowships throughout Virginia.

*"Historic Garden Week is an extraordinary example of what is possible when like-minded people come together to further a worthwhile cause."*

— Kathy Spangler, Director of Serve Virginia, part of the Virginia Department of Social Services that tracks volunteerism



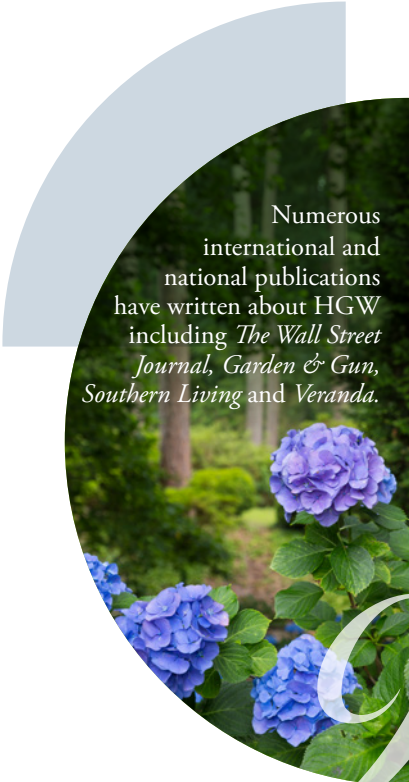


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## Historic Garden Week is a beloved springtime tradition for people who come from all over the world to attend tours. HGW promotes tourism while showcasing communities across Virginia.

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For more than a century, the Garden Club of Virginia has been an advocate for our Commonwealth. GCV has held fast to its core values: to educate, beautify, share a love of horticulture, increase awareness of important environmental and conservation issues, and to preserve historic public landscapes. As we look toward the future, we will continue to build upon these tenets.



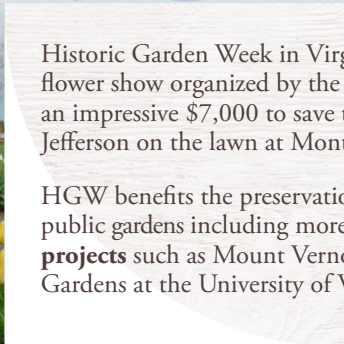
Numerous international and national publications have written about HGW including *The Wall Street Journal*, *Garden & Gun*, *Southern Living* and *Veranda*.




The statewide economic impact of historic garden week over the past 55 years is estimated to be over \$679 million dollars.




Historic Garden Week in Virginia got its inspiration when a flower show organized by the Garden Club of Virginia raised an impressive \$7,000 to save trees planted by Thomas Jefferson on the lawn at Monticello.




HGW benefits the preservation of Virginia's public gardens including more than **50 restoration projects** such as Mount Vernon, and the Pavilion Gardens at the University of Virginia.




91% of tour guests said they were very likely to attend Historic Garden Week in the future.



3,400 volunteers will spend more than 365 days planning and preparing.



Historic Garden Week has been recognized by Virginia's governors, the American Bus Association, and the Virginia Tourism Corporation as an important source of tourism to the state.



Over 120 private homes and properties featured on 29 statewide tours over 8 consecutive days in April.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE GARDEN CLUB OF VIRGINIA • [GCVIRGINIA.ORG](http://GCVIRGINIA.ORG) or 804-643-4137  
HISTORIC GARDEN WEEK • [VAGardenWeek.org](http://VAGardenWeek.org) or 804-644-7776

Cover photo is of the Poe Museum in Richmond, a GCV restoration project made possible by funds from Historic Garden Week. Photo by Mathew Oswald.