

The House and Garden Club of Frostburg Helps to Keep the Town Beautiful Year-round

Written by: **Rob Rephan**

The House and Garden Club of Frostburg, Maryland, had its beginning in the 1950s with a group of women who came together and called themselves “Recent Graduates of University Women.” At that time, they were also members of the AAUW (American Association of University Women). These women shared a common interest in gardening, community service and especially flower arrangements.

As time went on, the “Recent Graduates” were no longer quite so recent and their membership included women who were not specifically university graduates. As a result, they withdrew from the AAUW in 1964 to involve others who were not university graduates but who were interested in participating in the club’s activities. The name of the organization was changed to The House and Garden Club of Frostburg.

The club includes both men and women with the purpose of encouraging interest in all phases of home gardening and home beautification, better horticulture practices, civic beautification and conservation of natural resources.

Meetings are scheduled at 6 p.m. on the first Monday of the month (weather permitting) from October through June and are held in the Frostburg Community Center located on Water Street, unless otherwise announced. Each meeting opens with a guest speaker followed by refreshment. Speakers and programs will be updated on the club’s web site calendar.



The major project began in 1996, when the club purchased 16 metal hayrack baskets from a company in England to brighten up Main Street lampposts. In recent years, a local metal worker, Keith Skidmore, has been building replacement basket for the club. Members, merchants and other interested volunteers, now plant and maintain more than 60 lamppost flower baskets on Main, Center and Broadway Streets in Frostburg, plus six baskets at the WMSR Depot and eight planters at the GAP trailhead below the depot. Volunteers plant a basket or baskets, replace and fertilize the soil, weed and deadhead flowers and water them daily from May through the summer and into the fall. The club provides basket volunteers with \$40.00 per basket to purchase plants, soil and fertilizer. In the fall, baskets are emptied and refilled with pine and decorated with lights for the holiday season by the same volunteers.

The club is also active during the “Beautify the Burg” spring cleanup, by planting and cleaning a number of locations throughout Frostburg. They include the Post Office gardens, the parking lot on Broadway, the Veterans Memorial Garden in front of Mountain Ridge High School, a bed at the intersection of Braddock Road and Center Street and the Bingman garden at City Place. The club recently funded the replanting of the bed surrounding the parking lot on Broadway below City Place.

It takes the efforts of a majority of the members of the House and Garden Club of Frostburg, several merchants and dedicated friends of the garden club to keep the baskets looking beautiful for most of the year. They are rarely empty.

By the weekend before Thanksgiving, volunteers will fill them with pine and lights. Team leaders add bows when the baskets are completed. The majority of the baskets are maintained by members of the club but interested members of the community also take on the responsibility.

Truckloads of pine are donated by several local companies including Wayne and Gwen Blocker at Earth and Tree, JP Andrick at Andrick Tree Farm and Ed Geis of Bittersweet Acres on Long Stretch. The club purchases 2 boxes of lights and 2 bows for each basket.



Top: Garden club members and volunteers plant and maintain the Veterans Memorial Garden in front of Mountain Ridge High School.

The club is also active during “Beautify the Burg” with spring clean up and planting at the Post Office gardens (above) as well as several other locations. PHOTOS BY ROB REPHAN

The House and Garden Club of Frostburg always looks for new “Basketeers” to continue the tradition of planting and maintaining lamppost flower baskets on Main Street. Several baskets have “retiring” keepers, creating an opportunity for new volunteers to contribute a little time and energy to keeping historic downtown Frostburg colorful and full of flowers in the summer, and filled with pine and trimmed with lights for the winter holidays.

If you or your organization is interested in volunteering, contact **frostburggardenclub@gmail.com** or call Team Leader, Rob Rephan at 240-362-8492

Funding for the lamppost basket program comes from a portion of the Frostburg hotel/motel tax revenue, club fundraising projects and individual donations through Foundation for Frostburg. To support the project, donations can be made through the Foundation for Frostburg at P.O. Box 765, Frostburg, MD 21532. Download a form at <http://foundationforfrostburg.org/give.html> and indicate House and Garden Club of Frostburg.

The Holiday Lamppost Christmas wreath project has a separate committee. Contributions to that project can be made on the same Foundation for Frostburg form.



Top: Wreaths by the Holiday Lamppost Christmas wreath project and pine baskets keep everything looking beautiful nearly year-round.

Above: One of the beautiful lamppost baskets along Main Street.

PHOTOS BY ROB REPHAN



Left to right: Peggy Snyder planting one of the baskets at the Western Maryland Scenic Railroad Depot; basket at the corner of Main and Water Streets; and basket across from the Palace Theatre. PHOTOS BY ROB REPHAN