



## Congratulations to Our Winners!

ST. LOUIS (May 22, 2017)—National Garden Clubs Inc., one of the nation’s most-recognized nonprofits and largest volunteer gardening organization in the world, announces the 2017 winners of its highest honor, the Award of Excellence. The winners, who were recognized at NGC’s 88th annual convention in Richmond, Va., include Alan Steinman, Ph.D., the Allen I. and Helen J. Hunting director of the Robert B. Annis Water Resources Institute at Grand Valley State University in Muskegon, Mich., Pearl Fryar, creator of the inspiring Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden in Bishopville, S.C. and the Heirloom Seed Project at Medomak Valley High School in Waldoboro, Maine.

““Each year, NGC’s Award of Excellence recognizes exceptional individuals, organizations or institutions that have made significant contributions to their communities in such areas as environmental and civic responsibility, conservation or community beautification through gardening projects,” said Nancy Hargroves, president, National Garden Clubs Inc. “The Award of Excellence is our organization’s highest honor for non-members and by recognizing these deserving recipients from different parts of the nation, NGC hopes to educate and inspire others in communities coast-to-coast.”

## Pearl Fryar



Nominated by The Garden Club of South Carolina Inc., Fryar began his journey as a self-taught topiary artist and horticulturist in the early 1980s. By collecting discarded plants from compost piles at local nurseries and using sustainable planting techniques, he transformed the plantings into feats of artistry and horticulture on three acres at his home. Visitors from around the globe travel to Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden [www.pearlfryar.com](http://www.pearlfryar.com) in Bishopville, S.C., to marvel at the remarkable abstract shapes that Fryar formed from over 300 individual plants. He also has created topiary works on civic projects, at public garden sculpture exhibitions and received a commission for a topiary exhibit at the South Carolina State Museum in Columbia.

Fryar is the subject of a 2006 award-winning documentary, “A Man Named Pearl,” which introduced him, and his unique garden, to a national audience. He has been featured on National Geographic News.com, in garden industry publications and local and statewide magazines. His story and garden also were a focus on The Martha Stewart Show and he appeared in a TV commercial for John Deere. In addition, Fryar fosters education and dedicates his efforts to local youth, working with students of all ages through arts councils and colleges to demonstrate topiary techniques and illustrate elements of art in garden sculptures.

The Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden has awarded a total of 13 scholarships of \$1,500 each to local high school students to further their education at two-year colleges in Lee County. Fryar is a recipient of the Winthrop University Medal of Honor for significant contribution to the arts. He also is a popular speaker on the lecture circuit across the United States and teaches topiary classes at Moore Farms Botanical Garden in Lake City, S.C. In 2006, the Garden Conservancy, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving exceptional gardens and landscapes, formed a partnership with Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden.