



## The Beginning of Beautification

Much of the credit for the original beautification of Glynn County's public spaces should be given to the area's many productive garden clubs. Members have been working for over 90 years to enhance the natural charm of our coastal landscape.

Glynn County's first garden club, Cassina Garden Club, was organized at the St. Simons Island home of Mrs. William Shadman on January 28, 1928, with encouragement from the county home demonstration agent, Madge Merritt, to establish an alternative to farm clubs. The club was named for a native evergreen shrub, the cassina berry (yaupon holly), known for its durability, adaptability, and year-round appeal.

In addition to the study of gardening, the club organized beautification and community improvement projects. Their first endeavor was a clean-up program, which provided trash receptacles both on the island and at county roadside parks. The members "recycled" and painted 100-pound ice molds, donated by Glynn Ice Company, to be distributed as trash containers. Early projects included beautifying the grounds of Christ Church Frederica with azaleas, planting oleanders on Ocean Boulevard, and landscaping Neptune Park.

By 1936, the county had six garden clubs, later increasing to fifteen, which formed

the Associate Garden Club of Glynn County and organized flower shows and community projects. Norwich Street became the focus of a major beautification program. The garden clubs distributed grass seed, dogwoods, azaleas, and redbuds to property owners willing to enhance their landscaping. This project received the McHatton Trophy, the most prestigious award of the Garden Club of Georgia.

In 2009, Cassina Garden Club donated its historical records to the Coastal Georgia Historical Society for safekeeping, including the c. 1932 photograph of early members shown here. A copy that includes known names can be found at [coastalgeorgiahistory.org](http://coastalgeorgiahistory.org).