

Thelma Jensen Club Member for 40 years

At 96 years old, Thelma Jensen has been in Chesapeake Bay Garden Club longer than any of the club's 70+ members. She joined the club 40 years ago, in 1977. Back then, Thelma lived in Alexandria and they had a cottage in Reedville where she came with her husband and children to relax and enjoy the river and the community. Like many other members, she first



went when a neighbor invited her; she tried it, enjoyed the ladies and the interesting speakers, and just kept coming.

Thelma always enjoyed gardening. As a child she would follow her dad around the farm, poking in the dirt and picking flowers to give to her mom. Her family used to tease her that she could

put a chopstick in the ground and it would grow into bamboo. She would transplant things from the woods into her yard—dogwoods, redbuds, Jack-in-the pulpits, ferns—people would tell her they wouldn't grow, but in Thelma's yard they did grow. Wherever she lived she turned her yard into a garden of flowers and herbs. Her daughter, Joy, remembers a willow tree Thelma ordered from a catalog; expecting a small tree, she was surprised that it was just a small stick with a tiny root ball, no branches or leaves. She planted it, and 9 years later it had grown to a towering height.

When Thelma first joined Chesapeake Bay Garden club they met at the home of Addie Roberts. Mrs. Roberts lived in what is known as the 'Gables in Reedville', and is credited with starting the garden club in 1953. The club later moved their meetings to Bethany Methodist and then to Festival Halle, where the club currently has its monthly meetings.

Thelma says she went on a lot of field trips sponsored by the garden club. She remembers going to Buffalo Springs Herb Farm, Williamsburg and other places. They often visited club members' gardens, enjoying learning from each other. She enjoyed the 'plant swaps' when they shared plants with each other.

For years, Thelma and her friend, CJ Bonds, were on the 'Telephone Committee'. They would call members and pass on information about upcoming meetings or events. She liked being a part of the committee because it gave her opportunities to keep in touch with her garden club friends.

Although Thelma's health does not allow her to attend the monthly meetings of the Garden Club, she remains a member and still has friends from the club. And she has many fond memories of the days when she was more actively involved.