

**“Membership Offers Opportunities For Everyone”
Let’s Multiply Our Membership**

DEEP SOUTH REGION

NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

2011-2013

Sara Lanier, Regional Director
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Theme: “Membership Offers Opportunities for Everyone”

Deep South Unified Regional Project
“Building Membership”

MEMBER STATE GARDEN CLUBS
The Garden Club of Alabama, Inc.
Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.
The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
Louisiana Garden Club Federation, Inc.
The Garden Clubs of Mississippi, Inc.
Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

“A civilization flourishes when people plant trees under which they will never sit.”
Greek Proverb

The Growing Season has arrived!

The future is not tomorrow or next week, or next year. It is today. We must continue to encourage growth in our local clubs. In fact, membership is the “lifeline” of our organization; therefore we should make it a priority in our agenda for this term. We must set goals so that progress really happens. The baby boomers have arrived at retirement age and we want them. Never before have seniors been so active. It is the season for growing. Is your garden club growing as well? If each member will bring a new member, membership would soar. We all know someone that does not belong to a garden club and we all know someone that should belong to a garden club. Remind those interested in gardening how we volunteers are able to make a difference in our communities. Start an evening club, start a junior club, start a couples club, start an after 6 club and start a club in a local retirement community. If your club has a set number and full membership, then it is a wasted opportunity if that club does not sponsor a new club. Encourage members to bring a potential member or two to a stimulating program; publicize meetings with simple posters or an announcement in your local newspaper; have membership information at flower shows, plant sales, libraries, and garden centers. Let’s think “Membership” when we think Garden Club.

Yes, the growing season has arrived! Garden clubs provide education, resources, and national networking opportunities for their members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, and civic and environmental responsibilities. The four major schools - Flower Show School, Environmental Studies School, Gardening Study School, Landscape Design School - offer a perfect opportunity for a personal invitation to a friend and this is more likely to bring in students than a brochure by itself. Membership is not only the “lifeline” of our organization, but members are the heart and soul of this organization.

40 IDEAS TO INCREASE MEMBERSHIP

*“I will not follow where the path may lead,
but I will go where there is no path, and lead a trail.”*

1. Have a booth at a Home Show.
2. Host a “Paint Party” with local artists – invite public, have refreshments, have art judged. Artists supply all their own materials. Members act as host and hostess with Garden Club handouts and invitations to next regular meeting.
3. Hold a gardening program at the Library - either one club or with neighboring clubs. Three or more members can each take a topic to discuss – bugs, perennials, or favorite shrub, etc.

4. Choose a "Yard of the Month" – give them publicity or leave a flyer on the door telling them that they won and invite homeowner to a meeting. Consider giving a Certificate and give them a one-year membership to the club.
5. Send letters to new residents in neighborhood of each club member.
6. Have a beautification program in town.
7. Include meeting time and place with invitation to attend in your church bulletin.
8. Have a club competition – challenge members to bring in new members. Give a traveling trophy to the member who brings in a new member.
9. Notice gardens and gardeners in your area and send a complimentary letter inviting them to a meeting.
10. Have a Plant Party – invite the public. Maybe on a town square. Involve local nurseries. Hand out invitations to next meeting.
11. Have a "Mad Hatter Tea Party" – members and guests must wear hats – perhaps decorated for gardening. Everyone gets a prize. Invite guests. Have an interesting program to attract the public (example, "How to attract hummingbirds to your garden").
12. Have a garden tour – Invite the public. Good money maker too.
13. Have a "Special Night" party and give pansies to guests and the members who invited them. Purchase plants by the flat and package in Zip Locks and paper lunch bags.
14. If there is a parade in your town – Have a garden club float.
15. Distribute flyers to Realtors to give to new residents.
16. Distribute posters in town and at garden centers and libraries inviting public to an event or special program.
17. Sponsor a "Poppy Seed" Auction and Luncheon or Fashion Show Luncheon open to the public. Members sell tickets or purchase an extra one to bring a friend. A money maker as well.
18. Christmas house lighting or front door decoration contest – with prizes and invitation to join club.
19. "Spring Fling" garden luncheon and demo of floral design for the home.
20. Potluck Supper – invite a friend and member brings dish.
21. Plant flower beds at a flagpole, nursing home, library, or Fire Station with signage "Planted and maintained by The Daisy Garden Club".
22. Get bright tee shirts with club name and logo on front. One club had "Wednesday Weeders" on back so that they could be identified when working in public areas. It is exposure to the public.
23. Invite non members to assist with community activities that garden club is involved with.
24. Try to have at least one meeting in a public building each year to attract local attention.
25. Start conversations about gardening when on supermarket or garden nursery lines, especially if they are purchasing plants or flowers.
26. Provide flowers at City Hall, Library or your bank with signage "Courtesy of Ivy Garden Club". Small computer-generated sign in inexpensive frame. Assign different members for each month.

27. Computer-generated Business Cards by a club member and distributed (5 or 6) to each member to hand out personally to potential members with a personal invitation adds a special touch. Example included on following pages.
28. Advertise an open workshop at a garden center with a flower show judge demonstrating basic designs for the home. Charge a small fee (\$5.00) and serve refreshments – punch and cookies made or furnished by club members. Favors made of one-third block of Oasis wrapped in colored netting and tied with ribbon for attendees and a handout showing the basic construction of a centerpiece. Handout Example included in back of this booklet.
29. If you have a local garden project, advertise it in local paper and ask for community volunteers to help with the project. These volunteers usually become members, IF you are a fun group!
30. Print up a flyer on how nice a yard looks and place it on the front door of the home inviting the owner to the next garden club meeting.
31. Select a specific Chairman/Committee to work with Boy/Girl Scout Troops, 4-H groups and other youth organizations to form a youth club.
32. Go to your local high school and form a Youth Garden Club. A wonderful opportunity especially in small towns.
33. Deliver a personal invitation with a loaf of bread when a new resident moves into your neighborhood. (Does not have to be “homemade bread”. A loaf from the local bakery is fine.
34. Ask your recreational center in your area if your club could display information about your garden club activities for a week, or month, especially if the request is made with a pot of flowers (like garden mums) or cut flowers in an inexpensive vase.
35. Last year one club more than doubled their membership by simply getting on the phone and inviting people to one of the meetings. The invited guest liked the program and wanted to be a permanent part of the group.
36. Make your club more visible by always listing that we are garden club members (no matter what role we are playing in the community) and let groups other than garden clubs know that we want to give programs of activities that we have in our towns/cities.
37. Be positive about our roles as leaders – always appear as if you are enjoying yourself. Keep projects and programs that interest your specific club. Schedule a program that talks about our State, Deep South and national organization – the mission statements and touch on some of the successful projects that we are involved in nationally. We still have members that are not computer users and, therefore, miss out on many things that we take for granted.
38. At least once a year have an OPEN to the public and FREE meeting. Have a great Horticulture Program and have educational boards or displays up showing other avenues of interest in our state and national organizations. Example: Blue Star Marker, the 4 Educational Schools offered, Scholarship program, the National projects and others.

39. Prepare a one-page leaflet with a brief history of your club, or a booklet if there are funds and list past accomplishments, ongoing projects and community involvement, and end with an invitation to join the group. (Include meeting times and places and perhaps a contact person with phone number). Members could hand these out whenever they personally invite a potential member.
40. Keep your meetings FUN, SHORT and INTERESTING. The absolute most effective way to gain new members is simply asking. There is no substitute for a personal invitation. Getting new members is only a portion of the challenge. The first portion of this booklet is designed to give you ideas as to How to Get Members but in order to keep those new members interested and willing to spend a portion of their time – it must be worthwhile to them. Projects, Programs and opportunities for learning are vital to the success of KEEPING new and former members. True, it must be social, and fun, but you must arouse a passion or desire to service. Carefully thought out programs that will interest members in your local area and Active Projects that will make a difference – even if it is landscaping a small triangle in a city street - will give your club positive exposure. Ask an enthusiastic member to serve as Projects Chairman with the task of researching and evaluating the possibility of a local project and make suggestions early in the term for the club to consider and decide on and GET CRACKIN!

Get a Good Thing Growing!

“In a Nutshell”

Developing your club’s membership requires both recruitment and retention efforts. New garden club members bring important benefits to the club, including diversity, fresh ideas, and new energy. Existing members are crucial to sustaining and continuing the good works of the club.

Appoint a membership committee of 2 or 3 members with the job description of setting goals, and developing a plan for achieving them. The committee chairman communicates with club members in order to implement the plan. Getting new members is a responsibility of each club member. When reporting at each club meeting the chairman encourages all members to reach out to friends, family, business associates and other community members by asking them to visit the club.

Retention efforts should be a priority for the membership committee as well as gaining new members. Making sure that members are informed, involved and recognized for their service to the club will increase member satisfaction.

Consider the following **six step** process for getting and keeping members.

Identify. Identify members of the community who would be an asset to your club. Careful selection of members will increase your club's retention rate. Recently at a District meeting a new city council member had just joined a garden club. When asked why she had never joined a garden club her reply was, "I was never asked". Community leaders usually reinforce positive attitudes.

Introduce. Prospective members should be introduced to the club's history, ideals, mission, service and leadership opportunities. A prospective member who has been introduced to the garden club by enthusiastic members and is informed about the club's projects before joining is more likely to become involved and remain active. Consider providing a Prospective Member Information Kit with the club history or profile.

Invite. Here is where the personal invitation is important. If two members extend a personal invitation to visit the club that is even more effective.

Induct. New members should be introduced and welcomed in a meaningful and dignified way. When introducing the new member ask the new member to tell a little about themselves, hobbies, maybe their business and family. Thank the club member that extended the invitation to this new member. Be prepared to present the new member with current yearbook or directory.

Inform. Plan a morning coffee or afternoon "New Member Orientation Meeting" yearly. Each club chairman would talk briefly about their responsibility to the club and this could be open to existing members as well.

Involve. Make sure that all club members are involved in some club projects, committee activities, fundraisers, and social activities. Don't assign a committee chairmanship to a new member, but encourage volunteering for a service project. Ask the new members to find two or three other new members from among their peer group. Be sure to invite the new members to the next District Meeting. Some clubs pay all or a portion of the registration to their first District Meeting. Here is a wonderful opportunity to learn about the wider scope of garden club work and enjoy fellowship with other members of the organization with like interests. It also offers the foundation for building treasured lifetime friends.

SAMPLE FLYER



*a Member of
Briarcliff Garden Club, Inc.*

invites you to visit our club

When:
Tuesday, March 15, 2011

Where:
*Thomasville Garden Center
1102 Broad Street*

Time:
*Hospitality 9:45 am
Meeting/Program 10:00 am*

SAMPLE BUSINESS CARD

Cordele Garden Club

“You’re Invited”



What: Garden Club Meeting
When: 2nd Thurs of month at 10:30 am
Where: Cordele Garden Center
Contact: Jane Smith 706-331-2295

Fun, Fellowship, and Educational Opportunities are
Waiting For You. Plan to attend our next meeting.

This could be printed on pre-perforated stock business cards purchased at an office supply store or it could simply be printed on card stock paper several to a page, any size, and cut with a paper cutter. Also, it could be made postcard size for members that may wish to mail an invitation to a potential member.

Your club may choose to leave the Contact Line blank so that the person giving the card may sign their name and telephone number.

If your town does not have a specific garden center or central place where all your meetings are held, you could say **Where: Members’ Homes** and this would give the potential member an opportunity to call the contact person and get more details about the club and meetings.

Most clubs report that there is no substitute for a verbal, personal invitation. Follow that invitation by handing the card to potential members as a reminder of meeting and chances are they will come.

SAMPLE FLYER

You are Invited To Join a New Garden Club!

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Want to Share? | Like Horticulture? | Interested in the Environment? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening Tips | <input type="checkbox"/> Houseplants | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Conservation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Recycling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge with Youth | <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Pollution & Litter Control |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Organic Gardening | <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat Protection |

All of This, Plus Fellowship and Fun are Part of What Garden Club is All About!

Please Join Us on _____ at _____
Location _____
For More Information Contact: _____
At _____

SAMPLE LETTER

This would be a letter from the President of a club to a new member. It can be easily printed on computer on club stationery or plain printer paper enhanced with clip art on computer.

Greetings,

You have just become a member of a fantastic garden club. You are going to have fun for many years to come. You will learn about horticulture, flower arranging, gardening and much more.

In this New Member Packet, you'll find information about Briarcliff Garden Club and all of the garden club organizations that we are part of. If you have any questions, please ask any member or me; we will be happy to help in any way.

*Happy Gardening,
Angie*

SAMPLE BOOKLET

A computer-generated booklet is good information for existing members, as well as new members, and is suitable for inclusion with a New Member Packet. This is only an ink mark of the garden club organization.

Cover

Understanding the Garden Club Organization



An informative guide on
Camellia ~ District IV
The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
The Deep South Region
National Garden Clubs, Inc.

Opening Page

Welcome and Congratulations!

You have just joined an organization that has a national membership of 198,000 plus. Members of an affiliated garden club have the opportunity to advance in the study of gardening, landscape design, environmental issues, floral design, horticulture study, historic preservation and assist deserving students through college scholarships.

Information gathered in this booklet comes from the websites of the following:

**The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
National Garden Clubs, Inc.
The Deep South Region**

These websites have informative information concerning the garden club organization and their many projects. We encourage you to please visit these websites and learn more about the garden club organization.

Thank you for joining **Briarcliff Garden Club**. We are a member of:
The Camellia District
The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
The Deep South Region
National Garden Clubs, Inc.

After the Welcome page you could include a brief history of **your Local Club** citing wonderful projects that were established in the early years and accomplishments over the years and future programs and projects.

Next, include information about the **District** you are in. You could include drawing of the state with your district highlighted. And explain the districts serve as a vital connecting link between the state organization and its valuable members. The district board, patterned after the state board format, allows leadership development and input on a district level.

Next, include a page about your **State** organization giving the number of individual garden clubs and the total number of members statewide. Include the State Mission and mention the educational schools provided by the state organization. (Basic Horticulture, Landscape Design, Flower Show Schools, Gardening Study and Environmental Studies Schools). If your state participates in a State Scholarship program, include information about application and how the program is funded.

Next, include a page about your **Region**. The states were divided into 8 regions in order to provide close communications between National Garden Clubs, Inc., and its member federations. Each region has a mission statement that can be included. Leaders of these regions are called Regional Directors. The website address could also be included and referred to for additional information.

Following the page or section of regional information include **National Garden Clubs, Inc.**, a not-for-profit educational organization with its headquarters located in St. Louis, Missouri. It is composed of 50 State Garden Clubs and the National Capital Area, 6,218 member garden clubs and 198,595 members. In addition, NGC, Inc. proudly recognizes 447 International Affiliates from Canada to Mexico and South America, from Bermuda to South Africa, Australia and Japan, as well as 149 National Affiliates within the United States. National Garden Clubs, Inc., is recognized as the largest volunteer gardening organization in the world, offering a variety of challenging and rewarding service opportunities. The mission statement for the National Garden Clubs, Inc., is to provide education, resources and national networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral design, civic and environmental responsibility.

The purpose of National Garden Clubs, Inc.:

- To coordinate the interests and activities of the State Garden Clubs with similar organizations in the United States and abroad.

- To aid in the protection and conservation of natural resources, to promote civic beautification and encourage the improvement of roadsides and parks.
- To encourage the establishment and maintenance of botanical gardens, arboreta and horticultural centers for the advancement of science, enjoyment and education of the public.
- To advance the study of gardening, landscape design, environmental issues, floral design and horticulture and assist deserving students through college scholarships in these fields of endeavor.
- To co-operate with other organizations furthering the interest of horticulture, conservation, environmental protection and beautification.

For additional information about the National Garden Clubs, Inc. visit the website: <http://www.gardenclub.org>

This information was gathered from the National Garden Clubs, Inc. website, <http://www.gardenclub.org> and the Sixty Year History Diamond Jubilee, The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc. 1928-1988 publication.

Procedures for Forming A New Garden Club

1. Contact Prospective Members

Set a convenient time and place and invite interested friends and neighbors for the purpose of organizing a garden club. Consider contacting neighbors you have seen gardening, friends who love the environment and are interested in conservation, recycling, and preservation, as well as acquaintances you have met through school, church, Scouts, bridge, book clubs, tennis teams, gyms or at your local nursery. Think of those involved in other organizations related to beautification, conservation and education. They will make great garden club members! You will be off to a good start if you invite garden club members in your area to attend and speak on the benefits of a garden club. Call your state Membership Chairman. This Chairman can provide answers to your questions, as well as put you in touch with someone in your area who can provide hands-on assistance as you are getting your group started.

2. First Meeting

On the meeting day, the one who invited the interested persons will either serve as the temporary chairman or appoint another. The temporary chairman will, in turn, ask someone to serve as temporary secretary to take minutes of the meeting. Be sure to spend the first few minutes getting acquainted over a cup of tea/coffee and making sure everyone feels welcome. Invite the garden club members in attendance to explain the objectives of federated garden clubs, the benefits and

responsibilities, in addition to their personal joys and growth experiences from membership in a garden club. Dues paid to be a member of a state club will include membership in National Garden Clubs, Inc., the largest gardening volunteer organization in the world. After the discussion, the group will decide if they wish to form a club, and either by unanimous consent or by formal vote, the decision is made to organize and federate with the state organization. The temporary chairman appoints a bylaws committee and the date for the next meeting is set. It will be helpful to have a copy of your state organization's bylaws.

3. Second Meeting

It is important to remind all of those attending the first meeting of this follow-up date. After the meeting is called to order by the temporary chairman and the minutes are read by the temporary secretary, the proposed bylaws are presented, debated and adopted. A recess is taken for those present to become charter members by signing a paper and paying dues as outlined in the bylaws. The next order of business would be the nomination and election of officers. After the election, the President will chair the meeting and the Secretary will record the minutes for the remainder of the meeting. Necessary business of the club may be transacted, including appointment of committee chairmen and notifying the State Membership Chairman of the new club's desire to federate.

4. Following Meetings

Good communication and a variety of excellent programs will make a new club a GREAT club. Use e-mail or phone contact to keep everyone informed about all programs, locations, and any information to make members and visitors feel welcome and included.

Suggested Bylaws For A New Garden Club

ARTICLE I. Name

This organization shall be known as *The Green Thumbs*.

ARTICLE II. Mission Statement

The Green Thumbs is a garden club dedicated to improving the community through beautification, conservation and education.

ARTICLE III. Membership/Eligibility

Section 1. Active Member

Current with club dues, may hold office, attends regular meetings and participates in club activities.

Section 2. Associate Member

Current with club dues, cannot hold office and may be invited to club activities.

Section 3. Honorary Member

Voted on by club's active members, dues not required and cannot hold office.

ARTICLE IV. Dues

The Annual Dues for Active and Associate members shall be \$_____ payable no later than after the annual meeting.

ARTICLE V. Officers and Duties

Section 1.

The officers of the club shall be

President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer.

Section 2.

- A. The President shall preside at all meetings of the club and the Executive Board and shall perform all other duties related to the office. The President shall have the power to appoint all chairmen of committees, and shall be ex-officio member of all committees, except the Nominating Committee.
- B. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall perform all the duties of that office.
- C. The Recording Secretary shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of the club and Executive Board meetings.
- D. The Corresponding Secretary shall conduct the correspondence of the club. In the absence of the Recording Secretary, the Corresponding Secretary shall perform the duties of that office.
- E. The Treasurer shall have charge of all monies belonging to the club. The Treasurer shall pay all bills authorized by the President and give all receipts for their payment.
- F. A Parliamentarian shall be appointed by the President and shall attend all meetings of the club and of the Executive Board as a consultant without the privilege of a vote.

Section 3.

Each officer shall immediately upon the expiration of term of office deliver to his/her successor all books, records and properties pertaining to the office.

ARTICLE VI. Nominations and Elections

Section 1.

There shall be a Nominating Committee consisting of a chairman appointed by the President and two other members elected at the November meeting in the even-numbered years. The committee shall present their slate at the January meeting in the odd-numbered years.

Section 2.

Additional nominations may be made from the floor with the consent of the nominee.

Section 3.

Officers shall be elected at the January meeting in the odd-numbered years and shall serve a term of two years, beginning with installation at the annual March meeting of the year elected.

Section 4.

If a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the Vice President shall succeed to that office. Vacancies in other offices shall be filled for the unexpired term by the Executive Board.

Additional Notes:

A Garden Club might also include an Article concerning Meetings (dates and quorum) and how to amend the Bylaws. Most clubs include an Article stating that Robert's Rules of Order, Revised Edition is the Parliamentary Authority. Standing Rules may be added after the club has been established. These apply to details of administration of the club rather than parliamentary procedure.