Planting and Growing
Garden Clubs with Deep Roots

Best Practices
Membership Increase
and Retention Manual
Mission Statement

The Mission of Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. is to provide leadership in education, resources and networking opportunities for its members to promote the love of gardening, floral and landscape design, civic and environmental responsibility.

A THANK YOU TO ALL THE GARDEN CLUBS WHO SHARED ARTICLES AND 2013-2014 YEARBOOKS.

THIS MANUAL IS PUBLISHED IN GRAY AND BLACK TO SAVE ON PRINTING.

MARILYN MCINTOSH
Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.
First Vice President
Membership 2014
mmaemcintosh@hotmail.com
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Si quaeris penisulam amoenam circumspice.
If you seek a pleasant peninsula, look about you.
State of Michigan Motto

Building a Better Michigan through Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.

The Detroit Free Press has a section called “A Better Michigan.” The 6,530 Members of Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. together in our 176 Clubs contribute to this endeavor throughout the State. In all four seasons, we are involved in Civic and Roadside Beautification, Environment and Conservation, Litter, Recycling and Reclamation Issues; Garden Therapy, Youth Gardening, Birds, Bees and Butterflies Protection; Blue Star Memorials, Youth Gardening, Native Plants, Landscape and Floral Design, Historical Preservation and much more.

Our Members are busy, but volunteerism plays an important role in their lives. They make lasting friendships and foster their own personal growth while enhancing their communities. To make this all happen in the 21st Century, Clubs need to continue working on increasing their Membership to remain vital and productive. With more demands on time, growing your Garden Club makes sense as it may take more Members to complete projects through job sharing.

For New Members, our Garden Clubs often represent a place when making a change in life. We are a growing community. We welcome new residents, retirees, men and women, singles and youth who want to learn and are passionate about beautification, nature, health, and sustainable living.

We go beyond Gardening. Members, if they choose, can continue learning through our National Garden Clubs, Inc. Courses adding dimension to their own lives and Clubs. They become Gardening, Landscape Design and Environmental Consultants as well as Accredited Flower Show Judges. To further educate Members and the viewing public in Horticulture and the Arts of Floral Design, we hold Flower Shows based on standardized procedures.

This Manual is intended to share practical tools and ideas to keep our Garden Clubs exceptional in their communities from now into the future.

Marilyn McIntosh
Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.
First Vice President
**Membership Club Testimonials**

**LIVONIA GARDEN CLUB – DISTRICT I (80 TO 91 MEMBERS)**

Today I am writing as Livonia Garden Club President. We’ve had at least eleven new members in 2013. Because we have no particular plan for attracting new members, I contacted eight from the last couple years and asked what enticed them to join LGC. Here are some of their answers:

- The Plant Swap (Plant sharing we hold each May, saw it advertised, came and picked up information about the Garden Club.)
- Wanted to learn how to improve their own habitat for birds and butterflies (came for information).
- Wanted to improve flowerbeds (came for information on almost all responders’ lists).
- Great Speakers which were mentioned by more than one responder. (Speakers are advertised in our local newspaper before each Meeting/Program with a title and brief description.)
- Great Members, again mentioned by more than one responder (friendly, share my interests, met Members where I work and decided to join them, was encouraged by a neighbor, friend who were Members, welcomed at the door and asked by someone to sit in their group at the Meeting).
- Saw articles in paper about various activities. (The Club sounded interesting.)

I think these are all great ideas. Mostly, they involve some one-on-one contact and a little advertising; and that quest for information that affects most gardeners. Garden club members and prospects all have many interests in common.

*Ruth Moline*
Livonia Garden Club President

**ADRIAN GARDEN CLUB – DISTRICT IIA (22 TO 30 MEMBERS)**

We have “First Fridays” in downtown Adrian. We had a card table with Club Brochures and a Representative to take information from interested people. During our May Plant Sale, we picked up two more Members.

*Linda Freeborn*
Adrian Garden Club President
Hi! My name is Cindy Mann and I am a Co-president of the Brighton Garden Club. Judy Turnbull is the other Co-president. The ideas expressed here are from our observations and discussions with new members. It is a very exciting time in our garden club. Our numbers continue to grow and it seems that nearly every month we have new guests that would like to join. Yahoo! We have not made a concerted effort to attract new members, but feel that many things have contributed to our growth.

**What attracts guests to our meeting?**

- Members inviting friends and neighbors
- Garden Club information posted in our community library
- The beautiful gardens that we maintain in our community (These include gardens at the post office, library, community garden and Mill Pond. This year we are adding the new Downtown Sculpture Garden and Veteran’s Memorial, as well.)
- Our downtown plant sales
- Announcements in the local newspaper
- Online information in the Brighton Patch
- Business cards that Members give out when meeting others who are interested in gardening.

**Why do guests choose to join our club?**

- “Everyone seems so FRIENDLY!” I hear this over and over from our visitors and new members. We consciously try to be upbeat and welcoming at our luncheon, program and meeting. (We meet the 3rd Thursday of the month from 11:00 to around 2:00.) We also encourage everyone to arrive ½ hour early so that we have plenty of time to visit with our garden friends.
- We offer many ways for new members to get involved. Some of these include: serving on a luncheon committee, working in one of our gardens, field trips, garden therapy, garden buds (a smaller plant study group) and craft projects
- Mentors to assist new members
- Interesting and quality programs
- Organization is a top priority. Our Board works very hard to plan and organize, so that our programs are excellent and our meetings are conducted in a timely fashion.
- We have FUN!

**Many of our new members have recently retired and are:**

- Looking to make new friends.
- Want to be involved in the community.
- Like gardening.

Wow, what better place to find all of these than our Garden Club!

*Cindy Mann and Judy Turnbull*  
Brighton Garden Club Co-Presidents
Grand Ledge Garden Club has added a total of 20 new members – two couples and 16 individual members – since September 2013. Since its organization in 1941, our club has always met in the afternoons. Longtime members were not willing to give up this tradition, but recognized that we were declining in active members and had not been gaining new, younger members. We knew that in order to meet the needs of younger, working persons in our community we needed to make some changes.

A committee was formed early in 2013 to attempt to reverse this trend. The committee determined that the best way to do this might be to add an evening meeting in addition to current afternoon meetings. Names of persons who might be interested in joining were collected. During the summer additional interested persons were solicited through the local newspaper. For our first meeting in September all potential new members were sent personal invitations to attend an evening ‘potluck’ dinner served at a local church with food provided by current members, enjoy a speaker, and hear about Grand Ledge Garden Club’s plans to organize an evening group. Our membership chairperson, using a newly revised membership request form, signed up several new members that evening. Some of our new members have joined our afternoon group and others signed up for the new evening meeting group. While husbands were often utilized to assist with our projects, men had never been encouraged to join. We now have six men added to our membership.

The evening group has a good core of enthusiastic members and we expect that number to increase as programming gets put into place. The new group already has a downtown park beautification project that they are working on. At this point the evening group is considered a part of the club overall. However, each group wants to adopt a particular name in order to distinguish one from the other -- ‘Daylilies’ has been suggested for the afternoon group and ‘Stargazers’ for the evening group. The new group has a chairperson who is in charge of the meetings, a secretary, and program and hospitality chairs. The meetings are not held on the same day of the month and will not necessarily have the same programming. It is expected that the evening group will be less formal and will seek out programs that appeal to their particular needs and desires. All members will take part in our one fundraising activity and we expect to use these monies as needed for each group.

Two board members act as liaisons between the two groups. Any club decisions are presented to both for consideration and a vote. Any member is free to attend either or both meetings during the month. Meetings of the new group are held in private homes because the group is small. Afternoon meetings alternate between public meeting rooms and homes depending on programming and space available. Refreshments are served. We intend to reassess next year and make changes if necessary.

The second meeting of the new evening group was entitled "GLGC: A Perennial Purpose in the Past, Present and Future" presented by six current members. Included were the history of Grand Ledge Garden Club, an overview of our various community beautification projects, special club events and opportunities, and the advantages of MGC, Inc. membership. It was concluded with a promise made to assist the new group in any way to insure their success in the future.

Charlene Borgeson
Grand Ledge Garden Club New Members Committee Chair/Treasurer
**Meridian Garden Club – District IIB** (57 To 72 Members)

_Educational Outreach – The Schuler Books Initiative (from the 2013 - 2014 Meridian Garden Club Yearbook)_

In 2013, the Membership Committee undertook a new project – a series of garden and horticulture-related presentations by MGC Members at Schuler Books and Music in the Meridian Mall. The Committee expected the program to raise community awareness of the Meridian Garden Club, educate community members about gardening practices and the benefits of gardening and potentially, attract new Members. It also demonstrated very visibly the amazing gardening knowledge of the Members of Meridian Garden Club.

The first presentation, “All about Herbs”, drew an audience of over 45 people on a blustery March evening to hear an introduction to growing, preserving and using herbs. Attendees stayed beyond the program’s close to ask questions of panelists Martha Shortlidge-White, Madeleine Masterson, Jean Weinert, Larry Aaronson, and Moderator Sue Wittick and to sample herb teas and herb cookies. The second program, “Edible Gardens”, presented by Cathy Claypool and JoAnne Keyes on April 24, attracted over 20 people to learn about incorporating edibles in their landscapes. At the end, the Presenters distributed packets of seeds to help attendees start their gardens. Posters and handbills created by Sue Wittick and a strong publicity campaign by Publicity Chair, Andi Kramer, helped to assure good turnouts.

Larry Aronson presented a program on “Medicinal Herbs” on June 18, 2013 with nearly 30 people attending. Joyce Wang, a new Member and Herbalist in training, demonstrated how and when to harvest herbs and discussed Chinese remedies. Attendees were encouraged to fill out a brief questionnaire to determine topics of interest for the future.

_The Yearbook notes:_ Members of Meridian Garden Club who are interested in presenting or participating in a panel presentation on gardening topics should contact Education Outreach Coordinator, Peggy Bryson.

*Susan Leahy*
Meridian Garden Club President

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**The Garden Forum – District III** (26 to 32 Members)

At Christmas time, Berrien Springs has an event called “Kindle your Christmas Spirit” where merchants stay open and there are all kinds of fun events, carriage rides, etc. The Garden Forum members printed business cards listing future meetings and inviting people to join the Garden Club. With the cards, they gave samples of lavender and peppermint scented bath salts and foot soaks that were made by Garden Forum members. Over 350 of these were handed out and interest was expressed by community members in joining the Club.

_Sarah Burt_
The Garden Forum President
**STANDALE GARDEN CLUB – DISTRICT IV (29 TO 38 MEMBERS)**

We feel our membership has grown because we have good speakers at our meetings and have good refreshments. We also try to make new people feel welcome. We have some new members that came when we had our plant sale and since then they have brought a friend. We also have some husbands. We are happy to have this increase in membership.

_Betty Mucha_
Standale Garden Club President

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**SEEDUMS GARDEN CLUB – DISTRICT V (59 TO 70 MEMBERS)**

- Wainingan Raft Race on the Cheboygan River and downtown parade wearing our floral type dyed tee shirts. Some children joined in and had fun with us.
- Exhibit at Earth Week Expo featuring rain gardens, selling our cookbooks and passing out recipe samples. Sold 11 books and our garden gloves.
- Fun, food, friendships; sharing coveted cuttings and down to earth advice.
- A warm and caring Board of Officers.
- Display in the showcase at our meeting place, the library. We used craft ideas, dried flower bouquets, pressed flower note cards, our Seedums apron, tee shirt, cookbook, garden books. And provided fresh bouquets for the month on top of the showcase along with printed bookmarks with the yearly programs for people to pick up.
- Seedums seasonal display on Main Street filling an empty store front until the building is rented or sold.
- Our civic gardens speak loud about us utilizing most seasons.
- Caring and sharing our bouquets through the year at hospice house, assisted living and the nursing home.
- Programs, speakers and field trips to member gardens and local area interests.
- “Cheboygan In Bloom” is lots of fun as we tour in teams and recognize street scapes that enhance our Community.

_Susie Painter_
Seedums Garden Club President

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**From Seedums Garden Club Members:**

I chose to join Seedums Garden Club to be a productive member of the community by keeping up gardens, beautifying downtown Cheboygan, helping seniors and hospice patients with bouquets to cheer them; and learning and enjoying gardening. You won’t find a friendlier group. _Cindy Cartmill_

I can say is that as a younger woman I was too busy with young kids to take much of an interest in flowers, where now I find then so very interesting and love learning from others what they have to share about flowers. I find working with flowers to be very therapeutic. _Marge Malin_
I joined Seedums because I love gardening and want to learn more about plants and flowers. I also love all the community gardens the club keeps up and the projects such as sunshine bouquets. It is fun to be around women who also love gardening. *Elaine McIntosh*

**LAKESHORE GARDEN CLUB – DISTRICT VI (92 TO 104 MEMBERS)**

It is hard to generalize because we are such an active, social club. Our members have such unique abilities and are great at volunteering. Members work in cooperation with the community and our Lexington Village Council. Another thing members enjoy are our Guest Speakers. Each month a speaker presents a 20-30 minutes presentation. Sometimes these spots are filled with one of our own members. They love the social time (20 minutes) with finger foods. As their President, they tell me that our Business Meetings are done in an efficient manner.

*Joyce Schmitt*
Lakeshore Garden Club President

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**DEFINE YOUR GARDEN CLUB – THE ELEVATOR SPEECH**

The Board and Members networking in your Community are your best advertisements.

**COULD YOUR BOARD AND MEMBERS DESCRIBE YOUR CLUB IN A TIME SPAN OF AN ELEVATOR RIDE OF ABOUT 30 TO 60 SECONDS?**

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**SPEECH**

1. Introduce yourself
2. Describe involvement
3. Talk about Club
4. Invite

**The Elevator Speech puts your best foot forward in a practiced short summary.** Every Member should be ready to answer if asked by someone unfamiliar with your Garden Club. It takes some time to get it right and most likely will go through several versions before finding one which fits your Club.

**Steps:** Write down a broad description about your Club, edit, connect the phrases and memorize. Have you really answered the key question “if they were to join your Club, what would be in it for them?” Invite the listener to visit and exchange contact information or business cards. This method can clearly define fundraisers and events, too.

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7
DESIGN YOUR OWN CLUB MEMBERSHIP PLAN

The Membership Plan begins with Club Officers to discuss the needs of your local Club. One plan does not fit all. This Manual was designed to address the making of an exceptional Club whether it is large or small, urban or rural, evening or daytime, men and/or women, etc. Consider forwarding or having each Board Member download this Manual from the Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. website www.michigangardenclubs.org under the “Members Only” section or make copies to use during this process. Clubs add Members throughout the year, but, it is helpful to designate two or more regular Meeting dates specifically as “Membership Recruitment Meetings.” Planning ahead is the key to success.

ACTION STEPS FOR THE BOARD

1. Appoint a Membership Chairperson/Committee.*
2. Appoint a Publicity Chairperson/Committee.*
3. Develop an Action Plan with Goals and Time Frame (Use this Manual for Ideas.)
4. Discuss the Plan with the General Membership and get Input.
5. Make adjustments.
6. Vote on allocation of Funds, if needed.
7. Implement.
8. Review.

* Smaller Clubs may have Board Members serve as Membership and Publicity Chairs.
MEMBERSHIP

Member Show and Tell (Share Garden Tips, useful equipment or pictures of your garden)
Game Show Night – Test Your Horticulture Knowledge
Open Forum – Garden Club Exchange of Ideas
Garden Club Visitation Day – Bring a Friend
Winter Reading for Gardeners
The History of your Garden Club and your local Michigan city or town
All about the Garden Club and what you can do
Do it Ourselves Meeting – e.g. Members assigned a Bird, Flower, Tree, Environmental Issue, etc. to report on

Monthly Homework – Bring your answer each month for Roll Call – Examples:
  ● What is your most successful shade garden plant?
  ● Describe your worst insect problem this summer and tell us if you found a solution.
  ● What is your favorite tree?
  ● How do you conserve water in your garden?
  ● What is the first thing you see blooming in the spring?
  ● What is your favorite blooming shrub?

Annual Meeting – Recap past year
  ● End of Year Reports
  ● Committee Reviews
  ● Review/Update Program Book

Moments at each Meeting: Environmental Moment, Floral Design Moment and Gardening Moment
Getting Youth Involved
Junior Gardening
Club Floral Design Guild
Speakers from Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. Board Directory

Strategic Planning – Garden Club Meeting, Members break into groups to brainstorm ideas in areas of:
  ● Membership
  ● Fundraising
  ● Gardens
  ● Projects or Programs
  ● Report at the end of the session and set up action plan.
HORTICULTURAL

A Primer of Native Plants
African Violets
Alternatives to Impatiens
Alpine Plants and Gardens
Aquaponics
Chestnuts
Community Gardens
Compost Tea
Create a Children’s Garden – Learn new Ideas
Culinary Herbs
Cultivate your Green Thumb Indoors
Culture and Care of Clematis
Dahlias
Daylilies
Delicious Apple Varieties – Stock up for the Winter
Farmer’s Almanac – Planting by the Moon
Folklore of Native Plants
Garden Reading (Librarian Highlights Resources and Books/Magazines Available)
Gardening for Retirees
Gorgeous Grasses
Growing Grapes and Making Wine
Growing Roses
Heritage Gardening
Herbs: Grow Harvest and Preserve
Horticulture Therapy – Therapy through the Love and Care of Plants
Hostas
Houseplants
How Soil Testing Can Help
Hydrangeas
Hydroponics
Identifying Michigan Native Ferns (Bring a magnifying Glass)
Ikebana
Indoor Plants
Lasagna Gardening
Maple Syrup
Michigan Native Plants
Moon and Night Gardens
More on Gardening
Mums the Word
Myths and Magic of Plants
Organic Farming/Gardening
Overwintering Bulbs, Plants and Succulents
Peonies
Permaculture
Plant Pathology
Planting for Memorial Day
Planting Lavender
Plants of the Bible
Plants that make you Itch
Preparing your Garden for Spring
Propagation – Cuttings: A Form of Multiplication
Pruning
Putting Your Garden to Bed
Raised Beds “Gardening or Flowers”
Rhododendrons
Right Plant, Right Place
Shiitake Mushrooms
Straw Bale Gardening
Succulent Plants
Sunflower Varieties
Tasty Morsels – Mushrooms
Tea – A Healthy Beverage
Teas and Tisanes
The Beauty of Native Plants
The Best Fruits and Vegetables to Freeze
The Siberian Iris
Tillandsia - Air plants
Tower Gardens
Toxic Garden Plants
Vegetable Canning – Use what you plant
Vermiculture
Vertical Gardening
Waking Up your Garden
Watering Cans - Different kinds and care
Weed and Feed
What’s growing in the City? – Urban Agriculture
What’s new in the Greenhouse 2014

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

A Fairy Garden
Accessorizing your Garden
Creative Approaches to Low Maintenance Gardening
Creative Landscapes through Garden Paths, Rooms and Water Features
Designing Edible and Ornamental Small Gardens
Designing Outdoor Containers
Ferns, Woodland Plants and Ground Covers
First Impressions – Unforgettable Entrance to your Home
Garden Impact – Create a WOW factor
Herbs in the Landscape
Labyrinths
Landscapes by the Lake
Landscaping with Wildflowers
Make Your Landscape Sustainable
Neighborhood Beautification
New Trends, Designs and Colors
Perennial Gardening
Progressive Garden Tour
Strategies for a low maintenance garden
Think like a Landscape Designer
Tips to make your House look Professionally Landscaped
Taking Care of Pests Naturally
Smart gardening and Watershed
Waterfalls and Landscaping
LANDSCAPE DESIGN CONTINUED
What is Landscape Architecture?
What's New in Container Gardening?

ENVIRONMENTAL
Agrifood Practices from Food to Food Deserts
American Waste – Educate, Innovate, Recycle
Astronomy and the Environment
Attracting Birds
Bats
Bees in the Garden
Bird Identification in your Backyard
Butterflies and Birds in the Garden
Butterfly Gardens and Conservation
Conservation
County Park Systems
Dragonflies
Eastern Bluebirds
Energy Efficient Homes
Establishing a Rain Garden
Film - Stemming the Tide: Garlic Mustard
Freighters and Tall Ships
Genetically Modified Seed
Global Warming and Predicted Effects on the Great Lakes
Gourmet Bird Food
Healthy Eating
Herbal Tea
Honey Bee Pollination
Honey Bees, Nature’s Little Pollinators
Limber Up and Work Smartly and Safely
Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary Presentation
Maintaining Trees
Maintaining Water Quality in our Lakes and Streams
Make the Ultimate Bird Feeding Station
Making the World a Better Place
Meth Houses and Prescription Drug Disposal – State Police
Michigan Birds
Our Environment and Why We should Care about It
Owls, Hawks and Eagles
Pest Control for your Garden
Protecting our Environment - What we can do?
Protecting the Health of Gardeners and Gardens
Rain Barrels
Recycling Techniques
Reforesting with Planting and Caring of Trees
Sand Dunes
Shoreline Restoration
Spiders
Taking Care of Pests Naturally
The Cost of Raising Food
Using Herbs and Acupuncture to Heal the Body
(Chinese trained and Board Certified)
Watershed Health
Wildfires of Michigan

ARTISTIC CRAFTS
Bird Feeders – Using Knox Gelatin and Bird Seed
Crafting a Concrete Dish with Leaf Impression
Create your own Holiday Designs
Fall Decorating
Fun with Clay: Make Your Own Vessel
Leaf print demonstration
Make and Take Holiday Potpourri
Make and Take Twig Vase
Make Your Own Fruit and Vegetable Bouquet
Make your special flower arrangement for family and friends
Painting Rocks for your Garden
Photography of Flora and Fauna
Plants to dry and use all winter
Pot Painting Therapy
Pounding, Pressing, Waxing Flowers

BLUE STAR MEMORIAL RELATED
Old Glory: History of the American Flag
Support Our Troops – Wounded Warriors

FLORAL DESIGN
Basic Floral Design
Demo of Making Christmas Trees and Wreaths with Live Greens
Design Tips for Flower Show Participants
Exploration In Floral Design
Floral Design – Christmas Traditions
Flower Arrangements using “frogs”
Gourd-eous Design
Judges View – Horticulture
Make and Take Fall Arrangements
Make and Take Pumpkin Arrangement
Miniature Designs – How to create for a Flower Show
Small Flower Arranging
Fall Decorating
Preserving Flowers – Why? and How?
Teaching the Teachers for Community Greens Workshop
CELEBRATIONS

Annual Plant Auction at a Member’s House
Anniversary Celebration (Vintage clothing fashions)
Blind Auction/Silent Auction
Celebration Installation Luncheon
Christmas/Holiday Tea and Social (Bring your own floral tea cup)
Fashion Show and Tea
Member Recognition Day
Members bring some plants, garden crafts (and other garden items to be auctioned.)
Past Presidents’ Tea (Local Awards, Life Memberships, etc. given)
Picnic at the Park
Tablescape Luncheon – Each Table decorated by a different Member or Members
Taste of the Season Contest ---- This year: Create Homemade Salsa from your Garden
The Flower Pot Luncheon

FIELD TRIPS

American Waste Recycling Plant Tour
Botanical Gardens of Northwest Michigan
Dairy Farm Tour
Greenhouse or Nursery Tour
Hidden Gardens
Indiana Quilt Gardens Tour
Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary
Lotus Tour – Monroe
Meijer Gardens
Member’s Garden Tour, “View My Garden”
MSU Children’s Garden
MSU Horticultural Gardens
National Parks
Progressive Tour of Members’ Gardens with Treats along the way
State Parks
Tour a Specialty Foods Plant or Business
Tour Proven Winners Demonstration Garden
U of M Biological Station
What’s New at the Farmer’s Market?

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROGRAM CHAIRMAN

1. Plan general meeting programs in keeping with the State and National aims and objectives. New themes are announced every two years.

2. Contact program sources and get written verification (Speaker Contract) of scheduling, fees, and details for each program including AV Equipment. Note if handouts are part of the fee.

3. Prepare year’s program schedule with names of speakers and titles for publication in Yearbook or information sheet. Give a short biography of the Speaker and note what type of program will be given: Power Point, Lecture, Panel Discussion, Hands on Demonstration, etc. Variety is the key.

4. Check with the Speaker a week or so before meeting to confirm program arrangements, ascertain what properties will be needed, what assistance if any and what time the Speaker will arrive.

5. Arrange in advance for the number of chairs needed for seating and for necessary properties for program----good lighting, microphone, podium/lectern, extra tables, AV, screen, etc. Test from front to back of room to make sure the Speaker can be heard and visual aids can be seen.

6. Reserve the most convenient parking space possible for the Speaker. Be on hand when the Speaker arrives to welcome and assist, familiarize with the facilities, and help get acquainted with Club. Offer to load as well as unload.

7. Let the Speaker talk at the scheduled time and for the length of time previously arranged. Introduce and thank the Speaker publically at the Meeting. Have a check prepared in advance if there is a fee or have a gift as a token of appreciation where there is no fee. Send a note of appreciation.
100+ Ideas to Increase Membership and Retention

1. ASK – Still #1 way to invite Members to visit and join.
2. Appoint a Membership or Membership Recruitment Chairperson.
3. Great programs serve as magnets in drawing Members to Club Meetings. (See the 225+ Program Ideas on Pages 8-11.)
4. Consider a Fellowship Committee who would develop strategies for creating situations for Members to make friendships in an atmosphere of fun – good fellowship is one primary reasons members join. Interchange between members before, during and after each meeting will discourage the development of cliques within a club.
5. Make Membership Kits for Chairs to take to Plant Sales, Garden Walks, Flower Shows, etc. Include Club Brochures/Business cards, Bookmarks, Information Sheets, Membership Applications, extra Newsletters, Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. publications, etc. Exchange contact information so the Club has their name, email and phone for contact.
6. Make a New Club Member Folder or Packet, include Yearbook or Information Sheet on Club Program Dates, Location and Projects; Name Tag, and Mentor Contact Information for New Member. Have a special time to review expectations of a Member (Orientation) and get them involved on a Committee or Garden assignment right away.
7. Develop a Welcome Letter from the President for all New and/or Prospective Members, address the person by name and welcome them to the next Meeting. Put a survey sheet asking about areas of interest or expertise. Include a return stamped envelope.
8. Set Membership Goals early and announce to everyone. All Members should know about their Club goals, programs and accomplishments. (See Elevator Speech – Page 6.)
9. Ask each Member to bring a friend for a Club Visitation Day coupled with a special speaker, hands on activity (artistic crafts are popular) or event.
10. Create a Membership Committee to brainstorm recruitment ideas specific to your area.
11. Make everything you do a “Media Event.” Now that digital cameras are so easy to use, take a picture at all your events – your keynote speaker at a monthly Meeting, your new Member Inductions, Officer Installations, Garden Projects, etc. and send them to your local newspapers. Newspapers, especially weeklies, are always looking for items of local interest. Post on website, Facebook, etc.
12. Have clear Club goals (Vision statement) and a Strategic Plan.
13. Promote your local Club with National Garden Club, Inc. Week during the first week of June -- dress up your Library Showcase.
14. If you have a Welcome Wagon in your town, ask them to include information on your Club.
15. Leave welcoming information about your Club with Realtors for new residents in town.

16. Ask Businesses/Banks to put publicity on their electronic billboards or reader boards.

17. Have more gardening education at Meetings and review basics. One Club used Chapter Topics from a *Gardening Manual* to make sure all the basics were covered for new Gardeners and allowed Members to add their “Gardening Tips.”

18. Apply for Awards and publish results for Member/Club pride.

19. Get bright tee shirts (or hats, aprons, etc.) with the Club logo on the front so Club Members can be identified when working on Community Gardens, Fundraisers or Projects.

20. Choose “Gardens or Landscapes of the Month” of Residences or Businesses and invite the Owners to join.

21. Ask to put Garden Club information at temporary flower stands/greenhouses in the spring.

22. “Bloom” Homeowners with a yard flag/sign and postcard as contributing to the beautification of your city or area.

23. Provide floral arrangements or designs to public buildings such as City Hall, Libraries, etc. with signage “Courtesy of _________Garden Club”, have brochures or fact sheets.

24. Have a Booth at a Home Show with a Display. Vendors use a candy dish to draw attention.

25. Have a Blue Star Memorial Dedication or Rededication, involve Veterans, state and city officials and honor our service men and women. Be part of this National Garden Clubs, Inc. Program since 1945 as a large project for Club participation. Learn about Michigan’s Blue Star Highway. Contact MGC Blue Star Chair for more information.

26. Review your Club Yearbook with all Members at least once a year so they are familiar with goals and projects to be able to talk about their Club.

27. Challenge each Board Member to recruit a new Member.

28. Have a booth at the Farmer’s Market selling bulbs, your cookbooks, etc. Have information available.

29. Host a Fashion Show networking with local businesses. Invite the public.

30. Contact the Chamber of Commerce with information about Club and events.

31. Offer gardening programs at the Library or Book Store by Members, perhaps a weekly event for a month.

32. Place customized bookmarks at the Library with the Club calendar and location of Meetings. Make sure there is a contact phone number or website address.

33. Have public meetings at malls and outdoors in parks, Courthouse lawns, etc. (Use your MGC metal sign.)

34. Have a booth at malls, fairs, festivals, float in Parade, etc.

35. Allot a line item in the Budget for Membership.
36. Ask a well-known personality in your town to be the Honorary Membership Chairman. Publicize.
37. Ask the Mayor to proclaim a Garden Club Membership Enrollment Day, week or month to continue to enhance the beautification of your town or city. Publicize.
38. Don’t forget to contact new families that move into the community, welcome them with a personal call and invitation to your Club. Every new resident has a yard or front porch to garden.

**Use every talent available to promote membership. Ask a journalist to help with letters and articles; an artist for posters, sketches, logos; photographers to get high pixel photographs for printing; computer persons to help with Website and Facebook pages for announcing events.**

39. With permission, use store windows of restaurants, beauty shops, etc. for advertising.
40. Place pamphlets at doctor’s offices, hospitals, cafeterias, libraries, gyms, exercise classes, golf leagues, nurseries, organic food co-ops or stores, etc.
41. Hold a Club Meeting with the main topic being on Membership.
42. If you have a local Master Gardener Club, Garden Clubs provide education programs during their Meetings, District Meetings and State/Regional/National Conventions to fulfill their hours.
43. Give the Membership Chair one minute at every Club Meeting. Keep the message going throughout the year.
44. Place an ad about your Club in the newspaper.
45. Place a Membership table at the entrance to your Meetings or events. Place them strategically so people must pass by to enter.
46. Give a thank you and framed Certificate for businesses to hang for assistance to your Club.
47. Have a telephone committee to keep in touch with Members who have missed Meetings.
48. Plant a new daffodil or other flowering bulb for each new Member in a community park flower garden.
49. Ask for a few minutes at local government or service clubs (Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, Lions, Chamber of Commerce) to explain what your Club is accomplishing and invite to join.
50. Recognize new Members by name for their first three consecutive Meetings and perhaps add a line or two, so Members get to know them. Make sure new Members have a Name Tag right away.
51. Make the Membership Chair a Board Member.
52. Do service projects that serve a need in the community.
53. Distribute extra copies of magazines/newsletter that relate to your club in waiting rooms, etc.
54. Hold high-profile meetings.
55. Hold a dessert reception for prospective members or for a new Member orientation.
56. Invite your District Director to be a Speaker or do a Program at one of your Meetings.
57. Encourage Club Members to attend State, District and Presidents’ Meetings to network with other Clubs within their area and statewide.
58. Have Local Club Awards for your Members to recognize number of hours, achievements, special projects annually.

Ask for help from your District Director if you need specific ideas or to find a Club who has been successful in increasing Membership and retaining Members. Have your Board Members visit if possible.

59. Make prospective members feel important by getting them involved right away. Assign a Mentor, Buddy or Big Sister/Brother.
60. Make some Meetings social events and try some mixers so Members meet others.
61. Don’t take age or gender into consideration.

62. Build a Club website or Facebook page.
63. Sponsor a yearly club competition and challenge members to bring new members. The winner receives a traveling trophy recognizing their success in recruiting the most new Members.
64. Work with Boy/Girl Scout troops, 4-H groups and other youth organizations to form a Youth Garden Club.
65. Prepare a one page flyer with a brief history of your Club and list past accomplishments, on-going projects, etc. Use for new and prospective Members.
66. Give Honorary and Life Memberships to encourage participation and longevity in your Club.
67. Use group email to promote your club.
68. Put posters in public areas.
69. Create more fun and always show enthusiasm for your Club.
70. Send info to the media regularly.
71. Lead by example --- how many Members have you recruited?
72. Invite coworkers, neighbors, friends and family to garden club meetings.
73. Follow up with guests.
74. Ask corporations and employers to sponsor your Club or events.
75. Have Members be Speakers at other organizations such as a Mothers’ Group. Invite them to join and work on Children’s and Youth Gardening, playground and park improvement.
76. Provide guests with free meals.
77. Invite your spouse or have events which include spouses such as auctions, recycling, etc.
78. Check with your District Director to see if there is room to invite a guest or guests to a District Meeting.
79. Update your Club committee job descriptions including time commitments for jobs.
80. Advertise at sports events.
81. Share your Club experience with others.
82. Make Business cards for all Board Members.
83. Give an Award to your Members who have perfect attendance all year.
84. Circulate the Club newsletter widely beyond your Membership (i.e., Library, public officials, etc.)

**Hold cooking or culinary, healthy lifestyle, wellness, green/sustainable, eco-friendly living event(s) and invite the public.**

85. Offer to host a Study School, District or Presidents’ Meeting as a large group project for team building and as a Membership booster.
86. Design a Club Brochure.
87. Use Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. website calendar and Publication for garden walks, fundraisers and events.
88. Contact radio stations for interviews to promote your Club.
89. Television channels have websites with community event calendars for posting.
90. Contact Homeowners Associations about information on your Garden Club.
91. Have a Membership Tea, Luncheon or Garden Party and invite guests who are interested in gardening.
92. Implement smaller study groups which meet in libraries, delis, coffee establishments or homes.
93. Plant gardens with signs by “______Garden Club”. Include website address on sign.
94. Hold a Flower Show and invite Youth and Non-Members for involvement in Horticulture, Floral Design and Educational Exhibits. (Ask your District Director for assistance in finding a Flower Show Judge to mentor your Club if you have never done a Show before.)
95. Start a Flower Arranging Guild and invite the public to learn/practice a monthly floral design.
96. Have a village or city beautification theme in your town or city. Partner with city officials or downtown authorities.
97. Give a “free” one year Membership.
98. Have a Plant Auction or Exchange for your Club Members and the Public. (Spring and Fall)
99. Have a Landscape Nursery Tour; perhaps they will give a workshop jointly for your Club and the public.
100. Invite Non-Members to assist in community service project
101. Have winter beautification projects: Christmas lighting contest or home decorated for the holidays, decorate business or public building, have signage and leave brochures, website information.
102. Wear your Michigan Garden Club, Inc. pins or Club Nametags at Events and Meetings.
103. Consider mixed groups: Men and women, couples, and youth (teens).
104. Emphasize our National Garden Clubs, Inc. Courses which go way beyond just our Gardening Consultants to Landscape Design and Environmental Consultants as well as Accredited Flower Show Judges.

105. Ask a local self-defense expert to conduct a special workshop to be sponsored by your Club or Home Improvement Store to do an event on Energy Efficiency for Homes. Advertise.

106. Have small group connectors within the club such as Euchre, Book Club, Quilting, Knitting, Art, Hiking, etc.

107. Divide your Board into Membership teams and give them specific assignments for New Member recruitment and their involvement in the Club.

108. Have an Architect do a Special Program on products and designs for an eco-friendly and energy efficient home. Advertise.

109. Check last year’s Membership list. Call or send a reminder note to Members who have not renewed their Membership. Maybe they’ve been too busy or overlooked request. Remind them of upcoming events.

110. Have both day and evening or Saturday Meetings so working Members can join your Club.

111. Use the National Garden Clubs, Inc., Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. and Central Region Awards system. Review the lists to match the committees in your Club. Send in the required information for judging as a standard to produce high quality projects and programs in your Club. There are some financial awards given annually. Increase your Club and Member pride.

112. The Club Business card (see example below) has been a very popular way to have Club Members involved in the Membership process. Each Member is given the cards to hand out to those interested when in the community. These are inexpensive to print in a large quantity.

Continue to recruit throughout the year. Prospective Members move into the community or Volunteers are looking to find a commitment.

**Example: Club Business Card**

( ) Garden Club

Please join us!

What: Garden Club Meeting
When: 2nd Wednesday of Month – 10:00 a.m.
Where:  
Contact: Jane Gardener 989-555-5555

Please plan to attend our next meeting for fun, fellowship and educational activities.
EXAMPLES: PROSPECTIVE MEMBER AND WELCOME LETTERS

Follow up Email or Letter

President/Membership Chairman/Corresponding Secretary
Club Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Date
Prospective Club Member’s Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Name of Prospective Garden Club Member)

Thank you for attending our Meeting last_______. We appreciate you taking time to meet with our Club to learn more about our projects and activities in the community. Our objective is to promote the love of gardening, floral and landscape design, civic and environmental responsibility.

Please consider visiting us again at our next Meeting on_______at_____. We will be having a Program or Speaker on_______________.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like additional information on our Club. Enclosed /Attached is a Membership Application for your use.

Sincerely,
Name
Title

Welcome Email or Letter

President/Membership Chairman/Corresponding Secretary
Club Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Date
New Club Member’s Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Name of New Garden Club Member)

We are so pleased to have you become a Member of the_______Garden Club. We are sure you will enjoy the time spent with fellow gardeners and sharing your ideas of gardening with us. Our Club meets the _______of each month. One of the highlights of the summer is _______________. In the winter, we are busy getting ready for________________. Our Meetings are filled with Speakers and fun things to make for our gardens.

If you have any questions, please feel free to speak to one of your mentors (names and phone numbers) or any Member of the Club. We are looking forward to getting to know you better.

Sincerely,
Name
Title

REGISTER FOR “MEMBERS ONLY” ON THE MGC WEBSITE

You will need a Password to view:

- Facts and Information - The MGC Board Minutes, Bylaws, Directories, Handbook, Membership Benefits and State Life Members.
- Forms - Club of Distinction/President’s Report, Financial Report Forms, Judging Sheets, Sign Order and Youth Gardening Club Registration.
- Ideas to Increase Membership and other Aids
- Member Events and News
- Photo Gallery - Members
- Programs and Projects - Legislation, Flower Arranging Lessons, Steps to a Flower Show, Flower Show Schedule Booklet
- Writer’s Corner

Password Directions: Go to www.michigangardenclubs.org. Left hand column (Bottom of the List) “Member Registration” Look for your Club’s City and your Club’s name. Click “Join.” Fill out the form. Write down your user name and password. Click Register and read the confirmation page when it appears.
**TEAMWORK AND JOB COLLABORATION**

**A Story about Time Expectations**  A Workshop Presenter once explained when joining an organization, volunteer jobs were listed with the annual time expectations. She chose to be called 4 times a year to take a salad for luncheons. Because she worked, she would take the salad the night before and drop it off, picking her dish up on the way home. Our Members are busy, appreciate structure and organization; and knowing their time commitment is not open ended.

**Written Committee and individual job descriptions are important** and often overlooked. **Job Descriptions include the Job Title, Last Revision, Responsibilities, Qualifications and Time Commitment.** The more information you have for your Members upfront, the better prepared and motivated they will be for the job they take on. Make sure the person currently holding the position revises the written description to reflect the duties actually performed. Our Clubs have many types of Committees (see Page 20). Kent Garden Club shares a “Projects, Committees, and Classes” Reference sheet they give all New Members (on Page 21) as a brief overview in the Membership packets. An example Job Description for a “Membership Chair” is on Page 22.

**Teamwork and Job Collaboration** work well in our Garden Club settings when job descriptions are broken down into achievable parts. Consider these types of commitments in the chart below from *Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Collaborate Today, Thrive Tomorrow* by Jill Friedman Fixler, 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title, Description</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job Sharing</strong></td>
<td>Serve as one volunteer sharing responsibilities and splitting the time, providing coverage for each other; schedule can be prearranged or worked out among themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rotation</strong></td>
<td>Specified but negotiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Segmentation</strong></td>
<td>Negotiated time commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seasonal</strong></td>
<td>Can be time limited or ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substitute</strong></td>
<td>Episodic or short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Team Volunteering</strong></td>
<td>Organization’s high season assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultant</strong></td>
<td>On demand to fill in or be on-call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Virtual</strong></td>
<td>Time limited or ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Kent Garden Club** shares a “Projects, Committees, and Classes” Reference sheet they give all New Members (on Page 21) as a brief overview in the Membership packets. An example Job Description for a “Membership Chair” is on Page 22.
**Standing Committees**

- Artistic Design
- Audit/Financial Review
- Awards
- Beautification
- Birthdays
- Board Advisor
- Book Review
- Books of Evidence/Awards
- Budget
- Bylaws
- Children's Education
- Communication
- Community Education
- Community Liaison
- Contributions and Special Projects
- Courtesy and Hospitality
- Custodian
- Data Base
- Educational Moments
- Educational Outreach
- Email/Telephone Calling
- Fellowship
- Food Coordinator
- Field Trips
- Finance
- Friendship
- Fundraising
- Garden Planning
- Garden Maintenance
- Garden Therapy
- Grant
- Habitat for Humanity
- History, Archives or Scrapbook
- Hospice
- Hospitality
- Hostesses or Greeters
- Job Descriptions
- Junior Gardening
- Legislation
- Librarian
- Life Membership
- Membership/Mentors
- Memorial or Remembrance
- Merchandise
- New Member Orientation
- New Member Social
- Newsletter
- Nominating
- Parliamentarian
- Photographer
- Programs
- Publicity
- Refreshments
- Rest Area Beautification
- Scholarship
- Sharing Table
- Social Media
- Sunshine/Sunshine Sisters
- Telephone/Callers
- Transportation
- Ways and Means
- Website
- Workshop
- Yearbook
- Youth and Woodsy Owl

**Special Committees**

- All Around the City “In Bloom”
- Awards to deserving Front Yard Scapes
- Arbor Day
- Art Council Liaison
- Anniversary Celebration
- Birds
- Blue Star Memorial
- Chamber of Commerce Rep

**Education Groups**

- Floral Design
- Flower Show
- Horticulture
- Study Group Names: The Petal Pushers; The Lady Bugs

**Garden Walk**

- Advertisers/Sponsors
- Afterglow Party
- Design/Printing
- Garden Docents
- Garden Hostesses
- Garden Scouts
- Photography
- Refreshments
- Signs/Road Markers
- Ticket Sales

**City Planners**

- Conservation and Wildlife
- District Meeting
- Event Planners
- Festival of Trees
- Flower Show
- Frolicking Afar
- Gallivanting Gardeners
- Garden of the Month
- Healing Garden
- Installation
- Luncheons
- Member Flower Order
- National Convention
- New Member Brunch and Orientation
- Ox Roast
- Parade
- Plant It Pink
- Presidents’ Meeting
- Rotary Representative
- Spring Speaker
- State Convention
- Summer Picnic
- Veterans’ Memorial
- Yellow Ribbon Garden
FLORA FANS STUDY GROUP – Meet with members on various topics regarding horticulture and landscape design.

FLOWER DESIGN – Classes in all forms of floral design, from simple arrangements utilizing common flowers, to the intricate designs featured in many standard flower show classes. Participants will learn designs, plant materials, flower conditioning, container selection and use of mechanics.

FLOWER SHOW – The Committee will plan and stage a Standard Flower Show (every other year), including design, horticulture and educational exhibits.

GARDEN THERAPY –Ken-O-Sha – The Committee plans and assists special-needs students with crafts and projects relating to nature and horticulture.

GARDEN TOUR – The Committee will plan and coordinate a Garden Tour of home gardens and/or public landscaping for community education of plant material and design. This is a club fundraiser.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – The Committee will work with the local Habitat for Humanity organization to provide landscape design, materials, planting and maintenance information.

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON – The Committee will arrange for our yearly holiday luncheon in December, including menu selection, table arrangements and entertainment.

HISTORIAN – A member will collect photographs and materials pertaining to club activities to maintain the historical scrapbooks.

HOSTESSES – Every two years, members will be called upon to provide snacks and decorative arrangement at business meetings.

KEN-O-SHA – The Committee works with children who have special needs at Ken-O-Sha Center from October through May, using crafts and projects relating to nature and horticulture.

KGC SERIES – Members who teach classes in the community on horticulture, landscape design and floral design.

MEMBERSHIP – The Committee promotes and welcomes new members and maintains records of all members, their membership status and participation in activities.

NEWSLETTER – The Editor publishes the KENT THYMES, a monthly newsletter that includes current information on members and club activities; and articles on floral design, horticulture, environmental issues and nature.

PHOTOGRAPHER – A member who keeps a photographic log of club activities and events.

SPADE BRIGADE – Members who plant and maintain five KGC gardens throughout the community.

TELEPHONE – The Committee is responsible for occasional communications between members on club concerns or activities not otherwise sent in the newsletter or by electronic email.

WEBSITE – The Committee is responsible for keeping the website current on club activities.

WREATH SALE – The Committee will organize and coordinate the annual Wreath Sale, including suppliers, advertising, promotions, and order pickup. This is a club fundraiser.

YEARBOOK – The Committee will compile information and produce the club membership Yearbook annually, for distribution in June (the beginning of the fiscal year).

*Please keep this information for future reference
**MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON**

**Position Summary/Objectives or Overview:**
Manage the membership function to successfully retain members and achieve an increase in club membership. Create a Membership Recruitment Plan in collaboration with the Board. Guide the activities of the Garden Club Members to assist in membership promotion, recruitment and outreach.

**Revision Date:** 2/1/2014

**Responsible to the President, Board and Club Members**

**Responsibilities:**
- Form a Membership Committee and work with them throughout your term.
- Update a monthly list of New Members and enter the information into the Club Member database. Complete and send in the *Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. New Member Form* available on the website.
- Maintain current and updated contact information for all Members. Send email changes to President, Corresponding Secretary and Yearbook Chair. Use information to update *Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. Rosters due on June 1st* annually.
- Respond to requests for information about Membership through telephone calls, personal contacts, email and correspondence.
- Maintain and develop Membership/Promotional materials: Applications, informational brochures and flyers with the assistance of the First Vice President and Publicity Chair.
- Have a Membership Table at all monthly meetings for Attendance Sign-In Sheets, Club applications and brochures.
- Prepare Membership Kits for Chairs to take to Flower Shows, Garden Walks, Fundraisers, etc. with all Club information for membership recruitment.
- Plan prospective member events and activities including an annual Membership event/meeting in May and another during the Holiday Luncheon.
- Prepare New Member packets and distribute to each New Member.
- Pair each New Member with a Mentor or Buddy.
- Schedule New Members to attend the New Member Orientation.
- Send Welcome Letters to New Members.
- Serve as a Member of the Board and attend the regular monthly meetings.
- Represent the Club in the community.
- Review and keep records for the next Incoming Membership Chairman, then Mentor.
- Get Board approval before ordering or purchasing any new Membership materials.

**Requirements:**
- Must have reliable email skills.
- Possess good organizational skills

**Time**
- 10-15 hours per Month
The idea for the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan (FGCM, now Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.) was conceived at a meeting on June 30, 1931 at the Women's League Building in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Forty representatives of 15 existing garden clubs in Michigan were present at the meeting, where a nominating committee for the new organization was appointed and a secretary and temporary president chosen. The first formal meeting took place in October of 1931 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Federation's first president, Mrs. Joseph Dexter, who later became president of the National Council of State Garden Clubs in 1941, was instrumental in laying the groundwork for many of the projects the organization was to undertake. Due to her efforts and those of her successors, by 1941 the organization had grown from its original 15 clubs to 121 clubs, with a membership of between five and six thousand.

The first bulletin of the organization was published in December, 1931. This later became its official publication, “Thru the Garden Gate.”

During World War II many of the programs that had been started were put on hold for the duration of the war. Several garden clubs in Michigan disbanded, but new members joined and the Federation continued. The Victory Garden program became its primary project and many members volunteered at the Red Cross, Bond drives, and at various camps and hospitals. The Federation was incorporated in 1941 and became the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan, Inc.

Following the war, the Victory Gardens program continued as the Peace Gardens and other projects were begun. These included work on the Michigan section of the Blue Star Memorial Highway (completed in 1946), the "Help for Holland" and "Help for Finland and Lapland" programs in which quantities of tools, seeds, fertilizer, and insecticides were sent to the Norwegian countries, and the planting of 1,254 Freedom Gardens following the government's call for growing more vegetables in 1947.

Conservation has always been a primary concern for the organization. Its first Conservation Conference took place in 1934 in Lansing, Michigan after the State Department's declaration that if 100 women could be found who were interested in learning about conservation, it would come and give a comprehensive program. These conferences continued yearly and beginning in 1947 were held at the Higgins Lake Conference center. The first Conservation Training School for Teachers took place at Higgins Lake that year as well. In 1941 the Federation began the Loda Lake Sanctuary, the first wildlife sanctuary of the Forest Service in the Great Lakes Region, and several other initiatives followed. One of the biggest of these was the purchase by FGCM in 1980 of a large tract of land on Lake Huron known as Grass Bay. This purchase, and subsequent land grants, are managed by the Nature Conservancy and have helped to secure many miles of protected shoreline along the lake.

Education has also been one of the priorities of the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan. The first Flower Show School was organized in 1945 to standardize the judging of flower shows in the state (it was then called the Judging School Committee). Many more of these schools emerged, particularly in the
early 1950s, when the Federation's Garden Therapy program was at its beginning. The first Landscape Design School was instituted in 1958 and a Landscape Critics Council was formed in 1961. A Landscape Design School was founded in Holland, Michigan in the same year. Also in 1961, an organization was created to manage scholarship funds and support students of horticulture, environmental education, and related fields. This was known as the Federation of the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan. It was incorporated in 1961 and merged with the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan, Inc. in 2004.

In 1976 the first two Schools of Gardening were taught by Mrs. Paul Dunn. Upon completion of four courses, graduates were awarded certificates as Horticultural Consultants. These were the first of the Gardening Study Courses that the organization has continued to the present. A Gardening Consultant's Council was formed in 1980.

Through youth activities, education, celebrations, and campaigns, Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. has and continues to play a major role in raising awareness about environmental issues, sustaining conservation initiatives, and beautifying the state of Michigan. Some of their involvements that were not mentioned above include Arbor Day, Michigan Garden Week, the establishment of Public Gardens, Roadside Beautification, the Frederick Meijer Gardens, the Daffodil Project, the Loda Lake Nature Preserve, and the Jo Russell Memorial Wildflower Project.

**MEMBER ATTENDANCE**

*Attendance is Important to the Club because:*

Lots of Members in attendance mean more involvement in Club activities, more interested volunteers, more community resources and a place where everyone would be proud to invite a new Member.

- A Member who attends contributes, has greater ownership and knowledge about the Club.
- Vibrant Clubs enhance the quality of life in your town or city.
- It makes it easier to get good programs and better speakers when many are in attendance.
- It facilitates the recruiting of New Members. New Members bring their acquaintances and new ideas.
- Good attendance provides more fellowship, networking opportunities and resources.
- It provides more volunteers for Club service projects, leadership, teamwork and job sharing.
- It builds a positive club image with the reputation of being “an active Club.”
- It provides better opportunity for input and ideas by a greater number of Members.
- It makes meetings more fun.

*Attendance is important to the Club Member because:*

- It is a great place to meet and get to know others in your area with similar interests.
- Leadership roles are often available with chances to learn new skills in Committees.
- Personal growth is fostered through education, interaction and participation.
- Regular attendance creates continuity so Club activities and opportunities are better understood.
- Service to others makes a difference in Members lives as well as the community.
- Lifelong friendships are often developed.

**Accentuate the Positive - Eliminate the Negative**

- Respect your members who attend by starting your Meetings on time and ending on time.
- Use a pre-printed agenda. Club Members and Chair persons can come prepared.
- Do not put down members for shortcomings in front of others. But, do pat them on the back in front of others for a job well done.
- Do have great programs and promote the upcoming programs in your email or newsletter. Use fun, interesting and a variety of program ideas and styles from Power Point to Hands on, etc.
- Do not ignore new members and guests. Treat them as you would like to be treated; make them feel appreciated. They should leave the Meeting feeling like they are already part of the Club.
- Do ask your members to invite their friends, co-workers and relatives. Show your appreciation when they come and recognize them by introducing them during the Meeting.
- Do not complain at meetings; do not be a pessimist. If a challenge exists, work behind the scenes to correct it.
Share your Success Stories
with your District Director
(2013-2015 Term)

MGC District I Director
Sherry Sanelli
78966 Harvest Lane
Bruce Twp., Michigan 48065-1821
586-752-3734
ssanelli@att.net

MGC District III Director
Karen Gentile
390 Midlakes Road
Plainwell, Michigan 49080-9137
269-664-6555
saturnus@mei.net

MGC District VI Director
Ronnie Dush
4676 W. Lower Road
Saint Johns, Michigan 48879-9474
989-307-0248
ronniedush@gmail.com

MGC District IIA Director
Becki Jaeger
114 Stony Ridge Court
Hillsdale, Michigan 49242-1154
517-437-7171 or 517-250-7722
becki_jaeger@sbcglobal.net

MGC District IIB Director
Barbara Benner
114 Sherbrooke Court
Hastings, Michigan 49058-1079
269-945-2986
craftyladybarb@hotmail.com

MGC District IV Director
Lynn Miller
427 Adaway SE
Ada, Michigan 49301-7834
616-676-2274
lmmiller.garden@yahoo.com

MGC District V Director
Kathleen Johnson
5146 River Road
Manistee, Michigan 49669
231-398-2840
littleriverkj@yahoo.com

Where to find more Resources

Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc.
www.michigangardenclubs.org
Register to view “Members Only”

National Garden Clubs, Inc.
www.gardenclub.org

Central Region
National Garden Clubs, Inc.
www.ngccentralregion.org

Note: Replace this sheet when term of District Directors has been completed.

GOOD, BETTER, BEST; NEVER LET IT REST; TILL YOUR GOOD IS BETTER AND YOUR BETTER IS BEST.

UNKNOWN AUTHOR