

# ***GARDENING FROM THE HEART***



## **HORTICULTURE THERAPY FOR CITIZENS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

**A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM SPONSORED BY  
THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA  
MEN'S GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA**

# **GUIDELINES ON HOW TO ESTABLISH A CLUB PARTNERSHIP**

## **CLUB OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS ADOPT A PROGRAM:**

Explore within your community and find a group of disadvantaged youth or adults with whom your club members would be willing to establish a mutual horticultural interest. Don't forget to investigate all possibilities, children's home's, nursing homes, ARC, county care, veterans homes.

The enthusiastic decision for a club to adopt and support a Gardening From The Heart (GFTH) relationship with an institution is an important one.

Develop a prospect list for the GFTH Committee.

Elect or appoint a club Gardening From The Heart Chairperson.

## **GFTH CHAIRMAN MEETS WITH OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS:**

Establish an initial agreement with the mutual support of the Chairman. This is important. Club manpower and financial support of the program are related.

A decision should be made as to which institution will be contacted as a partnership prospect.

A team of at least two club officers and directors in addition to the club GFTH Chairman is recommended to meet with the director of the institution.

## **MEETING WITH GFTH INSTITUTIONAL TOP MANAGEMENT:**

Understanding and support from the institutional top management is critical to an on-going relationship.

Most clubs using the program have found that when the institution has a staff gardening director, who oversees the project, more activities can be accomplished.

GFTH Committee Members are advisors to the institutional garden director.

Horticultural therapy dividends to the institution are the number one dividend of the club partnership with an institution.

## **INITIAL GARDENING PLAN IS ESTABLISHED:**

An agreement is made between the GFTH Chairman and the institution garden director as to the plan. Starting small is important.

Also agreeing on the time schedule, seeds, plants, tools, etc., is important. A suitable activity site is the first decision.

# **MANAGEMENT SUGGESTIONS**

## **A GARDEN PROJECT**

### **THE GARDEN**

The ideal area has a plot of fertile soil with sun exposure, is fenced off and includes ample water supply.

Individual Garden Plots: These have special merit as gardeners take pride in "their garden", identified by name sign, roped off, etc.

Community Garden Plot: Many times this is part of the institution. The GFTH garden plot provides vegetables and floral displays, etc. (Reference and example of plot shown.)

### **DISTRIBUTION OF GARDEN PRODUCE**

What is to be done with individual or community garden produce? To permit waste would not be good for participants. An ideal situation is for arrangements to be made for the purchase of garden produce from gardeners with credit being given to the provider, etc.

### **RECOGNITION OF GARDENER ACHIEVEMENTS**

Gardener achievement recognition is highly recommended. Some gardeners will grow outstanding vegetables or floral displays. Perhaps a contest can be arranged. A Fall Recognition Program to present achievement ribbons, etc., could be arranged. Keep in mind, though, to present participation ribbons to gardeners who did not "win" achievement ribbons.

### **BUILDING AND SUSTAINING CLUB AND INSTITUTION INTEREST**

Periodic sharing of Gardening From The Heart status with club officers and directors at the monthly meeting, as well as with club members is important. Also, periodic articles in the club bulletin should be made.

### **FUNDING - SUPPORT OF PROGRAM**

Adequate funding by the club as well as by the related institution is essential for success.

### **THE CLUB**

The GFTH becomes a club operating budget item, expense as well as revenue wise. Many times the clubs annual plant sale, or other fund-raising event is advertised and publicized in support of the GFTH program. In doing this, it gives special purpose to the event and helps create public support.

### **CLUB MEMBERS CONTRIBUTIONS**

Many opportunities avail themselves to ask members to "share" plants, or seeds to help the program.

### **NURSERY & GARDEN CENTER CONTRIBUTIONS**

If asked by the "right" person, seeds and plants can be obtained.

## **THE INSTITUTION**

Predicated on the Horticulture Therapy dividends of GFTH as well as the activity values of gardening, the institution should budget funds for the program.

## **TGOA/MGCA NATIONAL GRANTS**

The National office maintains a GFTH Fund, which is comprised of funds voluntarily given from various sources by individuals and organizations, who are interested in furthering the purposes for which GFTH has been instituted. These funds are available to GFTH programs initiated by affiliated clubs or members at large for (1) start-up (beginning a new program) purposes, and (2) grants for on-going programs. Grants are available subject to the availability of funds. New programs will have first priority in regard to grants. Clubs are encouraged to obtain funding locally when at all possible. In the event of failure of a program using a GFTH grant, any unused grant funds shall be returned to the National office.

## **NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION GRANTS**

Each year this non-profit organization makes available, by application, several hundred grants for gardening of all types. Seeds, tools, etc., are presented to selected winners. Deadlines for applications are EARLY JANUARY each year. Applications may be obtained from NGA, 180 Flynn Ave., Burlington, VT 05401, or TGOA, P.O. Box 241, Johnston, IA 50131-0241

## **NEWS MEDIA PUBLICITY - A GFTH CLUB OPPORTUNITY**

Gardening From The Heart is **NEWS** . . . especially as related to an event. Metro paper garden editions would be immediately interested in the reader interest outreach of an active program.

REMEMBER . . . for the most part, institutions participating with GFTH programs do **not** permit use of the names of persons included in the pictures taken.

Radio and TV coverage is also possible, particularly for some special events. The Club Publicity Chairman can "open the door" for media coverage. And most institutions have staff news media persons who can expedite the publicity opportunity.

## **SHARE YOUR STORY**

THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA / MEN'S GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA is interested in your club GFTH program or project. Won't you tell us about it? Send your story, along with photos, to TGOA/MGCA, P.O. Box 241, Johnston, IA 50131-0241.

# **GARDENING FROM THE HEART**

## **AN OPPORTUNITY OF EXCELLENCE WITH DIVIDENDS**

"In ancient Egypt, physicians prescribed walks in gardens for disturbed people. During the 18th Century, Spanish psychiatric hospitals reported mentally ill patients benefit from work in the garden. Similarly, in colonial America, it was a common custom for mentally ill patients to be employed in growing and harvesting crops on the grounds of the institutions. Following World War II, numerous greenhouses were constructed and programs started in state and federal institutions for use by the mentally ill and physically disabled clients. Horticulture therapy programs have expanded to include many persons of all ages and rehabilitation has been brought about."

### **DIVIDENDS OF PARTICIPATION**

When a club reaches out a helping hand to emotionally disturbed or disadvantaged youth, or to the handicapped or otherwise disabled children or adults, or even to the golden aged persons in retirement or health care homes, a gardeners depth of satisfaction is discovered.

Participation in such activity through gardening accrues dividends not only of seeing a plant grow, but the hope, self-knowledge and confidence of all involved. Nature and plant related activities provide a positive therapy for "special" involved persons.

So a club sponsoring a GFTH program grows with pride and *"service to others is the rent paid for space occupied."* Gardening From The Heart is a good turn of excellence for such a club attracts the attention of the news media not only for the club, but also for the program and a favorable public image results for both.

### **SCOPE OF OPPORTUNITIES**

Youth or adult institutions for the emotionally disturbed, the disadvantaged, handicapped are all within a clubs Gardening From The Heart partnership opportunity. So also are golden aged persons in retirement or health care homes. Administrative persons in all institutions must understand the opportunity of horticulture therapy and what a club can do, so also the need for a staff person to be the coordinator.

### **CLUBS USING THE PROGRAM**

Many of our affiliated clubs are using the program, but we never hear their story. Some clubs may be involved and not even realize what they are doing is within the scope of a Gardening From The Heart program.

One of the goals of the TGOA/MGCA GFTH committee is to establish a record of these programs so when information is requested a helpful response can be made.

Current information indicates that the following clubs are involved in Gardening From The Heart programs or projects: Tucson, Green Valley, and Phoenix, Arizona; Akron, Erie County, Greater Toledo, Lima, and Youngstown, Ohio; Green Bay, Wisconsin; Overland Park, Kansas; Greater Kansas City, Missouri; San Marcos, Texas; and Spokane, Washington.

Other clubs involved in such programs are asked to advise TGOA/MGCA Headquarters of their programs and indicate the chairman and the type of program and group you are working with.

### **WHAT DOES THE PROGRAM COST?**

Commitment of the club officers and directors to support the program with an active advisory committee with an enthusiastic and believing chairman. The most important step in establishing a partnership with any group is an agreement as to mutual responsibilities related. Start with a plan on a small scale and then expand your involvement. The appointment of an institution gardening director by the administration is a critical first

step in establishing the partnership also. The club's GFTH committee then relates to that director, who in turn manages the persons involved in the project. Financial cost - yes. It should be a club budget item. Annual club plant sales and other sources of income, as well as the outreach of the institution and the club to secure contributed gardening items are also related.

## **HELP FOR THE CLUB**

A Gardening From The Heart visual relating some of the current programs, also the why and how of the opportunity of excellence is available from TGOA/MGCA. L.F. Petersen, Sr., originator of the program, and a member of the 1986 committee, prepared this helpful presentation which was introduced at the TGOA/MGCA Convention in July 1986.

A Gardening From The Heart tri-fold manual offering suggestions and procedures to clubs in order to expand in this area of opportunity within their communities is also available from TGOA/MGCA.

# **GUIDELINES TO ESTABLISHING A HORTICULTURAL THERAPY PROGRAM**

By Paula D. Relf

Horticultural therapy programs have proven to be effective in a wide range of settings, including programs for the mentally retarded, physically handicapped, elderly, emotionally disturbed, substance abusers, delinquents and disadvantaged. Although the goals and activities of these programs may differ in certain aspects, there are basic factors which should be taken into consideration in planning programs in any of these settings.

## **CONSIDERATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL**

1. Consider the abilities of the individuals within the program including both physical and mental limitations.
2. Keep in mind that all members of the group will not have an equal interest in plants. Encourage them to participate in related activities such as building bird houses, collecting insects, stones, etc.
3. Encourage group projects which make the best use of an individual's talents and abilities. For example, a horticultural exhibit would present an opportunity to plan the exhibit, gather the materials, build the displays and explain them to visitors. At the same time, it would promote social interaction, give group members an opportunity to show leadership qualities and teach cooperation.
4. Design your program so each individual works according to his needs and abilities, making it possible for them to accept their achievements as the result of their personal capabilities.
5. As much as possible, plan the activities together. Encourage the participants to make decisions. Use your knowledge of horticulture to guide the direction of the activities.
6. Design the project so the participants can manage most of the work themselves. Each person will gain more from the program by doing things themselves.
7. Avoid establishing competition between individuals by giving prizes or awards. REMEMBER... A fine, healthy plant and a word of praise will foster pride and satisfaction.

## **MAINTENANCE OF THE GOALS**

1. Avoid "busy" work. Every activity should have a definite function and be an integral part of the entire program.
2. Avoid placing too much value on the end product of an activity whether it is produce from the garden or a floral arrangement. It is the involvement that is important, not the finished product.
3. Remember that the purpose of the program is not to make gardeners or florists out of the individuals in the program. It is to encourage them to expand themselves through exploration with plants.
4. Avoid too scientific or complex an approach to horticulture. Present information about plants that will increase the enjoyment of gardening and encourage further exploration.

5. Utilize projects which can be completed in a short time so the participants will get immediate reward for their efforts. But, also include projects that are long term and teach them to think in terms of future needs and activities.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNIQUES**

1. Plan projects far enough in advance, for example, a year-round program. Seeds can be started in early spring indoors in a greenhouse or sunny window for a summer flower garden from which flowers can be dried for winter craft projects.

2. In motivating group members, utilize modification of activities with which they are familiar. For example, horticulture bingo, pin the flower on the plant, etc.

3. Exploit the passive benefits of a garden therapy program. Individuals who cannot go outside and work in the garden may profit from the tranquility of sitting near a window and observing nature at work in the garden.

4. Make use of flower shows and other exhibits to give individuals an opportunity to display their talents. It is often possible to incorporate your program into a local garden show, so the people in your program can display their horticultural abilities along with non-handicapped amateur gardeners.

5. Encourage the participation of local garden clubs, nurseries, and florists. They often have materials they would be willing to donate.

6. Know each activity thoroughly - be able to present it in a clear, organized fashion. Present it completely once as a demonstration then repeating as necessary to teach members of the group.

7. In planning a vegetable garden, consider how the produce will be used (i.e. consumed on the premises, or elsewhere, sold, given away) and what facilities area available to handle it after harvest.

8. Make use of public and private parks, gardens, arboreta, and greenhouses for field trips.

9. Incorporate projects to show interrelationship between various aspects of nature with emphasis on how this effects plants. Study soils, insects, birds, water, etc.

10. Make use of various audio visual materials available. Slide shows, movies, magazines, and garden catalogs are of great interest to all gardeners. They provide excellent activities for winter days.

11. Remember that inexpensive materials will provide as much therapeutic value as more expensive ones. Flowers grown by the participants are of more value in a flower arranging class than roses from the florist.

12. Be sincere and enthusiastic. If you are not already an enthusiastic gardener, try it! You'll love it! Then share it with others.



The following activities have been found suitable for horticultural therapy programs with disabled and disadvantaged individuals. Note that these activities can be modified and adapted to suit the nature and degree of handicaps of the individuals involved and the goals of the program.

Indoor Arts and Crafts (Individuals and/or groups)

- a. Model gardens.
- b. Artificial flowers using paper, ribbon, cloth, plastic films, etc.
- c. Collages of plants from garden catalogs and magazines, i.e. wall hangings, trash boxes, etc.
- d. Needlework projects decorating garden gloves, making aprons for yard work, cross-stitch flowers, etc.
- e. Jewelry making.
- f. Weaving with natural materials.
- g. Funny figure designs using seed pods, pine cones, apples, potatoes, etc.
- h. Wall plaques such as seed mosaics, seed pod pictures, and dried flower plaques.
- i. Stationery and note cards using such techniques as leaf and flower prints, potato block prints, pressed flowers.
- j. Book marks - pressed flowers encased in clear plastic.
- k. Sachet bags filled with herbs, pine needles, and flowers.
- l. Plants made from plastic milk jugs, coffee cans, sand castings.
- m. Paper-mache fruits, vegetables, vases, etc.
- n. Plaster of paris casts of wild flowers, ferns, etc.
- o. Bulletin board displays.
- p. Drying flowers.
- q. Christmas crafts such as ornaments from seed pods, wreaths, cards, etc.

**THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA  
MEN'S GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA**

**Developmentally Challenged  
Physically Challenged  
Emotionally Disturbed  
Citizens With Special Needs  
Veterans Homes - Hospitals  
Golden Aged**

**An Opportunity  
Of  
Excellence**

"Gardening is supportive to therapeutic readjustment"  
Dr. Carl F. Menninger, Menninger Clinic, Topeka, Kansas

**THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA  
MEN'S GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA  
Box 241, Johnston, Iowa 50131**

**GARDENING FROM THE HEART**

Mail initial request and supporting documentation to GFTH Committee Chair

**GRANT APPLICATION**

CLUB \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ REGION \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

NAME & ADDRESS OF ORGANIZATION (CLIENT) BEING SERVED \_\_\_\_\_

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

1. Start-up grants must be accompanied by a signed copy of the agreement between the club and client. Agreement should set forth responsibilities of both parties and should describe means of financing the project.
2. Additional grants are available.
3. Project must benefit a group of persons that are developmentally or physically challenged, emotionally disturbed and/or with special needs, ie Veterans homes, hospitals and golden aged.
4. Completed report with photos and copies of any project publicity should be mailed to :  
TGOA/MGCA, P.O. BOX 241, JOHNSTON, IOWA, 50131-0241

BRIEF HISTORY OF PROJECT OR START-UP PLANS: \_\_\_\_\_

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS INCLUDING AVERAGE NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED: \_\_\_\_\_

ITEMIZED PROJECTED USE OF GRANT: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF CLUB MEMBERS PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK: \_\_\_\_\_

PRIOR MONIES EXPENDED ON THIS PROJECT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL FUNDS INVESTED OR PLEDGED TO THIS PROJECT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT REQUESTED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Executive Board: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Disapproved by Executive Board: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_