

This manual is designed to assist you in the organization of a Garden Club in your community.

By using it as a guide and following the step-by-step suggestions, with help from nearby club officers, national directors and the staff at the national headquarters, you will be able to organize a club in your city or area with the least amount of difficulty.

People in your area need an orderly and systematic manner in which they can learn and share gardening knowledge and experiences, encourage responsibility in maintaining plants and enhance community pride through gardening projects, and fellowship with other gardeners and families.

Sponsored by:

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

**P. O. BOX 241
5560 MERLE HAY ROAD
JOHNSTON, IOWA 50131-0241
PHONE: (515) 278-0295
FAX: (515) 278-6245
Email: tgoasecy@dwx.com**

Updated 12/17/06

THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA

MEN'S GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA

A horticultural society; a friendly group of people, who share common interests in the art of gardening. They may be doctors lawyers, carpenters, postal workers engineers, corporation presidents, or shopkeepers; but they share a common interest, a common goal, which is the love of and participation in the therapy that gardening affords.

People who are concerned about the environment, conservation, beautification, and want to learn more about plants, soil, controls, insects, diseases, and the art and science of gardening.

They meet to exchange freely their ideas, knowledge, and experiences and to swap plants and ideas and to enjoy good fellowship and good wholesome fun in their common interests.

They are concerned about others and exhibit concern and love by instructing, demonstrating, and educating through seminars, plant shows, and projects of community beautification and conservation.

In an organized club it is possible to undertake improvements in home gardening, landscaping, and beautification in your city, state, and nation-wide projects.

SUGGESTED PROJECTS

- ❖ Beautification of open spaces, vacant lots, hospital grounds, school grounds, road sides, etc., with flower beds, trees, shrubs, and groundcover.
- ❖ Development of nature and bike trails.
- ❖ Working with youth in backyard gardens, judging Big Pumpkin and Giant Sunflower contests and related activities.
- ❖ Sponsoring and participating in flower and garden shows and qualifying, through instructional courses, as accredited judges for horticulture shows.
- ❖ Holding "how to" clinics, seminars, workshops for the public.
- ❖ Establishing plant sales.
- ❖ Developing garden tours.
- ❖ Recognizing outstanding achievements in club, civic, and region levels by members and others. Presenting awards for these achievements.
- ❖ Participate in therapy for the disabled through our "Gardening From The Heart" program.

A group of all ages and backgrounds, who love and want to learn more about gardening. They are both amateur and professional gardeners who meet monthly to have horticultural programs, discussions, and demonstrations. Speakers can be members of the club, or experts in various areas of horticulture in the community.

THE TIE THAT BINDS

The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America is an educational, scientific, charitable organization, conceived by ten representatives from four independent clubs who met in Chicago on September 26, 1932. They realized there were many more people nation-wide, who enjoyed gardening and should band together from all parts of the United States, to share their experiences, knowledge, and wisdom in bringing the art of gardening to others.

We are not only interested as members, we are INVOLVED! We propagate good gardening, good gardeners and good ideas. TGOA/MGCA is a network of affiliated clubs and members, linked together by common interests, bonds of gardening, fellowship, and the love of sharing with each other.

The National Headquarters is centrally located in Johnston, Iowa, where a full-time staff handles business. All officers and directors serve on a voluntary basis.

TGOA/MGCA is funded through the payment of membership dues; interest from gifts, bequests, memorials, and life memberships. The sale of magazine advertising and a small profit on the sale of merchandise assists financially.

TGOA/MGCA accumulated experience and prestige can be of real assistance to the new club by providing:

- National newsletter - news of clubs and the organization.
- Optional full membership in the American Horticulture Society at a discount,
- Includes subscription to the *American Gardener Magazine*.
- Exclusive discounts, Gift Certificates and other offers for members; from major gardening vendors.
- Lending library of latest horticulture books.
- Program and aids - ideas for club officers.
- Region Conferences, Annual Conventions.
- Accredited judging schools for flower and vegetable shows.
- Exchange of club newsletters.
- Audio/Visual rental.
- Leadership opportunities.
- Photography contests.
- Gardening From The Heart program for citizens with special needs.
- National and Club Awards and Recognition.
- Youth Gardening Program.
- Lifelong friendships, fun, and fellowship.

The TGOA/MGCA Staff is prepared to assist you with promotional material and in any way possible assist in organizing your club.

SOURCES FOR MEMBERSHIP

To help you develop a prospect list from which you may solicit membership, we suggest the following:

- ❑ Friends and acquaintances at work.
- ❑ Fellow church members.
- ❑ Nurserymen, garden center owners and employees.
- ❑ Doctors, lawyers, bankers, teachers, county agents, soil conservationists.
- ❑ Neighbors, there is one on each side of you.
- ❑ Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions.
- ❑ 4-H leaders.
- ❑ City parks personnel.
- ❑ FFA and 4-H .
- ❑ Arboretum and special garden employees/employers.
- ❑ Garden editor of local newspaper, radio.
- ❑ Florists, hardware employees, local greenhouse/nursery owners.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

- ❑ Posting invitations on church, civic club, businesses bulletin boards.
- ❑ Notices in supermarkets, etc.
- ❑ Place the TGOA/MGCA National newsletter in doctors, dentists, lawyers, hospital waiting rooms.
- ❑ Senior Citizens groups.
- ❑ Booths at local garden/flower shows, and state fairs.
- ❑ Local newspaper, TV and Radio stations.
- ❑ Sponsor a garden clinic, garden tour or plant sale for the public.

IN THE BEGINNING - ORGANIZATION

- Call together 10 or more persons who will agree to serve as a nucleus for the club. Mail a version of form letter (page 18) and follow-up with a telephone call or personal visit. Use recommended agenda as a guide for the first meeting.
- Circulate a roster to get names and addresses of persons attending.
- Appoint a secretary to take notes.
- Ask each person to introduce himself/herself and tell a little about his/her gardening activities.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Appoint a nominating committee of three persons, asking them to report at the next meeting with names of persons who have agreed to serve the balance of the calendar year as president, vice president, secretary and treasurer.
- Ask for two or three volunteers to give short discussions or demonstrations on their favorite plants at the next meeting. (Keep in mind a county agent, nurseryman, etc., who could be called upon at the last minute to give a program.)
- Decide on meeting time and place (garden center, social room, cafeteria, school, church, members' home, etc.) It is best to have a firm commitment for a meeting place before your first meeting. Most places mentioned are available without charge. Meals would change this if you decide to make yours a breakfast, lunch, or dinner meeting.
- Ask each member present to bring a list of ten or more prospective members.
- Hand out sample copies of the TGOA/MGCA Newsletter and other printed material furnished by the TGOA/MGCA Office.
- Notify TGOA/MGCA Officers and Directors (names supplied by TGOA/MGCA Office) to seek their active participation.
- Explain membership dues for both local and TGOA/MGCA and initial charter fee .
- Sample news releases are enclosed (page 16 & 17) for use in obtaining local publicity.
- Urge necessity of making contacts of prospective members immediately, while enthusiasm is high. Anyone aware of the new club will lose interest if not contacted promptly.
- Suggest teams of two persons seek out new prospects.
- Suggest that teams might return to a pre-appointed place and time for coffee or lunch to discuss progress and share prospective member information.
- A minimum of 10 persons are required to charter a club. Keep working as teams until the minimum have signed, but more than the minimum will give a greater selection for officers and committee chairpersons.
- Urge all charter members to seek out and bring in new members.
- Explain the "Spade Club" and "Life Membership" program. (pages 11 & 12)

FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

EMPHASIZE

- Date, time and place of first "regular" meeting.
- The first regular meeting should be held 1-2 weeks after your organizational meeting. Keep the fire burning.
- Notify TGOA/MGCA Office and Region Director immediately of your first regular club meeting with specifics, i.e. the date, time, and place of your charter meeting.
- Forward your charter application, \$20.00 fee, and membership list (anyone signing before the official charter night will be included as a charter member, those signing up after the charter night will not be included as a charter member) so you will have your official charter ready for the charter meeting.
- As soon as all charter information, fee, and membership dues are received at TGOA/MGCA headquarters, your members will begin receiving the bimonthly newsletter.
- If a TGOA Officer or Director is available, it is good to invite them to your charter night as a participant.
- Every effort should be expended to be sure all charter members attend the charter meeting.
- Discuss a name for your club, to be accepted at the first regular meeting.
- Club officers and committee persons could be acted upon at the first regular meeting.
- Begin to prepare a list of ideas for club projects to be considered by members, however, do not load the new members down with too many projects in the beginning.
- Be prepared in advance, with good, informative, interesting, member participation club programs.

TO FOLLOW UP

- Publicize your next meeting, using news media, bulletin boards, post cards, etc.
- Urge every member to bring 2 or 3 guests to the first regular meeting. Follow this up with telephone calls and post card reminders.
- Make last minute checks on the slate of officers to be presented by the nominating committee. Check with speaker to be sure he/she is ready.

YOUR FIRST REGULAR MEETING

ADVANCED PREPARATION

- Arrive at meeting place early. Bring several plants or garden items as door prizes so it looks like a garden club meeting. You might use some plants as an identification contest. Have a coffee and cookies, etc., for the social get-together right after the meeting (if you do not meet for a meal).
- Have one or two key members greet everyone. This is essential at every meeting.

USE THE FOLLOWING AGENDA AS A GUIDE

- Ask each person present to introduce himself/herself and any guest.
- Circulate a roster or have it ready at the door for names/address/phone numbers.
- Repeat the aims, goals and purposes of the club and its meaning to the members.
- Ask for the nominating committee report. Elect officers.
- Turn the meeting over to the new President. Ask the new secretary to take minutes.
- Decide on the name of the club. Vote on it.
- Determine the amount of club dues. (Remember to include dues payable to TGOA/MGCA for national dues.) You will need some local monies in the beginning for supplies: stationery, etc. You might propose to the members the potential for subsidizing the dues in the future with plant sales, sale of TGOA/MGCA calendars, etc., which will decrease your local dues.
- Announce that dues should be paid at the close of the meeting, and have checks made payable to the club name. (Your treasurer will need to set up a bank account. When dues are received by TGOA/MGCA along with name and address of members, you will receive a computer printout of this information, and a membership card for each member.)
- Call for demonstrations or lecture by previously selected speaker.
- Announce time, place and program for next meeting. Encourage each person to bring a guest or two.
- Adjourn for social session and discussion of specimen plants. If door prizes were brought, hold drawing just before close of the meeting.
- Fill out the charter application for affiliation with TGOA/MGCA. Mail with charter fee of \$20.00 to: TGOA/MGCA, 5560 Merle Hay Road, Box 241, Johnston, Iowa 50131.

TO FOLLOW UP

- Open an account at the local bank in the name of the club.
- Provide for two signatures on each check.
- Have treasurer send check to TGOA/MGCA for the charter fee with charter application. Make out separate check for national dues.
- Only ten members are needed to charter a new club. Have treasurer send full and accurate names, addresses, including zip codes to TGOA/MGCA and include telephone numbers of officers, and the office in which they are serving.
- Club president should call the nominating committee used for the previous meeting and ask them to select a slate of three directors at the next meeting.
 - One director to serve 3 years.
 - One director to serve 2 years.
 - One director to serve 2 year.
- This election of directors prevents a complete turnover and insures continuity even when officers are changed each year.
- President should call a meeting of officers and directors and all others who wish to meet, for the purpose of selecting a program chairman (usually the first vice president) and subjects for programs for the remaining months of the year. Often a sponsor club will assist in this area. Have programs scheduled well in advance for the year.
- The President should decide on a date for Charter Night (if not already held) which is usually 30 days after the application is mailed to TGOA/MGCA. Charter night is usually a special meeting, and quite often a special dinner meeting.
- Delaying your Charter Night will allow ample publicity and time for existing members to bring in new members and guests.
- Publicity chairman, appointed by the President, should issue publicity for the next meeting. This will eventually be aided by a club newsletter.

SECOND MEETING

SAMPLE AGENDA

- Report of Nominating Committee and election of directors.
- Installation: charge new directors with reviewing TGOA/MGCA bylaws and suggested club bylaws as examples to follow in drawing up your club bylaws.
- Appoint committee chairmen and members for key committees, such as:
 - A. Calendar Sales
 - B. Community Projects
 - C. Flower and Garden Shows
 - D. Flower Study
 - E. Gardening From The Heart
 - F. Landscaping/Trees/Shrubs Study
 - G. Membership
 - H. Plant Sales & Seminars
 - I. Programs

- J. Publicity
- K. Reception and Hospitality
- L. Vegetable Study
- M. Youth Gardening

- 4. Announce date, place, and time of directors' meetings (usually open to members who may attend, but not vote).
- 5. Announce time, date, and place of next meeting, and subject of the program.
- 6. Guest speaker.
- 7. Social hour.

(NOTE: It is vitally important that in the beginning the more complex business of organization be taken care of in meetings. As you grow, it is best to keep the time consuming nature of business confined to the directors meetings, and announce results, and membership voting matters in the regular meeting. It is so important to utilize the major portion of each meeting to horticultural oriented programs with ample time for questions and answers and membership participation.

FOLLOW UP

- President, publicity chairman, and secretary should get together and produce a roster of members, and a newsletter publicizing the coming meeting. The newsletter can be expanded and improved gradually to contain gardening articles, member news, national news, etc.
- President begin promoting attendance at region meetings and annual TGOA/MGCA convention.
- If near the end of the calendar year, appoint a nominating committee to report no later than the November meeting, so new officers can be elected and installed in December. These officers need to be reported to TGOA/MGCA office as soon as elected.
- It is a good idea to plan your schedule so a list of club officers can be submitted to the TGOA/MGCA headquarters before the first of December, along with dues for the coming year. This will enable the office to mail supplies and information to the proper individuals for the new year.

THE BIG ONE ... CHARTER NIGHT!

- ❖ A Charter Committee should be set up consisting of 3 to 5 members from the new club, and if possible, 3 to 5 members from a sponsoring club.
- ❖ Charter meeting should be scheduled not less than six weeks following the organizational meeting. Allow the TGOA/MGCA office time to prepare and return a charter certificate.
- ❖ Invite a National/Region officer to serve as toastmaster or keynote speaker and the Director or Region President to present the charter to the club president.
- ❖ Arrange for the gold Spade Pin to be awarded to the member most responsible for organizing the club. Obtain pin from the TGOA/MGCA office.
- ❖ Present any Spade Club pins due members of the new club who have recruited two or more new members.
- ❖ Arrange for gifts, such as club president pin, gavel, etc., that may be presented.
- ❖ Be sure the Charter meeting program includes the reading of all charter members names, for the club history and due recognition. Members of a sponsoring club may also be members of the new club by paying local dues only.
- ❖ The sponsoring club must keep a close contact with the new club for at least one year and preferably more, to make certain the club functions properly as a well organized Garden Club, and to assist with programs, fundraisers, etc., when needed.
- ❖ The first anniversary of the new club (one year from charter) should be a happy occasion for both the new and sponsoring clubs. Make it a special affair.

Certainly not new to the organization, but new to you are two major functions of TGOA/MGCA the *Spade Club Program* and the *Life Membership Program*. Both are important facets which help to move the organization forward and to realize and acknowledge the efforts of its individual members. The Spade Club Program was designed to provide some incentive to each member for efforts in increasing membership through a solicitation program. The Program should reward and encourage members and to promote a close fellowship among the members. The most effective and long-lasting method of increasing membership is by personal contact through personal solicitation or direct referrals.

THE SPADE CLUB PROGRAM

1. Under the direction of the Club President with responsibility delegated to the membership chairman who will provide each member with necessary membership application forms.
2. The Membership Chairman should immediately report candidates for the program to the National Office on appropriate forms provided.
3. The requirements are: a) personally enroll two (2) or more NEW members during the calendar year b) to maintain membership in the program, enroll a minimum of two (2) each year thereafter.
4. Only sponsors who are listed on the appropriate form and received by the National Office will be credited as SPADE CLUB MEMBERS.
5. A spade lapel pin is issued free for the first time. A replacement or additional pins are available at nominal cost.
6. A ribbon is issued free of charge, which indicates the number of years a member has been in the Spade Club.
7. The single TGOA/MGCA member having sponsored the most new members in the current year, will receive a Plaque at the next year's Convention.

THE TROWEL AWARD

The Trowel Award is reserved for SPADE CLUB members who have gone the extra miles helping others enjoy garden club membership. A gold trowel lapel pin is sent to the Spade Club members when names of at least two new members (1st year members) have renewed national dues for the second year (to headquarters) ***no later than January 31st***.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE...

- ❖ The Life Membership Fund is managed by the Endowment & Investment Committee of TGOA/MGCA.
- ❖ Life Membership fees are placed in the Endowment Fund and as such the principal is never used as a budget item.
- ❖ Depending on date of birth, a member may have National dues paid for the remainder of his/her life and the monies keep working for the organization. In this way the Life monies serve as a future security "blanket!", protecting TGOA/MGCA against financial difficulties.
- ❖ Upon payment of a Life Membership, you are presented a permanent Life Membership card, letter of acknowledgement, a Life Membership pin, and a certificate signed by the National President.
- ❖ What a wonderful way to assist TGOA/MGCA's future security and to place yourself among a very select group of gardeners. A great gift idea ... in fact, some clubs issue a Life Membership to each out-going Club President.
- ❖ These are but a couple of the little "extras" available to make your membership more enjoyable, meaningful and worthwhile.
- ❖ On behalf of the National Organization we wish you well in future gardening endeavors and in your new found enjoyment of a Garden Club.

WELCOME TO THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA MEN'S GARDEN CLUBS OF AMERICA

Please send the following supplies to assist us in recruiting new members and organizing our club.

- Awards Manual
- Installation of Officers and Members
 - Club Officer Guides
 - Club/Region Directory
- Copies of the latest TGOA/MGCA Newsletter
 - Gardening From The Heart Manual
 - Installation of Officers and Members
- National Bylaws & Sample Club Bylaws
 - National Committee List
 - Scholarship Manual
 - Supply and Service Catalog
 - Youth Gardening Handbook

As you organize and elect officers, and submit your charter and dues to headquarters, they will forward all needed, order blanks, forms, membership cards for your club.

GOOD LUCK!! We look forward to welcoming your club into our tremendous organization.

CLUB NAME _____

Mail above order to: _____

OFFICIAL PETITION

Per the organization of the _____
(club name)
by virtue of authority vested in us at a meeting held on _____
(month, day, year)
in the city of _____ state _____

at which time a quorum was present and duly constituted, we hereby apply for membership and affiliation with The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America. We have read the national bylaws and agree that _____ will
(club name)
be committed to abide by these bylaws.

Enclosed is our club Charter Fee of \$20.00.

Our Official Charter meeting will be _____

Club President _____

Club Secretary _____

Regular meeting day _____

time _____ place _____

(FOR OFFICE USE ONLY)

Application accepted: DATE: _____

Charter dated: _____

**THE GARDENERS OF AMERICA
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P. O. Box 241
Johnston, Iowa 50131-0241
(515)-278-0295**

Listed below are CHARTER MEMBERS (joining prior to Charter Night) with their full names and addresses. Enclose national membership dues for each person.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____

SAMPLE MEDIA LETTER

An organizational meeting for (club name) will be held at (place, time and date). At least (#) members are expected to attend and anyone interested in gardening is invited to attend.

(Name), one of the organizers of the proposed new club, states that there are persons who share a common interest in home gardening, beautification and conservation, who want to learn more about plants, soils, vegetables, and the art and science of growing plants. Members are dedicated to improving the beauty and livability of their surroundings and they enjoy the fellowship that is to be had while pursuing these aims and objectives. Gardening is one of the most effective ways of improving our environment.

When organized, the local group of gardeners will apply for a charter in The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America, Inc. The national headquarters is in Johnston, Iowa.

If you are a gardener who would like to learn more by sharing ideas, materials, and experiences, you will be more than welcome to attend the organizational meeting on (date). For more information, please call (name and number).

Sincerely,

NOTE: Type, the above, inserting the correct information and take it to the garden editor of your local paper and explain the purpose. Some background information may be needed.

SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

At a meeting (time, place, date) enthusiastic gardeners organized the Garden Club of (name) to be affiliated with The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America. (Name) of (city) was elected the first president of the club.

The new club will hold its meetings on the (day, time) and will meet at (place). The gardeners have already discussed future plans for civic projects, flower and garden shows, garden tours, and plant sales, and seminars.

According to President (name), The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America, members are from all walks of life who share a common interest in gardening and have a mutual desire to share of their knowledge, wisdom, and experiences with each other and to share their by educating the public. This new club is one of more than 65 clubs from coast to coast, united in similar interests, projects, and goals.

Other officers elected at the (day) meeting include (name), Vice-president; (name), Secretary; and (name), Treasurer.

Anyone who likes to garden or would like to learn from and with others are invited to join the organization. Those joining before the next meeting will become Charter members of the club. For more information, call President (name), at (telephone number), or (additional name and telephone).

NOTE. Re-type the above, inserting the correct information and if possible, take it to the garden editor of your local paper and explain your purposes. Some background information may be needed also.

(SAMPLE LETTER FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS)

Dear

I am helping organize the Garden Club of A small group of home gardeners will be meeting on (date, time, place).

We understand that you enjoy gardening and we believe you might enjoy sharing your horticultural interests with us. A few members may be real hobbyists in horticulture but most of us will be strictly amateur gardeners of all ages and backgrounds..

We hope to employ our mutual interests in plants and gardening to give each of us better home gardens. Plant study, seed and plant exchanges, youth gardening, beautification and the conservation of the natural beauty in our area will be our primary interests as well as flower and vegetable gardening.

The Gardeners of America/Men's Garden Clubs of America an association of local chapters, nation-wide, with whom we will affiliate, will supply us with step-by-step instructions or guidelines for both organizing our local club and making it grow in the future as an integral and important force in our community and state .but we do need your support.

Will you please join us? I will be calling you in a few days.

Sincerely,

(Name/address)

Steering Committee

(Names/addresses)