

What Makes A Good Newsletter?

by Robin Pokorski, CGCI President 2007-2009

- Determine what your club members want and/or need to know. The newsletter is the communication tool between members. Content and presentation counts. Remember that “Less is More” in writing.
- To make it an award winner, use the evaluation sheet available on this website as a guideline (go to Awards). There are many information resources available to help you get information and layout ideas for your newsletter such as:
 - *Golden Gardens eNews*
 - WACONIAH
 - The National Gardener
 - The Internet
 - CGCI website
 - National Garden Club website
 - Other gardening websites
 - District and/or club newsletters
 - CGCI Educational course materials
 - CGCI Board and Convention materials
 - Newsletters from local arboreta, botanic garden and garden centers

The keys to a good newsletter are good organization, proper production and circulation

- **Good Organization**
 - Prepare an issue-by-issue checklist so that everything that is needed to be included in each issue is included
 - Collect filler material in between times so that you always have a store of good material to include when room is available.
- **Proper Production**
 - Become familiar with good principles of layout and design. Always include a masthead and make the newsletter easy to follow.
 - Reevaluate the layout annually to keep updating the “look.”
 - Always include the source of the material used in case people want to learn more about your subject.
 - If the newsletter is printed - use paper that facilitates reading. Vivid colored paper is eye-catching but hard to read. If the paper is too light, double sided printing may hinder readability.
 - Graphics and pictures add interest but need to be crisp and clear. Always give photo credits if available. But do be careful not to overdue the graphics! If the pages is cluttered or “too busy,” your reader will pass it by.
 - Production by committee is always a good idea.
 - Two (or three or more) heads are almost always better than one.
 - Solicit submissions by club members. They have a wealth of information to share and enjoy seeing themselves in print.
 - **BE SURE TO PROOFREAD!** Proofreading is an integral part of any newsletter. HINT: For spell checking, proofread backwards – for content proofing, read forwards.
- **Circulation** is another consideration. If no one gets your newsletter to read, why bother? Everyone likes to know what’s going on and learn new things. Send a copy to members as well as to:
 - CGCI President and VPs
 - Golden Gardens eNews Editor
 - District Director & club presidents
 - Pacific Region Director and Editor
 - Another idea is to send a copy to speakers who give programs at your meetings before and after the speaker’s program. It gives them an idea of what to expect and how much you appreciated their good efforts.