

BLUE RIBBON ACHIEVEMENT FOR CLUBS



A GUIDE FOR GARDEN CLUB PRESIDENTS

Updated March 2026

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Mission Statement

California Garden Clubs, Inc. promotes gardening, floral design, civic beautification, environmental responsibility, and the exchange of information and ideas.

www.CaliforniaGardenClubs.com



FORWARD

Blue Ribbon Achievement refers to the award, the Blue Ribbon Certificate of Achievement, the most prestigious CGCI designation for Clubs. The designation indicates that the Club participates in and fulfills the objectives of California Garden Clubs, Inc. (CGCI), Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc. (PRGC), and National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC). It also demonstrates that the Club is well-rounded with many diverse activities and projects — all for the good of the community.

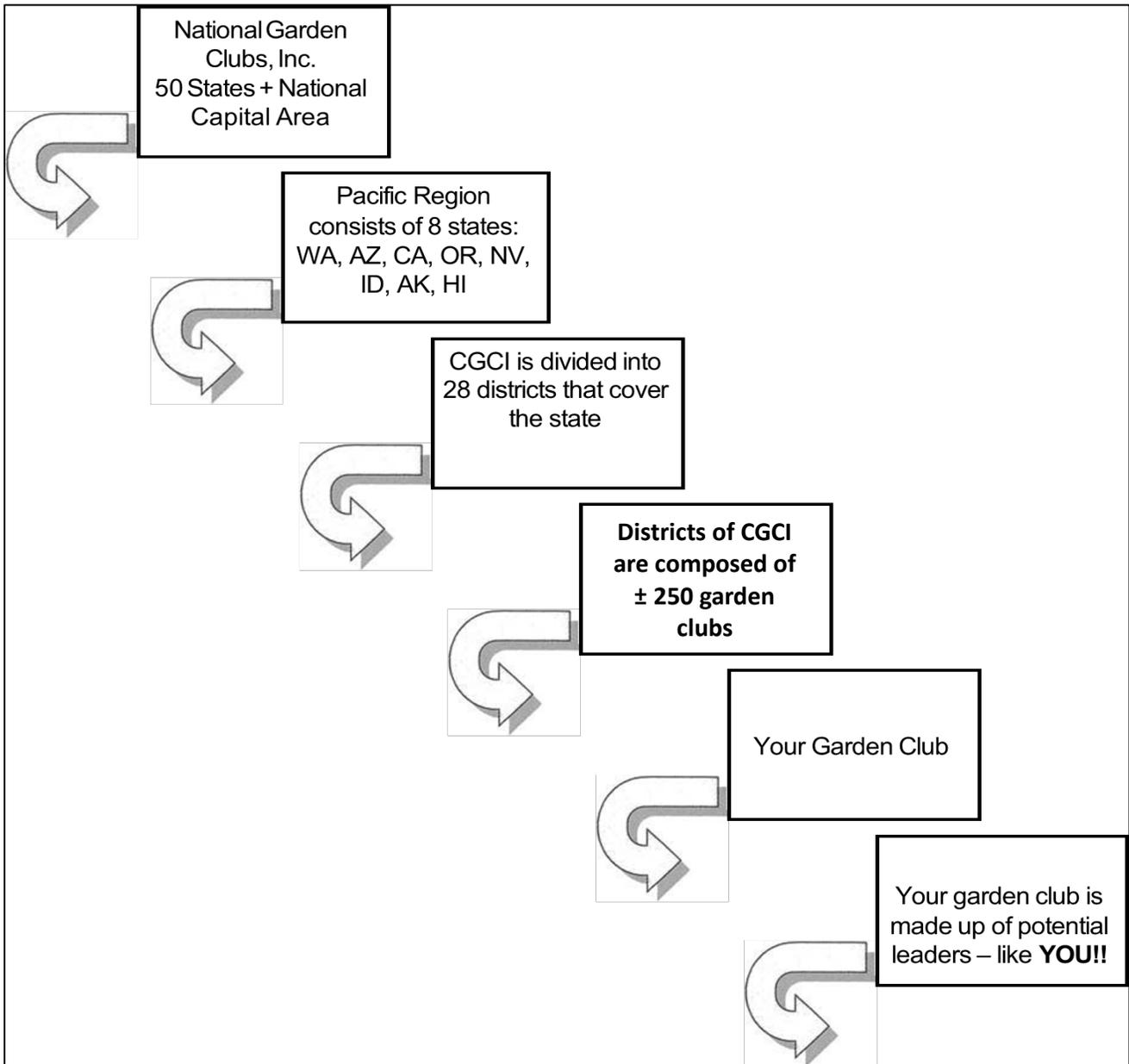
See CGCI Award #10—Blue Ribbon Certificate of Achievement in the Awards Manual on the website, under “Awards.” If a Club scores 100 points out of 200, the Club may apply for this award through the Club’s District Director. See Appendix A for the score sheet.

This edition of *Blue Ribbon Achievement* was compiled from many printings of material on the subject, including the very first edition of “How To Be A Blue Ribbon President” (April 1997) by the then CGCI Membership Chairman, Virginia Bennetts, who later became CGCI President (2001-2003). Several others are thanked for their guidance, input, and advice: Mrs. George Daiber, Mrs. Maurice Dillingham, JoAnn Gould, Jeanny Graham, Hoberley Schuler, Mary Tebo, Julie West, and Pat Claves.

Please remember that this booklet is simply a guide for Club Presidents. Consult your Club’s Bylaws and Standing Rules for dates and procedures specific to your Club. Some Clubs have different policies and practices. Some are dark during the summer, while some meet during the summer and are dark during the winter (e.g., mountain areas). Some Club Presidents serve two years, while others serve one year. And some Clubs have their own procedures and timing for specific items.

If you have questions, contact your District Director or any CGCI Board Member for assistance. We are eager for your Club to earn the prestigious CGCI “Blue Ribbon Achievement” designation. Let's strive for excellence together!

THE GARDEN CLUB STRUCTURE



NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC. (NGC) – <https://gardenclub.org>

PACIFIC REGION GARDEN CLUBS, INC. (PRGC) – www.pacificregiongardenclubs.com

CALIFORNIA GARDEN CLUBS, INC. (CGCI) – <https://www.californiagardenclubs.com> -- “About CGCI”

CGCI DISTRICTS – <https://www.californiagardenclubs.com>, “Membership and Dues/Districts”

TIPS

BYLAWS & STANDING RULES

- Read and know your Club's Bylaws and Standing Rules and refer to them often. Do the Bylaws need to be updated? If so, appoint a Bylaws Committee to study this and bring any recommendations from this Committee to your Executive Committee before presenting the proposed changes to the entire membership.
- Refer to the current copy of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.
- Check with the CGCI Governance Chairman if you have questions. Check with the GTEP Chairman for compliance if your club is a member of the GTEP Program.

CHAIRMEN

- The President usually selects the Chairmen and Parliamentarian. Refer to your Club's Bylaws.
- Appoint responsible Chairmen — people you can rely on to do their jobs thoroughly and effectively.
- Be sure that the Chairmen know their duties when you ask them to serve on your Board (and before they accept the chairmanships). They must be willing to do what is expected of them. It makes a difficult term of office for the President if the President must take up the slack for someone not doing his/her job.
- Be wary of those who may have been doing the same job "forever." Sometimes the person can get into bad habits. It may be a good idea to ask new members to take over a chairmanship; a new person can bring much enthusiasm to things others may be tired of doing. The new member will also have a chance to get acquainted with other members more quickly, and the new person's zest will inspire others. If a long-time Chairman needs to be "eased out" of doing the same job for several years, you should consider offering the person a new job before appointing someone new.
- Each Chairman should have written procedures/guidelines for the position (e.g., yearbook, youth activities, programs, etc.). If none is available, have procedures written by the previous Chairman or ask other Club Presidents in your District for examples.

CONTACT INFORMATION -- See the Appendix for the "Members Only" Section of the website, where the Club's official information and the information for you (as President) and the Treasurer can be reviewed and/or updated.

DUES (CGCI AND DISTRICT) – see "Membership and Dues" tab on the website for CGCI dues.

- Make sure the Club's CGCI and District dues are paid on time and before they become delinquent. EFFECTIVE IN 2026, the CGCI dues payment deadline is JULY 15. Membership cards for Clubs that have paid dues to that point are available for distribution to the District Directors at the CGCI Fall Board Meeting or mailed directly to the Clubs. A late fee will be charged if dues are postmarked after July 15. If dues are not paid by August 1, Clubs and Associate Plant Societies become ineligible for participation in the Liability Insurance Program and the Awards Program. Clubs become ineligible to participate in the Group Tax Exemption Program (GTEP).
- Most Districts require Clubs to pay District dues. Check with your District Director.

INSTALLATIONS

The President-Elect is privileged to invite the Installing Officer to the Club's installation. Invite the person of your choice to perform your installation. It is usual practice to ask someone of stature (the District Director, a former District Director, a CGCI Officer or Chairman, or a beloved senior member or former President of your own Club). The outgoing President will conduct the meeting on the day you will be installed. The gavel will be turned over to you at the close of the installation ceremony, and you will then take over the meeting and close it. At that time, a short speech may be made to thank the outgoing President and Officers for their service to the Club during the past year/s.

MEETINGS

- Before a new Club year, a joint meeting of outgoing and incoming Officers may be called to transfer procedure books and bank signature cards and discuss business and Club projects. This ensures continuity in the management of long-range programs.
- Club meetings should be carefully planned to achieve variety and points for Award #10—Blue Ribbon Certificate of Achievement. The fillable form for this award is in the Awards Manual on the CGCI website under "Awards."
- Agenda
 - Have a written agenda (see sample Order of Business under Parliamentary Procedure & Protocol). You should plan the agenda ahead of time based on the minutes of the previous meeting. The Recording Secretary should give you a copy of the Minutes at least one week before upcoming meetings.
 - Carefully prepare your agenda with the Club's Bylaws and Standing Rules near you.
 - Use the previous meeting's Minutes to assist in planning the next meeting, starting with "Unfinished Business."
 - The agenda may include timing notes on the side. Keep track of the time, and do not let the meeting wander or get off track. If the meeting is well-paced and on time, you will not lose your audience.
 - Consider creating a script based on your agenda to help with proper wording during the meeting.
 - Make copies of the agenda and place them on the table where members sign in, along with copies of the Minutes from the previous meeting, unless they have already been distributed by mail or email.
 - Make notes on your agenda. It is better than blanking out and keeps you from going on a tangent.
- Timing
 - Arrive early for Club meetings. Be at the meeting place well before the designated time. A good Presiding Officer is never late! Start your meetings on time, never wait longer than ten minutes.
 - Do not let the meeting drag. Otherwise, it may appear that you are unsure of yourself or a situation.
 - Do not rush a business meeting, or it may appear that action is being railroaded.
 - Remember that the Club may recess for lunch and dinner, or until all business has been taken care of, and then the Club "adjourns."

- Demeanor
 - You should set an example of courtesy. To control others, you must control yourself. A president who remains calm, courteous, and impartial, while others are quite expressive, can nearly always keep an assembly under control.
 - It requires tact to keep harmony and firmness to ensure rules are followed. You must be impartial and just, putting the welfare and wishes of your club above your personal desires.
 - Discourage talking and inattention when reports are being given. The officers need to be attentive to reporting members.
 - If the assembly becomes noisy, pause and ask them, “Will the members please come to order?” Always be in control.
 - Don’t wisecrack, as it might be misunderstood.
- Parliamentary Procedure
 - You, as the Presiding Officer, need to keep order, expedite the assembly business, and see that rules are enforced. To perform these duties, be familiar with the fundamental rules of parliamentary law and your Club's Bylaws and Standing Rules.
 - Keep a copy of *Robert’s Rules, Newly Revised* with you and refer to it when necessary.
 - Use the services of the Parliamentarian. He/she is to advise and inform you how to handle each situation properly. *In Robert’s Rules*, you will find proper procedures, how to bring order to the meeting, and ways to help run the meeting smoothly.
 - The President organizes, delegates, and supervises but does not interfere and is always impartial.
 - See more information under “Parliamentary Procedure” and Protocol” below.
- Inspiration: It is also a good idea to have an inspiration at the beginning of each meeting. Assign members at the beginning of each Club year to read an inspiration.
- Pledge of Allegiance: It is a good idea to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the USA at the beginning of each meeting (provided there is a flag). Assign members at the beginning of each Club year to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Reporting: Not every Chairman needs to report at each meeting. Have Chairmen report only if they need to report.
- When thanking a Committee Chairman, thank him/her for the REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE, not his/her report.
- Protocol Chairman: Use your Protocol Chairman even for small meetings. It is a good practice and ensures a smooth meeting.
- Hosts/Hostess: Appoint a door host/hostess to greet new members or visitors. You may want to assign a longtime member as a “big sister/brother” to a new member to serve as a mentor. This longtime member will make the new member feel welcome and introduce the new member to others in the Club.
- Programs: Have the program speaker be introduced on time. It is impolite to have the speaker waiting while business is being finished or cut into the time the speaker has been allotted. It is better to interrupt the meeting to have the program. After the program, finish the meeting. Good planning and timing will prevent these problems.

- Conclusion of Meeting: When the meeting is finished, stand at the door to say goodbye and thank members and guests as they leave. This is especially important if you have new members or visitors who have come for the first time. The visitors may be thinking about joining!
- Get to know the Club members and what they want and expect to get from attending Club meetings. Appointment to a committee can help get members acquainted with other members. Most new members are very enthusiastic and willing to participate.
- District Director: Invite your District Director to at least one meeting annually. At that time, your District Director should be honored by being seated at the head table and greeted at the door. Someone should be designated to welcome your District Director upon arrival. This should also be done with any VIP (very important person) or speaker for the Club program. You may need to designate a parking space for this person if parking is a problem.

MISCELLANEOUS

- Do not hesitate to ask someone else for an opinion.
- For your protection, put everything in writing and get everything in writing. Those telephone calls late at night should be backed up with a note for your files. Keep copies of everything.
- Keep a notebook beside your telephone to jot down notes of conversations.
- Answer all mail promptly and impress this necessity upon your Officers and Chairmen.
- Type “Mary Jones, President” and sign your name above the typing when signing letters.
- If you do not have email, ask a reliable member to use their email address for important messages from your District and CGCI.
- If having a Flower Show, invite accredited NGC Flower Show Judges to judge the show. Offer a mileage allowance for gasoline for the judges who drive a long distance. An inexpensive but memorable gift may be given to each judge. Always provide refreshments for the judges.

NEWSLETTERS

Club newsletters may be published monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly. They are invaluable informational tools for members. Copies should be sent to your District Director, CGCI President, Vice Presidents, and the *Golden Gardens* Editor and entered for Award #50, Section 2 -- Publications—Club Newsletter.

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

- If unavailable, create written procedures/guidelines to help the next President — what to do and when. Include CGCI and District deadlines, i.e., dues deadlines, to whom dues should be sent, liability insurance payment and GTEP deadlines, special events for calendars, etc. Much of the information can be obtained from your District Director.
- During the year, remind your Executive Committee Members and Chairmen to update their procedures/guidelines.

PROGRAMS & SPEAKERS

- The best way to recruit new members and keep old members is by having interesting and vital programs.
- Remember that good speakers get booked early! Ask your District Director for a list of potential speakers. CGCI Chairmen, Officers, Associate Plant Societies, and CGCI Affiliate members may be available to provide programs for club meetings. The Chairmen may be invited to speak about their chairmanships (e.g., Awards Program, Penny Pines, etc.)
- Obtain input from Club members about what interests them. If programs do not appeal to members, the Club will lose attendance. You may want to see if members are interested in hands-on workshops, tours, flower arranging, particular types of horticulture, etc. A questionnaire or survey is a good tool for getting members' input on their interests in programs you may want to present during your term.
- Be willing to try something new. You have been elected President, so put your own spin on the organization — avoid listening to those who say negative things like, “We’ve never done it that way.” At the same time, remember that you are serving the Club and its members, not pushing your own agenda.
- Try to balance the programs equally with topics that coincide with the aims and objectives of NGC, PRGC, CGCI, and your District.
- Offer some workshops during the year. Plan them as an entire program or a separate special event.
- Have a greeter for your speaker or other official guest, as sometimes you may be unavailable to greet the speaker/guest yourself. Have the greeter meet the speaker/guest at the door. All club members should treat the speaker/guest as a VIP (very important person).
- Invite District Officers and other District Clubs if your Club plans an outstanding/unusual program or special speaker. This should be done at least two months ahead of time.

PUBLICITY

- Whenever your Club holds important events, send a press release to your local newspaper and invite the public. Start by writing: “XYX Garden Club, a member of California Garden Clubs, Inc., ...” At the end of the article, mention when and where your Club meets and provide contact information. Most newspapers prefer press releases sent to them via the internet. Appoint a member to be in charge of sending press releases.
- Some clubs send articles to local newspapers and magazines. Always indicate that the author is a member of your Club, District, CGCI, PRGC, and NGC. It is a good idea to send a copy of the article to the *Golden Gardens* Editor and Social Media Chairman to exchange information and ideas.

YEARBOOK

- Publishing a Club yearbook is encouraged. It may include a membership roster, Club meeting dates with expected programs and speakers, dates of local, District, CGCI, PRGC, NGC events, etc. Copies should be sent to your District Director, CGCI President, and Vice Presidents, and a copy should be entered for Award #54 -- Club Yearbook Award. See the Awards Manual on the website under “Awards.”

- Appoint a reliable and computer-literate member to create the Club’s yearbook. Check the final version before printing for spelling and number accuracy and ensure that it measures up to your standards.
- Choose a theme and plan the year around that theme. You may want to title each meeting with a takeoff on your theme. If your theme is “A Blooming Garden the Year Around,” you could have “Winter Blooms,” “Wildflower Blooms in the West,” “Blooming Birds and Butterflies,” or “Floral Designs with Exotic Blooms from Australia,” and so on.
- See the CGCI Award #50 – Yearbooks criteria in the Awards Manual on the website (under “Awards”) that lists all pertinent information yearbooks should contain.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE & PROTOCOL FOR MEETINGS

Parliamentary Law is common sense used graciously. Rules of Parliamentary Law are designed to expedite business and protect the minority while enabling the assembly to express its deliberative sense on the question before it. Parliamentary Law should be the servant, but not the master. It should be used as a guide, not a whip. You should understand the general rules of parliamentary law and the Club’s Bylaws and Standing Rules.

MEETING ORDER OF BUSINESS:

- Call to Order
- Invocation (if desired)
- Pledge of Allegiance (if desired and if flag is present)
- Inspiration (If desired)
- President’s Welcome, followed by Introductions
- Roll Call (if desired)
- Reading and approval of the Minutes (if circulated, may be approved as circulated or distributed)
- Treasurer’s Report (place on file)
- Bills for Approval (to save time, may be presented by Treasurer)
- Executive Committee and other Officer Reports
- Special Committee Reports
- Standing Committee Reports
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Program — Presiding Officer (the President) introduces the Program Chairman, who introduces the program speaker
- Announcements
- Adjournment

MEETING GUIDELINES

- **Call to Order:** The Chairman (President) opens the meeting by saying, “The meeting will come to order.”
- **Invocation, Grace or Inspiration:** Invocations are presented before the Pledge, and inspiration after the Pledge. Invocations are not applauded, but inspirations may be. It makes a smooth beginning for you to ask the members to “rise for the invocation, given by _____, and please remain standing for the Pledge of Allegiance, led by _____.”
- **Pledge of Allegiance:** If on the platform, the flag should be placed to your right when you face members. And, while giving the Pledge of Allegiance, you turn right, face the flag, and place your right hand over your heart, ungloved.
- **Reports:** You, as chairman of the meeting, say the following:
- **Secretary’s Report:** “The Secretary will read the Minutes.” “Are there any corrections to the Minutes?” If there are no corrections (or “no further corrections”), “The Minutes are approved” (or “approved as read,” or “approved as corrected”). Minutes are the official record of club activities. Minutes may be written in many forms but should always be correct. Only actions by the Club, not what was said in the discussion, are recorded. The record must name the mover of a motion but does not need to identify the seconder. The result should be recorded whether passed, lost, or referred to committee. You should receive a copy of the Minutes before the next Club meeting to aid in preparing the agenda and as a reminder of any unfinished business recorded.
- **Treasurer’s Report:** “May we have the Treasurer’s Report?” After the Treasurer’s Report, “The Treasurer’s Report will be filed.”
- **Executive Committee Members’ Reports, Chairmen’s Reports, etc.:** “The next business in order will be the report” of the Executive Committee Members (officers), committees, and so on through your agenda. Remember, not every Officer or Chairman needs to report at every meeting.
- **Unfinished Business:** “The next order of business will be Unfinished Business. [Do not use the term “old business.”] This should not be announced unless the minutes show that there is pending business from the previous meeting. If a question was pending when the previous meeting adjourned, the chairman of the meeting (the President) might begin by saying “Under unfinished business, the first item of business is the . . . which was pending when the last meeting adjourned.”
- **New Business:** “The next order of business will be New Business.”

MOTIONS

- Business is brought before the Club by the motion of a member. A motion is a formal proposal by a member in a meeting that the assembly take certain action. All business is introduced by means of a “motion.” There can be no discussion or debate until a motion is made and seconded.
- How a motion is brought before the assembly:
 - A member makes the motion, “I move that . . .”
 - You, as the chairman of the meeting, state, “Is there a second?”
 - Another member seconds the motion: “I second the motion.”
 - If there is no second, the president states, “The motion is not seconded. The next item of business is . . .” [No second is needed if this is a recommendation from a committee.]

- If seconded, you state the exact motion and indicate that it is open for debate. “It has been moved and seconded that ... Is there debate?” You then turn to the maker of the motion to see if he/she wish to be assigned the floor.
- After debate, you put the question: “Are you ready for the question? The question is that . . . All those in favor, please say ‘Aye.’ Opposed, ‘No.’ The ‘Ayes’ have it and the motion is carried.” [Or “The noes have it and the motion is lost.”]
- It is not difficult to learn how to state and put questions, learn the order of precedence of the various motions, which motions are debatable, those that cannot be amended, and those that require a 2/3 standing vote. It will give you poise and confidence to know that you are saying the correct thing and using the correct patter — and members expect that from you.

MICROPHONE – HOW TO USE

- Step to the microphone
- Adjust the microphone
- Do not speak to someone nearby within pickup range of the microphone
- Collect yourself and then begin
- Speak loudly, clearly, and slowly
- Speak into the microphone
- Do not wander on and off or go out of range by turning your head
- Repeat any question presented to you from the floor (as some in the back of the room may not have heard the question)
- Practice with the microphone before the meeting and know how close you must be to it
- Keep strictly to time limits.

CGCI MEETINGS

- Club Presidents should attend all District meetings and the CGCI Convention. Your personal expenses for attending CGCI meetings are your responsibility. Clubs are encouraged to budget funds to help cover these costs. If possible, you should attend the CGCI Annual Convention, which is usually held in May/June of each year. Each Club is entitled to vote on important issues, and the number of votes from each Club depends upon the number of paid club members — See CGCI Bylaws, Article XI, Section 5.
- While attending the Convention, you will start networking with other club members, Presidents, and District Directors from around the state. You will meet CGCI Officers, Chairmen, and other Presidents and get a feel for the overall composition of CGCI. You will learn and receive inspiration from the Officers, Chairmen, Presidents, and other Club members from around the state.
- You can attend meetings, programs, and workshops and learn firsthand how CGCI works, the people who comprise it, and your part in it. Convention meetings, programs, and workshops are enjoyable and good learning experiences. You will leave feeling enthused and ready to take on the leadership role with a wealth of wonderful information and ideas for your Club.

- The Convention meetings with like-minded individuals from throughout the state are inspiring. Attendance will help build confidence. And by discussing your concerns and problems with others, you will find real solutions for the difficulties you may experience in your Club.
- Attend the Awards Banquet at the Convention. It will give you an excellent overview of the goals and objectives of CGCI. During the banquet, you will learn of the awards presented during the prior awards year -- some blue ribbons, others red, yellow, or white.
- In the Exhibits Room, you will find exhibits by various Chairmen, some with essential handouts to bring back to your Club members.

DISTRICT MEETINGS, ETC.

The purpose of the District is to interpret and expedite CGCI's projects, objectives, and programs to Club members. The District Director is the Club's liaison between CGCI and the Clubs. District Directors are a resource for Club Presidents, helping with issues, defining CGCI procedures, etc. The District Director may attend Club meetings to help solve problems when asked.

- Each Club is a member of a District. You, as Club President, are a member of the Board of Directors of your District. Each Club President has a vote at all District meetings.
- Club Presidents are expected to attend all District meetings or send a Club representative to attend.
- One of the primary purposes of the District meetings is to keep the Clubs informed and help the Club Presidents do a good job.
- District, as well as CGCI, PRGC, and NGC, activities should always be reported to your Club membership.
- Copies of your Club yearbook and newsletters should be sent to your District Director (and CGCI President, Vice Presidents, and *Golden Gardens* Editor).
- Provide your District Director with information, such as Club meeting dates, special events, etc.
- You should appoint as many Club Chairmen as possible to coincide with District Chairmen and send their names and contact information to their District counterparts to channel information to the Club through these Chairmen.
- A written report, briefly listing the accomplishments and continuing activities of the Club, should be sent to your District Director to aid in preparing reports for CGCI meetings. The Club should retain a copy for its files.
- At District meetings, you should be prepared to give a short report (varying in length from one to three minutes) on the happenings of your Club. [Varies from District to District.]
- Have a handout of upcoming events to distribute to each Club in the District.
- Your Club may be asked to host a District meeting. [This requirement varies from District to District.]
- Give copies of newspaper publicity to the District Historian (if your District has one).
- Provide the District Director with information specific to the District, i.e., club meeting dates, special events, etc.
- Inform the District Director of any changes on the Club's board throughout the year.
- The District may publish a yearbook that each Club President will receive from the District Director in the fall. You should refer to the District yearbook often.

- Your District may produce a newsletter that Club Presidents will receive from the District Director, usually in the fall. You should share the newsletter with your members.

CGCI BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

AWARD PROGRAMS – see “Awards” on the website.

Awards programs sponsored by NGC, PRGC, and CGCI.

CALIFORNIA CONSULTANTS COUNCIL – see

<https://www.californiagardenclubs.com/californiaconsultantscouncil>

Council members are CGCI Club members who are accredited Environmental, Gardening, and Landscape Design Consultants. Council members may be available for programs and assistance.

CHAIRMEN

- CGCI offers many benefits and services through its numerous state Chairmen and Officers. CGCI Chairmen (members of the CGCI Board) are chosen for their knowledge, interest, and ability in a particular field and may be available for programs about their chairmanships without charge. CGCI Chairmen may also provide additional material and assistance upon request. See the current list of Chairmen in the CGCI *Yearbook, Manual & Roster* and the online Directory. They are also included on page 2 of *Golden Gardens*.
- Contact the CGCI President if any Club member wishes to volunteer to serve as a Chairman.

CONSULTANTS – Contact the CGCI Schools Chairmen listed in the current *Yearbook, Manual & Roster* for contact information.

NGC has many Environmental, Gardening, and Landscape Design Consultants in California. These consultants may be available for programs and assistance.

COMMENDATIONS – see website under “Member Benefits”

Long-Service Certificates / Member Award of Distinction / Business Commendations

COMMUNICATIONS -- CLUB AND DISTRICT WEBSITES – see “Websites/Member Organizations” on the website’s home page.

If your organization has a website not currently included, log in to your “Members Only” account and add the URL.

DIRECTORY – See the online Directory in the “Members Only” Section of the website.

OFFICIAL CALENDAR – see “Calendar” on the website's home page.

Member organizations may post their special events (that are open to the public) on the Calendar.

FLOWER SHOW JUDGES COUNCILS

NGC accredited Flower Show Judges are available, free of charge, to judge flower shows.

GRANTS

Both CGCI and NGC offer grants from time to time for various projects. Check the CGCI and NGC websites, *Golden Gardens*, and *The National Gardener* for more information.

GROUP TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM (GTEP) – see “Member Benefits” on the website.

The GTEP Program is an opportunity for member Clubs and Districts to obtain Tax-Exempt Status under the CGCI exemption umbrella.

INSURANCE – see “Member Benefits” on website

General Liability Insurance and Additional Insured Certificates are available for qualifying clubs. See website for Directors & Officers Insurance (D&O) information.

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS – see “Membership & Dues” on website

Three types are available: CGCI Life Member / PRGC Life Member / NGC Life Member

MEMBER EDUCATION – NGC SCHOOLS – see “Member Benefits” on the website.

Four Schools are available: Environmental Schools / Flower Show Schools / Gardening Schools / Landscape Design Schools

“MEMBERS ONLY” SECTION OF THE WEBSITE – See the website's home page for the link.

See Addendum B for more information.

NEWSLETTERS – All Free

- **CGCI’S NEWSLETTER, *GOLDEN GARDENS*** – to subscribe, see “Member Benefits/Newsletter” on the website. To view the current and past issues: <https://www.californiagardenclubs.com/newsletters>
Golden Gardens is the official publication of CGCI and is an online, bimonthly publication.
- **PRGC’S NEWSLETTER, *WACONIAH***
WACONIAH is PRGC’s official regional publication bringing news from Washington, Alaska, California, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona, and Hawaii. It is online. Past issues can be found on the PRGC website -- <https://pacificregiongardenclubs.com/waconiah-issues>.
- **NGC’S NEWSLETTER, *THE NATIONAL GARDENER (TNG)***
The National Gardener is NGC’s official publication. It is a quarterly online magazine. The subscription form and present and past issues are available on the NGC website: www.gardenclub.org

PROJECTS – see “Projects” on the website.

- Black Point Historic Gardens
- Blue Star/Gold Star Families Memorials
- Cancelled Postage Stamps
- Conejo Valley Botanic Garden
- Endowment Funds
- Golden Legacy Society
- Life Memberships

- Penny Pines
- President's Project
- Scholarship Fund
- Sempervirens Fund

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL – see “Member Benefits” on the website.

CGCI provides a variety of materials to promote CGCI and your Club, and many are free.

RECOGNITION FOR MEMBERS AND BUSINESSES – see “Member Benefits” on the website.

Member Award of Distinction / Service Certificates / Business Recognition / Honor Book

SCHOLARSHIPS – see “Scholarships” on the website.

CGCI and NGC offer scholarships for students who have completed two years of college. PRGC offers scholarships to students already attending a school, college, or university who meet the criteria specified by PRGC.

WEBSITES

- **www.californiagardenclubs.com:** This is the official website of California Garden Clubs, Inc. It is a valuable tool for Clubs. Check the website regularly. Let your Club members know about important items that may interest them on the website (e.g., awards, scholarships, etc.). Check the CGCI Official Calendar for educational opportunities around the state. Clubs may place special events open to the public on the Calendar. See the home page of the website.
- **www.pacificregiongardenclubs.com:** This is the official website of the Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc. Valuable information (Awards Program, scholarships, etc.) is posted on the website.
- **www.gardenclub.org:** This is the official website of National Garden Clubs, Inc. It lists NGC schools held nationwide and provides other valuable information (grants, awards, scholarships, etc.). Items for sale (e.g., flower show supplies, books, gifts, etc.) are available at NGC's online store.

YEARBOOK -- CGCI'S YEARBOOK, MANUAL & ROSTER

This is a valuable tool for Club Presidents to use. You should refer to it often. Each Club President will receive a complimentary copy in the mail before each CGCI Fall Board Meeting. Additional copies may be purchased through the CGCI Yearbook Chairman. For the online Directory, see the “Members Only” Section of the website.

YOUTH PROGRAMS AND CONTESTS – see “Youth Activities” on the website.

- Clubs can register their youth groups with CGCI annually (see registration form on the website).
- CGCI offers five youth contests: Essay Contest, Poetry Contest, Pollinator Poster Contest, Sculpture Contest, Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest.

CLUB PRESIDENT'S MONTH-TO-MONTH CHECKLIST

MAY

- **May 1:** Provide your District Director with your Club information, i.e., Club meeting dates, special events, and the names and contact information of your Executive Committee and Chairmen.
- **May 1:** Ensure that your Primary/Billing Contact has updated the Club's contact information for the President and Treasurer and the general organization information in the "Members Only" Section of the website. NOTE: In some Clubs, the person with all access is not the Treasurer (e.g., the Club has no Treasurer or the Treasurer has no internet access). In those cases, the President or other Club-designated person has been named the Primary/Billing Contact.
- **May 1:** Ensure that your Treasurer has updated the Club's contact information for the President and Treasurer and the general organization information in the "Members Only" Section of the website.
- If you have just been elected, you should appoint members of your Club to the various chairmanships, if you have not done so already.
- Programs, workshops, and field trip tours for the upcoming year should be planned. You should begin working on these with your Chairmen.
- As President-Elect, it is your privilege to invite the Installing Officer to your Club's installation.

JUNE

- Attend the CGCI convention, if possible. Or send a delegate in your place.
- An "in/out" board meeting may be called to start planning the new Club year, including incoming and outgoing Officers and Chairmen.
- Instruct the Club Treasurer to pay CGCI dues. Dues are payable on **July 1**. Dues should be paid to CGCI for all members who pay dues to your Club, including CGCI life members, honorary members, associate members of your Club, etc. Pay dues before July 15 to avoid a \$25 late fee. Dues become delinquent after July 31. Refer to the CGCI website for more information ("Membership & Dues" tab).
- Instruct your Club Treasurer to pay District dues, if applicable. Refer to your District's yearbook for more information regarding District dues.

JULY

- If not already done, instruct the Treasurer to pay CGCI dues (**due July 1**).
- If not already done, instruct the Treasurer to pay District Dues, if applicable.
- Your Yearbook Chairman should be creating your Club's yearbook for distribution at the August or September meeting. Before printing the yearbook, you, as President, should carefully proofread it.
- **July 15:** Deadline for dues payments.
- **July 31:** Organizations become ineligible for Awards, General Liability Insurance, and the GTEP program if dues are not paid by this date.

AUGUST

- If your Club is dormant during the summer, this is a good time to hold another board meeting to start the Club year before the first meeting in September.
- If your Club yearbooks are ready for distribution, these may be given to the Executive Committee Members and Chairmen now.

SEPTEMBER

- Club Presidents will receive a complimentary copy of the *CGCI Yearbook, Manual & Roster* via mail from CGCI before CGCI's Fall Board Meeting. Contact the CGCI Yearbook Chairman to purchase additional yearbooks, if needed.
- If your Club is dormant during the summer, this is the first meeting of the new Club year.
- Club yearbooks are usually distributed at this meeting
- Enter your Club yearbook for the Yearbook Award (Award #54) — refer to the Awards Manual on the CGCI website (under the "Awards" tab). Deadline is **December 1**.
- Distribute material from the District Director received at the CGCI Fall Board Meeting to Club members or place the information in your Club newsletter.

OCTOBER

- Meet with your Club's Awards Chairman to see what awards your Club may be eligible to receive. There are two deadlines: **December 1** and **January 10** (check the Awards Manual on CGCI's website for specific deadlines, e.g., yearbook award entries are due December 1). Some clubs have an Awards Committee, as it is always advantageous to have "helpers" who may be learning the procedures and will be able to take over in the future.

NOVEMBER

- Check with your Club's Awards Chairman; some award applications will be due on **December 1**.
- The Club Treasurer will receive an insurance premium notice from the CGCI Liability Insurance Chairman (mid-November). If your Club is eligible to purchase this insurance, the premium is due **January 15**. If the premium notice is not received, contact the CGCI Liability Insurance Chairman.

DECEMBER

- Some award entries are due on **December 1**. See the Awards Manual under the "Awards" tab on the website for deadlines, application instructions, and where and how to send.
- All Youth Contest entries are due **December 1** (except the Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest entries are due in **January**). See the "Youth Activities" tab on the website for more information.

JANUARY

- The remainder of the award entries are due by **January 10**. See the Awards Manual (under "Awards" tab on the website) for deadlines, application instructions, and where and how to send to CGCI.
- To achieve the designation of a "Blue Ribbon Club," print and complete "The Blue Ribbon Certificate of Distinction" found in the Awards Manual (under the "Awards" tab on the CGCI

website) for Award #10. Submit the completed form to your District Director by **January 10**. If your district does not have a District Director, submit the completed form to the CGCI Blue Ribbon Certificates Chairman.

- Group Tax Exemption renewals are due **January 15**. The annual renewal form must be submitted along with other required paperwork by January 15 of each year, along with a check payable to CGCI. Note: If postmarked after January 15, an additional late processing fee is in effect. For more information, see the “Member Benefits” tab on the website.
- Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest entries are due in **January** – check the Youth Manual under “Youth Activities” on website for the exact deadline.
- The premium payment for the CGCI Liability Insurance is due on **January 15**, if your club is eligible to purchase this insurance.
- If your club is planning to hold a flower show in the spring, now is a good time to purchase the Additional Insured Certificate for the owner of the location, if needed. For more information, see the “Member Benefits” tab on the website.

FEBRUARY

- You may need to appoint a Nominating Committee (if you have not already done so) to nominate new Officers (check your Club’s Bylaws for when to appoint the Nominating Committee). Many times, a call for volunteers at a Club meeting will suffice. As President, you are not part of this Committee. The Parliamentarian should meet with the members of the Nominating Committee to make sure that the members elect a Chairman and explain the duties to the members. [The Parliamentarian is not part of the Nominating Committee.]

MARCH

- Some Clubs hold elections in March — check your Club’s Bylaws to see when this should occur.

APRIL

- Some Clubs hold elections in April — check your Club’s Bylaws to see when this should occur.
- Your Club should plan to send delegates to the CGCI Convention in May or June. The list of delegates is sent to the CGCI Credentials Chairman before the Convention. In an election year, or if pending legislation is to be put before the body, the votes of your delegates are important. Each Club is entitled to a certain number of delegates: Member clubs and associate plant societies shall be entitled to representation by the club president or alternate and additional delegates as follows: 25 members or less, one delegate; 26 to 50 members; two delegates; 51 to 100 members, three delegates; Increase one delegate for every 50 additional members or portion thereof.” CGCI Bylaws, Article XI, Sec. 5.

APPENDIX A

See Fillable Form on the Website under the “Awards” Tab.

#10 BLUE RIBBON CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Clubs earning 100 points of a possible 200 points will be awarded a Blue Ribbon Certificate of Achievement and be classified as a Blue Ribbon Club. Partial participation in any category will receive a partial point score. No proof of achievement is required. Send completed score sheet to your District Director. Contact the Blue Ribbon Certificate Chairman, Shirley Lipa, for email address of your District Director if unknown. Certificates to clubs earning 100+ points. CLUB: PRINT THIS PAGE AND SUBMIT COMPLETED SCORE SHEET TO YOUR DISTRICT DIRECTOR BY JANUARY 10. DISTRICT DIRECTOR: SUBMIT NAMES OF ELIGIBLE CLUBS TO SHIRLEY LIPA AT fortunagal.shirley@gmail.com VIA EMAIL BY FEBRUARY 15.

	POINTS	SCORE
District Points		
Attendance at district meetings	5	_____
President's report/s to director.....	3	_____
Representation on district board of directors: officer (3); district chairman (2).....	5	_____
Financial support for or participation in district projects.....	5	_____
CGCI Points		
Attendance at CGCI annual convention	4	_____
Representation on CGCI board of directors.....	3	_____
Financial support for or participation in CGCI President's Project	4	_____
Annual dues paid to CGCI by July 15.....	5	_____
CGCI Life members: standing (1); new (2).....	3	_____
California Consultants Council Members (one or more).....	4	_____
Contributions to CGCI project/s: Penny Pines, Honor Book, Blue Star/Gold Star Memorials, etc.....	5	_____
NGC/PRGC Points		
Attendance at NGC Schools — Flower Show Schools (1); Environmental (1); Gardening (1); Landscape Design (1); Flower Show Symposia (1)	5	_____
Credentials: FS Judge (1), Consultants: Landscape Design (1); Gardening (1); Environmental (1)	4	_____
NGC Life members: standing (1); new (2).....	3	_____
Participation in PRGC Director's Project.....	2	_____
Participation in NGC President's Project/s	2	_____
Club Points		
Increase in club membership (from January 1 to December 31)	5	_____
Submitted award entry for CGCI (5); NGC award (5).....	10	_____
Projects:		
Blue Star/Gold Star Memorial Marker installation.....	5	_____
Blue Star/Gold Star Memorial project (contribution).....	3	_____
Civic development project	4	_____
Conservation project	5	_____
Landscape design or roadside development project	5	_____
Flower Show (host/sponsor).....	10	_____
Garden therapy project	5	_____
Horticulture (plant exchange/sale, education exhibit, workshop, etc., other than at flower show) ...	5	_____
Litter control project	5	_____
Tree planting.....	5	_____
Workshop (other than horticulture).....	5	_____
Programs (at club meetings):		
Conservation program	5	_____
Floral design program.....	5	_____
Horticulture program.....	5	_____
Landscape design program	5	_____
Historic preservation program or contribution.....	5	_____
Scholarship/s awarded.....	8	_____
Tours		
Club sponsor of garden tour	5	_____
Club visit/field trip to garden-related sites.....	3	_____
Public Relations:		
Newsletter (minimum of 4 issues).....	5	_____
Participation in community affairs.....	5	_____
Publicity (brochures, posters, newspaper, radio, TV, etc.)	5	_____
Yearbook.....	5	_____
Youth: Sponsor youth garden club or support youth project	5	_____
TOTAL		_____

SCORING GUIDELINES: Give one point for any partial participation/support. CGCI President's Project: Full points if club donates money to a project or actively participates in the project. Full points if club donates to any of CGCI's projects. Full points if one or more members attend any NGC school; they do not have to pass the tests to become judges or consultants. Full points if one or more of your members is an NGC judge or consultant. Full points if the club financially sponsors youth projects or is actively involved in youth clubs/groups.

Club Name: _____

APPENDIX B

NEW "MEMBERS ONLY" SECTION OF THE WEBSITE

Effective May 1, 2025, the website has a new "Members Only" section. It is password-protected. The President/s and Treasurer/s of each organization will have direct access to their organization's record. Each President and Treasurer will be assigned a Username.

On the first login, they will create a password to access their organization's records. The Treasurer will be designated as the "Primary/Billing Contact." (Exception: If there is no Treasurer or the individual has no email, the President will be the designated primary contact. If a club has Co-Treasurers, one will be designated as the primary contact.) Why the Treasurer? This officer is responsible for paying dues and, in most cases, submitting the updated contact information.

Once logged in, the Primary Contact will be able to:

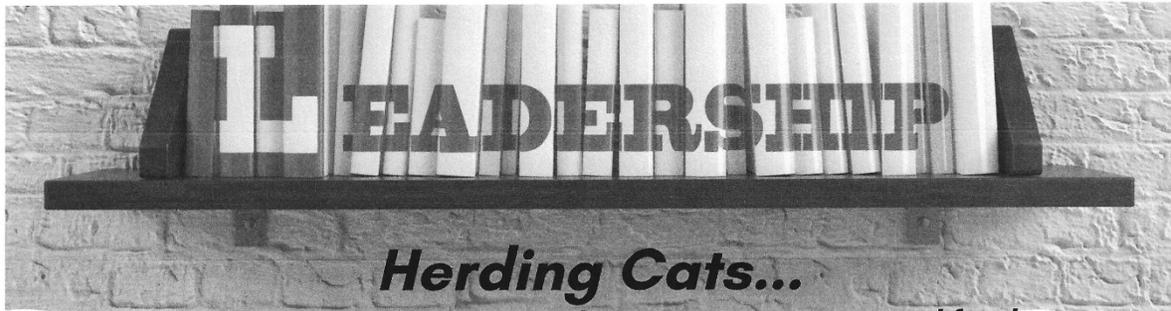
- Review/update the organization's official information and information for each individual (this replaces the Contact Information Form). NOTE: Updates submitted IMMEDIATELY update the record. No waiting!
- Pay dues. Submission of the dues form creates a printable confirmation page (to be mailed with your check) and generates a confirmation email sent to the primary contact.

The Presidents and Treasurers NOT designated as PRIMARY/BILLING CONTACT will log in to review/update their PERSONAL information as needed at any time during the year.

In addition, the "Members Only" section contains a variety of NEW online Directories with information similar to that contained in the *CGCI Yearbook, Manual & Roster*. Examples: List of member organizations (both alphabetically and by district) with contact information; List of CGCI Board members searchable by position or name. The District Directors will have access to these directories, so it is important to ensure the information is kept up-to-date. These directories are restricted to those with password access only.

APPENDIX C

LEADERSHIP ARTICLE FROM THE FALL 2025 *THE NATIONAL GARDENER*



Let's face it—leading a meeting can sometimes feel like trying to herd cats. People want to catch up, vent about things, or take the conversation in a completely different direction. Before you know it, the agenda's out the window and you're wondering how to get things back on track without being the bad guy. Here are a few tips to help you keep things running smoothly—without losing your cool (or your members).

Start with a Plan

People like to know what to expect. If you're doing something different from the usual routine, give everyone a heads-up. Sharing the agenda ahead of time helps set expectations and cuts down on confusion—or resistance.

Check In Beforehand

Avoid surprises by talking to your officers and committee chairs ahead of time. Find out if they need time on the agenda and what they plan to say. A little coaching goes a long way—encourage short, to-the-point updates. The longer and more rambling the report, the more likely someone is to interrupt or steer it off course.

Give People Time to Talk

Members want to connect—it's part of what keeps them coming back. So make space for that! Whether it's a few minutes built into the meeting, a break in the middle, or time set aside before or after, allowing room to chat helps keep everyone engaged and less likely to derail the business part.

Pro tip: If you're introducing something new or big, a short break can also help people process before making decisions.

Wrap It Up Clearly

Your job as Chair is to bring it all together. Before ending the meeting, be sure to clarify what was decided, who's doing what, and what's next. If things feel fuzzy or unresolved, you're more likely to hear about it later—from multiple directions.

Final Thought:

Leading a meeting doesn't mean controlling every word—it means guiding the group with structure, clarity, and a bit of flexibility. Do that, and you'll not only avoid chaos—you'll foster collaboration.

Author: Ginny Cardona
NGC Leadership Chair