



2026 CGCI YOUTH CONTESTS MANUAL

Youth Activities Chairman: Lisa Cosand

6152 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills, CA 91301
818-991-7707 / 818-929-2841(c) / sflowerplc@aol.com

Certificates: [Judy Bates](#)

Sponsors (Finance): [Elisabeth Tufo](#)

Smokey Bear / Woodsy Owl Poster Contest

Chairman: Michele Blomberg, 15111 Reynosa Drive, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683

530-415-2042 / MichelleBlomberg@icloud.com

Assistant: Charlotte Tucker, 18047 Lime Kiln Road, Sonora, CA 95370

209-533-9300 / CandChTucker@yahoo.com

Youth Sculpture Contest

Chairman: Lisa Cosand

(see above)

Youth Poetry Contest

Chairman: Lisa Cosand

(see above)

Youth Pollinator Contest

Chairman: Ashley Smith, 785 Quintana Road, #191, Morro Bay, CA 93442

802-777-0997 / Ashley@Lovgardenclub.org

Junior Essay Contest

Chairman: Lisa Cosand

(see above)

Updated July 24, 2026

INTRODUCTION

CGCI offers five youth contests:

Smokey Bear Woodsy Owl Poster Contest

Youth Sculpture Contest

Youth Poetry Contest

Youth Pollinator Poster Contest

Junior Essay Contest

Our contests teach youth to be responsible and capable citizens with greater self-expression, dignity, integrity, and knowledge of their environment.

Earn recognition, pride, and a few dollars for your youth gardeners!

The deadlines for all youth contest entries is December 1.

EXCEPTION: Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster contest – deadline is January 20.

The Youth Poetry, Youth Pollinator Poster, and Junior Essay Contests entries require a CGCI Youth Contest Cover Sheet to be completed and sent with all entries.

Note: NGC/CGCI Release for Publication and Website form should be completed and signed by the parent/guardian and kept on file by any garden club that takes pictures of children for use in publicity in any media format, including newspapers, newsletters, websites, etc. The [Release](#) form can be found on the CGCI website under “Youth Activities.”



CALIFORNIA GARDEN CLUBS, INC.

YOUTH CONTEST COVER SHEET

Only the Poetry Contest, Pollinator Poster Contest, and Junior Essay Contest require a Youth Contest Cover Sheet for each entry.

Complete this form, print it, and send it with your entry.
See fillable form on the CGCI website under "Youth Activities."

AWARD NAME: _____

SECTION _____ GRADE _____

CHILD'S NAME: _____

For above, enter the child's name exactly as it should appear on the award certificate.

COUNCILOR'S/TEACHER'S NAME (if any) _____

CLUB: _____

DISTRICT: _____

CONTACT NAME: _____ POSITION: _____

Contact is the contact for the club/district

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____ PHONE: _____

DATE MAILED: _____

By submitting this application, you affirm that you have any required permissions/releases and that the images, photos, and /or videos do not violate or infringe the copyright or other proprietary or intellectual property rights of others. You are giving the National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC), Pacific Region Garden Clubs, Inc. (PRGC), and California Garden Clubs, Inc. (CGCI) permission to use the images, photos and/or videos to promote NGC, PRGC, and CGCI in the future. Images/photos taken at a public event or in a public space do not need photo releases.

DATE RECEIVED BY CGCI: _____

SMOKEY BEAR/WOODSY OWL POSTER CONTEST

Sponsors: CGCI Honor Book: cash / USDA Forest Service: Certificates

To encourage youth to learn about fire prevention by creating a poster depicting either Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl.

1st \$25 in each section. 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th certificates in each section

Eligible for PRGC and NGC Awards

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY JANUARY 20. MAIL TO: [Michele Blomberg](#), 15111 Reynosa Drive, Rancho Murieta, CA 95683

ELIGIBILITY: Clubs may submit up to 4 posters in each grade.

Section 1. 1st grade Section 3. 3rd grade Section 5. 5th grade
Section 2. 2nd grade Section 4. 4th grade

CHECK POSTER CONTEST RULES AT THE [NGC WEBSITE](#) FOR UPDATES.

- All poster entries must be sponsored by a local garden club.
- Posters must feature Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl but must not feature both together. They may include just the head of Woodsy or Smokey.
- Smokey Bear posters must include his message: "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires!"
- Woodsy Owl posters must include his message: "Lend a Hand, Care for the Land!"
- Posters are to be completed by individual student artists. Teachers/parents must verify that the art is the work of the child.
- Required size is 11" x 17".
- May use crayons, markers, poster paints, watercolors, etc. but NO CHALK.
- No 3-dimensional, computer scanned, or electronically generated images are allowed.
- The following information should be written on the back of the poster in the lower right corner: artist's name, address, home phone number, grade level, school, teacher's name, city and state. POSTERS THAT INCLUDE NAMES WRITTEN ON THE FRONT OF THE POSTERS WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.
- Should school policy preclude giving students' addresses and phone numbers, please include the school address and phone number.
- Each poster must also show the name of the sponsoring local garden club, as well as the name, address, phone number, and email address of the local garden club's poster chairman.
- Do not use a dark marker for the above information as it may show through.

A CGCI Youth Contest Cover Sheet is not required for this contest.

NEW FOR 2025: The name of both the student and the parent must be written on the back of the poster. Include family address, telephone number and e-mail address. A signed consent from the parent must also be included. The consent form can be found at the bottom of the Youth Activities Page on the CGCI website: [Youth Activities - California Garden Club](#).

YOUTH SCULPTURE CONTEST

Sponsor: Rosa Raddichi

To encourage youth to keep our planet green by practicing the three Rs: "Reusing, Recycling, Repurposing."

1st \$25 in each grade. To youth club members or individuals

Eligible for PRGC and NGC Sculpture Contest

MAIL BY POSTMARK DATE OF DECEMBER 1 TO: [Lisa Cosand](#), 6152 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills, CA 91301.

ELIGIBILITY: Grades 4-8

- The sculpture is limited to a size that would fit on an 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper and must be constructed of recycled, reused and repurposed material. Height should be in proportion to width.
- Entries should include as many photographs as can be printed on the back of the entry form; two 4" x 6" photographs are recommended.
- Use [NGC entry form](#).

A CGCI Youth Contest Cover Sheet is not required for this contest.

MUST INCLUDE AGE AND GRADE OF CHILD AND NAME OF SCHOOL on NGC application form. If omitted, 5 points will automatically be deducted.

Scale of Points

	Score
Creative use of materials and self-expression: 60	_____
Description of sculpture and materials used: 30	_____
Craftsmanship and technique: 10	_____
Total: 100	_____

To be used by the Judging Chairman

GRADE: _____ PLACEMENT: _____

INDIVIDUAL: _____

CLUB: _____

DISTRICT: _____

YOUTH POETRY CONTEST

Sponsor: Albert & Lisa Cosand

2026 Theme: PLANT AMERICA Red, White, and Blue to Celebrate America's 250th Birthday!

1st \$20, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10, in each grade. Eligibility: Kindergarten through 12th Grade

To youth club members or individuals / Eligible for PRGC and NGC Awards

MAIL BY POSTMARK DATE OF DECEMBER 1 TO: [Lisa Cosand](#), 6152 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills, CA 91301.

A CGCI Youth Contest Cover Sheet (see page 3) is required for this contest. Complete the form, print it, and send it with your entry. See fillable form on the CGCI website under "Youth Activities."

For complete rules, see [NGC Website](#).

- All entries must be typed and titled
- Poems should be no more than 24 lines (including title) with a max of 42 letters/spaces per line in order to fit on single page of a booklet.
- Include name, address, age, grade, and school of participant on the back of entry.
- Sponsoring garden club and state garden club (California Garden Clubs, Inc.) names must also be identified.
- Garden club contact person is the mailing address for any winning entries.
- Sponsoring garden club may be that of a parent or grandparent.
- All entries become the property of National Garden Clubs, Inc.
- Poems do not have to rhyme. They may be traditional verse, acrostics, blank verse, cinquains, diamond poems, limerick, or haiku.
- The theme should not be used as the title to any poetry. When judging, the title is worth 10 points.
- When choosing poem title, please be creative and incorporate the theme.

Scale of Points

	<u>Score</u>
Title: 10	_____
Content: 40	_____
Creativity: 30	_____
Style: 20	_____
Total: 100	_____

To be used by the Judging Chairman

GRADE: _____ PLACEMENT: _____

INDIVIDUAL: _____

CLUB: _____

DISTRICT: _____

YOUTH POLLINATOR POSTER CONTEST

Sponsor: Albert & Lisa Cosand

To encourage youth to take a personal role in conserving and promoting pollinator habitat and awareness, as well as the importance of caring for our environment, by creating a poster highlighting pollinators in action.

1st \$25, 2nd \$20, 3rd \$15 in each grade. To youth club members or individuals.

MAIL BY POSTMARK DATE OF DECEMBER 1 TO: [Ashley Smith](#), 785 Quintana Road, #191, Morro Bay, CA 93442

Eligibility: Grades K through 6th Grade / Eligible for PRGC Awards

A CGCI Youth Contest Cover Sheet (see page 3) is required for this contest. Complete the form, print it, and send it with your entry. See fillable form on the CGCI website under "Youth Activities."

All posters must be submitted by a local CGCI club. The local garden club awards chairman will submit the top three in each grade. Sponsoring garden club may be that of a grandparent. For complete rules, see [PRGC Website](#).

- A CGCI Youth Contest Cover Sheet (see page 3) is required for this contest. Complete the form, print it, and send it with your entry. See fillable form on the CGCI website under "Youth Activities."
- Poster size: 8 ½ x 11" and must showcase one of the many pollinators.
- May put multiples of the same pollinator on the poster but not different pollinators.
- On the top right-hand corner on the back of the poster, in a space 3" x 4", write artist's name, grade, sponsoring garden club, and state. Do not use dark marker as the ink may bleed through to the front of the poster.
- Entries will be judged on originality, design, creativity, and artwork.
- Crayon, poster paint, watercolors, pencil, markers, etc. may be used.
- The color, type and texture of the paper used is up to the creator.
- Poster may include artwork that is pasted on a second piece of paper, but the entry must be flat – no 3D allowed.
- Original entries will not be returned and become the property of CGCI and PRGC.

Scale of Points

	<u>Score</u>
Adheres to contest rules: 20	_____
Originality: 20	_____
Creativity: 20	_____
Design: 20	_____
Artwork: 20	_____
Total: 100	_____

To be used by the Judging Chairman

GRADE: _____ PLACEMENT: _____

INDIVIDUAL: _____

CLUB: _____

DISTRICT: _____

JUNIOR ESSAY CONTEST

Sponsor: Lynne Batchelor

To encourage youth to learn about horticulture by writing an original, typed essay with the title "Plant America for the Next 100 Years" using one side of an 8 1/2" x 11" sheet of paper. Must use assigned title. Attached a separate piece of paper to a CGCI Award Cover Sheet and include student's name, age, address, name of counselor/teacher, sponsor or sponsoring club and district. Clip to essay.

1st \$20, 2nd \$15, 3rd \$10 in each section. To youth club members or individuals.

MAIL BY POSTMARK DATE OF DECEMBER 1 TO [Lisa Cosand](#), 6152 Chesebro Road, Agoura Hills, CA 91301.

Complete a Youth Contest Cover Sheet (see page 3).

2026 Title: **Celebrating America's Birthday in the Garden**

A CGCI Youth Contest Cover Sheet (see page 3) is required for this contest. Complete the form, print it, and send it with your entry. See fillable form on the CGCI website under "Youth Activities."

ELIGIBILITY:

Section A. Grades 1-3 (30-50 words)

Section B. Grades 4-5 (100-200 words)

Scale of Points

	<u>Score</u>
Story: 45	_____
Readability: 30	_____
Punctuation, grammar, neatness: 15	_____
Conformation to title: 10	_____
Total: 100	_____

To be used by the Judging Chairman

SECTION: _____ PLACEMENT: _____

INDIVIDUAL: _____

CLUB: _____

DISTRICT: _____