



Three of the winning gardens in recent years.

## Help us find and celebrate great home gardens!

*The Community Beautification Awards committee has commenced its search for the best Kent gardens of 2026*

Since 1971, The Garden Club of Kent has been conferring Community Beautification Awards annually to recognize great home gardens. The program honors good stewardship of the land and recognizes aesthetics, creativity and maintenance as well as sound environmental practices.

Preference is given to gardens located in Kent, but consideration will be given to gardens in adjacent towns if a winner is not selected in Kent.

Professionally designed gardens are acceptable, but the gardens must be maintained by the owners.

### Nominations open May 15-Aug. 15, 2026

Nominations will be accepted May 15 – Aug. 15, 2026. You can download a complete entry packet from The Garden Club of Kent website at [www.gardenclubofkent.org](http://www.gardenclubofkent.org), or request the submission packet from [BackyardPest@gmail.com](mailto:BackyardPest@gmail.com). Instructions for submitting in your nomination will be included in the packet.

Accompanying your nomination must be at least three (3) photographs of the garden you are nominating, preferably at its peak.

Our judges prefer to see gardens at their peaks to make the most accurate evaluation, so if the nominated garden is peaking in mid-June, then the nomination should be made in time for that to happen.

### How are nominations generated?

Neither nominees nor nominators are required to be members of The Garden Club of Kent. You can nominate your own garden or a fellow gardener — or both! Only two nominations per person are accepted, and please note that you can only nominate your own garden once, in one category.

If you know of a great garden but don't want to make the nomination yourself, let the Community Beautification Awards committee know and we'll take it from there. We make it our business to scour the town looking for interesting gardens. You can contact the committee by sending an email to [BackyardPest@gmail.com](mailto:BackyardPest@gmail.com).

### Award Categories

Community Beautification Awards are granted in the following categories. Not all categories will necessarily be represented in any give award year. Nominated gardens must be residential:

- Front Yard Garden
- Side Yard Garden
- Backyard Garden
- Small Space Garden
- Container Garden
- Woodland & Deep Shade Garden
- Home Vegetable Garden
- Native Plants/Wildlife Habitat Garden
- Youth Garden\*
- Best Overall Garden\*\*

\*Eligible for Youth Garden are children ages 5-17 who maintain a garden with minimal assistance; youth organizations; and K-12 school gardens.

\*\*We confer an award for Best Overall Garden, but this is not a nomination category. Best Overall is selected by our judges from among the nominations in all categories.

### Judging

Each nominated garden will be evaluated by two judges: a nationally accredited horticulture judge and a master gardener. The same judges will evaluate all gardens nominated in each category.

Gardens are judged in five general areas:

- Overall attractiveness
- Plant selection
- Design and functionality
- Maintenance
- Individual efforts

Some categories have specific criteria, which are explained in the packet.

### Winners

Winners will be announced at one of the club's fall 2026 monthly dinner meetings. Winners enjoy a free dinner and complimentary one-year Garden Club of Kent membership as well as an attractive award plaque.

We do not disclose publicly the address of winners' gardens, but we do announce winners' names and feature photographs of the gardens in our monthly newsletter and on our website and Facebook page.



## COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION AWARDS 2026 NOMINATION FORM

Complete this form if you would like to have your garden submitted for consideration or if you would like to nominate a garden in Kent, Ohio. Contact [BackyardPest@gmail.com](mailto:BackyardPest@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

### NOMINATION CATEGORY (please check one):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Front Yard Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Home Vegetable Garden      | <input type="checkbox"/> Container Garden               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Side Yard Garden  | <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland/Deep Shade Garden | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Plants/Wildlife Habitat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Backyard Garden   | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Space Garden         | <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Garden                   |

*\* The category of Best Overall Garden is not a nomination category; the winning garden is chosen by the judges.*

### PERSON SUBMITTING THE NOMINATION

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

### GARDEN ENTERED FOR CONSIDERATION

Owner's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUIRED: At least three (3) photographs of the nominated garden are included with the nomination.**

**GARDEN DESCRIPTION** Please describe the garden nominated, highlighting its best features.

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## COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION AWARDS 2026 PERMISSION FORM FOR NOMINEE

This document gives permission to The Garden Club of Kent's Community Beautification Awards committee members and judges to visit your garden on an agreed-upon date and time and to use images and share details about the contents (plant selections, design, etc.) of your garden in its publications and online platforms. Should you be the winner of a Community Beautification Award or receive an honorable mention, we request permission to use your name, descriptions of your garden and images of your garden. **The exact location of your garden – street name and street address -- will not be disclosed.**

NOMINEE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE & ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

AT LEAST 3 PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE NOMINATED GARDEN ACCOMPANY THIS SUBMISSION (PLEASE CHECK)

### GARDEN JUDGING

\_\_\_ I want to be present when committee members and judges visit my garden.

\_\_\_ I give permission to committee members and judges to visit my garden on the agreed upon date(s) without my presence or supervision.

### PERMISSIONS

If you are the winner of a Community Beautification Award, The Garden Club of Kent requests permission to use images of your garden in its newsletter, on its social media sites and website and on screen at the awards ceremony. A first and last name will be used to announce the award winners unless the winner wishes to remain anonymous. **No addresses, emails, contact information, or other personal information will be used or published anywhere except by permission of the garden owner.**

Check the boxes that apply:

\_\_\_ I give permission to The Garden Club of Kent to take photographs of my garden and/or use photographs I provide, which may be used for publication in the organization's monthly newsletter, on its website and in its social media and screen presentation at the awards ceremony.

\_\_\_ I give permission to The Garden Club of Kent to use my name in all announcements of winners, should I be selected for an award.

\_\_\_ I do not give permission to The Garden Club of Kent to use my name. I wish to remain anonymous.

### INDEMNITY

\_\_\_ I, the garden owner, will hold harmless The Garden Club of Kent in the unlikely event that any damage is done to my garden by judges or committee members.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Your Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## THE GARDEN CLUB OF KENT COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION AWARDS

### What are the judges looking for?

You don't have to meet all these criteria to win an award. This is a list of the range of attributes for which judges are looking. Gardens can be very successful and award-winning without checking all the boxes.

#### OVERALL ATTRACTIVENESS

- Curb appeal
- Pleasing color, form, texture and contour
- Décor enhances garden/ doesn't take away interest from plants
- Beauty, creativity and effective design
- Plants are well maintained
- Weeds are kept to a minimum

#### APPROPRIATE PLANT SELECTION

- Preference for natives
- Preference for perennials
- Functional landscape
- Pollinator/ bird/ butterfly friendly preferred
- Organically grown preferred
- Range and diversity of plants
- Continuous show of seasonal plants

#### DESIGN AND FUNCTIONALITY

- Functional layout
- Plant coverage
- Eco-friendly/ Habitat for wildlife
- Takes advantage of site features like water and shade
- Water use/conservation
- Companion planting
- Meets needs of owners
- Plants appropriately placed according to color/height/needs
- Sustainability practices/use of natural resources
- Edible/ culinary plants, veggies, herbs

#### MAINTENANCE

- Mulch if needed
- Minimal weeds
- Adequate supports/stakes when necessary
- Plants are neat and tidy

- Plant health and production; minimal disease/ infestation
- Cleanliness/ free of debris
- Preference for organic weed and pest control
- Paths are clear/mostly clear

#### INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS/ UNIQUE ASPECTS

- Stand-out qualities that make the garden unique
- Personal touches (meaningful items/ plants/ décor)
- Special features like waterfalls or rock arches
- Uncommon plants
- Evidence of good gardening practices

## COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION AWARDS

### Judging notes for special categories

#### NATIVE PLANTS/WILDLIFE HABITAT

- Primarily native plants (70/30 ratio)
- Shelter, water and food sources provided for plants and animals
- Organic

#### YOUTH GARDENS

- Youth ages 5-17 are eligible as long as they are maintaining a garden with minimal assistance
- Gardens maintained by youth organizations and school classrooms

#### VEGETABLE GARDENS

- Variety of vegetables and other plants
- Efficiency and amount of food produced will be taken into account

#### WOODLAND/SHADE GARDENS

- Focus on native plants
- Variety of plants and plant materials
- Provision of habitat (water, food sources, shelter)
- Intentionality of design
- Hardscaping and tableaux

#### SMALL SPACE & CONTAINER GARDENS

- Maximum and creative use of a small space (for instance, vertical gardening)
- Combination of plant types and appropriateness for location
- Proportionality and pleasing aesthetics
- For container gardens, good aesthetics in selection of plant vessels

#### BEST OVERALL

The Garden Club of Kent does not accept nominations in this category. The winner is selected from the nominees in all categories. Gardeners who have most, if not all of the following categories are most eligible for this award:

- Flowers/ pollinator friendly areas
- Food production (veggies/ fruits)
- Herbs and other culinary plants
- Animals for food production or ones that are beneficial for garden maintenance