



Enjoy Gardening? Join a Garden Club

OUTDOOR AND MORE | Enjoy Gardening? Join a Garden Club

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Joining a club, no matter the type, fosters a sense of belonging with fellow members on a shared mission. Garden clubs can be social, scientific, civic or all three with many opportunities to delve into plants and expand the knowledge of their members.

"We have a civic and environmental responsibility," Cheryl Lynch, president, Adrian Garden Club, says. "Our mission is to educate and provide opportunities for learning — we go on trips, have speakers and we are social."

History of Michigan's Garden Clubs

According to researchers, garden clubs in the U.S. formed around the early-1900s. For example, the Garden Club of Philadelphia and 11 other clubs joined together in 1913 to form the Garden Club

of America. The Detroit-area based Garden Club of Michigan is its only Michigan-based member club, and it's thriving. Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc. is another early 1900s organization and one of its earliest member clubs, the Adrian Garden Club, organized in 1926, is about to celebrate 100 years of gardening.

The Woman's National Farm and Garden Association, founded in 1914, has 25 Michigan branches interested gardeners can join depending on where they live. Its focus ranges from civic service and education to floral arts and horticulture therapy.

A Club for Every Gardener

Interested gardeners can choose from clubs with structure that follow bylaws or they may want a more

casual experience like the independent clubs often found on social media. The Clawson Gardening Club was formed in the last few years and one of its community projects is the garden area surrounding the Clawson Historical Museum.

"A lot of people don't know where to start with gardening," Jay Karwoski, Clawson Gardening Club Facebook administrator says. "We want to be very approachable, helpful and not structured. It's a very low-pressure atmosphere to ask questions, share plants and show off what you feel good about. I think we found a lot more gardeners with our Facebook page."

Why Join A Garden Club?

The reasons to join a garden club are limitless. Many people join to share their plants and knowledge, and it can be especially helpful to learn and grow things from someone who gardens in the same soil type and climate. Some people join for social interaction, whether it's working together quietly on a garden project or attending a lively gathering to celebrate a milestone.

Those who are more in tune with the business end of an organization or who can't keep up with the physical demands of gardening often have the skills needed to organize fundraisers, manage scholarship applications, apply for grants, write newsletters or help grow the membership.

When the gardening season winds down, education ramps up. Fall and winter are a time for learning and planning events for the next growing season.



To join a garden club, research both the structured organizations and the social media clubs in your area to figure out the club that suits your needs and talents, then attend a meeting or event. "People can come to a meeting just to see how they like it; they don't have to be a member to find out what it's all about," Lynch says.

Learn more at: GardenClubOfMichigan.org | MIGardenClubs.org/Clubs | WNFGA.org/AboutUs/Division-Branch-Info. □



Beautification Awards

Ever wonder about the beautification award signs that pop up in city gardens or residential yards around Michigan at the height of bloom? If there's a beautifully manicured residential or public garden near you that has been lovingly designed, planted and cared for by local volunteers, not paid professionals, it may be a contender for a local award. Here's how that works.

Contact your local township, village or city clerk for beautification award rules, but keep in mind your area may not offer this, though there are other options. While the State of Michigan does not have a statewide award program, municipalities or organizations such as the Michigan Nursery and Landscape Association and Keep Michigan Beautiful, Inc. offer beautification awards.

KeepMichiganBeautiful.org | MNLA.org/Community-Landscape-Beautification-Awards