

GCG YOUTH GARDEN CLUBS

Digging In with Our Redbud Youth Today and For Future Generations!

**Sponsoring a GCG Youth Garden Club may be easier than you think!
Here are a few ways to begin and program ideas to help you get started.
*Whatever you would like to share, the kids are going to love!***

~ Quick Steps to Get Going~

- ❖ **Work with an existing group such as a Scout Troop or Pack, school group, 4H Club or a class at your place of worship.**
- ❖ **Meeting requirement minimum is only 5 times per year.**
- ❖ **Be sure to apply for a GCG Youth Standard of Excellence Certificate.**
- ❖ **A Youth Club Registration Form and all youth forms & information may be found on the GCG website@ gardenclubofgeorgia.org**
- ❖ **Please advise your Redbud Youth Chairman if you register a Youth Garden Club.**

~A Few Program Ideas May Include~

- ❖ **Annual NGC Youth Poetry Contest 2025-2026 Theme:**
- ❖ ***Plant America for the Next 100 Years. Email entries to Melody Gaskins, Redbud Youth Chair. Entries should arrive no later than December 1st.***
- ❖ ***Annual NGC High School Essay Contest - 2025-2026 Theme: Is Recycling Plastics the Answer to Our Plastic Disposal Problem?*** The National Garden Clubs, Inc. Youth Essay Contest is open to all students in 9th - 12th grade. Essayists submit a 600-700 word essay that addresses the posed question.
- ❖ **NGC Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest.** Mail entries to Melody Gaskins, Redbud Youth Chairman. **Entries should arrive no later than December 1st.**
- ❖ **Have a recycle program and enter the NGC/GCG Youth Sculpture Contest.** Entries due Jan. 1 to GCG State Chairman Judy Johnson judytjohnson1953@gmail.com (C) 912-278-1953
- ❖ **Flower designs; start simple with a line design.**
- ❖ **Participate in a local Standard Flower Show or County Fair.**
- ❖ **Environmental concerns such as air quality, conserving water, litter & recycling.** Have a discussion with artwork or a craft (rain sticks and collages are fun!).
- ❖ **Sponsor a neighborhood or school "Clean-up".**
- ❖ **Create Holiday or Seasonal décor using fresh plant material found in the garden. Fresh, dried or a combination is easily obtained.**
- ❖ **Herb Program ~Bird Program ~ Container Gardening**
- ❖ **A Garden Therapy activity in your community is so appreciated.**
- ❖ **Important details for NGC Contests, Grants and more may be found on the NGC website www.gardenclub.org**

**Let's get Georgia's Youth excited about Gardening as they
*"Dig In with Redbud to Get Things Done: Beautify, Conserve, Educate."***

**Melody Gaskins ~ Redbud Youth Chairman 2025-2027
(C) 706-975-6609 melodythompsonsgaskins@gmail.com**

**Susan Turner ~ Redbud Youth Co-Chairman 2025-2027
770-922-4411 (C)404-502-8147 glencree@bellsouth.net**



YOUTH POETRY CONTEST GUIDELINES 2025

PLANT AMERICA FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS



Guidelines

- Include name, address, age, grade, school, sponsoring local garden club and state garden club of the poet on the back of entry. (Child privacy is important to NGC, and thus, published winning national poems will only identify the poet's first name, last name initial, local garden club and state.)
- Poet's family does not have to be a member of the local sponsoring garden club.
- 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 the booklet.
- Poems do not have to rhyme. They may be traditional verse, acrostics, blank verse, cinquains, diamond poems, limerick, or haiku.
- When choosing a poem title, please be creative and incorporate the theme: "Plant America for the Next 100 Years." However, the theme should not be used as the title to any poetry. When judging, the title is worth 10 points.
- Poets should be strongly encouraged to proofread their work for grammatical and spelling errors.
- All entries become the property of National Garden Clubs, Inc.
- Sending Region winning entries to NGC: All Region winning entries must be typed, titled, and sent to the National Chairperson (**James Pavelka**, jamespavelka@comcast.net) in Word format via email, and the original hard copy mailed for judging.
- National winners will be announced at the NGC 2026 National Convention and the local garden club contact person will be contacted regarding any winning entry.

Submissions and Deadlines

All poems are submitted to a local garden club affiliated with National Garden Clubs, Inc. Local clubs send their winning poems (1 per grade-level in each category) to their State by the published State deadline. State winning poems are sent to their Region Contest by **2/1/2026**. Region winners are sent to the National Contest by **3/1/2026**. National winning poems are announced in **May 2026**, and published online in a free digital poetry booklet.

Eligibility, Categories and Judging Criteria

- Youth in **grades K-12** compete by grade-level in one of three categories: General Education, Special Education or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).
- **Scale of Points:** Title 10%, Content 40%, Creativity 30%, Style 20%. Total 100%

gardenclub.org/poetry-contest



Email entries no later than December 1st to:
Melody Gaskins ~ Redbud Youth Chairman 2025-2027
(C) 706-975-6609 melodythompsongaskins@gmail.com



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



National Garden Clubs, Inc.

2025 Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest INFORMATION



Hosted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and the National Garden Clubs, Inc., this contest is an opportunity for local garden clubs to connect with their communities and may be used to **promote** their local or State garden club, **attract** children and their parents, and **raise awareness** of the importance of caring for the environment and preventing wildfires.

- Only children from first through fifth grade can participate. You can reach out to schools, scout troops, after school programs, youth programs, and similar groups.
- Students should be reminded to check spelling as posters with spelling errors will be disqualified.
- The following information must be written on the back of each poster: The student's name, grade level, garden club name, garden club contact name address, phone number, school, teacher's name, school name, parent or guardian name and address, phone number and email. (Should school policy preclude giving students' addresses and phone numbers, please include the school address and phone number.)
 - Or use the free downloadable label found at www.symbols.gov/ngc-poster-contest.
- Local garden club coordinators for the Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest should contact their State or regional poster chairman to get the promotional package. You can also download the promotional package from the National Garden Clubs, Inc., website, www.gardenclubs.org or from www.symbols.gov/ngc-poster-contest.
- Every participating child should receive a certificate of participation. Certificates can be ordered for free at www.symbols.gov or www.symbols.gov/ngc-poster-contest.
- Local and State garden clubs' poster coordinators are encouraged to organize recognition ceremonies.
- If there is a Forest Service office nearby, they can help facilitate the presence of Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl at your recognition ceremony. You can find your nearest Forest Service office by visiting www.fs.usda.gov.
- We encourage participants and/or local, State, and regional chairpersons to make copies of the posters before submission.
- The five posters that compete for the national grand prize become property of the Forest Service. They ARE NOT returned to participants.
- For information about the poster contest do not hesitate to contact the National Garden Clubs, Inc., national coordinator for the poster contest, Terry Critchlow at tchritchlow@aol.com or the Forest Service national coordinator for the poster contest, Iris Velez at iris.velez@usda.gov.

**Thank you for your support and commitment to the partnership between
the National Garden Clubs, Inc., and the Forest Service!**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Send entries via US Mail or other method of delivery to arrive no later than December 1st to:

Melody Gaskins ~ Redbud Youth Chairman 2025-2027

370 Peachbelt Rd Thomaston, GA 30286

(C) 706-975-6609 melodythompsonsgaskins@gmail.com

The Smokey Bear & Woodsy Owl Poster Contest Flyer!

Children from first through fifth grade are invited to participate in the National Garden Clubs, Inc. Poster Contest!

Poster Rules and Tips

1. All poster entrees must be sponsored by a local Garden Club.
2. Posters must feature Smokey Bear or Woodsy Owl and may **NOT** feature both together.
3. Smokey Bear posters **MUST** include Smokey's wildfire prevention message:

Only you Can Prevent Wildfires!

4. Woodsy Owl posters **MUST** include Woodsy's conservation message:

Lend a Hand, Care for the Land!

5. Each poster **MUST** be **11 x 17** inches in size.
6. A good poster has a bold and simple and its message is easily read and understood and is delivered both in picture and in text.
7. Materials that can be used include: crayons, markers, poster paints, water colors, etc. The choice of paper is up to the child.
8. Posters may include artwork pasted upon a second piece of paper. However, they must be flat. **No** 3-dimensional posters, computer scanned, or **electronically generated material** will be accepted.
9. The artist's name, address, home phone, grade, school, teacher's name, city and state must be printed on the back of the poster in the lower right corner. **Please print the label from GCG website**, then cut, paste or tape to the back of each poster.
10. Each poster **MUST** also show the sponsoring local garden club name and city.
11. Posters are the product of individual student artists.
12. Students should check spelling. Posters with spelling errors will be disqualified.
13. Posters are judged for originality, design, slogan, artwork, and overall effectiveness of the message.
14. Since Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl are Official icons protected by law, the colors of their clothing **MUST** be accurate. Check the colors on www.symbols.gov. For free participation certificates, click on NGC Poster Contest at symbols website. A poster may include just the head of Smokey or Woodsy Owl or their whole body. Woodsy Owl vintage images may also be used.
15. Winning posters should be copied as they will not be returned.
16. Visit www.gardenclubofgeorgia.org and www.gardenclub.org for further contest details.
17. Only 5 first place posters in the State competition will be entered in Regional competition. Regional winners will be entered in National competition. National entries become the property of NGC.
18. Please complete the Chairman winning posters report and local accountability form and send with posters.



All **local first, second, and third place posters** should be to your **District Chairman by December 1**. Please include the local winners report form and accountability form.

District Chairman should have all district winning **first, second and third place posters** to **State Chairman, Mary Ogden, by January 20**. Please include district winners report and accountability forms.

Send entries via US Mail or other method of delivery to arrive no later than December 1st to:

Melody Gaskins ~ Redbud Youth Chairman 2025-2027
370 Peachbelt Rd Thomaston, GA 30286
(C) 706-975-6609 melodythompsonogaskins@gmail.com



NGC Youth Sculpture Contest **Encouraging Youth to Keep Our Planet Green**

This contest encourages students to keep our planet green and to get involved with saving the environment.

Students in grades 4 through 8 are eligible to create a sculpture of recyclable, reused, and reduced materials.

The sculpture is limited in width to 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches.
Height should be proportional to width.

Recycle/Sculpture Contest Rules

All entries are submitted to GCG State Chairman Judy Johnson

Email entries no later than January 1st to:

judyjohnson1953@gmail.com (H) 912-367-7779 (C) 912-278-1953

Please advise your Redbud District Chairmen of your entry/entries.

Melody Gaskins ~ Redbud Youth Chairman 2025-2027

(C) 706-975-6609 melodythompsongaskins@gmail.com

Susan Turner ~ Redbud Youth Co-Chairman 2025-2027

770-922-4411 (C) 404-502-8147 glencree@bellsouth.net

- All children in 4th – 8th grades are eligible to enter, with a local garden club sponsor.
- Sculptures must consist of recycled, reused, and reduced materials.
- The sculpture is limited to a size that will fit sitting on an 8 1/2" x11" sheet of paper; height should be proportionate.
- A list of materials used, and a brief description of the sculpture should be included on the entry form.
- Entry form may be found on NGC website at www.gardenclub.org
- Entries will include (2) 4"x6" photographs printed on the back of the entry form.
- Chairman should make photos of entries to provide as requested from the NGC website.
- Club entries must be sent to your State Chairman by your state's deadline.
- Sculpture Contest Regional winners will be sent to NGC by March 1.

Scale of Points

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Creative use of materials and self-expression | 60% |
| • Description of sculpture and materials used | 30% |
| • Craftsmanship and Technique | 10% |

Total

100%

Resources

[**Sculpture Contest Entry Form**](#)

