

PROGRAM SUGGESTIONS FOR AFFILIATED TGOA/MGCA CLUBS

Good programs are necessary for a successful garden club.

Here are a few suggestions

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD PROGRAM

1. Start on time and close on time.
2. Members must be comfortable and free of distractions.
3. Several items may be covered, but only one main subject.
4. The main subject should be timely - possibly something that is commonly done in the month ahead.
5. Speaker must be informed on allotted time.
6. Allow time for questions - audience participation.
7. If necessary, use a P.A. system so all can hear.
9. Keep a rapid tempo with the program. Don't let it drag!
10. Routine club business should be handled at board meetings.
11. Announce main subject for next meeting before adjournment.
12. Most club programs conclude with a social exchange over light refreshments.
13. Some clubs have dinner meetings including the program.

WORK OF PROGRAM COMMITTEE

One of the elected officers should be designated program chairman and should be assisted by a small appointed committee. The first job of this committee is to select subjects or themes for meetings. This can be done by consultation with members in a small club; by a questionnaire in a larger club. List a dozen general subjects. Ask members to check the two or three in which they are most interested.

Advance planning is a must. The most successful clubs announce a year's program in January. If costs are involved, these must be included in the budget. You can always make changes if necessary.

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

The main feature of the program can take various forms. An informed speaker is the method most often used. Many sources for speakers are available. Members of the club and members of nearby clubs who are expert, or experienced, should be given priority. Extension Service specialists are often booked six months in advance. County agricultural agents are usually nearby. State Experiment Station staff are very knowledgeable. Nurserymen, arborists, landscape architects, landscape contractors and garden center managers should be considered. Members of specialty: roses, dahlias, irises, glads - there are over 50 specialty clubs.

Films are generally replaced these days by CD's, video and VCR's. Satisfactory ways of obtaining current information include a letter of inquiry, by email, or from websites.

Possible sources: (in no order of importance)

1. TGOA/MGCA Audio/Visual Programs (See TGOA/MGCA Red Book)
2. Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11225 <http://www.bbg.org>
3. Jackson & Perkins, Medford, OR 97501 <http://www.jacksonandperkins.com>
4. Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA 19348 <http://www.longwoodgardens.org>
5. Your State Agricultural College, Attention: Extension Services
5. American Horticulture Society <http://www.ahs.org>
6. All the specialty Societies (Find them with Google)
7. Thompson & Morgan <http://www.thompson-morgan.com>
8. W. Atlee Burpee & Company <http://www.burpee.com>
9. Johnny's Selected Seeds <http://www.johnnyseeds.com>
10. Victory Horticulture Library (Fostering Historical Research) <http://www.saveseeds.org>

Some regular club projects may be sources for part or all of a meeting program:

1. Annual Big Tree Contest winners
2. Home and Business Beautification Awards
3. Gardening from the Heart Projects (See TGOA/MGCA Red Book)
4. Annual Plant Auction (plants from members gardens)
5. Mini-Horticulture show with prizes
6. Silent Auctions at some meetings with donated items
7. Annual family picnic
8. Year end holiday dinner with special entertainment

To add variety, some clubs have regular segments in a program set aside for a specific purpose. These are usually before the main feature. A "Round Table" is a chance for anyone to ask a question and for members with experience to respond. "Timely Topics" is a 5 to 8 minute chat by members on something that is really "hot", or it might be a bit of garden philosophy. "The Flower (or Vegetable) of the Month" might be how to grow something especially well. "Gleaning the Crop" - a thumb-nail sketch of significant articles in recent magazines. Book reviews...A flower show at every meeting -Best arrangement of flowers; of grasses; of weeds or wildflowers. "What weed is that?" Leaf identification contest. Seed identification contest.

Colored pictures - name the plant. Self-explanatory educational exhibits. Door prizes, etc, etc. These secondary, or novelty features, should not detract from the feature presentation of the meeting.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The program chairman should always have an emergency program up his sleeve.

The program committee accumulates a surprising amount of material and information during the year. These should be turned over to the next committee.

It is the responsibility of the program chairman, or his representative, to confirm dates with the speaker; arrange for necessary equipment; to host and introduce the speaker; to time the speaker; to close the program and to see that the speaker is properly recognized for his presentation.

Remember - good programs are the basis for a successful club.

Find out what your members want. Then pile it on!! Have fun....

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