

Membership Development

How to Keep Existing Members

Developing your club's membership requires both recruitment and retention efforts. New garden club members bring important benefits to the club, including diversity, fresh ideas, and new energy. Existing members are crucial to sustaining and continuing the good works of the club.

Retention efforts should be a priority for the club's Membership Committee as well as gaining new members. Making sure that members are informed, involved and recognized for their service to the club will increase member satisfaction.

Appoint a Membership Committee of two or three members with setting goals for not only recruiting new members but how to retain existing members. When reporting at each club meeting, the chairman encourages all members to reach out to those members that are absent by either a phone call or a card expressing how much they were missed.

Six Easy Steps on Keeping Existing Members

1. Keep your meetings fun, short and entertaining! Keep business sessions short and to the point. Have fun and entertaining programs that not only educate, but are varied and interesting.
2. Make **everyone** feel welcomed. Not only the prospective member wants to feel welcomed, but those members that may have been absent the last meeting needs to feel special also.
3. Contact absentees and encourage them to attend and participate. A phone call or a card expressing how much they were missed goes a long way.
4. Involve all members in club activities. Everyone wants to feel needed and useful. Pair new members with existing members in each of your club's committees and projects.
5. Survey all members as to the type of programs they would like to have and follow up by providing these programs.
6. **MAKE GARDEN CLUB FUN!**

Accentuate the Positive, Eliminate the Negative The "Dos" and "Don'ts" of a Meeting

- **Do** use a printed agenda. Club members will find this help to start and end the meeting on time.
- **Do** start meetings on time. If you start late, members will get in the habit of coming in late or not at all.
- **Do** have a program and announce it ahead of time.
- **Do** ask each member to bring a guest. If the guest sees a good program with good fellowship, they might just beat you to the punch and ask how to join.
- **Do** appoint a Telephone Committee that will contact members of upcoming events.
- **Do** pat members on the back in public for a job well done. Everyone likes to be recognized.
- **Don't** put members down for failing. Remember, this is a volunteer organization.
- **Don't** ignore new members. Treat new members and guests as you would like to be treated.
- **Don't** complain at meetings. Who wants to hear complaints. Keep a positive attitude and smile!

Garden club activity has its tradition in civic involvement. Members benefit singularly from opportunities for leadership and personal development. Members of a garden club are always willing to share not only helpful information, but talents they have learned over the years. Sharing common interests and aspirations are the main satisfactions of membership. Support your club by serving on club committees and working on projects. Cherish your membership in your garden club.

