

Best Practices to Recruit New Members During the COVID-19 Pandemic

In-Person Engagement

1. Host frequent, in-person, socially distanced events that meet the current needs of the community in keeping with GreenThumb policies listed on our website. For example, host mutual aid efforts such as food distribution or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distribution to the community. As a reminder, as of March 2021, garden events are capped at a maximum of 25 due to COVID-19.
2. Decorate the garden during culturally-relevant holidays for the community, including Halloween, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Diwali, etc. Set up volunteer days and invite community members to assist with decorations in person and adhering to social distance protocols.
3. Strive to build and deepen partnerships and engage potential stakeholders. This is especially important during the Covid-19 era in order to demonstrate that the garden group is invested in the community.
4. Maintain a brief recruitment script in your garden to recruit potential new members and keep a guest/log book to capture data from garden visitors. Remember, your garden group can still safely accept new members regardless of whether your garden is holding public open hours during COVID-19.

Virtual & Passive Engagement

5. Build and maintain a strong social media presence on various platforms that attract different demographics. This will ensure the garden is able to tell stories about their space and their gardeners as well as conduct outreach for new members and volunteer support.
6. Consider doing some virtual and passive community engagement, including:
 - a. Hosting sidewalk giveaways of herbs, flowers, and seeds
 - b. Partnering with artists to display interactive art installations
 - c. Filming virtual garden tours and self-guided tours
 - d. Hosting virtual and hybrid in-person workshops
 - e. Installing Little Libraries
 - f. Saving and sharing seeds
 - g. Attend GreenThumb workshops or watch our YouTube videos as a group

Creating a Welcoming Space

7. The garden should look inviting to the broader community and potential new members even during the off season. Ensure that the garden is clutter-free, well-maintained, and incorporates some creative projects such as artwork, milk crate gardens, and children's projects.
8. Ensure that the garden has proper and visible signage indicating name of the garden, contact information, and other details.
9. Keep several copies of an information sheet in your garden which should mention: contact information, upcoming events, knowing how to join the garden, rules, and a quick snapshot of the garden. An added plus would be to print out business cards and include this information in multiple languages.
10. As a reminder, be sure to follow Covid-19 safety protocols, which include: wearing a mask while inside the garden, having hand sanitizer available at the garden, and maintaining six feet of distance from others.

As a reminder, GreenThumb provides the following services for registered groups in good standing: removal of debris and trash; translation of open hours and bylaws materials in multiple languages; signage for the garden, etc. Please contact your Outreach Coordinator for further information.

