

Revised September 2020

Kate Copsey, Kathy Jentz and Ken Brown



Regional Meeting Guidelines

GardenComm has a recognized list of goals and objectives for the development of regional meetings. Each meeting is supposed to be planned for only one day's duration. One of the three directors, or a Board of Directors/Executive Committee-appointed ambassador, for that region must be present throughout the day's events. Length of time to travel needs to be considered if the meeting draws on a local, regional, or national audience. Any overnight accommodations are the responsibility of the attendees. Any proposal submitted for approval to the Board of Directors/Executive Committee must include each of these three components:

- 1. **Education.** Sometime during the meeting an educational program needs to be presented. This program should include a speaker familiar with the topic or theme of the day. Also, a GardenComm organizational update should be given by the director or ambassador present. The floor should be opened for any questions about the organization.
- 2. **Story Tour.** The location should be selected so that attendees will be able to develop story ideas. Garden communicators should be able to write about horticultural topics. Photographers should be able to photograph horticultural subjects.
- 3. **Networking.** Arguably, this is the most important leg of this three-legged stool. Garden communicators need to be given time to talk amongst themselves.

Current Board of Director Policies for Regional Meetings

- Each region should hold at least one meeting per calendar year.
- A GardenComm Director (or Ambassador) must be present at all Regional meetings.
- Meetings cannot exceed more than one day. Which may consist of two half days with one overnight.
- There should be a reasonable time period between the meeting and the Annual Conference (30 days is suggested) and cannot take place in the host city of the Annual Conference.
- Meetings must be self-sustaining and shall be budgeted to at least break even. The meeting committee are encouraged to secure sponsorship to cover the meeting costs, but these should not be factored into the preliminary budget.
- All GardenComm Regional Meetings should have a registration fee of at least \$35. Registration fees for GardenComm members cannot exceed \$75. Late fees can be added to encourage early registration. Ex: Early bird (60 days out), registration set at \$35, regular sign up period \$45 and late sign up (less than 20 days) pay \$55.



- A registrant or participant to any GardenComm event may be expelled from a function or the entire event, without refund, for any action or activity deemed inappropriate or unsafe by the Board of Directors or their representatives.
- Virtual regional meetings that follow the above format could have a reduced fee as the garden tour portion may be interesting but will not allow photo opportunities or similar benefits.
- Virtual meetings that are primarily for networking and keeping in touch should have no fee.
- Given the reality of travel distances and the COVID pandemic, creative virtual substitution and additions to in-person Regional Meetings are encouraged. Fees and schedules should be adjusted accordingly.

EX. Virtual attendees would pay \$35 to have access to a live feed of the educational and business meeting. After the event, recordings of the destination garden would be available at the end of the event. The event committee would be responsible for coordinating the hybrid event with the site and management (Kellen).

The following is a hypothetical timeline that provides a description of responsibilities that an organizing committee needs to undertake. This check list has been developed to offer a blueprint against which previous meetings have been developed.

One Year to Six Months Prior to the Event

- A. Organize a committee. This can be as small as one person or as large as is workable for communication and required work load.
- B. Select a venue. This should include an inside gathering space as well as the opportunity to tour a facility and/or garden in close proximity.
- C. Confer with management at the venue.
 - 1. Are they amenable?
 - 2. How many people can they accommodate?
 - 3. Would they be able to obtain speakers for the education part of the meeting?
 - 4. Can they provide any AV equipment that would be required?
 - 5. Are they able to accommodate people with special needs?
 - Note: All Public facilities (hotels, restaurants, and public gardens) must be ADA compliant with local accessibility regulations. Private gardens do not need to be ADA compliant, but accommodation of any disability should be made, if possible.
 - 6. Are they able to provide food services?
 - a. If yes, can they set up for coffee/snacks upon arrival and lunch at mid-day?
 - b. If no, can they suggest any local off-site caterers?



- 7. Most importantly, are they willing to waive any and all entry or rental fees?
- D. Decide whether more than one location will be included in the meeting's agenda.
 - Is the site(s) within walking distance or a short car ride away? Unless other
 arrangements are made, the GardenComm will not provide insurance coverage for
 any mass transportation. The responsibility of moving from one venue to another
 belongs to the attendees. Exceptions would be if a local vendor or
 tourist/convention bureau sponsors the bus and provides the office with a
 certificate of liability insurance.
 - 2. Does the additional location(s) continue the theme of day's meeting?
 - 3. Does the additional location(s) conform to the Regional meeting goals of the GardenComm?
- E. Develop a budget for the event. (An excel spread sheet is attached that includes all of the possible costs associated with planning and execution of a regional meeting.) The budget must include the income from (reasonable) registration numbers, expenses including food and beverage, transportation, director's expenses (Expenses up to \$500 total or not to exceed 30% of income will be paid for all (not each) directors traveling more than 60 miles to represent the Board of Directors at a Regional meeting), meeting expenses (badges, copying, etc.), facility fees, speaker's fees, etc. The budget must at least break even.
 - 1. Contact GardenComm vendors within the region to ask for sponsorship (sample attached). All sponsorships must be committed in writing, describing the level of sponsorship and what they will receive in return.
 - 2. Price the registration to add perceived value to the event.
 - 3. Every meeting will have expenses. Plan for them!
- F. Write a proposal.
 - 1. Include a timed schedule/agenda of events that could be used on marketing messaging (sample attached).
 - 2. Addresses for all tour stops and a clear path/route must be provided.
 - 3. Include the budget proposal.
 - 4. Include contact information for the organizer.
 - 5. Include the name of the GardenComm director or ambassador responsible for the meeting.
- G. Submit the proposal to the GardenComm office.
 - 1. Send it to info@gardencomm.org.
 - 2. This proposal must be received by the office at least 60 days prior to the date of the event.



- 3. The office will distribute the proposal to the Board of Directors or Executive Committee for approval of the meeting.
- 4. The organizing committee will be notified of the Board of Directors/Executive Committee's decision. All proposal materials must receive Board of Directors or Executive Committees approval prior to any notices being distributed to the membership (including notices in *On the QT*).

Six Months to Two Weeks Prior to the Event

- A. Develop marketing and publicity for the event. This information will be used to create digital marketing (website, email, social media, etc.) by the GardenComm staff. All final information must be submitted at least 45 days in advance of the meeting date. Staff will create or assist with the following:
 - 1. Set a deadline for registration. Generally this is one to two weeks prior to the event.
 - 2. Create event page and configure registration on the GardenComm website "Upcoming Events" section.
 - 3. Submit a calendar listing for *On the QT*. Include the notice in the "Upcoming Events" section.
- B. Create messaging for any social media or email marketing. Write a preview post for the Gardencomm Grows blog.
- C. Communicate with GardenComm office. Staff will handle the following logistical items:
 - Note: Items 1,2,4 & 5 will only be handled by the office if the meeting's finances are in US\$. The local committee will be responsible for those items if the meeting's finances are in a different currency.
 - 1. Registrations.
 - 2. Prepayment of expenses.
 - 3. Certificates of insurance for any of the venues as required.
 - 4. Provide periodical updates on registration numbers.
 - 5. Provide final registration list on the week prior to the event. Name badges will be sent, if required.
 - 6. Do the registration numbers match the budget goals?
 - a. If not, can the office send out another round of announcements?
 - b. If not, can the event reasonably and without penalty be canceled?
 - c. If registrations are high, will attendance effect the capacity of the venue?



D. Confirm details of the meeting.

1. Contact the venue:

- a. Arrange for the specific room set up based on actual registration numbers.
- b. Confirm the AV set up.
- c. Confirm parking arrangements—or lack of them.
- d. Request all necessary information for how the venue wants to be recognized in all advertising.
- e. Make certain the venue knows about any food deliveries.
- f. If there is a photo shoot scheduled prior to the normal time for opening:
 - 1. Confirm where people should enter.
 - 2. Make certain that one GardenComm director is scheduled to be present.
 - 3. Have a list of registrants authorized to be present prior to the start of the regular meeting.

2. Contact the speaker(s):

- a. Confirm the AV requirements.
- b. If the speaker(s) are book author(s) ask them to bring supplies of their book(s) for sale.
- c. Request biography and program blurb.
- d. Confirm any fees or expenses to be reimbursed.

3. Contact GardenComm vendors:

- a. Confirm any monetary or gifts-in-kind sponsorship. Include them in all of the promotional materials.
- Contact additional GardenComm vendors for donations of related promotional material, product samples, or advertising specialty pieces for distribution to the attendees.
- c. Confirm how the vendor's company wants to be recognized in any promotion and marketing.
- d. If a raffle is planned, contact the vendors with that information and detail the delivery address and deadline for any donations. Be aware of any local rules/laws about holding a raffle.

4. If caterers are involved:

a. Make sure they're informed about registration numbers and delivery timing.



- b. Make sure they know who will be signing for the delivery.
- c. Confirm with the office how the bill is to be settled. See note above about meetings where US\$ are not being used.
- 5. Do the expenses for the meeting agree with the initial budget proposal?
 - a. If not, how can the income or level/type of sponsorship be increased?
 - b. If not, can the event reasonably and without penalty be canceled?
 - c. Can any expense item be renegotiated?
- E. Exchange cell phone numbers with all the members of the committee, the staff at all venues, the vendor (if necessary) and the caterer. Phones should be on and able to be used at any time during the meeting.

Just Prior to the Event

- A. Confirm registration:
 - 1. Staff shall supply a final registration list.
 - 2. Copy the list of contact information for the attendees for distribution at the meeting or send an email to the list with that information.
 - 3. Purchase badges to create name tags for attendees. Submit your receipt to staff for reimbursement. See note above about meetings where US\$ are not being used.
 - 4. Respond to any last minute questions from the registrants.
- B. Confirm final arrangements with venue and determine timing of arrival and set up. Will the AV be ready prior to the start of the meeting for testing?
- C. Assign MC or moderator duties to member of committee. Make certain that person has the speaker biographies for introductions and a copy of the schedule.
- D. Confirm final arrangement and time of appearance with speaker(s). If the speaker is using a visual presentation, request a digital copy to load onto the computer being used prior to the event.
- E. Confirm receipt of vendor donations.
- F. Double check all financial arrangements against the initial budget proposal.

IV. The Event

A. Committee should assemble at least ½ hour prior to the start of the meeting and assign last minute responsibilities.



- B. Set up registration table at least ½ hour prior to the announced start of the meeting. There will be attendees waiting for you.
- C. Check AV
 - 1. Do a sound check with microphones.
 - 2. If Powerpoint is to be used check computer and projector. Does it work?
 - 3. Assign committee member to control room lighting for ease of viewing screen.
- D. Confirm the presence of a GardenComm director or ambassador.
- E. Collect receipts for all reimbursable expenses.
- F. Follow the agenda! Begin the program, tours and change of venue according to the schedule—the success of the program depends on it!
- G. Keep the group together and do not allow for any deviation from the schedule—no matter how much the attendees beg or whine. Ultimately the success of the program depends on it.
- H. Announce all meeting or gathering times clearly before the group disperses for individually guided tours.
- I. Walk through the site prior to leaving to round up any stragglers. "No communicator left behind...".

V. After the Event

- A. Complete an "Actual Budget" to compare with projection.
- B. Submit all expenses for reimbursement to office. Any expenses over \$25 must be accompanied by a receipt. See note above about meetings where US\$ are not being used.
- C. Send "Thank You" notes to everyone involved—especially venue hosts, vendor sponsors, speakers, and committee members.



GardenComm Regional Meeting & Workshop Proposal Form

For all meetings and special events designated as GardenComm activities, the Association assumes financial, personal injury, and other liabilities for the event. Therefore, it is necessary that the Board of Directors or Executive Committee approve all program plans in advance of any program commitments and announcements in order for an event to be designated an official GardenComm activity.

The following form is designed to provide the information necessary to evaluate the risk being assumed by GardenComm for any proposed regional meeting or workshop. Event hosts are requested to submit their proposals to the GardenComm Executive Director at least 60 days prior to the event dates. Please complete as much of the form and provide as many details as possible. The more complete a proposal is, the quicker it can be approved. Additional details can be added as they become available. If you have any questions, please email the GardenComm office.

GardenComm Region f	or Event	
Name of Event		
Date of Event		Date Proposal Submitted
Event Location/ Venue		
City	State/Province	Zip/Postal Code
Event Organizer/Conta	ct Person	
Address		
City	State/ Province	Zip/Postal Code
Phone	Email	
Please provide the foll	lowing information in t	he spaces below.
•		ent, an officer, director or ambassador must be present. Which rador will be present at this event?



Please attach a program of activities and a time schedule that give details of the following:

A.	Schedule for the event including timeline, locations and presentation topics and speakers.

B. Please fill in the blanks:

Participants in this program should learn __"X"_ and/or see __"Y"__.

C. Please list program speakers' information:

Name	Phone	Email	Contract Y/N	Fee

- D. Is there time for the regional update and networking? Who will provide the GardenComm update portion of the meeting?
- E. Please list sponsor support:

Organization	Primary Contact	Phone	Email	Amount	Confirmed in Writing? (Y/N)

- F. **Housing** Describe available housing facilities and any commitments to be secured/guaranteed by GardenComm:
- G. **Meeting Facilities/Venue** Describe all meeting facilities to be used, fee for use and/or admission charge, and commitments to be secured/guaranteed by GardenComm:
- H. **Transportation** Will group transportation (busses) be required? What commitments must be secured/guaranteed by GardenComm?
- I. **Food/Beverage** Will coffee, snacks or meals be provided? If so, who will provide them and what is the cost of the food, tax, and service charge?



J. Technology -

Organization	AV (Y/N)	Cost?
Will a digital projector and screen be needed?		
Will a microphone/sound system be needed?		
Will electrical outlets be needed for use of laptop computers or other		
technology?		
Will any other technology be required, i.e. Internet connection?		
Will any other technology be required, i.e. Internet connection?		
Will any other technology be required, i.e. Internet connection?		
Will you need to rent tables and chairs?		
Other equipment? Specify:		

K. Prepare a budget for the event; please use spreadsheet attached.



GardenComm Regional Meeting & Workshop Checklist

	Organizing committee in place	Obtain information (speaker's bio, location/venue details including
	Theme /educational component determined	photographs) for marketing and PR
	Date and time selected	Arrange for pre-payments necessary for an fees
	Venue/location selected	Confirm details with venue/location
	Caterer contacted and menu requested	Confirm details with speaker
	Speaker(s) contacted. Date and cost confirmed?	Confirm registration
	Contact possible sponsors and confirm	Confirm details with caterer
	donation(s) in writing	Confirm donations received
	Budget developed and submitted in proper form	Confirm final payments needed
_		Obtain registration list
	Confirm GardenComm director to be present	Confirm MC or moderator and prepare
	Proposal form completed	GardenComm update report to be given
	Proposal and budget submitted for review and approval	Reconfirm GardenComm director or ambassador to be present
	Proposal and budget approved or denied	Conduct meeting/workshop following the approved agenda including GardenComm update and time for networking
	Determine deadlines for registration and confirm registration fees	Collect, review, approve and submit
	Confirm venue/location and obtain contract if needed; complete contract	invoices for payment Evaluate meeting
	Confirm completion of speaker contract or memo of understanding	Send thank you notes to all involved



GardenComm Regional Meeting Budget [SAMPLE]

SAMPLE ONLY: Please use separate Excel worksheet

Event/Region/Date	
_,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,	

INCOME:	# of Registrants	Fee	Income
Member (early)	0	\$0	\$0
Member (late)	0	\$0	\$0
Non-Member (early)	0	\$0	\$0
Non-Member (late)	0	\$0	\$0
Sponsor Contributions	0	\$0	\$0
Totals	0	70	\$0
			70
EXPENSES (fixed):			
A/V Equipment		\$0	
Projector + Screen		\$0	
Overhead		\$0	
Lavalier mic		\$0	
Pointer		\$0	
Budget Commitment (profit)		\$1	
Handout Copying		\$0	
Room Rental		\$0	
Public Relations		\$0	
Telephone		\$0	
Transportation		\$0	
Speakers' Expenses		\$0	
Director Expenses		\$500	
Total Fixed Costs		\$500	
		7	
EXPENSES (variable):	Tax %	Service/Tip %	
	4.5%	18%	
	Nom Cost	Actual Cost	Total Cost
Food & Beverage	\$0	\$0	\$0
Breakfasts	\$0	\$0	\$0
Coffee Breaks	\$0	\$0	\$0
Lunches	\$0	\$0	\$0
Receptions	\$0	\$0	\$0
Entrance Fees	\$0	\$0_	\$0_
Total Variable Costs		\$0	\$0
Fixed Expense			\$500
Variable Expense			\$0
Total Expense			\$500
Cash Profit/(loss)			(\$500)



GardenComm Meeting Schedule [SAMPLE]

Friday, October 11 Delaware: New Wave Gardens

8:00-9:00am Baywood Greens

check-in and coffee/donuts and badge/goody-bag pick-up

brief greeting/remarks by Joya Parsons. Landscape Supervisor, Baywood Greens touring of grounds

9:00am depart to Delaware Botanic Garden

9:30am arrive at Delaware Botanic Garden

9:30-10:00am gather at the new Delaware Botanic Garden and for a talk on the new landscape and grounds by Brian Trader, DBG Director of Horticulture

10-11:30am Guided Tour or own your own tour of grounds of Delaware Botanic Garden

11:30am depart Delaware Botanic Garden and head to Good Earth

12:00pn arrive at Good Earth Market & Restaurant

lunch at Good Earth Market & Restaurant

about 12:30 while seated, we will have a brief business meeting with group photo and some raffle prizes followed by a tour of their kitchen garden/shopping at the market

1:15 depart to Inland Bays Garden Center

1:30pm arrive at Inland Bays Garden Center (shop)

2:15pm depart Inland Bays Garden Center

3:00pm arrive at Lewes, DE, private garden 1 - Holly Shimizu

3:30pm depart Lewes, DE, private garden 1

3:45pm arrive at Lewes, DE, private garden 2 - Mike Zajic/Mill Pond Garden

4:45pm depart Lewes, DE, private garden 2

5:05pm arrive at Boggan garden - remaining raffle prizes/socializing/light refreshments

6:15pm depart Boggan garden

6:30pm BONUS dinner gathering** location TBD

*The bonus group dinner is Dutch-treat and not part of the official program, but some folks will want to stay a bit to avoid the worst of rush-hour traffic and others may be choosing to spend the Saturday night in the area.

- ** Car-pooling is highly recommended. Parking is free at all the locations (TRUE??), but limited at a few of them.
- ***There may be a cocktail party/dinner gathering on Thursday evening as a bonus for those who are in the area or plan to arrive early to stay on Thursday night for the event.
- ****For those who stay over Friday night, a group will converge on Peppers Greenhouse then perhaps have brunch together in Milton, DE, before heading home.



GardenComm Regional Meeting Sponsorship Form [SAMPLE]

[Event Name]

[Date, Time, Location]

GardenComm Sponsorships give your organization the opportunity to extend your message beyond the tradeshow floor and:

- Spotlight company information/products with key media professionals in the garden and green industries.
- Receive special marketing and recognition on all promotional materials including event website, marketing messaging, brochure and on-site program.
- Exclusive opportunity to share marketing materials and information with all attendees at checkin.
- Special recognition and potential speaking time at your sponsored event.

Sponsor Benefits & Levels

	\$1,000	\$500	\$250
Number of Registrations to event	3	2	1
Company Name & Logo on Event Materials	✓	✓	✓
Email Distribution to Members Pre or Post-Event	✓	✓	
Speaking opportunity during event	✓		

Schedule

[Event Schedule]



Spo	onsorship Level					
	\$1,000	□ \$500	 \$250			
Spo	onsor Informati	on				
Cor	npany					
Add	dress					
City	, State/Province, 2	Zip/ P.Code				
Rep	resentative Name					
We	bsite					
Re	gistrations					
Plea	ase list the name o	of people from yo	our company wl	ho will be re	eceiving complimentary registratio	n(s).
Nar	ne			Title		
Nar	ne			Title		
Nar	ne			Title		
Pay	yment					
	Check Check#_					
	Credit Card: 🗖 Vis	sa 🗖 MasterCa	ard 🗖 Americ	an Express	☐ Discover	
Car	d Number				Exp Date	
Nar	me of Card				Sec Code	
Ag	reement					
incl	•	ng marketing ma	aterial. I also un		specifications or arrive late may no at sponsorship opportunities are n	
Sign	nature				Date	



GardenComm Regional Meeting Social Media Toolkit [SAMPLE]

[Event Name]

[Location, Date, Time]

Social Media Platforms

GARDENCOMM

- https://www.facebook.com/gardenwriters/
- https://twitter.com/gardenwriters
- https://www.instagram.com/gardenwriters/
- Hashtags: #GardenComm #MeetGardenComm

Yew Dell Botanical Gardens

- https://www.facebook.com/yewdellgardens/
- https://twitter.com/yewdellgardens

Brian's Botanicals

- https://www.facebook.com/Brians-Botanicals-56523239933/
- https://twitter.com/briansbotanical
- https://www.instagram.com/briansbotanicals/
- Hashtag: #BriansBotanicals

Bernheim Arboretum & Research Forest

- https://www.facebook.com/bernheimforest
- https://twitter.com/BernheimForest
- https://www.instagram.com/bernheimforest/
- Hashtags: #Bernheim #BernheimForest

Cave Hill Cemetery & Arboretum

https://www.facebook.com/cave.cemetery/

Photos for this event are located here.

Suggested Tweets

- Join @GardenComms in KY for Gardens, Mysteries, Lore & More. Register today to explore the Louisville area w/ us! http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Explore @YewDellGardens, @BernheimForest and more with @GardenComms! Register today for our next meeting in KY! http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Do you love Gardens, Mysteries, Lore & More? Join @GardenComms on June 3rd for a tour around KY.
 Register today. http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Explore the Louisville area with @GardenComms! Join us on June 3rd and 4th for some great tours!
 Register today! http://bit.ly/216REDn



- Join me on June 3rd for a tour of @YewDellGardens with @GardenComms! Space is limited, so register today. http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Join me on June 3rd for a tour of Sue Grafton's home and garden with @GardenComms! Register today. http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Join me on June 3rd for a tour of @BriansBotanical with @GardenComms! Space is limited, so register today. http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Join me on June 4th for a tour of @BernheimForest with @GardenComms! Space is limited, so register today. http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Join me on June 4th for a tour of Cave Hill Cemetery & Arboretum with @GardenComms! Register today. http://bit.ly/216REDn

Suggested Facebook Posts

(Please link the bolded items to appropriate Pages)

- Join GardenComm in Kentucky for Gardens, Mysteries, Lore & More. Space is limited, so register today
 to explore the Louisville area with us! http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Explore Yew Dell Botanical Gardens, Bernheim Arboretum and Research Forest and more with GardenComm. Register today for our next meeting in the Louisville area. I hope to see you there! http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Do you love Gardens, Mysteries, Lore & More? Join **GardenComm** on June 3rd and 4th for a tour around the Louisville area! Registration is now open, and I hope to see you there. http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Join me on June 3rd for a tour of **[place name]** with **GardenComm**. Space is limited, so register today. http://bit.ly/216REDn
- Join me on June 4th for a tour of [place name] with GardenComm. Space is limited, so register today. http://bit.ly/216REDn



GardenComm Regional Meeting Business Meeting Agenda [SAMPLE]

- A. Welcome;
- B. Regional Update: News from around the region;
- C. Events Update: Upcoming GardenComm events in and out of region;
- D. Annual Conference Reminder: Date, location, registration reminder;
- E. Membership Reminders: New/changing benefits, upcoming changes;
- F. Questions;
- G. Adjourn.



GardenComm Regional Meeting Expense Report [SAMPLE]

Name				
Travel Start Date		Travel End Date		
Event/Location				
Date	Purpose		Expense	
		То	tal	
	•		•	
a				

Receipts required for all expenses in excess of \$25.