

Lessons learned and proposed ideas for the next garden tour

Garden Hosts

Rick Krause – “We just wanted to thank you all for your efforts Saturday, and for all you did to make the garden tour at our garden such a success. We know that the overall intent of the Garden Tour was to meet objectives of the Gwinnett Master Gardeners; we have been told that that was certainly met! To us, the real benefit was our collective carrying the message about the purpose and importance of using native plants in the landscape: of providing water, shelter, and habitat; of sustainability: avoiding the use of pesticides; avoiding invasive, exotic plants; and providing habitat for all wildlife including pollinators; and such, to fulfill the needs of the entire, living ecosystem.”

Becky Wolary – Would like more advance notice for garden host and docent tours. Too many gardens. Could delete public gardens. Would recommend selling tickets at each garden.

Genia Ryan – Expected to get garden angels and did not. Need more communication sooner. Docents were not well prepared. Perhaps a Zoom session for docents before the event to explain their duties would have been helpful. (Normally an in person meeting is held to explain docent duties.)

Peggy Jones – Grateful to participate in the tour. Thought it was wonderful.

Vicki Brandt – Thought April would be better for the tour with more in bloom. Otherwise she loved the tour.

Susan Varlamoff – Susan thought a thorough description of the garden would help the docents.

Docents

Jessica Miller – Docent shared that she would have preferred to meet with the docents prior to the tour, perhaps on Wednesday just to have a face to face with them.

Ivan Varlamoff - There should be on site docent training by garden host ahead of the event.

Tickets

Kathy Hartmann - She only heard positive comments regarding the tour as she was herself touring and received a nice email from a friend who toured thanking her for suggesting the activity. Apparently, he is an avid gardener himself and enjoyed talking with all the homeowners. She said she thought one person doing tickets was enough. She did them in the evening and said it was no trouble. Her spread sheet is wonderful and can be used as a data base for the next tour for advertising and also for the plant sale committee.

Co-chair Linda Bolton

Susan and I found it difficult to recruit MG's to work on this project. Many stated other obligations, mostly personal, others stated they did not want to be "in charge" of a sub-committee but would be willing to help if needed. However, when contacted felt they did not have the skills or knowledge to perform the task requested.

In a perfect world without a pandemic raging I would suggest having the following:

- Someone in charge of signage, to design, order and place signs on tour day
- 2 people to handle advertising
- 2 people to procure sponsors
- Have printed information for every docent regarding features to point out pertaining to their particular garden. (I noticed some docents just directing traffic or doing even less. Since few volunteered for the tour committee Susan and I divided these duties and managed them rather well. We were constantly in touch coordinating these activities.

I enjoyed working on this project and was proud to be a part of it. Working with the garden hosts and learning about their philosophy of gardening and the trials and errors they experienced in getting their gardens to their present state was very informative.

The committee workers we did have were extraordinary and competent in their assignments and easy to work with.

I hope the 2022 Garden Tour planners have as much success as we experienced.