



Tips for completing the Open Gardens registration form

Thank you for deciding to open your garden for your fellow NPA members. Here are some tips to help you complete the registration form.

✿ **Membership**

To open your garden, you must be a current NPA member. Please make sure you are up-to-date with your membership dues for the current year when you submit your registration form. It's easy to renew online at <http://www.northwestperennialalliance.org/join.php>.

✿ **Register early!**

If at all possible, submit your registration early, ideally in January. This allows time for the Open Gardens team to: 1) recruit additional gardens in your area, if needed; 2) coordinate dates with other garden hosts; 3) make sure that the information in the directory is accurate and best represents your garden; and 4) get the directory pulled together, printed, and mailed to members by early April.

✿ **The more, the merrier**

Tours of four or more gardens in a given area tend to bring more visitors. The Open Gardens team works with garden hosts to set up tours based on geographic areas. You can help. If you have friends or neighbors who are gardeners, or if you're part of an NPA neighborhood group, talk to them about opening their gardens at the same time as yours. If they're not yet NPA members, we can help them get signed up.

✿ **Choose your days and hours**

Traditionally, gardens are open Saturday and Sunday, although some open for only one day. It is best to be a little flexible on your proposed dates in case dates need to be negotiated between you and the other garden hosts on your tour. The standard hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., but you can specify a different timeframe. Feel free to open more than once in a season. You can also open your garden by appointment in addition to your tour days.

✿ **Writing your garden description**

Some garden hosts are hard-pressed when it comes to writing their garden description. Think of it as an overview of the kind of experience that awaits the visitor. Don't be modest – go ahead and brag a little! Here are some prompts to help you get started:

- What kind of garden is it? Cottage, woodland, formal, English, etc.
- How long have you gardened there?
- Do you specialize in particular plants?
- Does your garden have any special features? Water features, shed, arbors, art, etc.
- What do you love most about your garden?

Please keep your text to around 150 words if you want a picture on your page and about 250 words if you don't want a photo. It's best to refrain from giving a lengthy, itemized list of all the plants you grow. Let visitors discover them as they tour your garden

🌸 **Photos of your garden**

If you want to include a picture with your garden description in the Directory, you may submit up to three full-size color photographs -- as taken by your camera and uncompressed. Since they appear in the book in black and white, it is best to use photos that are sharp and crisp and will still have enough contrast without color. Also, you can release your photos for use in other NPA publications by checking the appropriate box on the registration.

🌸 **Is your garden an easy walk?**

In the Directory, we call out “Easy Access” gardens. This designation does not mean wheelchair-accessible. It means that most or at least a large part of the garden is level and can easily be maneuvered by visitors who are not so steady on their feet.

🌸 **Driving directions**

This is one of the most important information items on your Open Garden page. Our tours are self-directed, although an order is suggested by the tour’s lineup in the Directory. Many visitors choose to forego our suggested lineup, either to accommodate their starting point, or to avoid crowds. Therefore, we don’t give directions to your garden from the garden before you in the Directory.

Start your directions at the nearest Interstate exit, a major state highway exit or at a ferry terminal. Indicate the direction to drive. For example, “From Interstate 5, take Exit 99. Turn east onto 93rd Ave. and go about 0.3 mile . . .”

You might want to have a neighbor or friend review your directions to make sure you haven’t left out a critical piece of information.

Be sure to point out parking limitations or special parking instructions at your residence.

🌸 **Email the Open Gardens team**

If you have questions or need more info, email us at npaopengardens@gmail.com. We receive hundreds of emails over the course of the Directory’s production. To ensure you get the attention you deserve, please add your name to the subject line of your emails (for example, “Open Garden John Doe”).