



**NATIONAL GARDEN CLUBS, INC.**  
**YOUTH POETRY CONTEST GUIDELINES 2025**  
**“PLANT AMERICA FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS”**



Encourage **Your Young Poets** to express and explore their creativity through poetry. NGC's Poetry Contest enables youth to embrace their talents through the art of writing. Winning entries will be published in booklet form. Titles should reflect the theme: “Plant America for the Next 100 Years”.

**Eligibility:** Youth in grades K-12 compete by grade-level in one of three categories: General Education, Special Education, or English for Speakers of Other Languages.

**Dates for Submission:** All poems are submitted to your local garden club affiliated with NGC. **Local clubs send their winning poems (1 per grade-level in each category) to their State chair by the State due date.** State winning poems (1 per grade-level in each category) must be sent to the **SAR Poetry Chair by January 1, 2026.** Region winners will be selected and sent to the National contest chair. Winning poems are announced at the NGC 2026 Convention.

**Guidelines:**

- All entries must be typed and titled.
- **Include name, address, age, grade, school, sponsoring local garden club with contact person and address, and state garden club of the poet on the back of entry (may use index card).** (Child privacy is important to NGC, and thus, published winning national poems will only identify the poet’s first name, last name initial, local garden club and state.)
- Poet’s family does not have to be a member of the local sponsoring garden club. Sponsoring garden club may be that of a grandparent.
- Poems should be no more than 24 lines (including title) with a max of 42 letters/spaces per line in order to fit on single page of the booklet.
- Poems do not have to rhyme. They may be traditional verse, acrostics, blank verse, cinquains, diamond poems, limerick, or haiku.
- When choosing a poem title, please be creative and incorporate the theme: “Plant America for the Next 100 Years.” However, the theme should not be used as the title to any poetry. When judging, the title is worth 10 points.
- Poets should be strongly encouraged to proofread their work for grammatical and spelling errors.
- All entries become the property of National Garden Clubs, Inc., and will not be returned.
- National winners will be announced at the NGC 2026 National Convention, and the local garden club contact person will be contacted regarding any winning entry.

**Send to SAR Poetry Chair by January 1, 2026:**

Mary Ann Hext  
1997 Browning Road  
Rockfield, KY 42101  
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270-781-8171 (h)

**Scale of Points:**

Title: 10%  
Content: 40%  
Creativity: 30%  
Style: 20%  
Total: 100%