

2017 YOUTH GARDENING LETTER

To all gardeners interested in our gardeners of tomorrow -Welcome and thank you to everyone who is taking some time and energy to help our youth this year. *“The most important thing growing in our garden is our children.”* Kimberly George, Chicago Youth Center. Our goal is to get as many of our gardeners and clubs involved in some kind of project which will encourage and interest our youth in gardening. These projects do not have to be big and complicated or involve the club or individual in lots of work or time. Any member of the TGOA-MGCA can be a sponsor of any child who would like to do something related to gardening. We have several options available from national, but you may have many other wonderful ideas and/or projects in which a youth could participate. If you are doing something(s) different from those listed in this letter, please email or call me about them. Everyone benefits from sharing pictures, new ideas and projects. Please let me know what wonderful things you and your club are doing regarding youth and gardening. There is a national club award that can be given annually to a club selected from the applications submitted for the year.

Our national youth gardening contest has five divisions. Youth may enter as many divisions as they want. All of the information, rules and entry forms for each division are found in the Red Book. The contest is open to youth from birth to the end of their 18th year. The contest ends on November 15. Our five divisions are as follows:

1. The Big Pumpkin
2. The Giant Sunflower
3. The Container Garden
4. Favorite Flowers
5. Perfect Plants

Please read and follow the rules carefully as they are different for different divisions. To enter the pumpkin and sunflower divisions, you must use the seeds purchased from national. If you or your club are giving out the pumpkin and/or sunflower seeds, please give out a copy of the record and results form at the same time so the youth will be eligible to enter the national contest in November. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each division will receive a monetary award along with their ribbon. I cannot urge you enough to follow carefully all the rules, complete fully the record and result forms and have the necessary three pictures, one from each phase of the project. This is what is required, other things may be added if so desired.

This year we have an additional new, fun project – the Color Ons. You will be hearing more about this as time goes on. Also, don't forget about the year-round activity to find and reward youth through the OCTOPUS. These details are also found in the Red Book. This is not part of the national contests, but a nice recognition that can be given anytime.

If you have more questions or need more help, just let me know. Ckessen2001@yahoo.com

Cheri Kessen – Chairperson of the Youth Gardening Committee

