

## The story of our Octopus

In 2009, our Octopus came into existence. His **head** is filled with all the information and activities that the youth gardening committee accumulates to assist our fellow gardeners. We must all work together to interest and excite today's youth so we will have great gardeners and environmentalists tomorrow. The **arms** of the octopus are you, all of our members. Clubs need to let me know what is going on in your club involving youth. Club award applications are in the red book. You can help those arms spread across the United States by sharing your ideas, projects, pictures and successes with us. Remember, it only takes one person mentoring, encouraging or doing something with a youth to get the youth interested in the fun and joy of gardening.

In 2014, the octopus outreach began. This is a program in which any member of any club or member at large can recognize any youth that they have found doing something involving gardening or gardening related activities either in progress or completed. Go to the red book and get the form for octopus outreach with recognition. Carry the form with you when you go to flower shows, fairs, gardens, 4H and scout events, etc. and be on the look-out for some youth participants. You might even find a youth right in your neighborhood, a co-worker, relative or friend's child that could be recognized by you.

When you find a youth, fill out the form with them and send it to me. On the first line put your name and the name of the club you belong to. On the second line put a brief description of the project. On the third line put the place, show or activity where you found them. Take a picture (cell phone will do) of the project or activity with the youth. Be sure to get the signed and dated permission by the responsible adult and make sure the youth's name, email and address are legible.

You may send in as many forms as you like at any time of the year. The youth will receive a paper recognition certificate from us with some words of encouragement to keep up the good work. This is not a contest, there is no judging – just recognition. It is a year-round activity. Thank you for all the help and interest you can give to our youth.