



AMERICAN HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY Reciprocal Admissions Program



2023 Program Information for Gardens

Reciprocal Admissions Program Overview

The American Horticultural Society’s (AHS) Reciprocal Admissions Program (RAP) promotes horticulture across North America, encouraging people to visit gardens and other horticultural institutions. A current membership card from the American Horticultural Society or a participating institution entitles individuals to **special admission privileges and discounts** at other participating institutions.

Launched in 1990, this program currently counts **more than 345 participating horticultural institutions** in 48 states and the District of Columbia plus Canada and the Caribbean. A complete listing of participating institutions can be found on the AHS website,

www.ahsgardening.org/rap. We provide access to a state-by-state listing of RAP participants as well as a printable list of participating gardens for quick reference.

The Reciprocal Admissions Program web page, consistently attracts the highest number of unique visitors on the AHS website. You do not need to log in to view the listing; it is available to the public.

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Benefits of Participation

RAP helps horticultural institutions **attract more visitors and increase their membership** base. Selling just a few memberships pays for your RAP participation!

RAP helps **increase your institution’s visibility:**

- Online ad listing on the AHS website (averaging 22,700 views/month)
- *The American Gardener* magazine (6 issues per year; delivered to 22,000 AHS member households)



- Opportunity to list events in the Regional Happenings section of the magazine. These events are identified with a RAP symbol to draw attention to your event.
- 15% discount for ads placed in the magazine



RAP provides **valuable member benefits for your garden:**

- A current membership card from your garden entitles the member to benefits at all other participating gardens.
- AHS memberships can be purchased in bulk or offered at a discounted rate as a member benefit at your garden.

RAP provides **valuable staff and board benefits for your garden:**

- Discounted registration to the annual National Children & Youth Garden Symposium (NCYGS) for employees
- Discounted AHS individual memberships

Cost of Participation

Please read below as the pricing changed recently:

Website Listing	Operating budget size is under \$1 million	Operating budget size is \$1-3.5 million	Operation budget size is \$3.5 million +
	\$175	\$350	\$575
Contact Information	included	included	included
Benefits Offered	included	included	included
Image: Logo or Photo	\$50 add-on	\$50 add-on	\$50 add-on
Description (40 words max.)	\$50 add-on	\$50 add-on	\$50 add-on

Requirements for joining RAP

RAP is open to many different types of horticultural institutions. Participating gardens must be open to the visiting public and have a membership program. *It is the general practice of the AHS not to admit gardens that have been in operation less than one year and/or have less than 50 members. We encourage brand new garden sites to focus on the physical and virtual garden presence and to establish their membership base before applying to join RAP.*



Reciprocal benefits that may be offered are:

- Free Admission*
- Free Parking*
- Gift Shop Discount
- Free or Discounted Educational Programs
- Free or Discounted Admission to Select Special Events
- Free or Discounted Audio Guide/Tour
- Library Privileges

***If the garden charges an admission or parking fee, then free admission or parking must be a benefit offered. Gardens without admission or parking fees must offer three out of the five other types of reciprocal benefits.**

Gardens may choose to enforce the **90-mile exclusion policy**, which excludes members of other gardens within 90 miles of them from receiving their reciprocal benefit(s) unless the gardens mutually agree to lift the exclusion. Distance is based upon the RAP garden’s address to which the member belongs, or the home address for AHS members.

Applying to join: All organizations interested in joining the program must [submit an application online](#). AHS will review the application and inform the organization of its status (see timeline below).

If approved, the garden becomes a participant in the program and will submit payment for the year. The garden will be invited to renew annually as long as it continues to fulfill program requirements and payment is received on time. Once in regular renewal cycles if neither a payment nor a request for an extension is received by **October 15**, it will be assumed the garden is no longer participating in RAP and it will be removed from all listings at the end of that year.

2023 schedule for new RAP garden applications

RAP participation is based on the calendar year. Intention to renew and online ad listing information must be received by the **preceding October 15**.

Gardens can join mid-year according to the schedule below, but there are no pro-rated fees for mid-year joins. **May 31** is the last day that applications for new mid-year joins will be accepted. Current participating gardens will be notified as new gardens are added.

2023 schedule for new RAP garden applications

Application received by:	Garden will be notified by:	If approved, garden will be added to website by:
September 15, 2022	October 1	January 1, 2023
January 15, 2023	February 15	March 15
May 31, 2023	June 30	July 15
New RAP garden applications received after May 31 will be considered for membership in the next calendar year.		

How to renew participation in RAP



Renewal information for the following year's membership is emailed to each participating garden's RAP contact in mid-August of the preceding year. To update your garden's RAP contact or ask questions about your garden's renewal, email rap@ahsgardening.org.

To renew your garden's participation, complete the following **by October 15**:

1. Review your current online listing information and determine if changes are necessary
2. Email rap@ahsgardening.org if there are changes* or additions such as adding on an image or description
3. Submit payment by **October 15**

***Please note that changes in benefits offered and addition of the 90-mile exclusion may only be implemented during this annual renewal cycle.**

Guidelines for members of RAP institutions when visiting other gardens

The following guidelines for members to enjoy the Reciprocal Admissions Program are also included on the RAP website, www.ahsgardening.org/rap.

- **We recommend that you call all gardens ahead of time before you plan your visit. Many gardens have local restrictions and/or new policies due to COVID-19.** Some gardens have exclusions for special events or exhibits, or if you live within 90 miles of the garden (see the 90-mile Exclusion below), etc. Each garden has its own unique admissions policies, special events, and hours of operation, which is also why we recommend checking ahead of time to get the most up to date information.
- Present your current membership card or proof of membership at the admissions counter or gift shop to receive the RAP benefit(s) listed for that garden. **Each card will only admit the individual(s) whose name is listed on the card.** In the case of a family, couple, or household membership card that does not list individual names, the garden must extend the benefit(s) to at least two of the members. It is at the garden's discretion to extend benefits to more than two individuals. Some gardens may require a photo ID.
- Remember that the gardens you visit rely on admissions and donations to maintain their collections and gardens for all to enjoy. Please support them by visiting their gift shops or making a contribution.
- Be sure to check each garden's listing to determine the benefits offered.
- **The 90-mile Exclusion allows gardens to exclude members of other gardens within 90 miles of them from receiving their reciprocal benefit(s)** unless the gardens mutually agree to lift the exclusion. For AHS members, the exclusion is based on their home address. Please contact the garden you belong to or the garden you plan to visit to inquire about this guideline.

Staff and Volunteer FAQs



The following staff and volunteer FAQs are also provided as a separate one-page reference document online at www.ahsgardening.org/rap.

Who receives benefits?

Any card-carrying member of the participating gardens or the American Horticultural Society is entitled to receive benefits with the Reciprocal Admissions Program. Gardens may have exceptions for special events or exhibits, or if the 90-mile exclusion is enforced.

How many people receive benefits?

Each member card will only admit the individual(s) whose name is listed on the card. In the case of a family, couple, or household membership card that does not list individual names, the garden must extend the benefit(s) to at least two of the members. It is at the garden's discretion to extend benefits to more than two individuals.

How can a garden's status be verified?

The AHS website, www.ahsgardening.org/rap, will always offer up-to-date information on current participating gardens.

What is the 90-mile Exclusion?

The 90-mile Exclusion allows gardens to exclude members of other gardens within 90 miles of them from receiving their reciprocal benefit(s) unless the gardens mutually agree to lift the exclusion. For AHS members, the exclusion is based on their home address. Visit www.ahsgardening.org/rap to see if your garden enforces the 90-mile Exclusion.

How should RAP be promoted online and in print?

RAP is administered by the American Horticultural Society and should always be connected with the AHS. When referencing RAP on your own website and materials please remember to use the following language: **"The American Horticultural Society's Reciprocal Admissions Program offers free admission and/or additional benefits at 345 gardens throughout North America and the Caribbean."**

How can I order printed RAP Guides?

A free PDF is available for download at www.ahsgardening.org/rap, along with state-by-state listings which can be printed from our website. Printed RAP Guides will not be available to purchase in 2022. To inquire further, email rap@ahsgardening.org.

Who can be contacted at a participating garden if questions arise?

Questions that can be answered on-site should be directed to the membership, development, or administrative departments. For the most part, AHS works with the membership department for RAP-related issues. Be sure to check with your garden first to answer any questions.

How can AHS be contacted for program related questions?

Program information is available at www.ahsgardening.org/rap. Email rap@ahsgardening.org or call 703-768-5700 ext. 119 with questions.

