



# Young America Horticulture Contests

## National Junior Horticultural Association

Age Group:
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 to 8
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 to 11
<input type="checkbox"/> 12 to 14
<input type="checkbox"/> Group
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual
Project Area:
<input type="checkbox"/> Gardening
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Horticulture
<input type="checkbox"/> Experimental Horticulture
<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Propagation

Use this ENTRY PAGE as the first page of your project report. Fill it out completely. See the project specific guidelines listed for the project area being entered to learn what else to do. Please print, type, or write your report legibly.

Name/Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** The age group is your age as of December 31 of this year. Group projects should be entered based on the age of the oldest group member. For group projects, indicate the name of the youth who is preparing the report. List the names and ages of all youth participants in the project under number 2 of the Specific Guidelines.

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or guardian's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Leader's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of local newspaper: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE.

OVERALL RATING	Suggestions or comments of judges:
Excellent	
Good	
Fair	
Poor	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Chair of Judging Committee



## DIVISION B: ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

### National Junior Horticultural Association Young America Horticulture Contest

Whether you live in the city or country, you are on the planet earth as a guest of the plant kingdom. Without plants we would all soon starve or die from lack of oxygen. It is important for us to be aware of our environment because this is the only planet that we have. Understanding our eco-system has become increasingly important in the past 20 years to evaluate biological relationships among all living organisms.

It is interesting to study how plants, animals and other organisms interact for their mutual benefit. Yeast, fungi, bacteria, and simple animals such as earthworms are responsible for recycling nutrients from dead leaves, plants and animals so other plants and animals can grow.

#### **PROJECT PURPOSE**

To stimulate interest in the environmental factors that affect horticultural production. This includes gaining knowledge of why horticultural plants can grow where they do (sunshine, shade, sand, clay, etc.), as well as raising awareness of biological interactions, and existing or new ecological problems in our environment.

Your age group depends on how old you will be on December 31. If you are 11 years old while you work on your project, but will be 12 by the end of the year, you must plan your project for the 12-14 age group. Any participant who previously was awarded a Grand National Award for Environmental Awareness is ineligible to further compete in the same age category, but may compete in the next age group (example, if a 6-year old wins, the next year must enter 9-11 age category rather than 5-8).

#### **GROUP PROJECTS**

Groups can work together on projects. A group is defined as a 4-H club, school class(es), or other organized youth group. The age category to be used when submitting the report is the age of the oldest youth involved in the project.

AGE GROUPS	SUGGESTED PROJECTS
5 to 8 years	Environmental projects that take a short time and little equipment or materials.
9 to 11 years	Environmental projects that run for a few weeks and are more difficult.
12 to 14 years	Environmental projects that run for several weeks or month, that are harder, or that are original in nature.

#### **SUGGESTIONS AND ADVICE**

Project opportunities are quite varied and can include the clean-up of a yard, street, school ground, parks, roadsides or riverbanks. Perhaps you may want to evaluate the use of native and drought tolerant plants in the landscape; evaluate an ecosystem and learn about biological interactions between plants and animals; the use of plants to improve air quality; experiment with using different recycled materials as mulch; or a host of other ideas. All would be good, fun group activities.

You may want to go a step further and plant grass, flowers, shrubs, or trees. **PLAN CAREFULLY!** Get the right plant in the right place. You need to know how tall and wide a tree or shrub grows. Plants should fit in with existing plantings and not just stuck anywhere. Do not plant a flowerbed of annuals (plants that only live one season) in an area where they cannot be watered or in soil that will not support their growth. Many urban soils are shallow and of very poor quality. To grow plants, these poor sites must be modified. Good topsoil is often impossible to find in the city. The addition of compost adds nutrients, loosens the soil allowing roots to grow, absorbs water for future growth while allowing excess water to drain away. Organic mulches are also important in moderating the environment of the plant's root system.

## **GETTING STARTED**

1. Get adult help and advice to select, plan and get involved in one or more activities that will improve the environment. This will involve background learning like reading at the library, visiting a composting center, or talking with a horticulturist or other professional environmental specialist.
2. Planning in advance is especially important if you will be planting trees, shrubs, or flowers. Some trees become quite large and cause serious problems when they interfere with power lines, other utilities, or buildings. Plan before you plant is a good rule.

## **RECORDS TO KEEP**

1. Keep a journal (notebook). This can be a good reference when preparing your report. You should write in it on a regular basis just like a diary or assignment book, as this will be of great value when you prepare your report. Date each entry. Enter things you notice, and what you plan on doing in the future. Keep your journal handy and write down questions as you think of them. Draw pictures of plants. This journal will not be turned in so does not have to be neat. It is something that you should refer back to on a regular basis.
2. Take photographs of your project from the beginning to the end to show what happened. Be sure to date each photograph and to include a caption.
3. Make a simple drawing or map in your journal to show location and names of any plants that are part of your project.

Your parents, teachers, Extension (4-H) agent or nurseryman will help you choose the proper plants, and decide where and when to plant them so they will grow and develop properly. Ask for help as soon as possible to get the most benefit from their knowledge and experience.

Planting new trees and shrubs is important and makes us all feel like we have done something positive for the environment. It is just as important to provide regular care for trees and shrubs others have planted. Urban plantings suffer more stress than the same plants growing in wooded areas. In hot, dry weather, annuals must be watered weekly. Trees and shrubs must be protected from damage, mulched with organic mulches and fertilized.

## **PREPARING YOUR REPORT**

To enter your project for evaluation, make a report on it following the guidelines below and mail to the project chair between May 1 and September 1. Every effort will be made to return your project, but you may want to make a copy of the project just in case a problem would occur. Reports will be returned via your state leader (if your state has a leader) or will be mailed back to you.

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

1. Your entire report should be in your own handwriting. If you type it, please note at the end of the report that you actually typed it.

2. If you use a computer program, include only original information and observations you have made. Computers are great for making graphs and charts that can quickly show things like the differences in soil temperature under mulch, how much plants grew with and with compost added to the soil, etc.
3. Do not include your daily journal as part of your report. Just include totals, summaries and/or important items.
4. Enclose only the information requested (Do not include other project materials or forms that might have been a part of another youth organization's report).
5. Enclose your report in a thin, inexpensive binder or folder (not a thick, heavy binder or notebook).

## **REPORT FORMAT**

Part 1: Fill out the Entry Page and use it as the first page of your report. Starting with page 2, put your name and page number on each page.

Part 2: Briefly tell what you did in your project. List other participants in the group.

Part 3: Make a drawing of your project area, label existing and new plants, tell how and why they were chosen.

Part 4: Include black and white or color photographs of your project showing development from beginning to end. They should be mounted on a sheet of paper and include a date and a short caption describing each one.

Part 5: Write a short story telling:

- a. What you learned from your project and what it meant to you.
- b. What you learned about the plants and other materials in your project, how they grew and the effects they had on people.

If you are in the 5-8 year old category, the story should be 50-75 words. If you are in the 9-11 year old category, the story should be 75-100 words. If you are in the 12-14 year old age category, the story should be at least 150 words.

Send your entry no later than September 1. Mail to:

Carol Norden  
Wake County Center  
North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service  
4001-E Carya Dr.  
Raleigh NC 27610-2914  
Phone: (919) 250-1098  
E-mail: [cnorden@bellsouth.net](mailto:cnorden@bellsouth.net)

Your written report will be judged on thoroughness, accuracy, originality, photos, and depth and breadth of project. It is important to be innovative and creative in respect to your local situation, conditions and available resources.