

COMPETITION GARDENS

RULES & REGULATIONS

1. This division is open to adults, professionals, organizations, or schools. Those who wish to participate must register online to be placed in a **lottery** to receive a garden plot.
2. Registration will be available online at the link on the Flowers & Gardens page of the NC State Fair website between **May 1st, 2026** at 9 AM and **June 15th, 2026** at 11:59 PM. During registration, you will be asked to provide your top three choices for your plot location. The plot map is located on the next page.
3. Upon closing of registration, 26 exhibitors will be chosen, at random, to receive a garden plot for the 2026 competition. All exhibitors will be notified regarding the status of their entry by June 30th, 2026.
4. Gardens may be started on July 1st and must be completed by 12 PM October 14th, 2026. Gardens are to be started no later than Labor Day unless an extension has been granted in writing by the Flowers and Gardens Superintendent.
5. All gardens in each class will be judged against one another regardless of plot locations. Final scores will determine placing, with no more than four of each premium awarded per class.
6. The gardens are to be educational, artistic, and functional. No artificial plant material is allowed. All exhibitors must install at least two spotlights in each garden for night lighting.
7. A 24" x 18" plot board will be provided. Information to include on the board: garden theme, garden concept statement, name of exhibitor, plot plant, list of plants, and exhibitor's entry tag. Correct common names of plants must be provided. Botanical names should be included. The Garden Concept Statement (100 words or more) should explain what the gardener is trying to accomplish. The exhibitor's name must be masked from the judges' view prior to judging. Masking will be removed after judging is completed.
8. An appropriate sign may be used to acknowledge suppliers and donors. The sign is to be placed in the garden after judging and in a manner not distracting to the garden. NO signs will be allowed on the fence(s). Any sign or material deemed distracting and/or inappropriate by the Superintendent will be removed.
9. Exhibitors must clean, water, and replace dead material in the gardens daily during the fair. Pumps, fountains, and lights are to be maintained in good working order. All maintenance should occur prior to the fair opening. If done during fair hours, water will have to be carried, as NO hoses can be pulled across the walkways.
10. No exhibitor may enter the grounds for garden clean-out before 10 AM on Monday, October 26th, 2026. Removal of garden exhibit materials must be completed by 5 PM on Sunday, November 1st, 2026, unless otherwise permitted by the Superintendent. All bark and soil amendment materials are to be removed from contact with the fence and the remaining ground leveled.
11. Premium checks will be mailed after the gardens have been cleaned and approved by the Superintendent. Any exhibitor who fails to clean out their garden by December 31st, 2026 will forfeit all premiums.

JUDGING CRITERIA

Design (45)	Construction (20)	Materials (35)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scope (degree of difficulty)• Utilization of Theme• Attention to Detail• Overall Appearance• Creativity• Landscape Design, Graphics, & Labeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quality of Construction• Structural Integrity• Attention to Drainage and Finished Grade• Quality of Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall Quality of Plant Material (color, luster, free of insects & disease)• Selection (appropriateness of plant material)• Placement of plant material (spacing)• Appropriate Use of Mulch• Proper Maintenance

PREMIUMS

1st - \$800 2nd - \$700 3rd - \$600 4th - \$500

DIVISION 138 - COMPETITION GARDENS

CLASS

- 01 - Adult/Professional/Organization
- 02 - School

COMPETITION GARDENS PLOT MAP

During registration, you will be required to provide your top three garden plot location choices based on the map below. Plots will be assigned based on the preferences of the selected exhibitors by the order of the lottery drawing. Therefore, exhibitors are not guaranteed to receive one of their top three plot choices if chosen through the lottery drawing.

Gardens with metal perimeter fencing are not permitted to have anything hanging or attached to the fence. Garden plots with wooden panels or fencing can be used to hang or attach items, but everything must be removed after the fair.



ADULT/PROFESSIONAL/ORGANIZATION GARDEN PLOTS 1-11: These plots receive the most sunlight.



ADULT/PROFESSIONAL/ORGANIZATION GARDEN PLOTS 12-20: These plots receive less sunlight.



SCHOOL GARDEN PLOTS 21-26: These plots are designated for schools.

