



THE GARDEN CLUB *of* AMERICA

PROCEDURES MANUAL  
FOR  
SUBMISSIONS

*to the  
Archives of American Gardens  
Smithsonian Institution*

# INTRODUCTION

**THE ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN GARDENS (AAG)** WAS ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE SCHOLARS, RESEARCHERS, AND INTERESTED PERSONS WITH VISUAL DOCUMENTATION OF CULTURAL, HISTORIC, AND VERNACULAR GARDENS. *Its primary mission, in conjunction with the Garden Club of America's Garden History and Design Committee, is to collect unique, high quality images and documentation relating to a wide variety of cultivated gardens throughout the United States that are not documented elsewhere. In this way, AAG strives to preserve and highlight a meaningful compendium of significant aspects of gardening in the United States for the benefit of researchers and the public today and in the future.*

Every moment a garden exists it is subject to the forces of change, loss, and, in some cases, destruction. A familiar and beloved garden today may become a distant memory in just a matter of a few years (or, in the case of a natural disaster, a few hours). Even the most meticulously maintained garden evolves over time to the point where it deviates from its earlier incarnation. Unless gardens are photographed and their origins and life span documented, the thought, creativity, care and labor that goes into them may be lost forever.

Gardens seldom follow a regimented design formula; they echo and highlight the region, culture, history and personal tastes that influence them. Despite their uniqueness, gardens are such a subtle and natural part of our surroundings that they are often taken for granted and may not be "noticed" until they are in danger of disappearing or are gone completely. Documenting a garden helps to address the importance of recognizing its particular significance. It may take years for this recognition to occur, but when it does, it is crucial to have images to study in order to understand and appreciate the thought process and work involved in the garden's creation. Indeed, the most frequently used portion of the Garden Club of America Collection at the Archives of American Gardens are the glass lantern slides that were created in the 1920s and 1930s. Only the foresight of the Garden Club of America to photograph what were then 'contemporary gardens' saved these gardens from total oblivion.

**Note:** *Blue text within is hyperlinked to the individual form, sample, etc.*

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- A. Complete AAG INFORMATION SHEET (“Garden Information (fillable form)”)
  - Which includes: Gardens Feature List, Features Plan, Image View Plan
- B. Complete Checklist for AAG Submission
- C. Review completed submission with Property Owner and Photographer
- D. Maintain copy of submission for club files (optional)
- E. Mail completed submission to Zone Representative

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# STEP 1: PREPARE FOR DOCUMENTATION

## A. CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING GARDENS FOR SUBMISSION TO THE ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN GARDENS

### SITE SELECTION

1. The site must be a garden or a designed space.  
A garden is defined as an area of plants that are cultivated. All types of gardens may be considered for representation in this collection.
2. The site must have the following requirements:
  - Unique and/or outstanding characteristics.
  - An amenable owner who will accommodate return visits from a photographer and sign the appropriate release granting permission to photograph the garden and allow the documentation to be made available by the AAG for research use.
3. The garden should not have its history documented in another repository such as an archives, library, or museum. Do not consider for admission any public parks, monuments, memorials, etc. that maintain their own archives or have extensive documentation in other repositories. AAG seeks to provide researchers with unique information about gardens that have not been documented elsewhere, especially those that are in danger of disappearing.
4. Gardens may be, **but do not have to be**, those of garden club members.
5. Every garden is of interest, no matter the size.

SUGGESTIONS OF KINDS OF GARDENS TO DOCUMENT INCLUDE (but are not limited to):

### RESIDENTIAL GARDENS OF ALL KINDS AND SIZES

Alpine gardens	Rose gardens
City/urban/condominium/ townhouse gardens	Seaside Gardens
Container gardens	Vegetable Gardens
Cutting gardens	Vernacular Gardens
Herb gardens	Woodland Gardens
Rock gardens	Xeriscapes

### A HISTORIC GARDEN OR LANDSCAPE

Associated with significant events or persons.  
Contains exceptionally important elements such as sculpture or garden ornaments.  
Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction.

### A CULTURAL OR VERNACULAR LANDSCAPE is

Associated with the country's demographic, social and economic development.  
Associated with a local tradition.  
Not produced by professional landscape architects or designers.

### A DESIGNED SPACE is valued for its aesthetics.

It has significance as a design or work of art.  
It was designed by a master gardener, landscape architect, architect, horticulturist or amateur using a recognized style or tradition.

### COMMUNITY GARDENS

Butterfly gardens	School gardens
Children's gardens	Vegetable gardens

## **CHURCH YARDS OR CEMETERIES**

## **SUBDIVISIONS AND PLANNED COMMUNITIES/RESORTS**

## **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL GROUNDS**

Corporate offices  
Gas stations

## **GROUNDS DESIGNED FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION**

Country clubs  
Golf courses

**CITY PARKS** (only if no other agency or repository has records relating to the park)

**PUBLIC SPACES** (only if no other agency or repository--such as an archives, library, museum, historic site or municipal department—is dedicated to collecting records relating to the space. Please see AAG's [Documentation of Public Spaces Policy](#).

Traffic medians  
Libraries  
Civic designs

**UPDATING A GARDEN ALREADY INCLUDED IN THE GCA COLLECTION.** When submitting documentation (regardless of time lapsed) for a garden already included in the GCA Collection, treat as a new submission. Check with AAG to ascertain what documentation already is on file in the Archives.

- B. APPROVAL BY ZONE REPRESENTATIVE.** Review proposal with zone representative before proceeding with property owner. This step prevents possible embarrassment to your club in the event the garden does not meet the above criteria.
- C. SET UP WORK FOLDER.** Print out Procedures Manual, blank Forms and Releases (under "Resources" bar: "How to Submit a Garden to AAG" – "Forms and Samples"). The "[Checklist](#)" is an extremely useful tool for tracking your progress throughout the submission process.

NOTE: IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE ARCHIVES OF AMERICAN GARDENS RECEIVE FORMS THAT HAVE ORIGINAL SIGNATURES. PHOTOCOPIES ARE **NOT** ACCEPTABLE.

All images and documentation accepted into the Archives of American Gardens **must** be accompanied by all required releases that have been completed and signed. The Smithsonian must be assured that it has the rights from garden owners, photographers, and volunteers to make images and documentation available for the following uses:

1. Make the images and other materials available for use in publications, exhibits, related commercial products, etc. by AAG as well as third party researchers.
2. Allow the images and accompanying information to be made available to the public via the Smithsonian's online database of catalog records (SIRIS).
3. Advance the important educational goals of the Smithsonian.

## STEP 2: WORK WITH THE PROPERTY OWNER

**PROVIDE THE PROPERTY OWNER WITH THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS** before you begin to document a selected site.

**A. [LETTER TO PROPERTY OWNER](#).** (under "Forms and Samples") It explains the mission and policies of the Archives of American Gardens. It also addresses privacy issues and gives general guidance for special situations.

Provide the Property Owner with a copy of the [GH&D brochure](#) to give them additional background information on the garden documentation project.

**B. [PROPERTY OWNER'S RELEASE \(License\)](#)** (under "Forms and Samples")

EXPLAIN THE PROPERTY OWNER'S RELEASE (LICENSE)

- It grants permission to the Smithsonian and to GCA Volunteer(s) to document the property.
- It also gives the Smithsonian permission to copyright the images, to use and publish them, to include information about the property in the Smithsonian's Internet database (SIRIS), and to make the documentation available to third party researchers.
- The owner indicates the name of the property that they wish to have appear in all public records.
- Explain to Property Owner that once the completed submission is sent to AAG by the Zone Representative, 2 to 4 weeks will elapse before a letter of acceptance from AAG is sent to the Zone Representative. A copy of that letter will be sent by the Zone Representative to the submitting club. A Certificate of Appreciation will be mailed by AAG to the Property Owner 2 to 3 months later. Garden descriptions and select images will subsequently be made available in the SIRIS online catalog.

HAVE THE OWNER COMPLETE THE PROPERTY OWNER'S RELEASE (LICENSE)

- This form must be completed, signed and dated by the party or parties owning the property at the time the images are taken.
- If the property owner(s) feels compelled to amend the release form by striking out or adding any clauses, he or she must make these changes himself or herself, and initial and date the change(s) in their own handwriting.
- If you want to include images of a property that subsequently has changed hands, you must have the *previous* owner complete this release form (i.e. the one who owned the property at the time the images were taken). If the previous owner is no longer living or cannot be located, note that on the bottom of the release form and write "Submitted by [your name], [the date]." The current owner is not required to sign the release for these earlier images that pre-date their ownership of the property.

**C.** Show Property Owner the [Smithsonian Search Instructions for Beginners](#) and provide a sample AAG online catalog record page from SIRIS.

**SMITHSONIAN SIRIS WEBSITE** [www.siris.si.edu](http://www.siris.si.edu)

**D. [QUESTIONS FOR PROPERTY OWNER](#)** (under "Forms and Samples") This is a helpful optional guide for a) interviewing the Property Owner and b) compiling statements composed by Property Owners and/or garden designers that provide valuable additions to the garden submission.

**E. [AAG INFORMATION SHEET](#)** (see "Garden Information (fillable form)" under "Forms and Samples")  
Fill out as much information as you can obtain when interviewing the Property Owner. See Step 7 for detailed instructions.

**F. GARDEN PLAN** If possible, obtain from the Property Owner a plan of the garden. This may take the form of a designer's plan, plat, or sketch. For more information on how this plan will be used in regard to the garden documentation process, see Step 7.

### **G. Filling out Property Owner Release under Special Circumstances**

AAG releases are a required component of the garden documentation process since they enable the documentation to be made available to researchers. Without releases, AAG does not have permission to use the garden documentation. Its informational value becomes very limited as a result.

Most AAG releases can be filled out without a problem. Special circumstances do arise with some property owners and photographers, however, that affect how the releases may be completed. The following guidelines will help to explain how to address these atypical situations.

Who signs the Property Owner's Release?

The party who owns the property at the time the photographic images were taken completes the release.

If you have photographs of a property that is no longer owned by the party that owned it when the photos were taken, you:

- 1) do need to make an effort to track down the 'original' owner and have him/her complete the release
- 2) do not need to have the current owner complete this release (unless you feel that circumstances warrant asking the current owner to complete a release as a courtesy to them; this may also be a good way of opening up a dialogue with the new owner to determine if he/she would allow the garden to be re-documented to show how it has changed over time)

Deceased Property Owner

If a property owner is deceased, note that fact on the bottom of the Property Owner Release, and write "Submitted by [name of the volunteer documenting the garden], [and the date the volunteer completed the form]."

If an immediate family member of the deceased can be contacted, they can fill out the release on behalf of the deceased.

Cannot locate Property Owner

If a property owner cannot be located after a good faith effort is made, prepare the form as follows: "[Property Owner's Name] cannot be located" and "Submitted by [name of the volunteer documenting the garden], [and the date the volunteer completes the form]."



## **STEP 3: OBTAIN VOLUNTEER RELEASE(S)**

**VOLUNTEER RELEASE** (TRANSFER OF COPYRIGHT AND WAIVER OF LIABILITY) (under "Forms and Samples")

This release should be completed (without any changes), signed and dated by all Garden Club of America members documenting a garden or anyone submitting additional information for use in the AAG.

- 1) It grants the Smithsonian the necessary rights to use and reproduce information gathered by volunteers, specifically the information on the AAG Information Sheet.
- 2) It states that volunteers will not represent themselves as Smithsonian Institution employees.

## STEP 4: WORK WITH THE PHOTOGRAPHER

**A. REVIEW THE [AAG DIGITAL SUBMISSION POLICY](#)** (under “Resources” bar) for requirements for camera sensor size and digital images before photographing the garden. **Before photographing the garden check with Zone Representative to ensure that your digital camera meets AAG standards.**

**B. [PHOTOGRAPHER’S RELEASE - OPTION 1](#)** (ASSIGNMENT OF COPYRIGHT) (under “Forms and Samples”)

OR

**[PHOTOGRAPHER’S RELEASE - OPTION 2](#)** (NON-EXCLUSIVE LICENSE) (under “Forms and Samples”)

Only one of these two releases should be completed, signed and dated by each photographer.

1. These releases transfer certain rights from the photographer to the Smithsonian.
  - i. *Photographer’s Release – Option 1 (Assignment of Copyright)* transfers full copyright to the Smithsonian (this release is preferred by AAG whenever possible, though not mandatory).
  - ii. *Photographer’s Release – Option 2 (Non-Exclusive License)* grants a non-exclusive license to the Smithsonian to allow use of the images for a variety of purposes and allows the photographer to retain copyright to their images and freely use them as they wish (with garden owner’s permission).
2. Images submitted by the photographer must be listed by number as cited on the Image Caption List.
3. If digital images are taken, the photographer should fill out the box near the bottom of the release indicating the make and model of the digital camera.
4. If the photographer feels compelled to amend the release form, they must make any strikeouts or changes him or herself and initial and date the change(s) in their own handwriting. Please note that the deletion of certain clauses may make it too prohibitive for AAG to accept the images.
5. If the photographer is deceased, please check with their heirs to determine whether or not they now own the copyright to the photographs. If the heirs own the copyright, they must complete either the *Photographer’s Release – Option 1 (Assignment of Copyright)* or the *Photographer’s Release – Option 2 (Non-Exclusive License)*.
6. If there is more than one photographer of a garden, each must fill out a separate release form and identify on the release and/or the Image Caption List the particular images they photographed.

### **Filling out Photographer Release for Historic Images (in cases where original photographer is not available to sign release)**

AAG releases are a required component of the garden documentation process since they enable the documentation to be made available to researchers. Without releases, AAG does not have permission to use the garden documentation. Its informational value becomes very limited as a result.

Issues sometimes arise with historic images that affect how the Photographer's Release(s) may be completed. The following guidelines help to explain how to address these situations.

#### Deceased Photographer

If the photographer is deceased, check with their heirs to determine whether or not they now own the copyright to the photographs. Whoever owns the copyright must complete the Photographer's Release.

If the status of the photographer's copyright cannot be determined after a good faith effort is made to track it down, write on the release "[Photographer's name] Deceased" and "Submitted by [name of the volunteer documenting the garden], [and the date the volunteer completes the form]."

#### Cannot locate Photographer

If a photographer or photographer's heirs cannot be located after a good faith effort is made, prepare the release as follows: "[Photographer's Name] cannot be located" and "Submitted by [name of the volunteer documenting the garden], [and the date the volunteer completes the form]."

#### Unknown Photographer

If a photographer is unknown, prepare the release as follows: "Photographer unknown" and "Submitted by [name of the volunteer documenting the garden], [and the date the volunteer completes the form]."

### Photographer's Release FAQs

**1. I want to be able to use the images I photographed for the GCA Collection in the future. Which form should I fill out?**

Fill out the Non-Exclusive License. This grants the Smithsonian permission and whomever they authorize to use your images, but you still retain the rights to them.

**2. I agree to everything on the Non-Exclusive License, except I don't want anyone to be able to use the images for commercial purposes like note cards. How do I indicate this?**

Cross out the particular clause(s) you wish to decline and initial and date the strikethrough(s).

**3. My club wants to reproduce an image that it submitted to the Archives of American Gardens for a postcard announcing a fundraising event. Do we need permission to do that?**

Anytime you wish to use images from the AAG, please contact AAG staff with a list of the image(s) along with their intended purpose before you use them. (Contact AAG for an *Application for Permission to Publish Images* form for this purpose.) There could be use restrictions imposed on the images by the photographer or garden owner. In addition, it helps AAG maintain critically important use statistics that help support the Archives.

#### C. [PHOTO SUBJECT RELEASE](#) (under "Forms and Samples")

**THIS RELEASE IS USED ONLY IF SOMEONE IS PHOTOGRAPHED IN THE GARDEN.**

This release should be completed by anyone photographed in the garden who can be identified in the image, including the garden owner. In cases where a child under 18 appears in the image, a parent must fill out the release. Please note: images showing children are not uploaded into the SIRIS online catalog.

1. It grants the Smithsonian the necessary rights to use and reproduce images showing one or more people in the garden who can be identified.

## **D. PHOTOGRAPH GARDEN**

It is helpful at this early stage in the documentation process to have a plan of the garden and to begin to list and locate garden features. See Step 7.

**(1) Guidelines for IMAGES.** The Smithsonian's Archives of American Gardens has some specific requirements for the images it accepts. The following guidelines will be helpful when photographing images for the AAG.

### **CONTENT**

- Show what makes this garden special—tell its story.
- Get as much information as possible in each shot.
- Start with the entrance to the garden, and show how you move through it.
- If possible, show the overall design by shooting from an upper window or terrace.
- Include features such as walkways, gazebos, pools, walls, planting beds, greenhouses, etc.
- If possible, photograph particular views in different seasons to show how the garden changes during the year.
- Show the house in relation to the garden (unless prohibited by the owner).
- **DO NOT PHOTOGRAPH ANYTHING THAT SHOWS THE HOUSE NUMBER OR ADDRESS.**
- Do not include portraits of individual plants.
- Do not include close-ups of features. Show them in the context of the garden.
- Consider photographing the garden owner(s) for the historic record. They should fill out a Model Release.
- Do not photograph images from books, magazines, or other repositories. Include photocopies or a bibliography as part of your general submission instead.

### **COMPOSITION**

- Be aware of everything you include in an image. Look in all four corners of the camera's view-finder before you shoot.
- Make sure you haven't left important information out of the picture.
- Check for objects that block key features. Change position if necessary.
- Try moving a feature to the side, top or bottom of the image. Use curved or straight lines of pathways or walls to lead your eye to an important area.
- Try photographing from different perspectives. Kneeling down or standing at a higher level may improve a particular shot.
- Pay attention to what is in the background. If possible, eliminate telephone wires, cars and highly reflective items such as metal or windows.
  
- Keep the horizon line level.
- Don't allow the sun to shine directly into the camera lens. This will create lens flare.

### **LIGHT**

- The color of light will change with the weather, the season, and the position of the sun. Contrast between light and shadow will also be affected.
- Early morning is the best time to photograph a garden. The plants are fresh and may be covered with dew. The lighting is soft and warm.
- Late afternoon sun will have warmly colored light and cast long shadows.

- Bright overcast days are great for photography. Lighting is very even.
- Avoid taking pictures mid-day in sunny weather. There is too much contrast between light and shadow. The details of both extremes will be lost.
- Dark or rainy days give images a blue cast. Correct this with a warming filter.
- Items will photograph as blue/gray before sunrise and after sunset. The dark sky will contrast dramatically with streetlights, house lights, etc. The level of light will be low and a tripod may be needed.
- Use a flash to fill in shadowy areas.

## (2) Guidelines for EQUIPMENT

**Camera.** Manual or automatic settings may be used.

- Time and date stamp and GPS features should be turned off.
- A single-lens reflex (SLR) camera is needed when shooting with 35mm slide film.
- A digital single-lens reflex (DSLR) camera is needed when shooting digital images. DSLR camera should be a 6 mega pixel (or higher) model with a 22mm (or higher) sensor size. Avoid the use of point-and-shoot digital cameras as their sensor size does not meet the minimum AAG standard.

Please review the [AAG Digital Submission Policy](#) (under "How to Submit a Garden to AAG") for additional details on digital camera settings before photographing with a DSLR camera. The *Policy* outlines the equipment standards identified by AAG that will help ensure the long-term preservation of the digital files.

### **DSLR Settings:**

- Images should be shot in the camera's highest setting in order to meet AAG's minimum image file format size (at least 2,100 pixels on the image's long side, though 3,000 pixels or higher is preferred). A RAW image format producing TIFFs after post-processing is typically used by professional photographers; less experienced photographers should set their camera to the highest JPEG setting (often JPEG Fine).

**Lenses.** The most commonly used lenses are 35mm to 200mm.

### **Fixed focal length lenses:**

- 35mm is a wide-angle lens that will give a broad view of an area.
- 50mm is similar in perspective to the human eye.
- 100mm is a slight telephoto lens – it will make objects seem nearer. Distance between objects is compacted and they appear closer together.
- 200mm is a long telephoto that is useful when you can't get close to an object. Distance between objects is greatly compacted.
- 28mm gives a very wide view of an area, but may cause distortion.

**Zoom lenses** provide great flexibility. They come in a range of distances, e.g. 35-105mm, 80-200mm.

## (3) Digital Files, 35mm slides, Scanned Images

**Digital image files.** During image transfer from the camera to computer, images must be converted and saved from RAW image files to 16-bit TIFFs (preferred) or saved as JPEGs if shot in Auto mode. Please review the [AAG Digital Submission Policy](#) (under "Resources" bar) for additional details. The *Policy* outlines the capture standards identified by AAG that will help ensure the long-term preservation of the digital files.

All digital images submitted to AAG should meet standards defined in the *AAG Digital Submission Policy* so that they can be used for a variety of standard archival applications including exhibition

purposes. Digital files with fewer pixels (i.e. less than 2,100 pixels along the image’s long side) will not be adequate for these purposes.

\* Garden History and Design Committee Representatives: Please note, depending on the laptop in use, it may be difficult to open up particularly large digital files if you plan on showing them at a GH&D Committee meeting. For digital files over 1 megabyte (1MB), please make a copy of them and save each as a smaller JPG file using any imaging software. Save the smaller JPG files on your computer, then copy them onto a separate CD or flash drive to use at the meeting.

**35mm slide film.** There are many speeds of film as indicated by the ISO or ASA rating. Film speed will affect the camera’s shutter speed and/or the f-stop of the lens. Faster shutter speeds will help freeze any motion. Larger f-stop numbers give greater depth of field (sharpness of focus from foreground to background). The size of the grain that makes up an image will also change with film type. Smaller grain will give a sharper image.

- 200 ASA film is a good, medium speed film. It allows flexibility to shoot in different levels of light and has small grain particles.
- 100 ASA is a slower film with smaller grain. This is also a good film to use, but will slightly decrease shutter speed and/or give a larger f-stop.
- 50 ASA film is very slow with small grain. It produces high quality pictures, but may require use of a tripod.
- 400 ASA film is a fast film that lets you shoot in low-level light. It allows for faster shutter speed and/or smaller f-stop, but has larger grain.
- 800 ASA or higher. Fast film with large grain. Not recommended for this project.

### Scanned Images

Options for Scanning Original Photographs or 35mm Slides		
<i>If a garden owner does not wish to transfer original photographs or 35mm slides with the submission materials to the Smithsonian, the images may be digitized on a flatbed or slide scanner and saved to a CD. (Duplicate photo prints are also accepted if scanning is not a feasible option.)</i>		
<b>Resolution</b>	- 300dpi/ppi at a minimum for all images - 600dpi/ppi is preferred for photographs	
<b>File Format</b>	TIFF (preferred)	JPEG at the highest quality setting (also accepted)
<b>Compression</b>	None	All JPEGs are automatically compressed
<b>Compression Ratio</b>	N/A	Excellent or Highest Image Quality
<b>Minimum Image Size</b>	Preferred: Large Approximately 3,000 to 4,000 pixels on image’s long side  Also accepted: Medium Approximately 2,100 to 2,400 pixels on image’s long side	

# STEP 5: ORGANIZE IMAGES

(Refer to the [AAG Digital Submission Policy](#) under "How to Submit a Garden to AAG")

## A. EDITING IMAGES FOR INCLUSION IN AAG

1. Choose the best views and eliminate any that are repetitive, in deep shadow or bright light, are out of focus, or show close-ups of plants. Avoid submitting images that do not provide much information.
2. There is no hard and fast rule of how many images to submit for a garden. Depending on the size and complexity of a garden, 15 to 20 images is usually enough to document it sufficiently. Smaller gardens may warrant fewer images while larger ones will likely require more.
3. AAG staff will decline any images that are not suitable for permanent retention in the archives. 35mm slides or photographs that are not accessioned will be returned to Zone Representatives. For digital submissions, Zone Representatives will be notified which digital images are not accessioned, but the digital files themselves will not be returned.
4. Furnish only original 35mm slides. The color on duplicate slides is not always as "true" as the original.
5. While digital images often require some amount of image processing, any image adjustments need to be undertaken very conservatively. AAG digital images are considered to be visual evidence for the historic record.
6. Furnish only the final processed TIFF or JPG digital image files, not RAW image files.

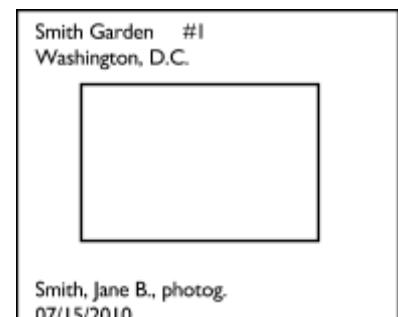
## B. RENAMING/LABELING IMAGES

### DIGITAL IMAGE FILES

1. After selecting images for submission, rename the digital files in the following manner: 001\_GardenName\_2009July15; 002\_GardenName\_2009Aug11; etc.
  - a. On the Image Caption List, indicate the date the digital image was photographed (not when it was processed) and the photographer's name.
2. Once digital images are processed and renamed, burn them to a name brand or 'gold' quality CD-R.
3. Do not write on the CD-Rs or apply adhesive labels to them.
4. Label CD case or paper CD sleeve with name and location of garden.
5. Save a back-up copy of digital images.
6. Indicate make/model of digital camera on *Photographer Release*.

### 35mm SLIDES

1. Label the side of the slide showing the correct view of the image.
2. Write the name of the garden (or owner), city and state.
3. Write the slide number (from your Image Caption List).
4. Write the name of the photographer and the designation "Photog."
5. Write the date the image was photographed.



**C. CREATING AN IMAGE CAPTION LIST** (see examples under “Forms and Samples”)

1. The image number assigned to a slide or digital file must match up to a corresponding numbered caption. Assign image numbers in strict numerical sequence (e.g. 001, 002, 003, etc.). Do not repeat numbers or use variants like 'A' or '1A' to indicate the same view photographed at a different time, etc.
2. List all numbered images along with a description, the date the image was taken, and the photographer's name.
3. Note specific location in the garden or on the property, prominent features, garden structures, names of plants, etc. This information will assist AAG staff in cataloging the images by furnishing terms with which to search the images. The more information you can provide in a caption the better as this will help future researchers understand and interpret the design more accurately.

**D. CREATING AN IMAGE VIEW PLAN** (see example under “Forms and Samples”). Indicate the location and direction of the images that are submitted. On the appropriate spot on the plan, write the number of each image, circle it, and draw a small arrow in the direction the image was taken.

**E. COPYING ONTO ARCHIVAL CD.** Copy onto archival quality (gold) or brand name CD(s).



## STEP 6: RESEARCH AND DOCUMENT THE GARDEN

### INCLUDE ANY INFORMATION THAT HELPS IN DOCUMENTING THE HISTORY OF THE GARDEN

Provide as much background and descriptive information as possible on each garden.

1. If feasible, include photocopies of articles or other related information. Provide complete bibliographic citations for these copies by including photocopies of the cover and title pages of the magazine, journal, or book from which they came.
2. For newspaper articles, be sure that the name of the newspaper, the date, and the page number accompany the article.
3. Planting lists are not mandatory, but they are particularly helpful if available.
4. For additional images (historical, family, etc.) remember to include appropriate *Photographer Release* form(s) for all of the images as needed.
  - a. See "Filling out Photographer Release for Historic Images" on page 9 for guidelines on filling out the Photographer's Release in cases where the photographer is unidentified or cannot be located.
  - b. If the garden owner prefers to retain the original photographic image and furnish just a copy, see Step 4 above for digital scanning specifications.
  - c. Be sure to number and provide a caption for each historic image as you would any newly generated image.

### THE MORE INFORMATION PROVIDED, THE BETTER

Without documentation, images have little value. Think of what information would help a researcher to know and understand more about a particular garden, especially design inspirations and challenges. If there has been a restoration, for example, find out when and by whom it was done. Interview the garden owner to find out why they made certain design decisions, how the garden is used, and how it has changed over time. Certain garden features and design choices may be obvious to you, but not to someone decades in the future. Think of what a researcher would like to know about the garden a hundred years from now!

When interviewing the garden owner, use the optional [Questions for Garden Owners](#) (under "Forms and Samples") to glean important information about the garden and prompt additional discussion.

## STEP 7: COMPLETE THE SUBMISSION

### A. COMPLETE AAG INFORMATION SHEET

The "[Garden Information \(fillable form\)](#)" (under "Forms and Samples") provides space for the *minimum* amount of information that is necessary for documenting a garden. However, those documenting a garden are encouraged to include as much information as possible. (If you wish to type in data into the 'fillable' PDF version of the AAG Information Sheet, make sure to download the document onto your computer *before* filling it out on the computer. It may be necessary to add text to additional sheets as the 'fillable' fields are limited with regard to the number of words they can accept.)

THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS INDICATE EXACTLY WHAT INFORMATION IS NEEDED FOR EACH ENTRY ON THE AAG INFORMATION SHEET.

**NUMBER OF IMAGES:** Record the total number of images submitted for the garden being documented.

**AAG GARDEN #:** This is for AAG use only. Please leave blank.

**UNIQUE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS GARDEN – WHY IT IS BEING DOCUMENTED:**

Briefly describe the garden's significance or noteworthiness. What makes it unique?

**NAME OF PROPERTY:** List the name of the property, as it is commonly known.

**PROPERTY NAME TO BE USED IN THE PUBLIC RECORD:**

Record the name of the property as the owner wishes it to appear in all AAG records. (This may or many not be the same as the entry above.) It could be an estate name, family name or arbitrary designation (ex. "Woodland Garden.") DO NOT enter the name of the owner if they do not wish their name to be made public.

**CHECK WHICH THE PROPERTY IS: PUBLIC, PRIVATE, OR VANISHED**

**ADDRESS OF PROPERTY:**

Include street address, city, county, state and zip code. The street address and zip code are for AAG record-keeping purposes only and are never made part of the public record.

**SUCCESSIVE OWNERS (PAST TO PRESENT WITH DATES OF ACQUISITION):**

Record the names of all known owners of the property and the dates of ownership. (Past owners' names are often helpful for historical context.)

**OTHER NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPERTY:**

Record any names that are important to the history of the property. Identify their role (ex. landscape architects, architects, gardeners, horticulturists, sculptors, etc.) Give dates of involvement, if known.

**SIZE OF THE PROPERTY:**

Give approximate size of the property in acres or fractions of acres.

**YEAR ESTABLISHED:**

Record the year the garden was established.

**DO PLANS/DRAWINGS EXIST FOR THE GARDEN?**

Yes or No. If Yes, note where documents can be found.

**DO OTHER IMAGES EXIST?**

Yes or No. If Yes, note where images can be found.

## **OTHER DOCUMENTATION:**

List any other documentation NOT included in this submission, including articles, plans, brochures, archival collections, photographs, family histories, books or other references and their locations.

### **DESCRIPTION OF GARDEN:**

Describe the garden in terms of its layout and unique features. Identify the image number when describing something shown in a specific image. Note sculptors, historical events or figures associated with the garden as well as factors that inspired the garden design. This information will be used in the AAG catalog records so it is important to be accurate and objective. Feel free to use separate sheets of paper for additional information.

### **GARDEN FEATURES LIST**

Check all features that are found in the garden EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT PICTURED IN THE IMAGES THAT ARE SUBMITTED. These listed features are authorized subject terms from the Library of Congress and Getty Art and Architecture Thesaurus that are used for Smithsonian cataloging purposes. You may add features at the bottom of the list if you do not see a likely term to use. These added terms will be reviewed by AAG staff and matched with an authorized subject term.

**LABELING AND LISTING IMAGES:** See Step 5: "Organize Images"

### **FEATURES PLAN and IMAGE VIEW PLAN**

Include TWO copies of a plan of the garden on 8.5" x 11" paper (11" x 17" sheets are acceptable as well). If a plat plan is not available, sketch out a plan that indicates the layout of major features of the garden as well as the location of the house and any other buildings. Indicate north with an 'N' and an arrow. The goal is to provide enough information to give researchers a sense of the overall garden layout and design.

**Title and annotate each plan as follows** (see examples under "Forms and Samples"):

**FEATURES PLAN** indicates the site of major garden features on the property.

Write the number of the garden feature (from the "Garden Features" list on pg. 3 of the AAG Information Sheet) on the appropriate spot on the plan to indicate where a feature is located. Larger features may be indicated with a title (e.g. house, tennis court, pool, etc.)

**IMAGE VIEW PLAN** indicates the location and direction of the images that are submitted.

On the appropriate spot on the plan, write the number of each image, circle it, and draw a small arrow in the direction the image was taken.

If a garden includes numerous features that are difficult to capture on a single plan, feel free to generate multiple plans showing individual garden areas or rooms. Please include an overall plan keyed to the more specific plans that shows the overall layout.

**B. COMPLETE [CHECKLIST](#) FOR AAG SUBMISSION** (under "Forms and Samples" and an Appendix to this Procedures Manual) Include Checklist with submission.

## **C. REVIEW COMPLETED SUBMISSION WITH PROPERTY OWNER AND PHOTOGRAPHER(S)**

**D. MAINTAIN COPY OF SUBMISSION FOR CLUB FILES.** If a club chooses to make a copy of a submission for its own files and/or for the garden owner, please include a statement with that copy that 'Use of any images or documentation requires prior approval from the Archives of American Gardens.' Please contact AAG staff at 202-633-5840 or [aag@si.edu](mailto:aag@si.edu) for all use requests.

**E. MAIL COMPLETED SUBMISSION TO YOUR GH&D ZONE REPRESENTATIVE. DO NOT MAIL TO AAG.**

Put all of the following in secure packaging. (The submission does not need to be in a 3-ring binder, but the mailer should be sturdy enough so that no damage can occur to the contents.):

1. unmarked CD-R(s) (in plastic case(s)) and/or 35mm slides (in plastic slide sleeves)
2. AAG Information Sheet
3. all Releases
4. Features & Image View Plans
5. Image Caption List
6. any additional materials: planting lists, photocopies, newspaper articles, etc.
7. Checklist

## **STEP 8: ACCEPTANCE OF SUBMISSION AND ENTRY INTO SIRIS CATALOG**

Approximately 2 to 4 weeks after AAG accessions the completed submission, the Zone Representative will receive a letter of acceptance from AAG. She will send a copy to the submitting club.

The Smithsonian will send a letter of thanks and a [SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION](#) (under "Forms and Samples") directly to the Property Owner approximately 2 to 3 months after the garden has been accepted by AAG. The submitting club sends a letter of thanks to the Property Owner.

Three to six months after a garden has been accessioned into the GCA Collection, the submission will be cataloged by AAG staff and select images made available on the SIRIS website. All accessioned images are available for on-site research at AAG. Researchers can also order copies of images for a fee without having to visit AAG.

**APPENDIX:**

**CHECKLIST FOR AAG SUBMISSION**

NAME OF GARDEN \_\_\_\_\_

COMPLETION DATE \_\_\_\_\_

GCA VOLUNTEER(S) \_\_\_\_\_

GARDEN CLUB \_\_\_\_\_

**RELEASES** (All must have an original signature.)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Property Owner's Release** (License)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Photographer's Release** (Assignment of Copyright [Option 1] **or** Non-Exclusive License [Option 2]). Each photographer should sign **either** release but **not both**.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Volunteer Release** (Transfer of Copyright and Waiver of Liability)  
Each volunteer must sign a release.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Photo Subject Release** (Required only when someone is photographed in the garden.)

**AAG INFORMATION SHEET**

\_\_\_\_\_ AAG Information Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_ Features Plan

\_\_\_\_\_ Image View Plan

**IMAGES**

\_\_\_\_\_ Image Caption List – List of numbered images with a detailed description of each, including date of photograph and name of photographer(s)

**DIGITAL IMAGE FILES (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_ CD-R(s) with digital image files that meet all minimum standards outlined in AAG's *Digital Submission Policy*

\_\_\_\_\_ Make/model of digital camera indicated on Photographer Release

**35MM SLIDES (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Slide sleeve(s) containing numbered, labeled and dated slides

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION** (Not mandatory, but highly encouraged)

\_\_\_\_\_ Questions to Ask Garden Owners

\_\_\_\_\_ Planting lists

\_\_\_\_\_ Copies of newspaper or magazine articles (with source and date cited)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bibliography

\_\_\_\_\_ Historic images (numbered and listed on the Image Caption List, with Photographer Release(s))

\_\_\_\_\_ Other

**SUBMISSION**

\_\_\_\_\_ Submit completed documentation to your GH&D Zone Rep. Do not send to AAG.

**GARDEN CLUB RECORDS**

\_\_\_\_\_ Copy of submission for club files (optional)

*Please include a statement with any copies of the submission you make that "Use of any images or documentation requires prior approval from the Archives of American Gardens. Please contact AAG staff at 202-633-5840 or [aag@si.edu](mailto:aag@si.edu) for all use requests."*