



GARDEN OPENERS GUIDANCE NOTES

Dear Garden Owner,

Thank you for offering to open your garden for Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts. We hope that you will thoroughly enjoy the experience of sharing your garden with appreciative visitors and helping good causes in France. I hope these notes will answer any questions you may have and guide you through the process. If you are unclear about anything, please do not hesitate to contact your Area Coordinator or if they are unavailable please contact me, Sue Lambert (Garden Development Manager) at: gardendevlopment@opengardens.eu

How to use this pack.

Before your open day.

- Ensure your Garden Page on the website shows your correct opening dates and times and your description is up-to-date.
- Place the **trifold leaflets** in prominent places around your area e.g. garden centres, supermarkets, shops, libraries, local Mairie, Tourist Information Office etc.
- You can add the details of your opening on the front of the **neighbourhood drop leaflet** and either put these in neighbours' letter boxes or slip one into each **trifold leaflet**.

There are two types of **posters, in A4 or A3 size** and they can be used in similar outlets. Put the details of your personal opening on these including your address, date and opening time/s.

If another garden is opening close to you, you can add their details too.

Try to contact the local press and radio station about three weeks before your opening, giving details of your dates and times. If you would like a copy of some general information as to what to say, just email me and we can send you some ideas. Your Area Coordinator can often help you with this or don't hesitate to contact Jess Roper who is in charge of Social Media at: media@opengardens.eu

Send emails to your friends, family and local contacts and if you use Facebook put an entry on there too.

Direction signs: put them up the day before if possible at lane ends and turnings. These help enormously in enabling people to find you on the day. Please remember to remove them after your open day and if in good condition these can be retained for future use.

Are there any hazards?

Please make a tour of your garden and either rope off any potential hazards (e.g. ponds, machinery, slippery paths) or make a simple sign asking people to take particular care.

Helpers/ Friends of Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts

On the day, helpers are invaluable for taking money at the garden gate, serving refreshments, selling plants, finding suitable parking if necessary or just answering questions. Ideally get two friends to help. It can make a huge difference to the enjoyment of your day and frees you

up to talk to your visitors, who love to be able to chat with the owner about their garden and its contents.

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Refreshments and plant sales

Whether you offer the sale of refreshments and/or plants is up to each garden owner. However, we greatly appreciate the additional income that such sales produce (it normally adds around 30% to the total raised) and visitors enjoy the experience of a chat with friends old and new over a drink. When you complete the **Finance Return Form**, you may deduct and retain expenses you have incurred. In practice, I usually ask my friends to help me by baking cakes on my behalf and they often offer these freely as their contribution to my day.

On your open day.

It is most important that you open at your stated time whatever the weather. If for unforeseen reasons you cannot open, please tell your Area Coordinator, put up prominent signs and either change your details on your website garden page or ask us to do it on your behalf as soon as you can.

The person at the gate admitting visitors will need to be provided with a table, chair and black pens if possible and of course sun protection if the weather is expected to be sunny.

You will need to put the completed **Entrance Fee Poster** in an obvious place, or attach it to the front of the table so that visitors can see clearly what the entry fee is.

Please indicate the price you are charging in the appropriate circle. The **Entrance Fee Poster with 2 circles** is for use if you are charging the usual 5 euros for you and entrance to any other gardens open that day. The **Entrance Fee Poster with 3 circles** is intended for your use if a) you are the only garden opening in your area that day (in which case write the appropriate amount in the first circle and put a cross in the second circle) or b) you are opening with a group of gardens charging more for your group of openings than the usual 5 euros, for example 7 euros, (in which case you put a cross in the first circle and write the appropriate amount in the second circle).

The **Donation Poster** can be used as you prefer to inform your visitors who last year's donations were given to.

When visitors arrive, they may have an annual **Membership Card** or a **Day Pass** or may wish to pay at the gate. Please mark this in the appropriate space on the **Garden Gate Visitor Numbers Form**.

If a visitor wishes to purchase an annual **Membership Card**, please ask them to write their details on the **Membership Form** and pay 15 euros. Again, record this in the appropriate box on the **Garden Gate Visitors Numbers Form**. Check their details have been written clearly and that they have indicated what their preferred language is. This is because as members they will receive newsletters and other relevant information in their preferred language. On the front of the card write 2021 in the space after 'Available from' (Valable un an à partir de mars).

For those buying a **Day Pass** please add the date bought on the **Day Pass** itself (some of these could be prepared in advance) and again your helper can mark this on the same form. Usually a **Day Pass** costs 5 euros but if you are charging a different amount for any reason please ensure your helper is aware of this. Should you be charging less than 5 euros and you

know there are no other gardens opening near you on that day, please strike through the **Day Pass** so it cannot be used elsewhere.

If you expect to use more **Day Passes** or annual **Membership Cards** than you have been allocated please let us know in good time so that we can send you more.

Recruitment Opportunity

Your open day is also the chance to recruit new gardens, new coordinators or indeed people who think they may like to help us in any other way, however small.

We have a group of people associated with us called Friends of Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts. These are people who do not necessarily want to open their garden but are willing to offer time to

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help you personally or someone else on their open day, maybe bake a cake, or grow small plants for someone to sell. They may be able to help with translation of someone's garden page, help us at a local plant show or be able to offer time or skills when we hold Special Events. They may like to be someone who distributes trifold leaflets for us by leaving them in a garden centre near them for example and returning throughout the year to top them up. No task is too small and it is with the help of these people that Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts will continue to thrive.

We have included a **Garden Contact Form** which you can either have near your refreshment area or leave with your helper at the garden gate for people who wish to leave their details and someone from Head Office will get in touch with them to welcome them on board! Again, please ensure they tell us their preferred language. Please return completed forms with your takings after your event, as below.

After your open day

The safest and easiest way to send your takings is to retain the cash and send a personal cheque.

Do not send cash by post. Please complete the enclosed **Finance Returns Form** with your cheque for the total amount to the Finance Manager within **14 days** of your opening or event. Please make sure you have included any of the forms on which you have recorded details.

In the unlikely event that you should have no visitors please email a nil return to Mick Lambert, the Finance Manager at: finance@opengardens.eu

Cheques should be made payable to **Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts**.

All forms and cheques should be sent to:

**The Finance Manager,
Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts,
16 Valaize,
23150 St.Pardoux-les-Cards.**

Please note: Please do not use envelopes from previous years as we no longer use the post office box at La Souterraine and your cheque and forms may get lost.

Also, please do not use any previous year's documentation, other than the red **Direction Arrows** as all the publicity materials have been updated and information will be out of date.

Additional Information: We have also introduced the concept of Pop-up Open Garden Days. These are meant for people like yourself who already have an open day planned but maybe earlier or later in the season decide to open again at short notice because their garden looks so nice and they want to share it. Don't hesitate to contact us if you want to try one of

these too. We normally ask for between 7-10 days notice so that we can advertise your opening on Facebook etc. and that you have people you are in contact with yourself who are liable to support you at short notice. Try one, and you may be surprised how this works too!

We sincerely want you to enjoy the experience of opening your garden. Please don't worry unduly if you have stray weeds in your flower borders or the lines on your lawn are wobbly! Remember that visitors greatly appreciate your efforts and the fact that you have kindly opened your garden in aid of the charities we support. Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts is intended to be fun for all of us; if you enjoy the experience as much as your guests, you will have a lovely day.

Good luck and best wishes for your open day.

Sue Lambert and all the team at Open Gardens/Jardins Ouverts.