

Rose Society Leadership: Tips for Leading a Successful Rose Society

By

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Introduction and Goals of the Leadership Support Subcommittee

Under the leadership of Diane Sommers, the American Rose Society (ARS) President, the Local Rose Society Advisory Committee (LRSAC) was created. The purpose of this committee is to provide a bridge between the ARS and your local rose societies and their members. The Leadership Support subcommittee's goals are to assist our local rose society's leadership with their challenges, such as maintaining well-run, enjoyable societies, tools to support membership and activities, and addressing many other concerns that local rose societies face. Our local rose societies are the grassroots of the ARS, and we depend upon each other for success. We welcome your questions and concerns and appreciate the opportunity to better serve you, our rose society leaders!

Member Recognition

A Society's volunteers are the lifeblood of the organization. No events, activities, or even the monthly meetings, can take place without folks who will make things happen. People need to know that their hard work is meaningful, seen and appreciated by their Society. Member recognition is a public "Thank You" for a person's contribution to their Society and it encourages others to volunteer! We surveyed the members of the Local Rose Society Advisory Committee to assemble best practices and offer ideas, other than the ARS Bronze Medal for member recognition.

Best Practices

- Evaluate candidates each year
 - Consider roles, such as hospitality, mentoring, newsletter editor, Program Chair, Rose Show Chair
 - Think about members who are not in the spotlight: go-to volunteer, smiling face at every meeting, event greeter, setup and take down person, etc.
 - Society membership milestones, i.e., 5-year, 10-year

- Consider awards other than the ARS Bronze Medal, since it can only be presented one time, even if the person has provided on-going service to a Society
 - Engraved Garden Stone, which can include the date and Society info. Reasonable prices and quality with natural stone and engraving can be found at EngravedStone.net by Adirondack Stone Works. They even have a rose that can be engraved on the stone!
 - Tangible Awards, such as gift certificates, rose bushes, garden products, tickets to botanical gardens or related events, free year of Society membership, Society years of membership pin
 - Cost Effective Awards: Certificates of Appreciation, Presidential Citations, Awards of Merit. These can be simple, using a template, printed on heavy paper and can be framed, if desired
- Present Awards at a public event, such as the end of year banquet, awards luncheon, Holiday Party
- Publish the Award write-up in the Society Newsletter and/or on the Society Website

Member Recognition says, “We appreciate you and what you do! Your contributions make a difference to our Society!”

Caption: Donna Pierce Jones receiving the Bronze Medal from the Greater Greenville Rose Society, Greenville, SC

Rose Shows and Rose Displays

Another way to let your members shine is allowing them to “show off” the roses that they grow.

One of the most popular and satisfying activities for rose enthusiasts is the rose show. Whether one is just beginning or is a long time rose growing veteran, attending, and participating in rose shows is a wonderful way to meet others who share our hobby and to increase their knowledge of the many varied classes of roses and the unique beauty each offers. The main purpose of a rose show is to promote the rose and provide rose education. In recent years, however, the number of rose shows has steadily declined. This may be due to the misconception that ALL rose shows MUST follow a stringent set of rules and regulations, are expensive to host, and need an army of volunteers to be successful. There are, however, other ways to satisfy the need to display the beauty of the rose, as well as fulfil an educational theme.

Rose Show or Rose Display?

- ARS accredited “rose shows” have established guidelines
- Informal shows (“exhibitions” or “displays”) are not constrained to ARS rules
- Both are popular and can bring out prospective new members

- Both can serve as fundraisers for the local society from selling roses
- Public venues can attract interested spectators

Rose Displays or Informal Rose Shows:

- Roses that do well in your climate.
- Roses that are carefree
- Fragrant Roses
- New rose varieties
- Memorial Roses (Veteran's Honor/Memorial Day)
- No need for prizes
- Non-threatening educational opportunities
- Can be coupled with grooming roses
- Can educate novices on ARS judging criteria
- Can educate on pre-show activities such as pruning for the show

Leadership Tips for Effective Rose Society Meetings

The monthly meeting is the one time when members have the opportunity to meet together and interact directly with others. It is a wonderful opportunity for people with people of all ages who are passionate about the same subject. It is the responsibility of the leadership of the society to provide a friendly, organized, and interesting experience that will keep members coming back.

Here are only a few strategies that will help leaders of local rose societies to not only bring in new members but, just as important, keep your current members engaged.

- Start your meetings on time. Be sure to allow time for fellowship before the start of the meeting
- Plan entertaining and informative meetings that will be of interest to both experienced rosarians and those who are just getting started. Include hands-on programs such as pruning demonstrations, propagating, and getting roses ready for a rose show. Be certain to ask your membership the topics in which they are most interested and try to accommodate their requests
- Make certain that your speakers have everything they need. If they are coming from out of town, offer to take them out for a meal before the meeting. Let them know how much time they will have for their program, including enough time for questions and answers. Have a back-up plan in the event that your speaker cannot be present. There are programs available on the American Rose Society website that you may use.
- Always remember to thank your members for their contributions to the society. Not everyone is comfortable serving as an officer. Those who provide refreshments, warmly greet members and newcomers each month, and are always willing to lend a helping hand, are just as essential to your society. Let them know they are appreciated.
- Listen! Ask for feedback from your membership. Let them know their ideas and concerns are heard and valued.

Ideas for Local Rose Society Fundraising

By
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Presenting rose education programs, building and maintaining membership, and having committed leadership are all critical elements that contribute to the thriving of your local rose society. These elements require financial resources on the local level. Below are some ideas for local fundraising in your society:

- Plant Sales
- Fertilizer Sales
- Charge for special program such as CR course, Arrangement course
- Discount cards
- Sale of Roses
- Sale of other products
- Membership drives
- Garden Tours
- Cocktail Parties (wine and roses)
- Venders Market
- Art exhibit
- Raffle, Silent Auction
- Rose Bingo
- Education Day on growing plants for youth

STAY TUNED! More information on these activities covered in this article will be coming soon from your Local Rose Society Advisory Committee in upcoming President's Meetings, as well as on the ARS website.

