



Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.

PROMOTE CIVIC BEAUTIFICATION

Position Statement
Adopted September 12, 2013

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. is committed to promoting the beautification of our communities.

Beautification is the process of improving visual appeal. In our communities this process may include clearing debris from vacant lots; removing graffiti; demolishing or renovating abandoned buildings; landscaping yards; planting trees along boulevards, shrubs on traffic islands, flower beds in city parks or wildflowers along highways; hanging flower baskets or colorful banners on downtown lampposts; burying overhead power lines and communication cables underground; widening sidewalks or laying decorative pavers at crosswalks; incorporating planters, benches and fountains along pedestrian malls; installing public art or holiday lighting; restoring native vegetation along shorelines or maintaining open expanses of green space. Beautification has a tremendously positive impact in our communities that exceeds visual appeal.

Beautification transforms not only our physical surroundings; it transforms our hearts and minds as well. Although what we perceive as beautiful is highly individual, the experience of perceiving beauty is relatively the same for each of us. Simply viewing an impressive landscape can uplift our spirits, nurture our sense of wellbeing and strengthen our moral fortitude. Studies have shown that crime in public housing complexes is reduced by 50 percent in developments attractively planted with trees and scrubs. Aesthetic appeal transcends differences in language, culture and creed establishing order and harmony in society. Beautification projects bring neighbors together and build a sense of connection, cohesion and goodwill. Hands-on participation in beautification programs empowers individuals to take personal responsibility for improving their communities. Participants of all ages learn that they can contribute to making a difference that they can be proud of.

Beautification is the simplest and most cost effective way to raise property values, increase commerce and encourage economic investment in communities. Even small-scale beautification projects are a strong factor in revitalizing communities. Reclaiming and greening blighted lots changes the dynamic of an area and increases adjacent property values by 30 percent in inner cities. In suburban neighborhoods, an exceptional landscape with mature trees and seasonal color variations can add tens of thousands of dollars to the value of residential properties. Commercial properties beautified with well-designed landscapes generate higher rental and occupancy rates. Consumer research has shown that customers are willing to pay more for products and services sold in stores and shopping plazas that are distinctively landscaped. Beautification initiatives in partnership with local governments and community leaders can help build and diversify economies. Attractive, well-maintained communities suggest social and economic vitality which attracts increased entrepreneurial activity and business investment. Managed municipal landscapes, entrance gateways, parks and streetscapes help create a unique 'sense of place' and contribute substantially to the desirability of a community as a place to live, work and play.

Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. recognizes that beauty is transformative and that beautification improves the quality of life for everyone in our communities. To encourage a greater, shared sense of community involvement, we endorse the following:

To Promote Civic Beautification

- Enhance, restore and preserve the beauty of our communities and roadways
- Support beautification initiatives by offering grants and resources for community projects
- Utilize planting programs, such as Operation Wildflower
- Develop and implement outreach educational programs to increase public appreciation of the value of beautification
- Recognize significant beautification initiatives by awarding and honoring the efforts

To Empower Community Pride

- Provide a broad platform of diverse stakeholders (e.g.: neighborhood associations, community coalitions, business owners, real estate developers, chambers of commerce and other governmental agencies) in support the beautification initiatives
- Encourage and assist active volunteer participation in community improvement programs by enlisting support of interested individuals, businesses and organizations
- Develop and implement outreach programs to actively engage youngsters in age-appropriate community beautification projects, such as trash and litter pickup events, and community gardening workdays

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