

BATON ROUGE GARDEN DISTRICT E-MAIL LIST

GENERAL GUIDELINES

(Last updated 8/27/09)

I. OVERVIEW

The Baton Rouge Garden District has an e-mail list ONLY for people who reside (or own property) within the boundaries of the Garden District neighborhood (see: http://www.gdcabr.org/hood_filings.php for boundaries). The name of the Garden District e-mail list is: GDCA_BR. This list was one of the very first neighborhood e-mail lists in Baton Rouge when it began in 2000. Approximately half of the residents of the approximately 850 households in the Garden District are signed on; the exact number keeps changing. It is a great way to keep up with what is going on in the Garden District! Our goal is to maintain this list as a place where people can get general information about the Garden District and also be alerted quickly in the event of security concerns. To that end, we would like as many residents signed on as possible. We strive to keep this list focused on neighborhood topics that are useful to the majority of residents.

We use the list mainly to:

- Post Garden District Civic Association announcements and information.
- Post security alerts quickly and discuss ways to promote and encourage security.
- Request calls for action relating to the neighborhood projects (beautification, fundraising, etc.).
- Send reminders and calls for volunteers for neighborhood events and activities.
- Discuss Garden District concerns and answer questions.

ALL messages are monitored and checked by the administrator for appropriateness before they go out. No advertising or spam is ever allowed. All messages should concern the immediate neighborhood and surrounding area, although occasionally useful information relating to neighborhoods in general are allowed. For more detailed information on what messages are allowed, please see section IV below.

II. HOW CAN A GARDEN DISTRICT RESIDENT JOIN THE GDCA_BR E-MAIL LIST? POST TO IT? ACCESS THE ARCHIVES?

TO JOIN THE LIST, just send a short e-mail message to the list administrator at: gdca_br@hotmail.com and ask to join the GDCA_BR e-mail list. You must include: (1) your first and last name (2) your street address. This information is necessary to confirm that you own or reside on property within the boundaries of the Garden District neighborhood.

TO POST TO THE LIST once you have joined, just send your message to this address: gdca_br@yahoo.com Note: only subscribers to the list can post messages to the list. You **MUST** post e-mail messages from the e-mail address subscribed to the list.

TO ACCESS the GDCA_BR E-Mail List archives, photos, and other information, go to: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GDCA_BR/

Note: To get all of the options such as “messages” and “photos” on this page, you must be (1) have a Yahoo id (2) the Yahoo id MUST be linked to the e-mail address you are signed onto the GDCA_BR e-mail list with, and (3) you must be logged in to that Yahoo id.

III. RULES AND REMINDERS:

1. **All messages MUST be signed with a first and last name at the bottom.** If you do not add your name, the list administrator will usually add your first and last name for you, and this usually takes extra time and delays your message. Sometimes if the administrator has misinformation about your name, it could be added incorrectly.
2. Please always add a “subject” to the header of your message. It really helps your neighbors decide if the note in their inbox is one that they are interested in or not. If you do not add a subject or if your subject is misleading, the list administrator will usually add one for you.
3. Attachments are now allowed. However, please make sure that they are not very large. A good rule of thumb is to keep attachments to under 200KB. If you have a photo to send and it is large, please reduce it first using photo-editing software.
4. Please consider the following when sending a message: Would I say this in this manner to my neighbor’s face if he/she were standing right in front of me? Please remember that sometimes written words can be misconstrued and sound even worse than you mean them to. Not to mention, they can easily be forwarded on to someone who reads them out of context. Please remember that we are all friends and neighbors, and this list is meant to facilitate friendly and respectful communication with one another.

IV. WHAT TOPICS ARE /ARE NOT ALLOWED?

First and foremost, the main goal of the Garden District Civic Association E-mail list is to send out information about GDCA topics, such as meetings, social events, neighborhood concerns, etc. We also use it to encourage GDCA membership, to solicit volunteers for beautification efforts, and to alert neighbors about any zoning or security threats.

In order for this list to be useful, we want as many Garden District residents as possible signed on. So that is why we try to keep the postings “on target” and that is why we **MUST** limit any postings that don’t benefit most of the neighborhood. We have found that as soon as too many off-topic postings, people tend to get understandably annoyed and then they begin to sign off.

But what does “on target” mean? Here are some guidelines that the GDCA Board agreed upon early on, and for the most part they have worked well.

A. Examples of topics that **ARE allowed:**

1. Garden District Civic Association or neighborhood related announcements, regarding meetings, social events, security, beautification, activities, etc.
2. Questions or discussions about services that impact the entire neighborhood such as sewage and drainage, garbage/recycling pickup, road work, neighborhood electric and lighting issues, etc.
3. Requests for information OR recommendations for people who work ON your house such as carpenters, roofers, painters, renovators, plumbers, electricians, contractors, etc. is okay,

because we all have “old house” issues in common, so we need to know which workers understand "old house" way of doing business.

4. Requests for information OR recommendations for people who do yard-related work such as landscapers, mowers, etc. is okay. Again, this was deemed okay because we all have similar landscaping challenges.
5. Free stuff can be given away because the GDCA encourages recycling. But, anything you are trying to get rid of must be given away FREE. You must also state that it is free in your posting. If you have something to sell, we suggest you use Baton Rouge’s very popular Craigslist at: <http://batonrouge.craigslist.org/>
6. Lost/found pets
7. Information about new businesses or events bordering the boundaries of the Garden District or in the very nearby Mid-City area. Our preference is to promote Mid-City businesses in general and postings that look like advertising for a single business is generally not allowed; single businesses should instead pay to advertise in the Garden District newsletter. However, we do sometimes single out businesses with a “thank you” if they donate money, goods or services to the Garden District Civic Association for use as prizes for our events.
8. E-mail that pertains directly to the Garden District and immediately surrounding areas.
9. Rarely, some non-neighborhood topics are allowed when it is deemed useful to the neighborhood in some way. When in doubt, the list administrator asks for rulings from the GDCA Board.
10. During times of crisis or emergency, some notes might be allowed that are not allowed during normal circumstances. For example, for a couple of weeks after Hurricane Gustav, we allowed people to send out notes regarding requests for people looking for places to rent, cars for sale, etc.

B. Examples of topics that **ARE NOT** allowed:

1. Recommendations (or requests for recommendations) for people who work INSIDE the house (but not on the house itself) such as: nannies, babysitters, elderly care sitters, pet sitters, pet groomers, housekeepers, car repair, physical therapists, doctors, energy healers, acupuncturists, massage therapists, upholsterers, photographers, etc, etc. As you can see, if we allowed one, we would need to allow all, and the list would risk being flooded with non-neighborhood information. Please talk to your neighbors directly for these sorts of recommendations.
2. Classified ad type notes, such as: information about garage sales, church fairs, fund-raisers and calls for volunteers (except the event relates to or benefits the Garden District), people looking for buyers or renters or people looking for houses or apartments for sale or rent, cars for sale, or any other items for rent or sale. We recommend that you e-mail your neighbors directly OR post these types of items on Baton Rouge’s Craigslist at: <http://batonrouge.craigslist.org/>
3. Request for volunteers or help or sales relating to organizations not directly related to or located within the Garden District or immediately surrounding areas, including schools, religious organizations, non profits, etc. Occasionally, exceptions are made by the Board if the organization relates to a cause important to the well-being of the Garden District (stray animals, homeless people, etc.).
4. E-mail that includes personal attack, racist comments, sexist comments, bad language, etc.
5. E-mails that attack a particular neighbor by name is usually not approved, although e-mails that discourage a particular action is sometimes okay. For example, please make it clear that you are unhappy with the action itself, such as a parking violation, or someone’s poison ivy

growing over the sidewalk, etc. as opposed to saying “ John Doe is a jerk because he violated a zoning law.”

6. E-mail that does not pertain to the Garden District neighborhood or immediately surrounding areas. For example, most news about the Perkins Road/City Park or Mid-City area is okay; activities in downtown BR are usually too far removed to post.
7. Posts about conversations that have run their natural course. For example, once the 3rd or 4th person starts venting about dogs pooping in their yard, with no new information or suggestions...well, for obvious reasons those comments just can't be allowed to go on forever.

V. CLOSING COMMENTS

The above examples are meant to be guidelines for list use, and are not all-inclusive. The list administrator, with the help of the GDCA Board, decides “grey area” topics on a case-by-case basis.

We are always learning new things and tweaking these rules in order to accommodate our goals. The goal is to keep the discussions respectful, productive, and related only to topics concerning the neighborhood. We also want to keep as many neighbors signed onto the list as possible by not flooding your mailboxes with notes that are not useful to most residents.

The Garden District Civic Association board appreciates all of the support that our neighbors have shown for this list, and the GDCA Board continually strives to improve it. If you have comments, criticisms or suggestions, feel free to contact the list administrator at: gdca_br@hotmail.com or the current Garden District Civic Association Board.