

GARDEN RAILWAYS MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

These notes are for those of you who have asked about the requirements for writing an article for *Garden Railways*, and for those of you who haven't inquired but have something interesting to contribute. People often feel they are not qualified to write, don't know how to write, or don't have enough experience. This is too bad because their reluctance deprives the hobby of their special knowledge.

Garden Railways is not a literary magazine. If you are unsure of spelling and syntax, as many of us are, don't worry. It is the editor's job to straighten out the kinks. Moral: Don't be shy. If you have something to say, say it.

Query letters

We have a large backlog of articles, and it is a good idea to drop us a note to make sure that the article you have in mind is not already in our files.

Putting an article together

Wondering how to put an article together? You might appreciate a tip that was helpful to us. "Tell 'em what you're gonna tell 'em, then tell 'em, then tell 'em what you told 'em." In other words, briefly introduce your subject by telling the reader the topic of your article in general terms. Then continue with the body, or meat, of the article. Finally, finish up with a short summary or concluding statement. Don't be too wordy. Write as you speak (pretend you're chatting with a neighbor). When you have finished, give your article to someone to read. Pay close attention to the parts they don't understand. You might have to rephrase these sections to make them clearer. Chances are if your reader understands something, so will everyone else.

You should consider the probable experience level of the reader. If your knowledge is highly specialized, then the inclusion of some background information may be in order before you progress to the main body of the article. Don't risk boring your readers, though, by assuming they know nothing and explaining every detail.

Keep in mind that no one's work will be rejected because of style. The goal here is to disseminate information on our favorite topic. We believe that everyone has something to contribute, regardless of his or her level of experience; even sharing a bad experience can help others.

Suggestions for articles

All of us like to read about other garden railways, and the general How-I-Did-It sort of articles are among the most popular. The best ones cover the following ground: the general idea or philosophy behind the railway; how it was planned; how it was constructed; how any special problems were overcome; the line's rolling stock, locomotives, and structures; landscaping considerations and plants, including things of unusual interest; family and friends' involvement; and the melding of multiple hobby pursuits. Finish up with a few words about the future of the railway.

CHECKLIST

- Inquiry to editor
- Body text
- Photo captions
- Photos and illustrations numbered according to manuscript
- Materials/parts list
- Text, captions, and photos in electronic form
- Hard copy of text with your contact information
- Self-addressed envelope if you'd like materials returned

Dealing with plants

An aspect of the hobby that we'd like to print more information on is one people seem particularly timid to write about. The creation of a small-scale landscape is a very vital part of building any garden railway, and our readers are increasingly asking for your ideas, as regional-specific as you can make them. Include a few sentences about the climate you live in. People in your geographic area or similar climatic zone will take special interest in what you have to say.

When you list the name of a favorite plant you've used, give us as much information off of the nursery's identification marker as you can. Common names (such as monkey flower or pussytoes) are easier to remember but also easy to confuse with other-often very different-plants that share a common name. Every plant, like every animal, has a Latin name, and that nomenclature is what tells us precisely what we're working with. If you have no source of Latin identification, try to give us some kind of description to go on, and if at all possible, send clear photos (snapshots are fine) to help us do a little detective work. This extra trouble is greatly appreciated by staff and readers. Consider including a brief mention of what unique quality a little plant has, to earn and keep its place on your railway. Again, relating a story about an unfortunate choice can be helpful to your readers.

Acceptable submission formats

Mail in submissions: An article may be submitted in any form that we can read. We prefer articles to be submitted digitally. We accept CD-ROMs and USB flash drives. Please include a hard copy of your text with your submission. We can accept manuscripts in the following formats: Word, text only/rich text file, or InDesign formats, or pasted into the body of an e-mail letter sent to mhorovitz@gardenrailways.com. If you are not submitting digitally, your article should be typewritten, double-spaced, on one side of the sheet. Mail to the address listed below.

Online submissions: You can also upload your text and photos to our contributor submission website: contribute.kalmbach.com. All types of files may be uploaded to this site; however, please make sure all files include a three-letter suffix (such as .jpg, .doc, etc.) as part of the file's name. We can accept manuscripts in the following formats: Word, text only/rich text file, or InDesign formats.

Please also refer to our [digital image photo submission guidelines](#).

Product reviews

In general, we write product reviews in-house. If you have a product you'd like to review, though, let us know about it. Chances are, we'd like to see it reviewed too. Please don't send unsolicited product reviews. We may not want them, or you may be wasting your time by duplicating work that has already been done but has not yet been published.

We are pleased to have a healthy backlog of articles, and we certainly appreciate all that has been sent in to us. If there is a surplus of articles on the same topic as yours, they will sit in the files until their turns come up, which sometimes takes a while. On the other hand, if we receive something that is particularly timely, we try to get it in sooner. Also, as mentioned before, articles that take less preparation on our part may be given priority, depending on our workload.

Payment

Payment will be made upon acceptance, at the rate of \$15 per column (including drawings and photos), with a minimum payment of \$75. For the cover photo you will receive \$100. Sorry, but we do not trade subscriptions for magazine contributions.

SEND ALL QUERY LETTERS AND MANUSCRIPTS TO:

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