2025 Arkansas Master Gardener Awards – Updates Overview

Major Overhaul Primarily Due to Judges’ and State MG Coordinators’ Feedback

Thanks to pointed feedback and suggestions from our 2024 Arkansas Master Gardener Awards Judges and Master Gardener State Coordinators throughout the US, followed by a majority approval vote by attendees at the April 22, 2025, AR MG County 76 quarterly meeting, the 2025 Arkansas Master Gardener Awards nomination process and celebrations have been updated to reflect the U of Arkansas Extension Service Awards and other states’ MG Award programs.

Nomination Change Highlights

* There is only one statewide winner for each of the nine awards; there are no longer small and large MG program winners.
* The number of images allowed has increased from four (4) to five (5) to help illustrate your nomination story. Several judges requested a one- to two-person close-up shot of people (MGs and target audience members)interacting rather than all group shots. Also note that many judges count off if nominations do not take advantage of including all 5 images.
* Nominations should be reviewed carefully prior to submitting to ensure:
  + All the criteria are addressed. All requirements must be met in order to go to the Judges.
  + Grammar, spelling and punctuation are correct.
  + There are no acronyms or abbreviations in the nomination.
  + Objectives and goals and supportive data are used to measure impact against objectives and goals, including pivots to salvage the project when things did not go as planned (that’s gardening, as well as problem solving).
  + Co-Chairs and Assistant Chairs are identified for Newsletter, Excellence in Education and Project nominations.
  + Current UADA Media Release Forms have been obtained from non-MGs, especially children (or these facial images are blurred to prevent identification), signed by a parent/guardian. Many judges have said they like to see facial close-ups of children working at a project, program or special event rather than just group shots.
  + A minimum of three (3) qualified physical (not computer software-generated) signatures must appear on each nomination application form.
  + MG programs should include total program membership (total on the active membership list rolls) and active members (MGs who have recorded hours on the online system; remember that Lifetime, Sustainer and Leave of Absence members do not have to record hours but are encouraged to do so), to help judges compare available resources.
  + The AR MG Award Judges do not live in Arkansas; many have not visited our state and are unaware of our beautiful state that we love and cherish. Educate them through your nominations.
  + The nominations, which are forwarded to the judges, are submitted separately from the nomination application forms; do not submit as one merged packet or the nomination will be disqualified. Be sure the nomination is submitted as a word processing document: Microsoft Word, Google Docs or Apple Pages, not as a PDF file; PDF nominations will be disqualified.
* All nominations will be forwarded to the judging panel as submitted; RRR does not proofread or edit nominations.

Award Celebration Change Highlights

* Arkansas Master Gardener State Conference hosts determine how the award winners are honored on the opening Thursday of the conference.
* Award winners will be honored at the AR MG State Conference opening with a video highlighting their accomplishments. In the following months, their nomination highlights will be posted to the Arkansas Master Gardener Awards page on the state website if all children’s facial photos include parent/guardian-signed UADA media release forms or their faces blurred: <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/awards.aspx>

~ Your Arkansas Master Gardener County 76 Recruitment, Retention & Recognition Project Team~

6/20/2025