

How to Nominate a Master Gardener

Plan

1. **Start early.** Check with your Master Gardener program to find out your program's process for submitting to the state level.
2. Give yourself time to read the nomination criteria, gather information and lots of action images, draft the nomination, check it for errors and word counts, etc., to ensure your nomination qualifies.

Gather Information

1. Make notes about contributions/achievements/measurable results against goals, etc., of individuals/teams and project(s) all year long. Use statistics to track measurable results.
2. Take action-oriented photos throughout the year and identify all people in each photo and each person's role. Winners need at least 40 images to make the video look good and representative of the work done. "A good image caption is normally more than one sentence and less than four sentence. Picture quality is also important. A good photographer can describe the program through the lens."*
3. Invite input from the potential nominee individual/team. Doing so can help create a unique story of your nominee and provide detailed examples you may not have known.

Draft Your Nomination

1. Think of your nomination as an investigative story record: Who, What, When, Where and How.
2. Fill in the nomination guidelines to make it easy for the judges to find the criteria data.
3. Address all award criteria, including "contributions to the Extension service and the local community."* Judges notice.
4. Focus on how the nomination's contribution/achievement/skill is significant and deserving of recognition, using specific details and descriptions to show nominee's impacts. "To fully describe impact, there must be more

information provided than they taught a program. A good evaluation reflects how many attended, what did they learn and what was the dollar value of the program. A short 3-question evaluation can provide valuable information from a program.”*

5. Use data (number of people served, money earned, hours worked, etc.) to measure nominee’s impact against goals. Judges want to know evaluation data.
6. Use verbs and action photos to tell the narrative. Be a storyteller. Draw the judge in.
7. Avoid using acronyms or nicknames, especially on first reference. Spell things out for those who may not know us or our state.
8. Use a standard word processing software in at least 11-point type. Microsoft Word and Google Docs have word count, spelling and grammar features.
9. Use our standard nomination title, so the judges see consistency across all the nominations:

[Last Year] Arkansas Master Gardener – [Category] of the Year Nomination

[Nominee Name]

Submitted by the [Program Name] Master Gardeners

Revise and Edit Your Nomination

1. Have “fresh eyes” (i.e., other Master Gardeners) read and critique the document.
2. Check for word count to ensure it is at or under the limit. “If 800 words are allowed and they only use <600, it is very difficult to accurately describe the accomplishments. It would be good for those writing to use a writing assistance tool like Grammarly.”* Word counts are just for the body of the nomination, not the entire nomination. Headings, subheadings, footers, page numbers, bullet points/numbered lists, and photo captions are NOT part of the word count. The above-mentioned items help the judges by chunking the nomination into parts rather than one long narrative, making it easier for the judges to read and judge.
3. Embed fully captioned images as JPEGs at the end of the nomination.

Submit Early

1. Ensure you have the necessary signatures.
2. **Submit your one-page signed application form** (as a PDF or image) **and your nomination form with embedded captioned images as 2 separate files in one email packet per nomination to C76RRR@gmail.com well before the Jan. 15 deadline** so that the RRR Project may have time to review your nominations and allow you to make any necessary changes prior to sending your nomination(s) to the judging panel. Judges ONLY receive your nomination document, which is why you need to title your nomination and embed images. The application form is used by AR MG County 76 RRR Project to verify nomination authenticity before forwarding each nomination to the appropriate judges.
3. County 76 RRR Project prefers each Arkansas Master Gardener program submits nominations electronically via email on the same day to assist with filing requirements.

Please rest assured that Randy Forst, our state Master Gardeners State Coordinator & Consumer Horticulture Expert, as well as Julie Treat, Horticulture Program Associate, have access to these files.

The Arkansas MG Awards judging panel is comprised of experienced horticulture experts across the United States, most of whom serve in Randy Forst's role as their respective state's MG Coordinator. Arkansas MGs have NO input into the judging panel's decision.

* Indicates judges' written comments.

Don't miss your chance to shine—enter today!

For any questions, contact the AR MG County 76 RRR team at C76RRR@gmail.com. Let's ensure the entire state is represented and recognized.

Join us and be part of our collective growth!

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

6/8/2026