CHECKLIST FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE MASTER GARDENER AWARD NOMINATION

All nominations are to be submitted by January 15th each year in the required digital format to **C76RRR@gmail.com**
One nomination for each award will be accepted – only nominate within your program

Click on the state MG website Awards link for more information:
https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/awards.aspx

PLAN

1. **Start early.** Check with your MG program to find out your program's process and procedures for submitting to the state level. We recommend working through a Nominations Committee, which can provide a team of proofreaders and editors.
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 ID all in each photo and each person's role**. Winners will need at least 40 images to represent the work done to achieve the awards. **Parent/guardian-signed UADA media release forms are required for minors; if these forms are not on file, blur their facial features**. Failure to have a signed media release form attached or blurred youth faces will disqualify your nomination.
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 DOCUMENT

1. Think of your nomination as an investigative story record: **Who, What, When, Where** and **How**.
2. Use the nomination guidelines to create headings to make it easy for the Judges to find the information. **Group ideas for your nomination as outlined in the nomination criteria headings**, i.e., Project Start & Evolution, Need, Objectives and Goals, Hours Worked, Impacts on Intended Audiences, How Evaluated, Stats, etc.
3. **Address all award criteria** in order to have your nomination qualified to go to the Judges.
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 impact**.
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 action 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, Google Docs and Apple Pages have word count, spelling and grammar features. Most judges deduct points for grammar mistakes.
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 with [#] active and [#] total members

EDIT DOCUMENT

1. Have "fresh eyes" (i.e., other Master Gardeners or non-MGs who may not know MG lingo) read and critique the document.
2. Check for word count to ensure it is at or under the limit. Build in a cushion by being a few words below the maximum because different programs and versions count differently; the RRR reviewers' software word count is the final authority. Word counts are just for the body of the nomination, not the entire nomination. Therefore, headings, subheadings, footers, page numbers, bullet points/numbered lists, footnotes and image 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. Action-oriented images should provide support, clarify and enhance the understanding of the nomination narrative. Include captions that identify the MGs (and MG partners) and the MG work being done. Include a close-up shot of two to three people interacting, too. Embed 5 fully captioned images as JPEGs at the end of the nomination. Some judges deduct points if 5 images are not included. The 5 digital image files may include maps, charts, graphs, drawings, newspaper articles with multiple images, or a collage of photos as a single image.

SUBMIT EARLY

1. Ensure you have the necessary physical (not computer software-generated) signatures.
2. **Submit your one-page signed application form with a minimum of 3 qualified physical signatures** (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 before or on the January 15th deadline** so that the RRR Project may have time to review your nominations and ensure all requirements are met. Do not combine the application form with the nomination or it will be disqualified. The application form is used by AR MG County 76 RRR Project Awards Coordinators to verify nomination authenticity before forwarding the application form and nomination to the appropriate judges.
   Important Software Information: **Microsoft Word** documents are preferred. **Google Docs** requires the submitter to grant editing privileges to all who receive the online Google Docs link; the Awards team will convert to Word for you). **Apple Pages** requires conversion to Word before submitting. Steps to Convert Pages to Word: 1) On Mac: Open the document, click File in the top menu bar, select Export To, and choose Word. Click "Next" to name and save the file. 2) On iPhone/iPad: Open the document, tap the Share button (box with upward arrow), select Export and Send, choose Word, and save to files. 3) On iCloud.com: Sign in to iCloud.com, open the document, click the More button (three dots), choose Download a Copy, and select Word. *Do not send a PDF*.

The AR 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. While horticulture experts, many judges are not familiar with our state, so be sure to describe clearly and avoid undefined abbreviations. AR MGs have no input into the judging panel's decision.

Please nominate! You can't win if you don't enter. Please contact the AR MG County 76 RRR Awards Coordinators if you have questions at C76RRR@gmail.com. We want the entire state represented and recognized! We can learn from each other to improve our Master Gardner Programs across the state. Please participate and be part of our learning together.

Please have a team review your nomination for addressing all required nomination criteria, as well as grammar and spelling. Please re-read the Arkansas Master Gardener Awards Process and Deadlines and this checklist as a final step to a successful nomination. Nominations will be forwarded to the judging panel as initially submitted; RRR does not proofread or edit nominations nor will RRR allow an updated nomination to correct errors be submitted due to time constraints in packaging the nominations for the judging panel.

As each judging panel returns its score sheets, each winner is notified via email from the C76RRR@gmail.com account in order to begin gathering more images and begin writing your 300-word video script.