



# ARKANSAS MASTER GARDENER STATE CONFERENCE June 5 – 7, 2025 Searcy, AR



## 2025 'SPIRIT POLE' PROJECT

County 76 invites you to participate in the 2025 Spirit Pole project. This is your chance, once again, to represent your county in a fun, personal, and collaborative way! These unique Spirit Poles will be displayed at the 2025 Master Gardener State Conference for all to enjoy! The purpose of the project is to inspire gardening 'Spirit' through creativity, good-will and involvement of your county. **The Spirit Poles will be auctioned at County 76 Silent Auction.**

A 'Spirit Pole' is a handcrafted garden monument that reflects your personal style and message of community spirit. It should reflect your county and its unique beauty. Use a general garden or nature theme or design to reflect our Arkansas splendor.

Using a **4' or 5' 4" x 4"** treated wood post, express what gardening and your area means to your group. The sky's the limit of how to decorate your pole. It can be created individually or in a group, your choice. More than one pole can be created by your county.

Spirit poles are pieces of unique garden art that can be displayed in the yard, garden, home or in your community.

### What is a Spirit Pole?

### What does a Spirit Pole look like?

You might find inspiration for designs from many sources like books and magazines, or just search the internet for peace poles or garden art totems. Let your creative juices flow!





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## HOW DO I MAKE A SPIRIT POLE?

### • Supplies & Prep

- Start with a 4" x 4" wood post (available in 6' or 8' lengths.) Use pressure treated wood posts from home improvement stores (typically available at Lowe's or Home Depot).
- Cut to either **4' or 5'** post based on your design. Check to see if Lowes or Home Depot will cut it for you. **Length is limited to 5'.**
- Another option is to look in the Decking department which has 4" x 4" 4-foot posts already cut and are pressure treated.
- Consider a topper too. There are inexpensive metal, wood, or even solar post caps that you could use to top off your creation. Maybe a birdhouse, bird bath, a metal pot - anything decorative or creative. **Topper must be able to be detachable for transporting. Please ensure that the Spirit Pole is NOT top heavy.**
- Sand your post lightly with 180 grit sandpaper.
- Prime the post. We suggest 2 coats of primer.
  - Use a water-based interior/exterior white primer that works on all surfaces. Suggest: KILZ® Waterproof Sealant



### • Brainstorm and Plan Your Design

- There are hundreds of different examples of 'peace poles' or 'garden art totems' on Pinterest or Google.
- Don't copy, just get inspired! Let your spirit move you.
- What is your message? Consider your color scheme and try out some sample combinations first.



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- Decorating ideas and supplies:
  - Use outdoor craft paint or acrylic paint. Hobby Lobby, Walmart or Target have many colors of craft paint in the Craft Supplies area. Hobby Lobby has acrylic paints in the Art department.
  - Be sure to decorate all four sides of the pole.
  - Please **do not add** decorations or embellishments to the **bottom 5 inches** of the pole so it will fit into the base used for display at the conference.
- **The display base for the pole will be furnished by County 76 Fundraising.**

## CREATING A SPIRIT POLE?

### 1. Base Coat

- Start with a base coat of your background color once your primer is dry as a starting point for decorating your pole. Be sure to paint the entire pole.

### 2. Transfer Design

- Once your base coat is dry, begin transferring your design to your post.
  - Tip: You could use brown craft paper to sketch your design, then use graphite tracing paper (Art area of Hobby Lobby) to transfer your design onto the pole.

### 3. Painting & Decorating Process

- Base coat and stencil (or draw) one side at a time.
- **Stencils can be used for an outline** – print off your own and cut them out.
- You can tape stencils to the pole and paint them directly.
- **Embellishments** – Use an exterior adhesive (Suggest: Gorilla Glue Heavy Duty Construction Adhesive) to add stones or rocks



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#### 4. Finish it Up!

- Don't forget to **Sign and Date** your unique Spirit Pole!
- After all the decorating is complete, **wait 24 hours**. Then use a **non-yellowing waterproof sealant** (Suggest: Rainguard Paint Sealer) over the entire pole.
- Follow label instructions.
- **Use 3 coats. Lightly sand with 220 grit sandpaper** in between coats.

#### 5. Enjoy!

- Let it dry for at least 24 hours. You did it!
- Ideally, your pole should be **completed by May 2025**.

#### 6. Drop Off

- You have several delivery options:
  - You may deliver your Spirit Pole to the **April 22, 2025** County 76 Membership meeting at the Little Rock Extension Office.
  - Deliver your Spirit Pole to the **Liberty Room** in the David B. Burks American Heritage building **no later than June 5**.
- Other pick-up arrangements may be made with Susan Colles (479-857-8544). Arrangements must be made by May 9, 2025.

### WHAT IF I NEED HELP?

- Reach out to the County 76 Fundraising Project. The chair and co-chair would be glad to speak or Zoom with you to answer questions. Contact either Susan Colles at 479-857-8544 or [scolles53@yahoo.com](mailto:scolles53@yahoo.com) or Sheila Waddell at (870-489-9768) or [Sheilahs1@yahoo.com](mailto:Sheilahs1@yahoo.com) for assistance.

### PARTICIPATION DEADLINE

- Please confirm your participation in creating a spirit pole(s) by **March 15, 2025** by completing the application at the following link:  
[https://uada.formstack.com/forms/spirit\\_pole](https://uada.formstack.com/forms/spirit_pole)