

BASIC STRUCTURE

Revised
Treasurer
Area 9/2025

This section contains examples of how a county Master Gardener program may be organized. Every county has its own identity and will be different from other counties. Use these examples to guide the development of your own county program. It may also be helpful to contact county agents and officers in other counties to learn about how their programs are organized and how they operate.

BYLAWS

Every county Master Gardener program should develop bylaws which list rules to govern the internal affairs of the organization. Master Gardener bylaws should specify the relationship of the county Master Gardener organization to the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. Some sample bylaws are included here.

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
_____ COUNTY MASTER GARDENER
BYLAWS
(Proposed)

ARTICLE I
NAME

The name of this organization shall be the _____ County Master Gardeners.

ARTICLE II
PURPOSE

The _____ County Master Gardener program trains and maintains horticulture
_____ volunteers for the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. The goals of this
program shall be to increase the availability of horticultural information for their members and
the community at large and to improve the quality of life for the residents of
_____ County through horticulture volunteer activities.

ARTICLE III
MEMBERSHIP

- A. Membership in the _____ County Master Gardeners shall be by successful
completion of Master Gardener training classes and the final exam, and by remaining a
member in good standing. For all other purposes, a member in “good standing” is one
who has fulfilled the requirements for membership including but not limited to

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completing the entirety of the training process, is current in membership dues, is current on required hours for the preceding year, and who neither has voluntarily withdrawn from membership, been expelled, suspended, or under disciplinary probation.

The program is open to all interested persons without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

- B. Upon completion of the Master Gardener training class conducted by the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service, first year Master Gardeners are required to pay back forty (40) working hours and acquire an additional twenty (20) learning hours within 12 months of completion of class. At least 50% of the required working hours must be conducted on projects sanctioned by the _____ County Master Gardeners.
- C. If an individual's annual working and learning hours are not completed within the first twelve (12) months after completion of the Master Gardener Training class, he or she will no longer be considered a Master Gardener and will forfeit all privileges of membership. The Executive Committee may, with the approval of the County Extension Agent, make exceptions in unusual circumstances.
- D. To remain a Master Gardener in good standing in subsequent years one must also:
1. Complete twenty (20) working hours during the membership year; fifty percent must be completed on projects sanctioned by _____ County Master Gardeners.
2. Complete twenty (20) learning hours during the membership year.
- E. Persons who have successfully completed the Master Gardener training in another Arkansas county and were members in good standing in that county, may petition for immediate membership.
- F. Membership dues may be levied as recommended by the budget committee and voted on by the membership.
- G. The working year for _____ County Master Gardeners is _____ to _____. All hours must be turned in before the end of the Master Gardener working year.
- H. All Master Gardeners are expected to report their working and learning hours monthly. All hours must be turned in by the end of the Master Gardener year.

ARTICLE IV
OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS
Revised 3/2025

- A. The members of the _____ County Master Gardeners who shall serve as the Executive Committee shall be: Past President; President; Vice President(s); Secretary; Treasurer; one member elected at-large from the membership; one member elected from the current training class. The County Agent shall serve as advisor. The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting by majority vote for a term of one year or until their successors are elected. The at-large member and

new member representative shall be elected, for a term of one year, at the first business meeting following the conclusion of the training classes. No person may hold more than one office at the same time. No person may hold any office for more than two successive years.

- B. The President, with the approval of the Executive Committee, shall appoint a nominating committee in good standing of three members at least one month before the annual meeting. All nominees selected for the slate of officers shall be _____ County Master Gardeners in good standing. Following the report of the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor, provided that consent has been secured from the nominee.
- C. Vacancies among the officers and standing committee chairs shall be filled by the President, with approval of the Executive Committee, for the remainder of the unexpired term. However, if the office of either the President or the Vice President becomes vacant, it will be filled by a special election by the general membership. If an officer has served more than half a term, the individual is considered to have served a full term in that office.
- D. **Nepotism 3/2025**

Purpose: The Division of Agriculture recognizes that potential conflicts of interest may exist when members of the same family are serving on the Master Gardeners Volunteer Executive Committee at the same time.

Scope: This provision applies not only to volunteers on regular appointment to the Master Gardener Executive Committee, but also to volunteers in temporary interim positions following a vacancy on the Executive Board.

Definition: For purposes of this policy, “family member” shall mean a Volunteer’s spouse, children of the volunteer or his or her spouse, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, first cousins, parents, grandchildren or grandparents, whether by blood or marriage, of the volunteer or his or her spouse.

Policy: To avoid conflicts of interest which may result from such volunteering, family members in the same county shall not hold an executive committee position at the same time.

ARTICLE V DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS Treasurer Area revised 9/2025

- A. The President shall preside at all meetings at which he or she is present, and shall exercise general supervision over the affairs and activities of the group. The President shall be responsible for selecting committee chairs for various committees and for assuring that the committees are functioning as necessary. The President shall appoint an auditing committee at least 60 days prior to the annual meeting.
- B. The Vice President shall serve as Program Committee Chair for the group and shall perform the duties of the President whenever the President is absent or unable to perform his or her duties.

- C. The Secretary shall maintain written records of all meetings of the _____ County Master Gardeners and meetings of the Executive Committee. He or she shall:
- 1) Keep an up-to-date record of the names and addresses of members.
 - 2) Maintain a file of all documents and papers belonging to the _____ County Master Gardeners.
 - 3) Conduct the correspondence of the _____ County Master Gardeners at the direction of the President.
 - 4) Provide minutes and other information to the _____ County Cooperative Extension Office Staff.
- D. The Treasurer shall set up a budget as necessary to fulfill the business of the Master Gardeners. The Treasurer shall:
- 1) Process a Purchase-Payment Request form for all County MG expenditures authorized by the Executive Committee and send to County Extension Office Staff Chair/Admin for processing payment.
 - 2) Collect and receive dues from the members, if applicable.
 - 3) Report the amount of money in the treasury at each meeting of the general membership. (This Workday detailed report for MG Designated Worktag is obtained from the County Extension Office Admin.)
 - 4) Prepare an annual budget in consultation with the Executive Committee.

- 6) Provide an annual financial report at the end of the year.
- 7) Supply a copy of the annual report to the _____ County
Cooperative Extension Service to be filed as a permanent record.

- E. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to act as the governing body of the _____ County Master Gardeners and to transact its necessary business. The _____ County Extension Agent responsible for agriculture, who provides leadership and counsel to the Master Gardener program, shall serve as Advisor to the Executive Committee.

ARTICLE VI ROLE OF THE COUNTY AGENT

The County Extension Agent is advisor to and administrator of the _____ County Master Gardeners and as the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service representative in _____ County is the final authority on its Master Gardener program.

However, to facilitate everyday management, the organizational directives set forth in these bylaws will provide a functioning set of guidelines.

ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES

The President may create committees as needed and shall appoint committee chairpersons. The chairman of the committee will select the committee members. These committees will be categorized as one of three types:

- 1) Project Committees - committees to manage ongoing _____ County Master Gardeners sanctioned projects;
- 2) Ad Hoc Committees - short term committees to meet an immediate and short term goal; or
- 3) Standing Committees - permanent committees necessary to the continued existence of the _____ County Master Gardeners. Standing

_____ Committees shall determine standard rules of operation for their committee and make those rules known to the membership.

ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS

- A. General membership meetings shall be held the _____ of every month. At

monthly business meetings, members present shall constitute a quorum. Members on approved leave of absence do not have voting privileges. Meetings shall be conducted following *Roberts Rules of Order*.

- B. The annual meeting of the _____ County Master Gardeners, with election of officers, shall take place in _____ of each year.
- C. The Executive Committee shall meet as needed. All Executive Committee members and the County Extension Agent will be notified of meeting time and location by the President. Members of the Executive Committee present, if not less than three, shall constitute a quorum.
- D. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President or at request of a majority of the officers.

ARTICLE IX FINANCES

- A. A proposed budget of anticipated revenues and expenditures as prepared by the Treasurer shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval to be presented to the general membership for adoption.
- B. In consideration of the budget for the _____ County Master Gardeners, the Executive Committee will recommend the dues (if applicable) which shall be levied from the members. Such dues shall be approved at a regular meeting of the general membership.
- C. Fund-raising, activities for the _____ County Master Gardeners may be authorized by the Executive Committee when the purpose of such activities is in agreement with the objectives of the group and not in conflict with the nature of the organization.
- D. At the end of the working year the Treasurer shall provide an annual financial report, which has been reviewed by the audit committee.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the _____ County Master Gardeners by 2/3 of the votes cast, provided that the changes are agreeable to the County Agent, and that written notice of the proposed changes was sent to the membership twenty-one days before the time of the next meeting.

OFFICERS

The number, type, and duties of officers are usually stated in the bylaws of the organization. Some counties choose to have few officers, while others prefer more. Most county Master

Gardener programs have a President, Secretary, and Treasurer at the very least. Other possible officer positions include Vice President(s), Record keeper, Immediate Past President, etc.

COMMITTEES

Committees are sometimes listed in the bylaws of the organization, but more frequently they are formed after the bylaws are written and are not included there. Committees can often be broken into three different types: standing committees, project committees, and ad hoc (or special) committees. Standing committees are those that the organization needs for internal operations. These would include such committees as budget, training, membership, public relations, newsletter, social, scrapbook, telephone, etc. Project committees are those that work on community projects such as school enrichment, courthouse gardens, youth garden project, etc. Ad hoc committees fulfill short term needs. To avoid confusion, you may want to use the term “committee” for standing committees and “project group” for project committees. Some examples of possible committees follow.

Standing Committees:

Budget – Prepares annual budget, determines funding needs, recommends amount for dues, and holds fundraising events as needed.

Training – Plans Master Gardener training, arranges speakers for training, helps interview and select trainees, sets up room and prepares refreshments during training.

Membership – Solicits new members, encourages participation of current members, acts as mentors for newest members.

Public Relations – Notifies media of special events, workdays, and fundraisers.

Newsletter – Prepares internal newsletter for the organization.

Social – Plans and coordinates social events.

Scrapbook – Maintains scrapbook of all Master Gardener activities.

Telephone – Contacts members to inform them of workdays, field trips, etc.

Program – Arranges educational programs at monthly meetings.

Field Trips – Plans and coordinates educational field trips.

Record keepings – Records ‘working’ and ‘learning’ hours reported to them by the Master Gardener membership. Sends notices when members are short of hours.

Project committees:

Beautification projects – Design, construct, and maintain public landscaping projects.

County Fair – Assist with check-in, display, judging, and checkout of horticultural exhibits at the county fair.

Speaker's Bureau – Present educational gardening programs to other community groups such as Senior Citizen's, garden clubs, homemakers' clubs, etc.

School Enrichment – Present educational gardening programs to school groups.

Extension Office – Respond to horticulture related requests at the County Extension Office. Assist with preparation and distribution of Extension newsletters.

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Most county Master Gardener programs hold monthly meetings. A few counties do not meet during the summer months or in December. Often a holiday party or social event is held in December in place of the regular business meeting.

The monthly meeting is extremely important to Master Gardener programs. It is the primary way that members stay informed of the group's activities. The monthly meeting is also the time when most decisions affecting the group are made. All Master Gardeners should be strongly encouraged to attend and participate in the monthly meetings.

Many counties have an educational presentation in conjunction with the regular business meeting. This is a good way to keep people excited about the meetings. The educational presentation may be made before or after the business meeting. If the speaker is not interested in staying through the business meeting, it is advisable to present the program before so that they may leave when they are finished. The allotment of learning hours to members for attending the educational presentation is at the discretion of the county agent.

Order of Business

The basic outline of the business proceedings.

1. Call to order
2. Reading and approval of minutes.
3. Reports of officers, boards, standing committees.
4. Reports of Ad hoc Committees (Committees appointed to exist until they have completed a specified task or been discharged.)
5. Special Orders (Matters which demand special priority).
6. Unfinished Business (matters previously introduced but not completed.)
7. New Business (to bring a new matter before the organization for discussion).
8. Adjournment

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is an orderly method of conducting business efficiently and effectively. Your group or certain members of your group may get into long discussions on past events or events that do not relate to the business at hand. It is also very easy to get "sidetracked" to another subject. This can greatly affect the efficiency and effectiveness of your meeting. By using basic parliamentary procedure, you can take care of the business at hand. It also helps to

preserve harmony in the group and aids in reaching decisions agreeable to individuals within the group.

There are five basic principles of parliamentary procedure:

1. Only one subject can be considered at a time.
2. Each proposal presented entitles every member to free and full debate.
3. The will of the majority must be carried out, but the rights of the minority are protected.
4. Every member has rights equal to every other member.
5. Business and discussion should follow rules of courtesy.

Quorum

A quorum is the minimum number of members of an organization that must be present at a meeting to legally transact business. You must have a quorum to have a meeting. If a quorum is not present, the group should set a time for another meeting. You should check your organization's bylaws concerning a definite number as a quorum.

Making a Motion

A motion is a proposal to bring a subject to a group for discussion and action. To properly make a motion the following procedures are followed:

1. Member rises and addresses the chair "Mr. / Madame President or Chairman."
2. Chair recognizes the member.
3. Member: "I move that ... (states motion)."
4. Second to motion.
5. Chair states motion: "It has been moved by (name) and seconded that...."
6. Discussion.
7. The chair says, "If there is no further discussion, the motion is ... (restate motion)."
8. Vote: The chair says, "All of those in favor ... (state motion) say Aye. Those opposed say "No."
9. Result of the vote is stated by the chair, "The motion is carried" or "the motion is lost."

Amendments

Amendments are used to change or modify motions. There are three methods of amending motions. They are: (1) Striking out a certain word or words; (2) Adding a certain word or words; (3) Substituting a word, phrase, clause, or a new motion. Amendments must be relevant to or have a direct bearing upon the motion which the amendment seeks to change. Debate on an amendment is limited to discussion of the amendment, not the original motion. An amendment must be seconded. To properly amend a motion, the following procedures are followed:

1. Member rises and addresses the chair "Mr. / Madam President or Chairman."

2. Chair recognizes the member.
3. Member: "I move to amend the motion by substituting the word November for December."
4. Second to motion.
5. Chairman: "It has been moved and seconded to amend the motion by substituting the word November for December. This would make the motion read "The club will host an open house during the month of November. Is there any discussion?"

Group Discussion

If the motion is debatable, every member has the right to debate; the chair refrains from debate while presiding. The chair carefully determines the order in which members are recognized to speak, giving first opportunity to the person who proposed the motion. Discussion should be related only to the motion being considered. Members should be recognized by the chair before addressing the group.

ACTIVITY INSURANCE

Master Gardener programs may purchase insurance to cover medical expenses resulting from accidents which occur during official Master Gardener activities such as working on projects or attending field days. The insurance carrier is American Income Life Insurance Company. Forms to insure activities are available in the local County Extension office or the Little Rock state office. Coverage may be purchased for each individual activity or for the entire year. The cost of insurance coverage must be paid by the county Master Gardener program.

DUES AND FUNDRAISING

Deciding when to collect dues is often tricky. Many groups include the first year's dues in the cost of the training course. If your group does this, it is probably best to collect dues from return members near the time of the training or just after. This gives the new class one full year before they have to pay dues again.

In general, you should also probably collect dues after the annual review of members' working and learning hours. You need to know who is still eligible to be a Master Gardener before asking for dues.

We strongly encourage Master Gardener groups to analyze their budgets before beginning any fundraising activities. Groups should have a specific plan for how they intend to spend the money raised by a fundraising project. Planning how you will spend the money should help avoid conflicts later about how money is used. The finances of community service organizations such as Master Gardeners are very different from personal finances. Saving money is not necessary in community service organizations.

Many groups do not need to hold fundraisers since expenses for their projects are paid by other organizations such as city or county governments, chambers of commerce, utility companies, corporate sponsors, etc. It is preferable to have a funding organization for all Master Gardener

projects. Master Gardeners provide a great service to the community even without footing the bill for their projects.

TIME RECORDING

Time recording is probably one of the biggest chores of the Master Gardener program, yet it is the most important measure by which the Master Gardener Program is evaluated at the state level. Each Master Gardener is responsible for keeping up with and reporting their working and learning hours. Many counties have an officer or committee in charge of maintaining records of the hours that are reported. In some counties, the county agent will keep these records. Some counties require monthly reporting of hours, others quarterly, and others don't have any time limits. Often it is best to have Master Gardeners report hours on a form which is then turned in to the appropriate person, but some record keepers will also accept hours which are reported by email, phone, fax, or on scraps of paper. An example time reporting form is included here.

Anything to make the time-recording chore easier is encouraged. Some counties have sign-in sheets at meetings, seminars, and projects. If a Master Gardener signs the sheet, they do not have to report those hours since the time will be automatically recorded.

The record keeper often also has the job of notifying individuals who are low in hours. In some counties, hours are tallied and then reported in the newsletter either quarterly or at the middle of the reporting year to notify members of their totals. The record keeper or Executive Committee should notify individuals in writing at the end of the reporting year to let them know if they completed their hours or not. Some sample letters follow.

MASTER GARDENER TIME CHART

Name _____

Month _____

[illegible][illegible]

Example Warning Letter

Dear Mr./Ms. _____

The end of the year is drawing near, and our records indicate that you are short either working or learning hours for Master Gardener recertification. Your hours need to be completed by the end of the year. If you have completed hours that you have not reported, please send those to (the record keeper) as soon as possible. If you have questions about how many hours you need, you can contact (the record keeper) .

Sincerely,

_____ (the President)

Example Completion of Hours Letter

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Thanks for helping make the _____ County Master Gardener program so successful! Master Gardeners donated over (number) hours of volunteer service in _____ County in (the year) .

You completed your working and learning hours which allows you to retain the Master Gardener designation. I hope that you will continue to remain active in the following year. Remember that to retain the title of Master Gardener and remain in the program, you agree to contribute 20 working hours on Master Gardener projects and accumulate 20 learning hours during the next year.

Thanks again for your help with the support of the _____ County Master Gardener program.

Sincerely,

_____ (the President) or _____ (County Agent)

Example Failure to Complete Hours Letter

Dear Mr./Ms. _____,

Our records indicate that you have not completed your Master Gardener working or learning hours for recertification in the Master Gardener program. For this reason, you are no longer eligible to be a Master Gardener. Thank you for your interest in this program and I hope that you will continue to support the _____ County Master Gardeners.

Sincerely,

____ (the President) or ____ (County Agent)

SUPPORT MATERIALS

Several items can be ordered through the Cooperative Extension Service to enhance county Master Gardener programs. These include media equipment, educational slide sets and videos, project signs, and various handbooks and manuals.

Master Gardener publications can be ordered through the Cooperative Extension Service State Office in Little Rock. Following is a list of publications available to counties with Master Gardener programs: (some may involve a charge)

“Are You Interested in Joining the Master Gardener Program?” pamphlet

Master Gardener Handbook

Master Gardener Recertification Card

Master Gardener Volunteer Manual (available on the Master Gardener website)

Arkansas Master Gardener Program Management Guide

If you are interested in ordering any of the publications listed above, please contact the state extension office at 501-671-2237.

Many county groups also order Master Gardener apparel and nametags. These items are not printed or provided by the Cooperative Extension Service. Counties may use any screen-printing or engraving company to print these items. However, the Master Gardener logo including the University of Arkansas logo must appear on these items. Companies offering Master Gardener products are listed on the website.

Signs to acknowledge Master Gardener beautification projects can be ordered using the form which follows. Signs will include the county name and the Master Gardener logo. Please return the form to the Cooperative Extension Service state office in Little Rock and include your check.

Master Gardener Signs

Master Gardener signs for project areas can be purchased by the county extension office from the state extension office sign printing shop. The county extension office can contact the sign printing shop for information on cost and sign design using the UA MG logo.

WEBSITE

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service maintains a Master Gardener website at www.uaex.edu. There are two main parts to the website. One part is open to the general public, while the other part is password protected so that only Arkansas Master Gardeners and Arkansas Extension personnel can access the information contained there.

The I.D. and password for the secure Master Gardener site can be obtained by checking with the County Extension office. The secure Master Gardener website contains the names and contact information for Master Gardener county contacts around the state, copies of important forms which are often used in the Master Gardener program, and much more useful information for Arkansas Master Gardeners.

COUNTY CONTACTS

Increasing postal costs, time sensitive material, and availability of Internet services to more people have made e-mail contact the method of choice for many Master Gardener communications. Each county Master Gardener program should designate the e-mail contacts in their group. Program information will be sent to County Extension Agents and the two county contacts. County contacts should develop a plan for sharing this information with the rest of their program members in a timely manner. This may include forwarding the message to all Internet connected members and developing a ‘buddy’ system for those without email, contacting the newsletter editor if publication is imminent; or instigating a phone chain.

STATE MASTER GARDENER ADVISORY BOARD *Revised 1/07*

County 76 is a state level organization designed to replace the State Advisory Board, and it will use the county program process as an organizational model. County 76 members will act as state staff, help set policy, and provide guidance to county programs. State programs will be County 76 “projects.”

The “County Agent” is replaced by the State MG Coordinator (Janet Carson), and the officers will be elected from the membership of County 76. The projects will focus on organizational, leadership, and general management issues. County 76 members will decide which projects will be created, and each member will decide on which project he/she wants to work on.

Who can join County 76? County 76 is open to all current Master Gardeners and County Agents

who have attended Leadership Training in 2005 or later. Master Gardeners must have completed one year, recertified, and remain in good standing on the local level. County Agents must have an active Master Gardener program in their county. Membership term is unlimited for those who recertify.

