

**University of Minnesota Extension  
Master Gardener Program  
Houston County**

**By-Laws**

**Reviewed and Updated:  
January 1, 2019**

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## About the University of Minnesota Extension

The University of Minnesota Extension Service is a major outreach arm of the University of Minnesota, a land grant institution with a mission to serve the public through applied research and education. The mission of the University of Minnesota Extension Service is: “Making a difference by connecting community needs and University resources to address critical issues in Minnesota.”

## The Extension Master Gardener Program

### Mission Statement

The mission of the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program is to support Extension by providing volunteers trained in horticulture to educate the public with research-based information on the best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship. The Extension Master Gardener program will provide an environment for a volunteer that is friendly and supportive, so his or her training, experience, and enthusiasm will produce maximum benefits to communities.

### Core Value Statement

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners teach research-based horticulture information.



## **I. OPERATING GUIDELINES**

### **a. Purpose**

- i. The purpose of this program is to assist University of Minnesota Extension in meeting community needs by providing research based information and education for the public on the best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship.

### **b. Name**

- i. The name of the organization shall be the “University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program – Houston County”; hereafter referred to as the Program.
- ii. The Program is an informal non-profit, non-partisan group having as its primary concern the education of citizens of Minnesota regarding horticultural activities.

### **c. Affiliation**

- i. The Program is a local unit of the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program (hereafter referred to as the State Program) where trained volunteer members deliver education on behalf of the University of Minnesota Extension. The State Program is located within the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum at 3675 Arboretum Drive, Chaska, MN 55318.
- ii. Where county funds support the coordination and work of the Program, volunteers also deliver education on behalf of the county. Where such is the case, the Program shall maintain a relationship with the county extension committee.
- iii. At a minimum, the Program will comply with the guidelines, policies and procedures of the University of Minnesota Extension and the State Program. This includes, but is not limited to, the University of Minnesota Board of Regents Code of Conduct and State Program guidelines as defined in the Master Gardener Volunteer Manual. Failure to comply may result in revocation of the Program’s status as a University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program, including the use of name, title and logo.

### **d. Membership**

- i. Membership: The membership will consist of Master Gardeners who have active and emeritus Master Gardener volunteer status, Master Gardener interns, and the paid staff coordinator (if applicable).
  1. In-person – Attends in-person meetings and actively participates in one or more project teams including a sub-committee of the Spring Garden Conference.
  2. Remote – Does not attend most, if any, in-person Program activities but fulfills volunteer requirements completely through other means.
  3. Mix – Attends some in-person activities but may or may not be active in project teams or other committees.
- ii. Status: Master Gardener volunteer status classifications are defined in the State Program Volunteer Manual.
- iii. Interns: Interns are individuals who have been screened and accepted into the Program and have completed the Core Course training, but have not yet fulfilled their obligation of 50 volunteer work hours.

- iv. Good Standing: To be "In good standing" requires the member to complete a minimum of 25 volunteer work hours and 5 continuing education hours during each fiscal year following certification.
- v. Minimum: A minimum of five (5) members meeting membership criteria must be part of the group in order for it to remain an active program and recognized by the State Program.

**e. Program and program meetings**

- i. Fiscal Year - The fiscal year of the Program shall be the calendar year, January 1 – Dec.31.
- ii. The Program shall meet a minimum of twice in a calendar year. Newly elected Leadership Team members assume responsibility January 1 of the new calendar year.
- iii. Notice of all meetings shall be given by either the Coordinator, Group Leader or local Extension office via email, mail, facsimile, or other appropriate means at least five (5) days before a proposed meeting. Failure of any member to receive such a notice shall not invalidate the action which may be taken at such a meeting.
- iv. Special meetings may be called as necessary by the Coordinator or Group Leader. Notice of the meeting shall be issued within five (5) days prior to said meeting date. No business shall be considered at a special meeting except that mentioned in the Notice of Meeting.
- v. Voting
  - 1. Each Member shall be entitled to one (1) vote on all items requiring action.
  - 2. An act of the majority of members entitled to vote and present shall be an act of the Program.
  - 3. Voting members present at each duly called and convened meeting shall constitute quorum.
- vi. Committees will be established as needed by the Group Leader, Leadership Team, Coordinator, or at the request of a majority of membership. These committees may be either permanent or temporary and address a specific need or activity of the Program.

**f. Operating funds**

- i. Funds may be raised, held and distributed by the Program in accordance with the State Master Gardener Program Financial Management Guidelines.
- ii. Moneys paid to members for Master Gardener volunteer services (speaking fees, garden center booth fees, etc.) are to be turned over to the Program Treasurer. No money may be accepted by individual members while serving in official University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener capacity.
- iii. No part of the finances of the Program shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to, its members or other private persons, except as reimbursement for legitimate and reasonable expenses incurred on behalf of the Program.
- iv. Should this Program be dissolved, all the assets of the Program shall be turned over to the State Program. No part of the assets shall ever be distributed to or used for the benefit of any member, or any private individuals or corporations.

**g. Change in guidelines**

- i. These guidelines may be amended by a majority vote of members present at any annual or special meeting where a quorum is present, with notification in writing five (5) days prior to meeting.

**h. Saving clause**

- i. Any portion of these By-Laws found to be contrary to law shall not invalidate other portions.

**i. Effective date**

- i. These guidelines shall be effective January 1, 2019

## II. LEADERSHIP AND POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

### a. Leadership

- i. Where there is a paid Extension staff person responsible for Master Gardener program coordination, that person shall have oversight of the county/local MG program.
- ii. Where there is no paid Extension staff person responsible for Master Gardener program coordination, the local Group Leader will assume the roles previously assigned to the Master Gardener Coordinator.
- iii. The Program will also have a Leadership Team to provide organizational leadership for the Program.
- iv. Leadership Team Positions
  1. Members holding Leadership Team positions must meet the Program's membership criteria.
  2. Positions on the Leadership Team shall consist of
    - Group leader
    - Secretary
    - Treasurer
    - Historian
    - Webmaster
  3. Where there is a paid staff coordinator, that person shall be an ex-officio member of the leadership team.
  4. Nominations for Leadership Team positions may be made by a Nominating Committee or from the floor at the meeting in which elections occur. Elections shall take place at the December meeting of the Program.
  5. Leadership team positions shall be elected by a simple majority of members present at the meeting. Ballot or voice vote may be used at the discretion of the Group Leader.
  6. In the event any elected Leadership Team member cannot fulfill his/her term of office, such position will be filled by vote of the membership of the Program.

### b. Position descriptions

- i. Program coordinator

About this position

The Master Gardener (MG) Coordinator is responsible for general oversight of the local University of Minnesota Extension MG program. The MG coordinator is the primary point of contact representing U of M Extension with the local MG program. The level of coordination and management functions performed by a local MG coordinator will depend on the amount of time allocated for the position. As time allocation is decreased, more tasks of coordination and management will be required to be assumed by MG volunteer leaders. Engaging and managing volunteers is critical for program success.

The MG coordinator is accountable to the employee's supervisor and the State Master Gardener Program for local program performance.

Some duties will be covered by support staff at local Extension office.

Duties:

- Oversee operations of the Program.
- Keep local Master Gardener directory up-to-date and distribute the directory to MG volunteers by e-mail and/or paper copies.
- Double check meeting room reservations for the year.
- Oversee meeting setup and volunteer involvement.
- Approve programs, speakers, events, etc. for continuing education hours.
- Oversee intern selection, welcome, and integration into the Program.
- Communicate and coordinate MG Program information to interested community members and Master Gardener transfers.
- Keep a database of people who have inquired about becoming a MG, e-mail application materials to prospects, and send acceptance or non-acceptance letters.
- Review State MG database for accuracy of intern private data and hours reporting.
- Make announcements about volunteer opportunities.
- Act as a MG project liaison to community partners and MG volunteers.
- Collect project outcome information and pictures for the Year End Program Report, summarize and submit report to the State MG Program office by December 31.
- Serve as the conduit between the State MG Program and members of the Program
- Forward communications from the State MG Program to the Program's volunteers as appropriate.
- Communicate suggestions and concerns to the State MG Program Manager.
- Write recommendations for State Advisory Board Representative applicants.
- Assist certified Master Gardeners requesting Emeritus status.
- Check in regularly throughout the year with the State MG Program Manager.

ii. Group leader

Term of Office: Term of position shall be one year. Elected member may serve up to a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms in this position. If the member decides not to continue in this position they must indicate as such before the December general meeting.

Duties:

- Be familiar with and follow State MG Program guidelines.
- Plan general meeting schedule with the assistance of the Master Gardener program coordinator and the local Extension office.
- Prepare meeting agendas with input from project team coordinators and the Master Gardener program coordinator.
- Lead the general Master Gardener meetings.
- Communicate with the local Master Gardener leadership team.
- Review and propose updates to guidelines and policies.
- Recognize and reward MG volunteers as appropriate.

- Represent volunteers of the Program by communicating their goals, viewpoints, needs, and program impact to decision makers and the public.
- Respond in a timely manner to questions, complaints, suggestions, and other communications.

Helpful Skills: Computer proficiency, planning, organization, leadership, negotiating, mentoring, clear written and oral communication, public speaking, listening, delegating, teamwork, and networking.

### iii. Secretary

Term of Office: Term of position shall be one year. Elected member may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms in this position. If the member decides not to continue in this position they must indicate as such before the December general meeting.

Duties:

- Serve as secretary for the Houston County Master Gardeners.
- Record minutes of general meetings and distribute copies to volunteer members, local program coordinator, and the local Extension office.
- Collect minutes from project team coordinators and provide regular summaries.
- Send thank you notes, notes or cards of condolence, and other correspondence as necessary.
- Submit important documents for archiving to the Historian.
- Submit important documents for website publication.

Helpful Skills: Word processing, familiarity with voicemail, computer proficiency, organization, note taking, listening, clear written & oral communication, attention to detail, computer.

### iv. Treasurer

Term of Office: Term of position shall be one year. Elected member may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms in this position. If the member decides not to continue in this position they must indicate as such before the December general meeting.

Duties:

- Manage the budget and track income and expenditures using a spreadsheet such as Excel or Quicken.
- Maintain “Houston County Master Gardener” checking and savings accounts
- Write checks, manage reimbursements, and balance account regularly.
- Become familiar with and abide by the “UMN Extension Master Gardener Financial Management Guidelines”.

- Prepare financial reports including a summary of actual income and expenses for the year.
- Lead budget discussions.
- Submit reports to the local program coordinator and the local Extension office by the end of the fiscal year (Dec. 31).

Helpful Skills: Computer proficiency, organization, knowledge of bookkeeping practices, use of spreadsheets (Excel or Quicken), clear written & oral communication, attention to detail.

v. Historian

Term of Office: Term of position shall be one year. Elected member may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms in this position. If the member decides not to continue in this position they must indicate as such before the December general meeting.

Duties:

- Keep accurate records of events, membership and activities related to the Program

Helpful Skills: Organizing, planning, budgeting, written and oral communication, computer proficiency, and follow through.

vi. Webmaster

Term of Office: Term of position shall be one year. The appointed member may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms in this position. If the member decides not to continue in this position they must indicate as such before the December general meeting. Members may also consider hiring this work done if no members are willing to take on this position.

Duties:

- Report to the treasurer on annual budget request
- Keep online records and websites (Facebook, organizational websites, etc.) up to date
- Maintain a strong communication with the members to assure that the website and the Facebook page reflects the information the group wishes to convey.
- Conduct at least one monthly review of the website to assure that the information and the links to other sites are up-to-date.

Helpful Skills: Computer proficiency, experience or familiarity with website software (including but not limited to WordPress), experience or training in maintaining websites with a basic understanding of domains and web hosting, planning, organization, leadership, clear written and oral communication, listening, and teamwork.

### III. Project Teams

Houston County Project Teams are committees of Master Gardener volunteers that work together to plan, execute and review one or more related programs for the Program. Project teams are expected to meet outside of general program meetings and when appropriate report at the general program meetings about plans, decisions and needs related to their respective program(s). MGs who are willing, may serve on as many committees that interest them and that they are able to provide a commitment to.

#### Project team leaders

Houston County Master Gardener Project Teams are led by Project Team Leaders who volunteer to lead respective groups. This is a general description for all Project Team Leaders. Details will vary depending on the specific project.

Term of Office: Term of position shall be one year. Member may serve an unlimited number of consecutive terms in this position. If the member decides not to continue in this position they must indicate if possible as such before the December general meeting.

#### Duties:

- Take a leadership role for a specific Houston County Master Gardener Project Team
- Recruit and organize volunteers to successfully achieve the team's goals.
- Communicate with other sponsoring or supporting organizations.
- Turn in receipts for the present year and submit budget requests for the next year. It is the Project Coordinator's responsibility to keep the project within budget.
- Keep notes with pertinent information about the project (contacts, annual reports, what works well and what does not work well).
- Report on the outcome of the project and write a one page annual report (summary and suggestions).
- Keep all Houston County Master Gardeners informed of the program status, needs, accomplishments, etc.
- Keep notes with pertinent information about the committee tasks (contacts, budget, yearly summaries, what works well and what does not work well, etc.).

Helpful Skills: Organizing, planning, budgeting, written and oral communication, teamwork, delegating tasks, motivating and giving positive feedback, computer proficiency.

- a. **Youth** – This team meets throughout the year
  - i. Junior Master Gardener program
  - ii. School gardens and school grants
  - iii. Other volunteering with schools or youth groups

- b. Outreach programs** – This team meets from March through October
  - i. Planning event/curriculum
  - ii. Schedule and participate with other community events (i.e. Caledonia June Youth Day, Taste of the Trail or Owl Festival (Houston), Apple Fest (LaCrescent), Uffda Days (Spring Grove) are examples. (As able, MGs are encouraged to participate in the community event located in their particular community)
  
- c. Spring Conference/Garden Day** - All members are encouraged to be active on one or more subgroups as this is a very large project
  - i. Sub-group: Silent auction
  - ii. Sub-group: Program
  - iii. Sub-group: Food
  - iv. Sub-group: Country Store
  
- d. County Fair Booth** – This team meets June through August
  - i. All members may work at fair booth.
  
- e. Plant Exchange**
  - i. Spring
  - ii. Fall
  
- f. Development** – This team is ongoing and meets as needed
  - i. Planning and reviewing new programs or projects
  - ii. Officers, Extension Educator and any other interested MGs may serve on this team