

The Bylaws of the Montgomery County Master Gardeners Association

Article I: Name, Purpose, and Organizational Affiliation

Section 1.

The name of this not-for-profit, volunteer based organization is the Montgomery County Master Gardeners Association (MCMGA).

Section 2.

The purpose of this Association is to serve the citizens of Montgomery County with educational and consulting activities, addressing horticultural and associated problems using information derived from a broad base of knowledge developed and/or endorsed by the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension.

Section 3.

The MCMGA will pursue its mission under the supervision of the Montgomery County Master Gardener Coordinator (MCMGC) in conjunction with the Director of the Maryland Cooperative Extension, Montgomery County Office. Reports of the activities of the MCMGA will be submitted as requested to the MCMGC for review to assure that those activities are consistent with the goals of the Maryland Cooperative Extension, Montgomery County Office. Reports of the activities of the MCMGA will also be periodically submitted to the Director and the State MG Coordinator for review to assure that MG activities are consistent with the goals of the Maryland Cooperative Extension – Montgomery County Office, and that the support needs of the program are being met in a manner consistent with the resources available to the Maryland Cooperative Extension.

Article II: Membership

Section 1.

Membership is open to all those meeting the qualifications of a Master Gardener regardless of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation or handicap. A minimum qualifying requirement is the successful completion of the basic Master Gardener course and internship requirement. Qualifications for maintaining good standing as members of the MCMGA shall be based on evidence of continuing service to carry out the basic mission of this Association as specified in Article 1: Section 2. Members in good standing shall have met their annual volunteer and education hours for the previous year. Criteria for meeting the requirement of hours shall be established by the MCMGC in consultation with the State MG Coordinator.

Section 2.

Membership dues shall be established for the purpose of supporting various activities not covered by the Maryland Cooperative Extension, Montgomery County Office. The level of dues shall be proposed by the Executive Board, with final approval by those members in good standing at a membership meeting. Notice of the vote and the amount of dues shall be part of the agenda at the membership meeting one month prior to the vote. Dues should be paid by March 31. Any member not wishing to pay dues may forgo payment by sending a brief written request to the Treasurer or the MCMGC, requesting a waiver for that year. Non-payment of dues will not impact the MCMGA membership status. Confidentiality must be maintained.

Article III: Organization

Section 1.

The Executive Board shall be responsible for assisting the MCMGC with Program formulation, identification of resource requirements, Program execution and reporting. The Executive Board shall consist of the Officers, the immediate past President, the New Class Representative, and Chairpersons and/or co-Chairpersons of the standing Committees. Officers may not serve for more than 2 consecutive terms in the same office but may be reelected to that office 2 years after leaving it. It shall be a goal for Committee Chairpersons to not serve more than 4 consecutive terms. However, it is recognized that in some instances (small Committees or Committees where a new person does not step forward) a Chairperson may need to serve more than 4 consecutive terms. Officers and Chairpersons and/or co-Chairpersons of the standing Committees are nominated by the Nominating Committee and must be elected by the general membership. Chairpersons of non-standing Committees are appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board.

Section 2.

In the event that an Executive Board Member is not serving in the best interest of the MCMGA, any member of the MCMGA may submit a request for dismissal action to the Executive Board where a two-third majority vote will result in a dismissal from the Executive Board.

Section 3.

The elected Officers of the Executive Board shall be: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 4.

The duties of the Officers shall be as follows:

President—the President shall co-Chair the general membership meeting with the MCMGC, and shall serve as Chairperson of the Executive Board. The President is responsible for communicating effectively with the MCMGC, the Director of the Maryland Cooperative Extension - Montgomery County Office, the State MG Director and those designated by the Director or MCMGC to insure that the MCMGA's activities are supportive of the goals of the Maryland Cooperative Extension, Montgomery County Office.

First Vice President—It shall be the duty of the First Vice President to exercise the powers of the President in his or her absence. In the event of the resignation or incapacitation of the President, the First Vice President shall become the President. The First Vice President shall be responsible for the coordination of membership matters including the mentor program, and the Master Gardener Intern interest inventory. The First Vice President shall also be responsible for formation of the Nominating Committee and overseeing its activities. If the First Vice President has any conflict of interest, then formation of the Nominating Committee will be transferred to an Executive Board member having no conflict of interest. (An example of 'conflict of interest' would be if the First Vice President is running for a 'contested' office.)

Second Vice President—the Second Vice President shall be responsible for preparation and distribution of the Annual Report and for reports based on individual service activities, which are extracted from the records of the various activities of the MCMGA. The Second Vice President shall also assist the First Vice President in the carrying out of that position's duties as needed.

Recording Secretary—the Recording Secretary shall maintain all MCMGA records. This shall include preparation of minutes of the Executive Board meetings and records of membership meetings. Said minutes and records of membership meetings shall be placed in the Minutes Binder located in the phone room. The Recording Secretary shall communicate via the Newsletter summarizing major decisions or actions that affect the general membership, which were taken at the monthly general membership meetings or at Executive Board meetings.

Treasurer—The Treasurer shall be responsible for formulating the budget and maintaining records of all financial transactions of the MCMGA. A preliminary budget shall be presented by the Treasurer to the membership in the November Newsletter and to the Executive Board at their November meeting. The preliminary budget is subject to approval by the Executive Board prior to the end of the calendar year. The approved budget shall be placed in the Minutes Binder located in the phone room. Written Treasurer reports of total income and expenditures shall be presented to the Executive Board at each monthly meeting, and placed in the Minutes Binder on a monthly basis. The Treasurer may elect to have another Executive Board member present said report if the Treasurer is unable to attend.

Article IV: New Class Representative

Section 1.

New Class Representative—The New Class Representative shall be elected by the newest MG class during a meeting of the class in February. The New Class Representative shall serve on the Executive Board from March of the year in which he/she is elected through February of the following year.

Article V: Committees

Section 1.

The current standing Committees include: Computer/Website, Demonstration Gardens, Landscape Design, Montgomery County Fairgrounds, Newsletter, Plant Clinic, Program and Education, Public Relations, Speakers Bureau, Special Events—External, Special Events—Internal, Strategic Planning, Telephone Hot Line, and Therapeutic Horticulture. The Executive Board may add, delete, combine, or split the standing Committees at the end of the calendar year as it deems necessary.

Section 2.

Non-standing Committees shall be established as deemed necessary and dissolved when their mission is completed. The duties of these Committees shall be defined by the Executive Board. These Committees and their missions will be announced to the membership. Chairpersons of non-standing Committees are appointed by the President and approved by the Executive Board.

Section 3.

Chairpersons and/or co-Chairpersons of both standing and non-standing Committees are expected to make decisions within their Committees and to keep the Executive Board, MCMGC and the membership informed of their activities. The Committee Chairperson has the responsibility to appoint an acting Chairperson in his or her absence.

Article VI: Meetings

Section 1.

Monthly meetings of the general membership will be held for the purpose of updating members on Master Gardener activities and for continuing education.

Section 2.

The monthly general membership meeting held each November will be for the purpose of electing Officers and standing Committee Chairpersons and/or co-Chairpersons for a term of one year.

Section 3.

The Executive Board shall meet monthly to review Executive Board and Committee activities, to discuss problems and successes, and to consider recommendations for future Program initiatives. Meetings of the Executive Board are open; however, only Executive Board members may vote. In cases of more than one Chairperson of a standing Committee or multiple individuals holding one Officer position, only one may vote. Voting shall require a quorum that shall consist of a majority of the Executive Board positions. No member of the Executive Board may cast more than one vote. Proxy votes are not permitted.

Article VII: Nominations and Elections

Section 1.

Nominations - The First Vice President shall submit the names of a Nominating Committee including the Chairperson of the Committee to the Executive Board and MCMGC no later than July 1. (except as noted in the Conflict of Interest Section of Article 3. Section 4.) The MCMGC shall provide to the Nominating Committee information regarding a candidate's standing with respect to volunteer hours and continuing education hours for the previous year. The Executive Board shall conduct a vote at the regular July meeting to approve the Nominating Committee membership and Chairperson. During August the Nominating Committee shall notify the MCMGA membership of the November election and solicit candidates verbally and via the August Newsletter. The Nominating Committee will present the slate of nominees to the MCMGC and the Executive Board prior to their September Executive Board meeting. Any member of the MCMGA may notify the Executive Board that he/she wishes to have a name added to the slate of nominees, provided that a written petition endorsed by 5% of the membership of the MCMGA endorses this nomination. The Executive Board may add additional names to the slate of nominees. The Executive Board shall finalize the slate of nominees and present it to the general membership in October by printed notice provided through the Newsletter or other communications.

Section 2.

Elections - Officers and standing Committee Chairs will be elected by the general electorate at the monthly general membership meeting held in November unless otherwise scheduled by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. Paper ballots will be used and the results tabulated by two or more members of the

Nominating Committee who are not running for a contested position on the ballot. The term for Officers and standing Committee Chairpersons will begin on the First of the year and will be for one year.

Section 3.

Vacancies - Vacancies (other than the President) on the Executive Board occurring during the year will be filled by appointment by the President with the concurrence of the Executive Board. The person appointed to fill the vacancy shall be designated "Acting." The time that the "Acting" Executive Board member serves, shall not count against any term limits. A formal election to fill those vacancies will be held at the regular November elections meeting. In the event that the President must step down, the First Vice President will assume the position of President, and the Second Vice President will assume the position of First Vice President. The position of Second Vice President will be appointed by the President with the concurrence of the Executive Board.

Article VIII: Amendments

Section 1. Any member of the MCMGA may propose an amendment to the Bylaws by presenting a petition to the Executive Board signed by 5% of the members of the MCMGA. The Executive Board shall review the proposed amendment, and present the proposed amendment to the membership via the Newsletter. The amendment will be voted on at the next regular monthly membership meeting. The amendment must be approved or rejected by a simple majority of those present at the membership meeting using paper ballots. The ballots shall be counted by one Executive Board member and one non-Executive Board member.

Article IX: Dissolution

Section 1. The MCMGA shall not be dissolved as long as 25 members request its continuance. In the event of dissolution, all assets of the MCMGA shall become the property of the Maryland Cooperative Extension, Montgomery County Office.

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