



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR WINNEBAGO COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER ASSOCIATION

Mission Statement: “The purpose of the Winnebago County Master Gardener Volunteer Association is to provide horticultural education, community service and environmental stewardship for our community in affiliation with the University of Wisconsin-Extension Program.”

I. CERTIFICATION CERTIFICATES, RECERTIFICATION CARDS & NAME BADGES

A. MEMBERSHIP

All persons who are members of WIMGA affiliated local associations or qualify for the membership categories listed below may become members of the association upon receipt of their annual dues.

Membership in the Association shall consist of the following categories:

Voting Members of WIMGA

1. **Certified Master Gardener Volunteers** – those persons certified by UW-Extension who are in good standing. Good standing is accomplished by completing the yearly training and service requirements by UW-Extension for maintenance of certification as a Master Gardener Volunteer as determined by the member’s local association or county.
2. **Intern Master Gardener Volunteers** – those persons who have completed the UW Extension Master Gardener Training Program but have not satisfied the service requirement for certification.

Non-voting Members of WIMGA

1. **Inactive Master Gardener Volunteers** - those persons who have been active Master Gardener Volunteers but who have not accomplished the yearly training and service required by UW-Extension as determined by the member’s local association or county. Voting rights are suspended until UW-Extension requirements for recertification have been completed.
2. **Student Master Gardener Volunteers** - those persons currently taking Master Gardener training but who have not completed the training program.
 - must work with a certified or Intern MGV on any MG project
 - must not represent themselves as a UW-Extension MGV or give advice representing UW-Extension until they become Intern MGVs.
3. **Associates** - those persons who join during the period when MG training is not available but plan to comply with the standards set for Certified Master Gardener Volunteers at the next available training opportunity. An Associate member:
 - must work with a Certified or Intern MGV on any MG project
 - must not represent themselves as a UW-Extension MGV or give advice representing UW-Extension until they become Intern MGVs.
4. **Friends of Master Gardeners** - those persons who wish to support the association from industry, business or the community but who do not plan to take MG training.

B. CERTIFICATION CERTIFICATES

Winnebago County Master Gardener Volunteers (WCMGV) who completes the requirements of the General Master Gardener Training Program shall become certified after completing 24 hours of community service on a Core Project or Committee.

C. RECERTIFICATION CARDS

Winnebago County Master Gardener Volunteers who complete the requirements for annual recertification shall receive a wallet-sized card indicating they are a UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteer in good standing for the coming year.

D. NAME BADGES

One name badge shall be furnished by Winnebago County Master Gardener Volunteer Association upon certification. Additional name badges may be ordered when accompanied by the current state fee. Any

WCMGV who is in good standing at the time of ordering may order a name badge. "In Good Standing" means the WCMGV is active and has completed their initial certification within the last year or are currently recertified, as verified from volunteer hour records. Order shall be submitted annually for any name badges that are needed.

II. ELIGIBLE VOLUNTEER HOURS FOR CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION

A. CERTIFICATION

1. Volunteer hours shall be submitted to the Time Keeper by 9/1 of the current year.
2. Class hours count as Continuing Education hours for first year WCMGV members.
3. All first year or uncertified WCMGVs must work all twenty-four (24) volunteer hours on Core Projects or Committees. Travel time associated with Master Gardener volunteer activities may be included.

B. RECERTIFICATION

1. Volunteer hours shall be submitted to the Time Keeper by 9/1 of the current year.
2. Hours shall include a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours of volunteer time and a minimum of ten (10) hours of continuing education annually.

The minimum twenty-four (24) hours shall be broken down as follows:

- A minimum of twelve (12) hours must be worked on Core Projects
 - A minimum of five (5) hours must be on Community and/or Youth Education
 - The balance of hours (a minimum of seven (7) hours) may be worked on individual projects
3. Travel time associated with MGV activities may be included.
 4. Time spent on monthly board and business meetings may be included.
 5. Reasonable time spent on project and/or education preparation, research time and meeting times may be included
 6. Reasonable time spent on the phone, on mail and e-mail pertaining to committees and Master Gardener related business may be included. This includes any time spent on planning and performing any duties associated with approved projects or committees.

III. CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS FOR RECERTIFICATION

Continuing education (CE or professional development) is a way for MGVs to learn more after general training and keep up with the latest horticultural information. Policies on what counts as CE vary by area. Check with your program facilitator (usually the county UW-Extension agent) who determines what is acceptable in that county.

A. WCMGA Guidelines

Although much can be learned from gardening books, the Internet, and self-guided garden tours, the quality of this information is variable and difficult to evaluate. WCMGVs are encouraged to pursue educating themselves through these resources, *but this information will not qualify for continuing education recertification hours.*

1. Shall follow the Guidelines set down by the State Master Gardeners Association (WIMGA).
2. Shall include UW-Extension sponsored programs such as:
 - a. Brown Bag Master Gardener Monthly Wisline
 - b. Weekly summer Horticulture issues Wisline Update
3. Specialized Horticulture programs
4. Public Radio Programs hosting UW-Extension Specialists
5. Satellite programs
6. Materials from UW-Ex Media Collection
7. Research Station Field Days
8. Other Extension produced programs
9. Master Gardener Advanced Training
10. All Master Gardener Conferences

Shall include programs or seminars on horticulture or leadership skill development offered by:

1. Master Gardener associations or in community
2. Garden Centers
3. Trade shows
4. WI DNR or other state agency
5. Botanical Gardens
6. Tech schools
7. Guided Garden Tours
8. Universities or Colleges
9. Educational gardening shows on radio and television

IV. LIST OF PROJECTS/COMMITTEES

Current Core Projects and Committee opportunities are listed in the WCMGA membership booklet, on the WCMGA Facebook page, website and in each month's newsletter.

V. MASTER GARDENER PROJECTS

Projects of the association are intended to serve multiple purposes, including providing educational opportunities for Master Gardener members and a means by which to earn hours and experiences required to obtain or maintain Master Gardener certification. Projects are also a means of outreach into the community, both to provide community education, WCMGA goodwill, environmental stewardship, and to improve local horticulture.

There are two types of projects approved by the association: Core Projects and Individual Projects.

GENERAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS: Projects must meet the purpose of the association. The beneficiary of the activities of the project must be a school, a non-profit, or 501(c)(3) entity. The project plan may be reviewed and sanctioned by the beneficiary. The beneficiary representative shall have the option to review the progress of the project and agree that the project is meeting with the sanctioned plan or give the Project Lead complete control once the plan has been approved.

A. CORE PROJECTS

Core Projects are on-going, annual and/or long-term projects or committees in which prospective or continuing Master Gardeners may be involved. A list of projects and committees is included in each month's newsletter.

A Core Project Application and Funding Request must be submitted to the Vice President(s) and be approved by the Board for the anticipated extent of the project.

Multi-year projects:

- Must submit funding request to the Vice President(s) on an annual basis.
- Must submit a project summary report by December 1 of each year.

B. INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS

Any Certified Master Gardener may propose an individual project. The Master Gardener must complete an individual project application form and submit it to the Vice President(s). Application forms may be obtained from the Winnebago County Master Gardener Volunteer Association website or requested from the Association Vice President(s). Individuals with approved projects may be required to submit activity reports as requested and submit a Master Gardener Project Summary Report.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS: In order for Individual Project volunteer hours to be counted, Twelve (12) hours on a core project must be completed as well.

No association funds shall be provided to complete an individual project. However, the beneficiary of the project may contribute funding to an individual project.

VI. PROTOCOL FOR PROPOSING NEW PROJECTS

Each year the WCMGVA Board approves projects. The projects have gone through an application and review process in which they are approved for appropriateness to the organization's mission and for benefit to the

community. The WCMGVA board conducts the review and approval of ongoing project applications in October of each year. New projects may be considered by the Board throughout the year.

VII. PROJECT LEAD'S RESPONSIBILITIES

A project lead must submit a Project Application/Funding Request to the Vice President(s) by October 31 for the following calendar year. Application forms are available from the Secretary or on our website. The application shall be reviewed at the following months Board meeting. The Vice President(s) shall notify the applicant with the result of the board review by email or by mail, indicate the dollar amount that was approved for the project and include a copy of the tax exempt form. Awarded funds will become available upon notification. Requested funds for each year are limited to \$500.00. Additional funding for the project may be obtained from the beneficiary of the project, government grants or other sources outside of the WCMGVA. Expense reimbursements shall be made following the WCMGVA financial procedures and are based on an approved budget. **A completed check request form and itemized receipts are required for reimbursement.**

The Project Lead may solicit volunteers for the project from the WCMGVA membership. WCMGVA members may come forward at any time to request admission to the project team. It is the responsibility of the Project Lead to determine and maintain the appropriate number of team members.

The Project Lead shall call a meeting for the project at the beginning of each new project year to discuss projected activities, goals for the new season, and budgetary limitations. Duties and responsibilities for individual team members may be assigned at this time.

At the end of the gardening season (October) the Project Lead shall prepare a Master Gardener Project Summary Report following the outline on the form. The project leader may, from time to time, be asked to update the membership on the project.

The Project Lead shall maintain on-going communications with project beneficiaries, as needed, throughout the life of the project.

VIII. WINNEBAGO COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION ADVISOR'S ROLE

The Advisor's role will be filled by a person from the Winnebago County UW-Extension Department. This person will advise the Board of Directors and members about operations and projects. The Advisor will be responsible for coordination of the General Master Gardener Training. The Advisor will also direct the local association on matters of compliance with WIMGA programs, priorities and policies.

IX. COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

- A.** A WCMGA committee chairperson must be a Certified Master Gardener in good standing.
- B.** Responsibilities of chairpersons
 1. Organize committee members, coordinate committee activities, schedule and notify committee members of meetings.
 2. Submit progress reports to the newsletter and membership.
 3. Report progress to the Board and General Membership as requested.
 4. Submit funding requests to the Vice President(s) as needed.

X. EDUCATION/TRIP COMMITTEE

The Education and Trip Committee is comprised of WCMGA Volunteers. The Chairperson is a certified WCMGA Volunteer and sits on the Board of the WCMGA. The purpose of the Education and Trip Committee is to organize and implement a minimum of ten hours of continuing education per membership year and aid the Master Gardener Advisor with Basic Training as requested. The continuing education offered may be any combination of classes/seminars and/or trips. All classes, seminars and trips are offered for the benefit of WCMGAs; however, the general public may be invited to attend. Only Education and Trip

Committee members may count actual class/seminar/trip hours toward volunteer hours. All other members may count only the education portion of the class/seminar/trip toward continuing education hours.

The Committee invites suggestions for seminar topics, speakers and trip destinations from the general membership. If a WCMGA member wishes to offer and host a class, seminar or trip, the member must be certified and shall present a proposal to the Education and Trip Committee. The purpose of this proposal is to:

- Ensure offered events are coordinated to enhance the success of each event.
- Provide the opportunity for the Education and Trip Committee to share the experience gained from hosting previous events.
- The hosting member shall work/coordinate with the Education and Trip Committee to plan and execute the proposed class, seminar or trip.

The member shall then present the proposal to the Board for approval. The board shall consider the financial implications of the event and if they are willing to accept the financial risk.

REFUND POLICY FOR TRIPS/SEMINARS:

No refunds will be issued. If you are unable to attend an event, you may send someone else in your place. If an event must be cancelled, the Board will use its discretion regarding refunds.

**XI. GRANT INSTRUCTIONS
WISCONSIN MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION (WIMGA) GRANTS FOR CONTINUING
EDUCATION**

WIMGA offers several Continuing Education Grants to Master Gardener organizations in the state. Applications and instructions are on the WIMGA website. Completed applications must be mailed and postmarked by October 1 to be considered. WIMGA will determine recipients by November 1 and will mail checks to accepted applicants. Recipients must report to WIMGA how the grant was used by April 1 of the following year.

XII. SUNSHINE COMMITTEE

The Sunshine Committee shall, upon notification of a specific noteworthy event in the life of one of our members, send the appropriate agreed upon response.

- A. A \$50.00 gift certificate from a nursery or garden store will be given to the family of a deceased WCMGA member for the purpose of purchasing a suitable memorial in the name of the departed gardener.
- B. A suitable \$25.00 gift certificate shall be given to any Winnebago County Master Gardener Association member who has a lengthy hospital stay due to illness or injury
- C. An appropriate card shall be sent for all other reasons.
- D. Expenditures exceeding the above limits will not be reimbursed.

XIII. MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING

Members shall sign in at business meetings to record attendance.

STANDARD AGENDA

1. Date
2. Call to Order
3. Secretary's Report and approval of Minutes
4. Treasurer's Report
5. State representative presents update at business meeting
6. Old Business
7. New Business
8. Refer to annual calendar for agenda items

XIV. INTRODUCTION OF NEW BUSINESS

- A. The President(s) shall create a written agenda for the Business Meeting. Any new business should be directed to the Business Meeting. The topic should be added to the Business Meeting written agenda no later than 2 days prior to the next meeting by contacting the President(s). Any requests received after the above date will be added to the next month's meeting agenda. If the relevant members are not present at the Business Meeting at which the topic is scheduled, the topic shall be tabled until the next Business Meeting agenda.
- B. New business may also come from the floor during any business meeting. The President(s) has the option to postpone discussion to the next business meeting if appropriate.
- C. Minutes will be taken at each Business Meeting by the Secretary and will be published in the next newsletter. An electronic copy of minutes will be maintained. The Secretary will record in the minutes any new procedures, rules, important motions, and SOP or By-laws changes.

XV. PROXY VOTING FORM

Voting by proxy is permitted only for election of officers, when a completed form for that purpose is registered with the Secretary at least one day prior to the meeting and to the extent permissible by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

XVI. ANNUAL CALENDAR

The Annual Calendar shall be revised annually, in order to provide a consistent method for setting and reviewing goals and strategies for WCMGA.

JANUARY

- Board Planning Meeting to review previous year, set goals and new programs
- Send State dues to WIMGA
- New officers take office
- Update all forms, officer & board lists (printed & website)
- Begin preparing budget for year
- State Representative presents update at business meeting
- Annual and Short-term projects finalized
- Review minutes for changes in SOPs, By-Laws, Forms, etc.

FEBRUARY

- Reserve Home & Garden Show booth
- Reserve booth for Paine's Festival of Spring
- Review worm castings stock and brochure
- Board hosts special meeting with Project Leads
- Projects begin planning for the year
- Complete contract for Farmers' Market booth

MARCH

- Budget presented to Board for approval
- Approved budget presented to membership
- Tri-County Home & Garden Show
- Sign up for Projects

APRIL

- Plan summer garden walks
- Plan annual membership picnic

MAY

- Last business meeting before summer break
- Reserve booth for Winnebago County Fair
- Arrange 4-H Awards for Winnebago County Fair
- Award Master Gardener Scholarship(s) to Fox Valley Technical College student(s)
- Paine Festival of Spring

JUNE

- Annual membership picnic
- Garden tours begin

JULY

- Garden tours continue
- Advertise fall general training opportunity
- Information/registration for fall general training

AUGUST

- Winnebago County Fair
- (2) \$25 awards given for 4H members for Winnebago County Fair (Outstanding Vegetable/Outstanding Cut Flower)
- Submit annual membership dues by Sept. 1 to Treasurer
- Volunteer year ends August 31; submit volunteer hours by September 1 to Time Keeper
- Board discusses suggestions for WIMGA grants
- Reserve room for awards banquet
- Reserve rooms at Coughlin Center for classes, Business & Board meetings for next year
- Garden tours continue

SEPTEMBER

- New volunteer year begins
- Business meetings resume
- Fall General Master Gardener Training classes begin
- Update project application form (on website) for October
- Nominations for election of officers & board positions begins

OCTOBER

- Prepare Annual Accomplishment report for November 1 due date
- Nominations for election of officers & board positions close
- Nominees present bio to the newsletter editor
- Project Application/Funding Request due to Board by October 31 for the following calendar year
- Update Membership Book
- Order name badges, hours disks & certification plaques (ask general membership if anyone is in need of a new name badge prior to submitting the order)
- Send letter of invitation to members who did not renew

NOVEMBER

- Election of officers/board members
- Set budget for Project Fund
- Send out project approval letters
- Set new short and long-term goals

DECEMBER

- Awards dinner
- Present Membership Booklets to members
- Committee and Master Gardener Project Summary Reports due to Vice President(s) by December 1

ONGOING

- Newsletters
- Basic General Master Gardener Training promotions
- Website maintenance
- Facebook page maintenance
- Individual projects
- Educational promotions

Revised: April 12, 2011

Approved by Membership: April 12, 2011