

Operating Guidelines

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program -- Hennepin County

The purpose of these guidelines is to define how the county/local unit of University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners will function as a group in representing the University of Minnesota Extension and/or county and in carrying out its responsibilities.

1. MISSION STATEMENT

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteers in Hennepin County promote environmental stewardship by providing research-based horticultural information and education to enhance the quality of life in our communities.

2. NAME

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

3. AFFILIATION

- a. 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 University of Minnesota Extension. The State Program is positioned within the University of Minnesota Horticulture Science Department and is located at 155 Alderman Hall, 1970 Folwell Ave., St. Paul, MN.
- b. 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.
- c. At a minimum, the Program will comply with the guidelines, policies and procedures of 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.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Membership: The membership will consist of Master Gardener volunteers who have active and emeritus Master Gardener volunteer status, Master Gardener interns, and the paid staff coordinator (if applicable).

- b. Status: Master Gardener volunteer status classifications are defined in the State Program Volunteer Manual.
- c. 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.
- d. Good Standing: To be "In good standing" requires the member to complete a minimum of 25 volunteer work hours and 12 continuing education hours during each fiscal year following certification and adhere to the Code of Ethics established by the Minnesota State Master Gardener Program.
- e. 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.

5. LEADERSHIP

- a. 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. (Attachment A)
- b. In the event there is no paid Extension staff person responsible for Master Gardener program coordination, a Master Gardener volunteer will serve in the role of Volunteer Leader as outlined in the State Program volunteer leader position description. (Attachment B)
- c. The Program will also have a Leadership Team to provide organizational leadership for the Program. Fifty (50) percent of Leadership Team membership constitutes a quorum for a meeting. The Leadership Team shall meet monthly January through November. Meetings may be held by alternate formats that include teleconference or electronic means so long as a quorum is present and the media permits for democratic participation of all members in attendance. Where there is a staff coordinator, that person shall be an ex-officio member of the Leadership Team.
- d. Leadership Team Positions
 - i. Members holding Leadership Team positions must meet the Program's membership criteria.
 - ii. Positions on the Leadership Team shall consist of the volunteer leader, if serving, a chairperson (or co-chairs), chair-elect, chair-emeritus, secretary/treasurer and committee chairs. The volunteer leader may serve a dual role as the chairperson.
 - iii. The Master Gardener Program Coordinator ("Program Coordinator") shall be an ex-officio member of the Leadership Team.

- iv. Nominations for Leadership Team positions may be made by a Nominating Committee comprised of executive officers and approved by the Program Coordinator. "Elections" shall take place at the October Leadership Team meeting with terms to begin in January of the following year.
- v. Leadership team positions shall be elected by simple majority by members present at the meeting. Ballot or voice vote may be used at the discretion of the chair.
- vi. The Leadership Team, with input from the program coordinator, may collectively decide to add or remove positions, defining position duties and responsibilities as needed.
- vii. Terms of positions shall be two years or as agreed by the Leadership Team and approved by the Program Coordinator. Members may serve multiple terms. Members may be removed for cause, either by the program coordinator or a quorum of the Leadership Team.
- viii. In the event any elected Leadership Team member cannot fulfill his/her term of office, such position will be filled by appointment by the remaining Leadership Team members.

6. **DUTIES OF LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS**

- a. **Program Coordinator or Volunteer Leader** – Responsible for oversight of the Program as identified in position descriptions. Act as liaison between the Program and the County Extension office and State Program. Specific duties are outlined in the Master Gardener Coordinator and Master Gardener Volunteer Leader position descriptions. (See Attachments A & B.) The following positions make up the Leadership Team. See the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program in Hennepin County Leadership Team Manual (Attachment C) for position descriptions.
- b. Chair
- c. Chair Elect
- d. Chair Emeritus
- e. Secretary/Treasurer
- f. Program Development Chair
- g. Community Programs Chair
- h. Communications Chair
- i. Master Gardener Program Support Chair
- j. Fundraising/Development Chair

7. **PROGRAM AND PROGRAM MEETINGS**

- a. Fiscal Year - The fiscal year of the Program shall be the calendar year, January 1 – December 31.
- b. The Program shall meet a minimum of twice in a calendar year. The annual meeting shall be held prior to the last day of February. Newly elected Leadership Team members assume responsibility January 1.

- c. Notice of all meetings shall be given by either the Coordinator or Volunteer Leader 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.
- d. Special meetings may be called as necessary by the Chair. 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. Notice of Leadership Team meetings shall include a call for agenda items.
- e. Voting.
 - i. Each Member shall be entitled to one (1) vote on all items requiring action.
 - ii. An act of the majority of members present and entitled to vote shall be an act of the Program.
- f. A simple majority of voting members constitutes a quorum.
- g. Committees will be established as needed by the Chair, 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.

8. OPERATING FUNDS

- a. Funds may be raised, held and distributed by the Program in accordance with the State Master Gardener Program Financial Management Guidelines. (See Attachment D)
- b. 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.
- c. No part of the assets of the Program shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributed to, its members or other private persons or other entities, except as reimbursement for legitimate and reasonable expenses, such as tuition reimbursement for education specifically benefiting the Master Gardener Program in Hennepin County.
- d. Funds of the program may be used to provide for recognition of the achievements of individual master gardener volunteers made on behalf of the program.
- e. Should this Program be dissolved, all the assets of the Program shall be turned over to the State Program.

9. CHANGE IN GUIDELINES

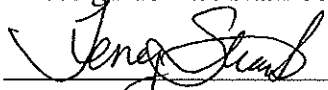
- a. These guidelines may be amended by a majority vote of Leadership Team members at any duly noticed regular or special meeting where a quorum is present.

10. SAVING CLAUSE

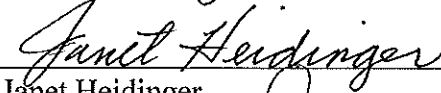
- a. Any portion of these Operating Guidelines found to be contrary to law shall not invalidate other portions.

11. **EFFECTIVE DATE**

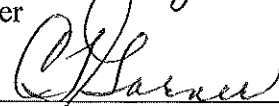
a. These guidelines shall be effective July 12, 2010.

Coordinator: 
Terry Straub

Date: 7/12/10

Chair: 
Janet Heidinger

Date: 7/12/10

Secretary/Treasurer: 
Carol Garner

Date: 7/12/10

07/12/10 Draft Operating Guidelines