

Master Gardener Association of Passaic County
BYLAWS

Article I: Name and Purposes

Section 1. Name:

The association shall be known as the Master Gardener Association of Passaic County, Inc. (MGAPC).

Section 2. Purposes:

- 1- To assist Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) in its service to the public.
- 2- To promote community awareness of and participation in Extension programs related to horticulture through educational programs.
- 3- To sustain the interest and enthusiasm of our members through continuing educational programs and field trips.
- 4- To support the Master Gardener Association of New Jersey (MGANJ) in promoting and expanding the program.
- 5- To cooperate with other RCE departments in an effort to improve community life.
- 6- To promote and sustain horticultural projects within Passaic County.

Article II: Membership

Section 1. Eligibility:

Membership is open to all people without regard to race, sex, color, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, or political beliefs.

Section 2. Requirements Include:

A training program of 70 hours, successful completion of a written examination and 70 hours of volunteer service, (including 10 hours on the help line), there-by attaining RCE Master Gardener certification. In order to hold membership in MGAPC one must comply with any of the following categories of Rutgers Master Gardeners and be current with the dues structure of MGAPC.

Section 3. Categories of Membership:

1. **Rutgers Master Gardener Intern:** A participant from the time he/she is admitted into and completes the Rutgers Master Gardener Training program (with an average score of at least 80% on all assessments) through the completion of a minimum of 60 hours of approved volunteer service. This internship is normally completed within 12-18 months of the end of the training. However, situations may arise where Interns may take longer to complete their internship. If so, an agreement with the local Rutgers Master Gardener coordinator must be reached. Anyone who fails to complete the volunteer service requirement does not attain status as a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener, and is not permitted to use the Rutgers Master Gardener title. As an Intern, dues are not required.
2. **Rutgers Certified Master Gardener:** A Rutgers Master Gardener training program graduate who is an active volunteer and has completed his or her initial volunteer service requirement. To retain the Rutgers Certified Master Gardener status, a minimum of 25 hours of annual volunteer service and 10 hours of annual continuing education must be attained. Certification is valid for one year only; therefore, all Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners must be recertified every year.
3. **Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educator:** A Certified Master Gardener, as defined above, who has advanced training and who teaches within the Rutgers Master Gardener Program. To achieve this status following his or her annual certification, the Certified Master Gardener is required to (1) complete an additional 10 hours of specialized training annually, 5 of which must be in their specialty or field of expertise, and (2) complete an additional 10 volunteer hours as a teacher annually. The specialized training must be in a specific area of horticulture, environmental stewardship, youth education, leadership, or other approved category within the local Master Gardener program. Furthermore, a local county program coordinator may award this title to a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener who has consistently and repeatedly shown expertise and proficiency in a specific area of horticulture and/or has held a teaching or faculty position or has a

teaching degree from an accredited university. Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educators are expected to annually volunteer an additional 10 hours (beyond the county program requirements) specifically as a teacher or lecturer. Volunteer opportunities for Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educators would include teaching current Rutgers Master Gardener training courses, providing distance education course materials, or others as deemed appropriate through the local program coordinator. Recertification requirements for Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educators is a minimum of 35 hours: 25 volunteer hours, 10 of which must be in teaching (+ other hours the county program may require), and 10 hours of continuing education, 5 of which should be in their specialty or field of expertise. Failure to meet these additional requirements will only remove "Educator" from a current Certified Rutgers Master Gardener, unless they also fail to meet the program's requirements as a whole.

4. **Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Aurum Insigne**: Is bestowed to an active Rutgers Certified Master Gardener who has accumulated 1,000 hours of volunteer effort. This recognition and status is valid within New Jersey, but transfers to other state programs are then subject to their new locale's Master Gardener program requirements. To retain active status as a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Aurum Insigne, Master Gardeners must meet the same minimum hour requirements of volunteering and continuing education annually. Failure to meet these hourly requirements would result in the individual moving to alumnus status.
5. **Rutgers Master Gardener Alumnus**: A previously Certified Rutgers Master Gardener or Master Gardener Educator who no longer maintains his/her annual active volunteer status, including service and/or education update requirements.
6. **Rutgers Master Gardener Alumnus - Aurum Insigne Emeritus**: A previously Certified Rutgers Master Gardener or Master Gardener Educator who, after attaining a minimum of 1,000 hours of volunteer service, no longer maintains his/her annual active volunteer status, including service and/or education update requirements.

7. **Honorary Master Gardener Status:** RCE faculty or program coordinators, in consultation with active Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners in their counties, may give honorary status to noteworthy municipal or county government officials, staff, or other county residents or volunteers who display exemplary support (as determined locally) for the success and expansion of the Rutgers Master Gardener program.

Section 4. Volunteer Time:

1-Volunteer time must be recorded and submitted to the Master Gardner Coordinator. The second vice-president will assist the coordinator in the processing of reporting the volunteer hours.

2-Travel time shall be recorded as part of volunteer time or as set by the RCE Master Gardener Coordinator.

Section 5. Awards:

Shall be distributed at a pre-announced meeting. RCE certification awards (70 and 100 hour) may be distributed at graduation from the training program or at an equivalent ceremony. At the milestones listed below, members of the MGAPC are eligible to receive the following awards:

100 hours: A Master Gardener name badge, and certificate.

500 hours: A certificate.

1000 hours: A certificate and gold name badge.

Increments of 1000 Hours: A certificate.

ARTICLE III: Officers

Section 1. Officers: The officers of the Master Gardener Association of Passaic County shall be president, first vice-president, second vice-president, treasurer, recording secretary, and corresponding secretary.

Section 2. Eligibility: All dues paying members of MGAPC are eligible to vote and hold office.

Section 3. Election of Officers:

1-Nominations: A nominating committee of three (3) members, including a chair, shall be appointed by the president before September. A

slate of candidates will be presented by October's General Meeting at which time nominations from the floor will be accepted. Job sharing by two people is permitted.

2-Voting: If at the November meeting no nominations are made from the floor, the recording secretary will be asked to cast a unanimous ballot for the entire slate. If further nominations are made from the floor, each position will be voted upon separately, either by written or voice ballot.

3-Terms of Office: Terms of office will be for one year effective from the date of installation at the December meeting. No officer may serve in a specific office for more than three (3) consecutive terms. No one may hold more than one office at a time. Absence without a satisfactory excuse at a combined three general or executive committee meetings may be deemed a resignation of the board position.

Section 4. Duties:

Duties of All Officers:

All officers are required to support the purposes of the MGAPC.

All officers will attend General, Executive Board, and special meetings.

All officers shall perform the duties of the president during his or her absence in the order of the list of officers.

Duties of the President:

1. Preside over all Executive Board, General, and Special Meetings.
2. Appoint committee chairs with the concurrence of the Executive Board.
3. Act as ex-officio member of all committees, except the nominating committee. Call special meetings of the General Membership and Executive Board to facilitate business and address emergencies. The minutes of all general meetings will be distributed and voted on at the next General Meeting. All minutes of the Executive Committee will be held by the Secretary for future use of executive committees.
4. Shall vote only in the event of a tie.

5. Appoint two representatives and two alternates to attend meetings of the MGANJ with the concurrence of the Executive Board. If possible, the president should be one of the representatives.
6. Establish written agendas for all meetings and distribute when appropriate. Will present a report of the activities of the MGAPC for the previous year at the January meeting.

Duties of the First Vice President:

1. Shall organize field trips and/or programs during the year.
2. If possible, shall serve as one of the representatives or alternates to the MGANJ.

Duties of the Second Vice President:

1. Will calculate and report the volunteer hours of all Master Gardeners on an annual basis in collaboration with the RCE Master Gardener Coordinator.
2. Will coordinate with the Awards Committee to arrange for certificates, name badges, and pins as appropriate to Master Gardeners who have reached volunteer hour milestones.
3. If possible, shall serve as one of the representatives or alternates to the MGANJ.

Duties of the Treasurer:

1. Present reports at all scheduled Executive Board and general membership meetings. A copy of these reports will also be kept on file at the RCE Office.
2. Propose an annual budget which shall be submitted to the Executive Board at its November meeting. The budget will be presented to the General membership to be voted on in its entirety ASAP. If the vote is negative, the budget will go back to the Executive committee for restructuring and will be presented again at the following general meeting for approval in its entirety. Any unused funds from the previous year will automatically revert to the general fund.
3. Prepare the financial records of the Association for audit at the conclusion of the calendar year.

4. Will send out dues notices on an annual basis, will collect dues and deposit them into the MGAPC account, and will keep records of which members have paid their dues.
5. Shall file along with the President, the appropriate reports to government agencies annually.
6. Reimbursements will be made only with a voucher and receipts.
7. Only the treasurer and president are authorized to sign checks.

Duties of the Recording Secretary:

1. Record minutes of all Executive Board, General, and Special meetings. During the secretary's absence the minutes will be recorded by a volunteer.
2. File copies of all minutes in the appropriate file at the RCE Office.
3. Maintain a second file which will be available at all Executive Board, General, and Special meetings. This file will be passed on to the next secretary.
4. Shall serve as Parliamentarian.

Duties of the Corresponding Secretary:

1. Ensure that each member receive a monthly recap advising of upcoming meetings and other activities.
2. Receive, record, and report to the MGAPC all correspondence to said Association and go to the RCE office at least once per month to check correspondence.
3. Prepare and send all correspondence from the MGAPC.
4. File records of all correspondence and summary reports of projects and special events at the RCE office.
5. Will assist the president with all mailings.
6. Will maintain and distribute annually to all members a list (Directory) of Active members.

Section 5. Vacancies: Vacancies among officers except for the position of president will be filled by the president from the general membership with the concurrence of the Executive Board.

Article IV: Meetings

Section 1. Executive Board Meetings:

The Executive Board consists of the president, first vice-president, second vice-president, treasurer, recording secretary, corresponding secretary and the immediate past president and the delegate(s) to the MGANJ. The Executive Board shall meet in January and a minimum of four (4) additional times to discuss planning and the budget. Only members present at a meeting may vote. A quorum consists of a simple majority of the entire Executive Board. The Executive Board shall be empowered to transact any necessary business between meetings and act in emergencies which do not run contrary to the bylaws of the MGAPC or entail expenditures. ~~Any non-budgeted expenses over \$500 (five hundred) or more must be approved by the President, Treasurer and at least one other Board Member.~~ Guests may be invited to address specific business, however, only members of the Executive Board shall be allowed to vote.

Section 2. General Meetings:

General meetings shall be scheduled at least eight (8) times a year. The schedule of dates and times for the year to be set by the Executive Board before January 31. A quorum shall consist of twenty-five (25) active members including 3 (three) members of the Executive Board. All members may debate, but only active members present at a meeting may vote. Decisions may be made by a majority vote of active members attending a meeting. Robert's Rules of Order shall guide procedures for all General and Executive Board meetings. If an issue arises not addressed in these bylaws, Robert's Rules will apply.

Article V: Committees

Designation of Committees: Committees will be established by the president with the approval of the Executive Board for a specific purpose or long-term goals. At minimum the following committees shall be appointed annually:

1. Nominating Committee shall be formed before September as stated in Article III, Section 3.

2. **Auditing Committee** shall be established in January to audit the financial records of the previous year.
3. **Awards Committee** consisting of the President, 2nd Vice-President and the RCE Master Gardener Coordinator, shall be established early in the year. This Committee will determine who shall get awards based on:
 - a. Article II, section 5 of the bylaws.
 - b. Using input from the project chairs, recommends members for recognition by the Master Gardeners Association of New Jersey at the Fall Conference.
 - c. With help from the RCE Master Gardener Coordinator, decides awards for the present intern class.

Article VI: Finances

- A. The financial accounts of the MGAPC shall be separate from all other RCE funds.
- B. Spending authority.
 1. Project leaders will submit proposals for their project by Oct 31 of the preceding year.
 2. Projects will need approval of the RCE agent.
 3. Based on the approved proposals, the Treasurer will present a budget for the upcoming calendar year to the Executive Board for review, prior to the November general meeting.
 4. At the November general meeting, this budget and any changes will be presented to the general membership for approval. Failing approval, the treasurer will submit a new budget by the first meeting of the New Year.
 5. Committee and project leaders are authorized to spend up to their approved budgets. Amounts in excess of five percent of each committee's or project's approved budget must be approved by the executive board.
 6. When time does not permit a vote by the Executive Board to exceed a budget expenditures of not more than \$500.00 above an

approved budget limit, must be approved by the President, Treasurer and at least one other Board member. Such approval will be noted in the minutes of the next Executive Meeting.

Article VII: Bylaws Amendment Procedure

Only active members may propose amendments to the bylaws. The proposed change(s) must be presented in writing to the Executive Board. When accepted by this Board written notice would be given to the general membership at least 15 days before a regularly scheduled meeting. The amended bylaws must be approved by an affirmative vote of 2/3 (two-thirds) of the Active membership at the designated General meeting. Every five years the president shall appoint a committee to review the bylaws.

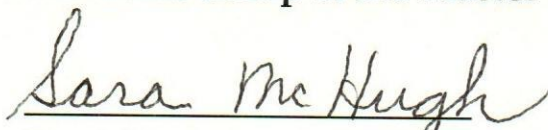
Article VIII: Role of the RCE Master Gardener Program Coordinator

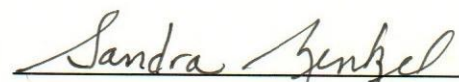
The role of the RCE Master Gardener Program Coordinator shall be the instruction and certification of RCE Master Gardeners in Training and as an expert in horticultural matters.

Article IX: Dissolution of the Association

In the event that the MGAPC ceases to function and dissolves itself, all assets after obligations and expenses of the MGAPC have been satisfied, shall be transferred only to a not-for-profit organization with shared horticultural purposes.

These bylaws of the Passaic County Master Gardner Association of Passaic County, a 501(c) (3) Non Profit Corporation have been adopted on this 22nd day of Oct. in the year 2019 by the membership of the Master Gardener Association of Passaic County.


President


Recording Secretary