

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE AWARD NOMINATION **Washington County Master Gardeners**

Click on the Awards link to view winning nomination highlights, a sample nomination and judging scoresheet for guidance: <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/master-gardeners/awards.aspx>

PLAN

1. WCMG members of WCMG sanctioned projects, committees, subcommittees, and general membership are authorized to submit nominations in **any/all** WCMG award categories.
2. Criteria for each award is found at wcmgar.org website, Member Portal, Award Forms Section.
3. Start early in the year – discuss with and invite input from other members of a project/committee about potential nominations.
4. Washington County Awards Committee requires all award nominations be submitted prior to **October 15**.
5. Digital copies of all nominations are to be emailed to Colin Massey, cmassey@uada.edu, with “Awards Committee” in the subject line.
6. Give yourself time to read the nomination criteria, gather information and lots of action images, draft the nomination, check it for errors and word counts, etc., to ensure your nomination qualifies.

GATHER INFORMATION

1. Make notes about contributions/achievements of individuals/teams and project(s) all year long.
2. Use statistics to track measurable results against goals.
3. Take action-oriented photos throughout the year and ID all in each photo and each person’s role. State winners need at least 40 images to make the video look good and representative of the work done.
4. Gather lots of action images or newspaper articles – images make an award nomination stronger.
5. Invite input from the potential nominee individual/team. Doing so can help create a unique story of your nominee and provide detailed examples you may not have known.

DRAFT DOCUMENT

1. Think of your nomination as an investigative story record: **Who, What, When, Where and How**.
2. The nomination should be a stand-alone document rather than filling in the nomination guidelines.
3. Group ideas for your nomination as outlined in the nomination criteria headings, i.e., Project Start & Evolution, Need, Goals, Hours Worked, Impacts on Intended Audiences, How Evaluated, Stats, etc.
4. Address all award criteria. Judges notice.
5. Focus on how the nomination’s contribution/achievement/skill is significant and deserving of recognition, using specific details and descriptions to show nominee’s impact.
6. Use data (number of people served, money earned, hours worked, etc.) to measure nominee’s impact against goals. Judges want to know evaluation data.
7. Use action verbs and action photos to tell the narrative. Be a storyteller. Draw the judge in.
8. Avoid using acronyms or nicknames, especially on first reference. Spell things out for those who may not know us or our state.
9. Use a standard word processing software in at least 11-point type. Microsoft Word and Google Docs have word count, spelling, and grammar features. Most judges count off for grammar mistakes.

DRAFT DOCUMENT *(Continued from page 5)*

10. Use our standard nomination title, so the judges see consistency across all the nominations.

[Last Year] Arkansas Master Gardener – [Category] of the Year Nomination
[Nominee Name]

Submitted by the [Program Name] Master Gardeners [indicate (50- or 51+ members)]

EDIT DOCUMENT

1. Have “fresh eyes” (i.e., other Master Gardeners) read and critique the document.
2. Check for word count to ensure it is at or under the limit. Word counts are just for the body of the nomination, not the entire nomination. Therefore, headings, subheadings, footers, page numbers, bullet points/numbered lists, and photo captions are NOT part of the word count. The above-mentioned items help the judges by chunking the nomination into parts rather than one long narrative, making it easier for the judges to read and judge.
3. Embed fully captioned images as JPEGs at the end of the nomination.

SUBMIT EARLY

1. Record all the necessary information on nomination (i.e., names, email addresses, phone numbers, etc.
2. Washington County Awards Committee requires all nominations forms be submitted prior to **October 15.**
3. Digital copies of all nominations are to be emailed to Colin Massey, cmassey@uada.edu, with “Awards Committee” in the subject line.