

## **BYLAWS**

### **ARTICLE I – Name**

The name of this organization shall be **Washington County Master Gardeners** (hereinafter **WCMG**).

### **ARTICLE II – Purpose**

WCMG is a program of the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service.

The purpose of the WCMG shall be to:

- a. Stimulate public interest in plants and gardening.
- b. Educate the public about consumer horticulture.
- c. Encourage the beautification of Washington County.
- d. Support conservation of natural life and natural resources.
- e. Encourage the training of additional Master Gardeners.
- f. Organize and monitor community projects for the fulfillment of required WCMG volunteer hours.

### **ARTICLE III – Authority**

WCMG operates according to its Bylaws and Policies & Procedures; however, any updates by the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture to the Arkansas Master Gardener Program Management Guide, ~~or~~ Financial Guidelines, or Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) applicable to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) immediately supersede any WCMG Bylaws and Policies & Procedures.

### **ARTICLE IV – Membership**

#### **4.1 – Non-Discrimination Policy**

Pursuant to 7 CFR § 15.3, the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture offers all its Extension and Research programs and services (including employment) without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, religion, age, disability, marital or veteran status, genetic information, sexual preference, pregnancy or any other legally protected status, and is an equal opportunity institution.

#### **4.2 – Membership Classifications**

General membership includes the following categories:

- a. First-Year Master Gardeners/Trainees - Those persons who have completed Master Gardener training and are completing their first year of volunteer and education hours requirements. Master Gardener training shall be conducted at least annually.
- b. Active Members - Those persons who have completed Master Gardener training, fulfilled the annual requirements for volunteer and education hours, and paid their dues for the year.

- c. Lifetime Members - Classification automatically bestowed on a member of WCMG after fifteen (15) years of active membership. Lifetime members have the following available options:
  - i. Benefits of Lifetime Membership status include:
    - 1. Volunteer and education hours are no longer required but are encouraged.
    - 2. Dues shall be waived.
  - ii. To accrue years of service beyond Lifetime (15 years of service) for Lifetime-Plus status (marked in 5-year increments beginning at 20 years of service), a WCMG Member shall report a minimum of ten (10) hours annually on approved volunteer activities.
  
- d. Sustainer Status - A Master Gardener who has been an active member for seven (7) years may request a move to sustainer status.
  - i. A sustainer shall:
    - 1. Pay WCMG dues.
    - 2. Have no requirements for volunteer hours or education hours.
    - 3. Not hold office or vote.
    - 4. Be active on a committee or a project, if desired.
  - ii. The Request for Sustainer Status form shall be submitted to the Chair of the Membership Committee for a recommendation to the WCMG Executive Committee before the end of the fiscal year.
  - iii. Sustainers shall not accrue active years of WCMG service.
  - iv. To return to active membership, a completed Request for Return to Program form shall be submitted for approval to the WCMG Executive Committee within seven (7) years of leaving the program.
  
- e. Transfer Members
  - i. In-State
    - 1. A letter of transfer shall be written by the transferring member's County Extension Agent to the Washington County Extension Agent to verify that person has completed Master Gardener training and is a member in good standing.
    - 2. The Washington County Extension Agent shall submit the letter of transfer to the Chair of the WCMG Membership Committee for a recommendation to the Executive Committee.
    - 3. The transferring member shall pay WCMG dues and purchase a WCMG member name tag.
  - ii. Out-of-State
    - 1. A person wishing to transfer membership from out of state shall have completed Master Gardener training in their prior state of residence and be a member in good standing.
    - 2. The transferring member may begin participation immediately but shall attend the first available Arkansas Master Gardener training, auditing 50% of the Arkansas training instead of having to complete the entire course. There will be no charge for auditing the course.
    - 3. The transferring member shall pay WCMG dues as well as the cost of the handbook (if they wish to have it) and the name tag.
    - 4. Years of service from another state will not be counted for Arkansas Years of Service awards.
  
- f. Leave of Absence
  - i. A leave of absence may be requested by an active member in good standing who has completed one (1) year of membership.
  - ii. Reasons for requesting a leave of absence shall be:
    - 1. For personal or family illness.
    - 2. For a family emergency.
    - 3. Job related.

- iii. A Request for Leave of Absence form, completed by the member or someone aware of the circumstances, shall be submitted to the WCMG Membership Committee by November 1. It will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for a recommendation, then submitted to the Washington County Extension Agent.
- iv. The WCMG Executive Committee Secretary shall notify the member and the Membership Chair as to the status of the submitted request. The Secretary shall inform the member and the Membership Chair of the decision within seven (7) days of the Executive Committee meeting.
- v. During the leave of absence, the member shall continue to pay WCMG annual dues but is not responsible for any annual volunteer or education hours and will not accrue WCMG years of service.
- vi. Members may take a leave of absence for up to three (3) consecutive years.
- vii. If a leave of absence beyond three (3) years is needed, the member shall submit a request to the Washington County Extension Agent for approval.

## **ARTICLE V – Membership Meetings**

### **5.1 – Membership Meetings**

- a. Scheduled Membership Meetings will be held in person or by electronic means, as determined by existing circumstances.
- b. Membership Meeting dates and times will be set at the Annual WCMG Business Meeting.
- c. After seeking counsel from the County Extension Agent and the Executive Committee, the President may cancel a meeting when necessary due to extenuating circumstances. Members will be notified as soon as possible through any available means.
- d. Quorum. For WCMG Membership Meetings, a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the active membership must be present at any meeting for official business to be conducted, although a smaller number may vote to adjourn a meeting.
- e. Manner of Acting. Unless otherwise noted, a motion passes by simple majority vote of members present at any meeting for which a quorum has been established.
- f. Electronic and Proxy Voting. Electronic voting is allowed only when a membership meeting is being held by electronic means. Proxy voting is not allowed.

### **5.2 – Annual Business Meetings**

- a. The WCMG Annual Business Meeting will be held at the November meeting.
- b. The Annual Business Meeting agenda shall include but is not limited to:
  - i. Election of officers.
  - ii. Approval of annual budget.
  - iii. Bylaws Committee report.
  - iv. Approval of membership meeting dates and times for the following year.

### **5.3 – Special or Called Meetings**

- a. When immediate action by the full WCMG membership is deemed necessary, a special meeting may be called.
- b. The President, a majority vote of the Executive Committee, or any five (5) duly elected Executive Committee members may call a special meeting.
- c. Notification of a special meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting.
- d. A minimum of five (5) days advance notice by letter, phone, or electronic means shall be provided.
- e. Business conducted is limited to only that which was stated in the purpose of the meeting.
- f. A quorum is required for official business to be conducted (see 5.1.d).

## **ARTICLE VI – Nominations and Elections**

### **6.1 – Nominations Committee**

- a. The Nominations Committee shall consist of three (3) members appointed by the President and approved by a majority vote of the remaining Executive Committee members, excluding the President.
- b. At least one (1) of the Nominations Committee members shall be a current ex-officio or past member of the Executive Committee.
- c. No one on the Nominations Committee shall be nominated for election.
- d. The Nominations Committee shall select its chair.
- e. The Nominations Committee shall be appointed at least three (3) months before the elections are conducted at the Annual Business Meeting.
- f. The consent of a member to be nominated and serve adhering to the Bylaws and Policies & Procedures shall be obtained in writing or electronically.
- g. The slate of nominees for election to the Executive Committee shall be sent in writing (electronically when possible or by regular mail when an email address is not provided) to the general membership at least ten (10) days prior to the Annual Business Meeting.
- h. Nominations close ten (10) days prior to the Annual Business Meeting to allow adherence to item 6.1 f.

### **6.2 – Elections**

- a. Elections shall take place at the Annual Business Meeting.
- b. Elections shall be by secret ballot if there is more than one (1) nominee running for the same position.
- c. There must be a minimum of fifteen percent (15%) of the active membership present to conduct business.
- d. See 5.1.d-f for rules for voting at Membership Meetings.

## **ARTICLE VII – Executive Committee**

### **7.1 – Responsibilities**

- a. The WCMG Executive Committee shall conduct the business of the organization as directed by the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture to the Arkansas Master Gardener Program Management Guide, UADA Financial Guidelines, the WCMG Bylaws, the WCMG Policies & Procedures, and the membership.
- b. The WCMG Executive Committee is authorized to act on behalf of the organization between meetings as long as the action is reported to the membership at the next meeting.
- c. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for determining the committees needed to carry out the mission and goals of WCMG.

### **7.2 – Composition**

- a. Executive Committee members and officers shall be active members in good standing.
- b. The Executive Committee shall consist of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and three (3) Members at Large. The Washington County Extension Agent, the Parliamentarian, and the Immediate Past President are ex-officio non-voting members of the Executive Committee.
- c. One (1) of the Members at Large shall be chosen from the most recent MG Basic Training class.
- d. The Division of Agriculture recognizes that potential conflicts of interest may exist when members of the same family are serving on the Master Gardeners Volunteer Executive Committee at the same time. This provision applies not only to volunteers on regular appointment to the Master Gardener Executive Committee, but also to volunteers in temporary interim positions following a vacancy on the Executive Board. “Family member” shall mean a volunteer’s spouse, children of the volunteer or his or her spouse, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, first cousins, parents, grandchildren or grandparents, whether by blood or marriage, of the volunteer or his or her spouse.

### **7.3 – Meetings**

- a. Executive Committee meetings shall be held at least one (1) week prior to the regular WCMG membership meeting.
- b. Executive Committee meetings are Executive Sessions limited to the Executive Committee unless members are invited by the President to attend and present business matters that require the Executive Committee's approval. Members, including Sanctioned Projects and Committees, may request participation at least 30 days before the desired Executive Committee date. Urgent business matters may be approved closer to the meeting date at the President's discretion.
- c. A minimum of four (4) Executive Committee members shall be present to conduct business. A majority vote is required to approve a motion.
- d. The Washington County Extension Agent is the final authority on unresolved issues.
- e. A vacancy on the Executive Committee shall be filled by appointment by majority vote of the remaining Executive Committee members.

### **7.4 – Terms of Office**

- a. The term is one (1) calendar year.
- b. No officer shall be elected to more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office. After two years in the same office, a member must rotate out of that office for a minimum of one year before being considered for that position again.
- c. Members may be elected to three (3) consecutive terms on the Executive Committee – as long as it is not the same position all three (3) years – after which they must rotate off for a minimum of one (1) year before being eligible for nomination again.

### **7.5 – Executive Committee Member Expectations**

- a. Executive Committee members are expected to make attendance and informed participation at WCMG Membership Meetings and Executive Committee meetings a priority.
- b. Executive Committee officers and members may be removed from office if they are unable to perform their Executive Committee duties or do not comply with the WCMG Code of Conduct.
- c. Between the election in November and the end of their terms in December, Executive Committee members will train their incoming counterparts about their duties, timelines, and procedures.

### **7.6 – Duties of Elected Positions**

The President shall:

- a. Prepare the agendas for and preside at meetings of the WCMG and the Executive Committee.
- b. Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the Executive Committee and Nominations Committee.
- c. Appoint the following:
  - i. Chairs of all committees except the Nominations Committee.
  - ii. Chairs of all projects in consultation with the current Project Proposal & Review Committee and the sanctioned project team members.
  - iii. Parliamentarian (optional position).
  - iv. Archivist.
- d. Ensure that each new member has access to the WCMG Member Resource Guide and Membership Directory.
- e. Send a Letter of Termination to members who have not complied with membership requirements (see 4.2).
- f. Ensure that all activities are completed in accordance with the WCMG Annual Timeline document and Annual Timeline for Committee Activities.

The Vice President/President-Elect shall:

- a. Assume the duties of the President in case of absence or disability.
- b. Be responsible for the programs at the Membership Meetings.
- c. Coordinate the booking of each of the Membership Meeting locations with the Washington County Extension Agent.
- d. Perform such other duties as the President may direct.

The Secretary shall:

- a. Take the minutes of all WCMG Membership Meetings and present them for approval at the next general meeting after they have been presented to the membership in the *Garden Thyme* newsletter.
- b. Take the minutes of all Executive Committee meetings and present them for approval at the next Executive Committee meeting.
- c. Write and send correspondence as needed, including informing members of the status of their requests for a membership change to Sustainer or Leave of Absence after the Executive Committee has voted (see 4.2 d. and f.)
- d. Keep a record of general meeting attendance.
- e. Forward all approved minutes to the Archivist before the end of the fiscal year.
- f. Perform such other duties as the President may direct.

The Treasurer shall:

- a. Manage the WCMG Financial Reports as specified by the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture-Cooperative Extension Service (UADA-CES) Financial Guidelines.
- b. Manage WCMG income and expenditures according to the approved budget and track against the UADA-CES financial software reports from county administrative personnel.
- c. Approve committee or sanctioned project chair-authorized expenditures prior to payment by UADA-CES.
- d. Prepare monthly and year-end financial reports for review and approval by the Executive Committee, then provide the Treasurer's Report for distribution to the membership via the *Garden Thyme* newsletter. Once approved by the membership, send to the Archivist no later than the end of the fiscal year.
- e. Serve as chair of the Finance Committee which is charged with preparing the annual budget.
- f. Track annual dues paid to UADA-CES with assistance from county administrative personnel. Send the list of paid members to the Membership Committee by December 2 each year. Maintain an accurate list of paid members.
- g. Perform such other duties as the President may direct.

The Assistant Treasurer shall:

- a. Serve under the guidance of the Treasurer.
- b. Assume the duties of the Treasurer in case of absence or disability.
- c. Assist the Treasurer in preparing the budget.
- d. Serve as a member of the Finance Committee.
- e. Train with the Treasurer to prepare the monthly and annual financial reports.
- f. Assist in all other Treasurer duties.
- g. Perform such other duties as the Treasurer or President may direct.

Members-At-Large shall:

- a. Be voting members of the Executive Committee.
- b. Bring forward ideas and concerns to benefit the organization.
- c. Serve on a standing committee as assigned by the President.
- d. Perform such other duties as the President may direct.

The Past President shall:

- a. Ensure continuity of leadership.
- b. Serve as an ex officio non-voting advisor to the Executive Committee.

The Parliamentarian shall:

- a. Interpret and clarify the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture's *Simplified Handbook of Parliamentary Procedure* during the WCMG Membership Meetings and the Executive Committee meetings.
- b. Be an ex officio non-voting member of the Executive Committee.

## **ARTICLE VIII – Fiscal Policies**

### **8.1 – Financial Authority**

All financial activities of the WCMG shall be in accordance with all current University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service (UADA-CES) Financial Guidelines.

### **8.2 – Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year for WCMG shall be the calendar year of January 1 through December 31.

### **8.3 – Dues**

- a. Dues for First-Year Master Gardeners/Trainees' first year are included in the Master Gardener training fee.
- b. Annual dues for the next fiscal year shall be approved by the membership at the September Membership Meeting.
- c. Annual dues for the next fiscal year shall be due and payable on or before December 1.
- d. A late fee will be charged for dues received after December 1.

### **8.4 – Finance**

- a. Finance Committee
  - i. The Finance Committee shall be appointed by the President with the Treasurer as chair and the Assistant Treasurer and other appointed parties as members.
  - ii. The Finance Committee shall prepare an annual budget and submit it for review to the Executive Committee.
  - iii. The annual budget shall be voted on by the membership at the November Annual Business Meeting.
  - iv. The Finance Committee will recommend the annual dues for the next fiscal year to the Executive Committee for their review and approval. The annual dues must then be presented to the WCMG membership for approval at the September Membership Meeting.
- b. WCMG Fundraising
  - i. Fundraising activities shall be in agreement with the purpose of WCMG.
  - ii. Fundraising activities shall be approved by the WCMG Executive Committee.
  - iii. An Ad Hoc Fundraising Committee shall be appointed by the WCMG President and approved by the Executive Committee as the need arises.
  - iv. WCMG members shall not apply for grants on behalf of the organization.
- c. Dissolution
  - i. In the event of the dissolution of WCMG, all its assets shall be turned over directly to the University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service.
  - ii. Net earnings of WCMG shall be used for the common good of the community and shall not be distributed to its members, officers, or any individual.

## **ARTICLE IX – Bylaws Review and Amendments**

### **9.1 – Bylaws Review**

- a. The Bylaws Committee Chair shall be appointed by the President.
- b. The Bylaws Committee Chair shall select the Bylaws Committee members.
- c. At least one (1) of the Bylaws Committee members shall be a past member of the Bylaws Committee.
- d. The Bylaws Committee shall review the Bylaws and the Policies & Procedures at least every three (3) years or more often if deemed necessary by the Executive Committee.
- e. Any changes recommended by the Bylaws Committee shall be presented to the Executive Committee for a vote of approval. If approved by the Executive Committee, the proposed Bylaws shall be presented to the membership for a membership vote of approval.

### **9.2 – Amending the Bylaws**

- a. The Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those active WCMG members present at any meeting for which a quorum has been established.
- b. A copy of the proposed amendments/revisions must be sent in writing to the membership at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. The amendment may be sent electronically when possible or by regular mail when an email address is not provided.

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Alfi Anderson, 2025 WCMG President

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Date

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Colin Massey, Washington County Extension Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

First Adopted 9-1-1992; Revised 9-6-2005; 9-1-2006; 11-6-2007; 9-2-2008; 11-3-2009; 2-7-2012; 9-2-2014;  
9-6-2016; 9-5-2017; 9-4-2018; 9-3-2019; 9-7-2021; 9-6-2022; 9-5-2023; 4-2-2024; and 10-7-2025.

The most recent revision replaces and nullifies any and all previous versions of the WCMG Bylaws.