

Lafayette County Master Gardener Association By Laws

NAME:

The name of the association is the Lafayette County Master Gardeners Association (LCMGA).

PURPOSE:

Lafayette County Master Gardeners Association is a volunteer organization whose members maintain, increase, and document their expertise in the area of consumer horticulture and other gardening related areas. LCMGA provides educational opportunities and community service with the purpose of enhancing the knowledge and quality of life of the membership and the public at large.

OFFICES:

The office of the LCMGA is located at the Lafayette County Extension Service Office at 70 F. D. Buddy East Parkway, County Road 406, Oxford, MS 38655. The office space is assigned to the LCMGA by the Lafayette County Extension Agent and is used primarily for LCMGA official files, research material, supplies, and other storage.

MEMBERSHIP:

The association's membership includes certified Master Gardeners, Master Gardeners currently obtaining recertification hours, and Interns, who are completing or have completed their coursework and are working on hours for initial certification. All members have one vote. All votes shall be "aye" or "nay" aloud and/or show of hands. A written vote may be required for some purposes at the discretion of the President.

OFFICERS:

The officers of the association are President, Vice President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. Officer nominations are generated by the Executive Board and are announced at the July business meeting. Nominations may be made from the floor, but the person being nominated must have given their prior approval of the nomination. Officers are elected annually at the October business meeting. Election is by majority vote of the membership present at the October meeting, no proxy or absentee voting is allowed. New officers assume their responsibilities in December. If for any reason an elected office becomes vacant, a special election is to be held within 30 calendar days to fill the vacancy. All officers serve for a term of one year but may be re-elected, if the majority of membership so chooses.

The Executive Board of LCMGA includes the current elected officers, the immediate Past President, and the Lafayette County Extension Agent.

The President is responsible for the general oversight of the association, setting the business meeting agenda, the order of business, presiding over the meeting, corresponding with the membership on issues between meetings, and insuring that the business of the LCMGA is conducted in a timely, organized, and efficient manner.

The Vice President is responsible for serving in the absence of the President and will assume any responsibilities of leadership assigned by the President. The Vice President may serve as a liaison between the Executive Board and all committees and maintain and update as needed the Committee Volunteer List. In the event the President is unable to serve, the Vice President will act as President until a special election is held to replace the President.

The Recording Secretary is responsible for recording and maintaining files on the business of the association including agendas, board and business meeting minutes and other items as needed. The Recording Secretary submits minutes and other written business items to the President for review, comments, and approval prior to sending out to the membership.

The Corresponding Secretary is responsible for all outgoing correspondence for the President and/or membership. The Corresponding Secretary also sends out any cards of thanks to individuals who have assisted the LCMGA or to individuals or members at various times as the need arises. When time allows during the business meetings the Corresponding Secretary will arrange for new members to introduce themselves to the group.

The Treasurer is responsible for all payables and receivables, the maintenance of all records pertaining to the financial activities of the LCMGA, and input needed to prepare a budget for the calendar year, based on the income and expenses of the association. The Treasurer is also responsible for reporting account balances and expenses at the business meetings and insuring the protocol for the expenditure of funds is followed.

The above example of officer responsibilities is intended as illustrations of the work performed and are not intended to be an exhaustive listing of duties. Each officer may be called upon to perform other similar duties.

MEETINGS:

Business meetings of the LCMGA are held in January, April, July and October at the Lafayette County Extension Service Office. Meetings are open and the members are welcome to bring guests. The President may call a special meeting of the membership at any time deemed

necessary and appropriate. Educational programs, including roundtable discussions and field trips will be held throughout the year

COMMITTEES:

In an effort to efficiently execute its business, the LCMGA will have seven (7) standing committees. The committees are: Education, Projects, Finance, Publicity, Hospitality, Membership, and Awards. Members are encouraged to volunteer their service to committee(s) based on their interests and talents. Each committee must decide within its individual framework whether subcommittees or other committee structures are needed for the best result and will elect its own chair. Committees are expected to meet at the convenience of their membership and to report their findings at the business meetings. It is incumbent upon the Chair of each committee to ensure that the President is kept apprised of all plans and activities in a timely manner.

The Education Committee is responsible for eliciting input from the membership on topics for educational program for the months of February, March, May, June, August, September, and November. No program will be scheduled for December. Programs, speakers, field trips, and focused round table discussions are the responsibility of the committee. Educational programs are typically held on the date and time of the regularly scheduled meetings. The date and time of a field trip will be organized at the discretion of the committee and will be considered the educational program for that month. The Education Committee also is responsible for disseminating information to the membership regarding other educational opportunities.

The Projects Committee is responsible for receiving suggestions from the membership for proposed group projects that can realistically be undertaken by the membership and completed ideally within the calendar year while recognizing that some projects may be of longer duration. All projects should be in keeping with the mission of the LCMGA and be approved by the Lafayette County Extension Agent. Some projects that are of a recurring nature or last longer than a year are likely and should be taken into consideration when this committee is making recommendations for new group projects. The Lafayette County Extension Agent is responsible for approving all individual projects before they are begun for certification or recertification credit.

The Finance Committee is responsible for compiling and recording a budget recommendation to the Executive Board and membership in January of each year. The approved budget is the basis for expenditures through the year.

The Publicity Committee is responsible for all publicity for the LCMGA program, including, but not limited to, posters, brochures, newspaper articles, and any type of printed material that serves to market activities of the group to the public. This committee also maintains and

manages social media for the group including the website, LCMGA.org and the Facebook page, Lafayette County Master Gardeners.

The Hospitality Committee is responsible for arranging and executing all LCMGA celebratory gatherings and events where food and/or decorations are needed.

The Membership Committee is responsible for addressing the issues of ongoing membership as well as the recruitment and retention of new members. Further, this committee is responsible for the welcoming and mentoring of interns.

The Awards Committee is responsible for seeking out and applying for Mississippi Master Gardener awards and grants.

RECORDS:

All records and historical documents pertaining to the ongoing operations of the LCMGA will be housed at the Lafayette County Extension Service. Financial records will be kept by the Treasurer for the convenience of that officer and for a timely performance of their duties. When any records are no longer needed for working purposes, they may be stored chronologically in the LCMGA office space for future reference or maintained on the Extension Service Computer.

PRIVACY:

Email addresses and other information provided by individual members of the LCMGA are for the exclusive use of the membership. Under no circumstances will any member forward or otherwise give this information to persons or organizations outside of the membership. Emails and other correspondence to LCMGA membership are for official business.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

Members of the LCMGA should always be mindful that as representatives of the Mississippi State Extension Service they enjoy a public trust and should in no way engage, promote, or recommend a person or business with the intention of promoting that person or business for their profit or financial gain. Any questions about conflict of interest should be directed to the Lafayette County Extension Agent before any action is taken.

Should any of the substantive features of these Bylaws conflict with the Mississippi Master Gardener Association Bylaws, the MMGA Bylaws will prevail.

Revised June 18, 2020

Mission Statement for the Lafayette County Master Gardener Association

The Lafayette County Master Gardener Association, a service and education organization of the Mississippi State University Extension Service, uses trained volunteers under the guidance of the Extension County Director to provide service and enhance public education in consumer horticulture.

General Guidelines for Lafayette County Master Gardener Association Membership

Annual dues are currently \$25.00 and are to be paid at the January business meeting.

Meetings are scheduled on the first Monday of the month, except for September, when the meeting is scheduled on the second Monday. Meeting times are 9:30 am unless announced otherwise.

Executive Board meetings are generally held the week prior to the business meeting and the agenda will be emailed to the membership prior to the upcoming business meeting. All committee chairpersons are encouraged to attend.

LCMGA Bylaws will be reviewed every 3-5 years or whenever there is a change that may affect governance of the LCMGA .

Interns must submit 40 service hours to become certified after they have completed the classes and passed the test. All class sessions must be attended or made up before the test is taken. The submission time frame for certification hours is January 1st through December 15th.

Certified Master Gardeners must recertify on the same submission timeline (January 1st through December 15th) with 12 hours of education and 20 hours of service. Hours may not be carried over from one year to the next.

ALL hours should be submitted in a timely fashion on the MSU Extension website.

Individuals who certified as Master Gardeners in another state may not transfer their membership to Mississippi. They must take the classes, test, and obtain the necessary hours like any new intern.

Any person who has tested and completed hours as a Master Gardener in Mississippi may transfer that membership from county to county upon written verification of certification.

Anyone who completed the class work and tested satisfactorily but did not complete their initial certification may pay the dues for the current year and submit their 40 hours by the December 15th deadline.

Individuals who completed their initial certification but did not recertify in subsequent years may do so by paying their dues for the current year and submitting their 32 total hours (12 education hours and 20 service hours) by the deadline of December 15th.

Persons who have not completed their certification and/or recertification hours will not be entitled to a MG badge nor will they be able to refer to themselves as Master Gardeners. They will not be entitled to vote at meetings of the LCMGA.

Friends of Master Gardeners are individuals who have not completed the class sessions or test but attend meetings and volunteer their time to LCMGA service projects. They are not allowed to hold office or vote on any business pertaining to the Lafayette County Master Gardener Association.

The Lafayette County Extension Agent is also the County Master Gardener Coordinator.

Revised June 18, 2020