

Master Gardener Association of Burlington County, New Jersey Bylaws 2008

December 23, 2008

Article I - Name, Affiliation, Purpose, Goals

Section 1 - Name

The name of the organization shall be Master Gardener Association of Burlington County, hereinafter referred to as the "Association."

Section 2 - Affiliation

The Association shall serve as an advisory and support organization to the Cooperative Extension of Burlington County and be affiliated with the Master Gardener Association of New Jersey.

Section 3 - Purpose

- A. The Association will unite in a volunteer capacity to advise and assist the Cooperative Extension of Burlington County in its basic mission to disseminate research-generated, horticultural information to the general public.
- B. The Association will provide for the horticultural enrichment of its members.
- C. The Association will participate in the Master Gardener Association of New Jersey.

Section 4 - Goals

- A. To inform the Cooperative Extension of Burlington County about issues of county concern as a result of public interaction.
- B. To supplement the basic educational program of the Cooperative Extension of Burlington County Master Gardeners.
- C. To develop activities to promote the dissemination of horticultural information to the general public.
- D. To cultivate the interest and enthusiasm of the members of the Association.
- E. To provide opportunities for Master Gardeners to participate in hands on horticultural projects.

Article II - Membership

Section 1 - Requirements

There shall be six classes of membership: Active, Provisional, Associate, Lifetime, Advisory, and Honorary.

- A. Active Member has successfully completed the core Burlington County Master Gardener training and is currently certified under the policies and procedures. This also includes approved, certified Master Gardeners transferring from other Master Gardener Programs.
- B. Provisional Member has successfully completed the Burlington County Master Gardener core course, but is not yet certified.
- C. Associate [Alumni] Member has been certified, but has not been recertified.
- D. Lifetime Member has completed the requirements specified by Rutgers Policies and Procedures.
- E. Honorary Member has been recommended by an Association member(s) and has been approved by the Executive Board and by the Cooperative Extension of Burlington County Advisor to Master Gardeners.

- F. Advisory Member is the Cooperative Extension of Burlington County Master Gardener Coordinator or a Cooperative Extension of Burlington County Agricultural Agent.

Section 2 – Rights

- A. Attendance: All members are eligible to attend all meetings.
- B. Voting and holding office:
 - 1. Active Member is eligible to vote and hold office.
 - 2. Provisional Member is not eligible to vote or hold office.
 - 3. Associate [Alumni] Member is eligible to vote but may not hold office.
 - 4. Lifetime Member is eligible to vote and hold office.
 - 5. Honorary Member is not eligible to vote or hold office.
 - 6. Advisory Member is not eligible to vote or hold office.
- C. A member may resign from the Association at any time by notifying the Coordinator or Executive Board Secretary.
- D. If a member moves away or if the Secretary cannot locate a member for six months, the member will be dropped from the Association’s membership list. If the member wishes to remain involved, s/he must contact the Coordinator or the Executive Board Secretary.

Section 3 – Civil Rights Compliance

Membership is open to all without regard to race, religion, color, age, national origin, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Article III - Governance

Section 1 – Governing Body

The Executive Board shall be the governing body of the Association.

Section 2 – Executive Board Composition

- A. Elected members: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and 3 trustees
- B. Appointed members: 2 representatives to the State Master Gardener Association
- C. Immediate Past President of the Association for one year following completion of term.
- D. Advisor with no voting status: Cooperative Extension of Burlington County Master Gardener Coordinator/Agricultural Agent

Section 3 – Terms of Office

- A. President, vice president, secretary, treasurer are elected for one-year terms and may not serve more than 2 successive terms in the same office.
- B. Three trustees, representing at least two different graduating Master Gardener Classes, are elected to two-year terms. Terms are staggered; two are elected in one year while one is elected in the alternate year. None can serve more than two consecutive terms.
- C. Representatives to the State Association: Two representatives will be appointed by the President with Executive Board approval for a term of one year and may be reappointed. Two alternates will be appointed by the President with Executive Board approval for a term of one year and may be reappointed.

Section 4 – Duties of the Board

- A. To be the liaison between the Association and the Cooperative Extension of Burlington County.
- B. To create standing committees and committees to plan and prepare programs, projects and activities for the membership.

- C. To approve annual budget to be presented to the membership at the Annual Winter General Meeting.
 - 1. Authorize money earning activities.
 - 2. Be stewards of the monies of the Association.
- D. To approve all expenses either as part of the budget or as individual items.
- E. No officer, chairperson, or member is authorized to act as an independent agent to set policy or formally represent the Association without Executive Board approval.
- F. Maintain an Association checking account, and a savings account when deemed needed, for the deposit and distribution of Association monies.

Section 5 – Committees

- A. Standing Committees
 - 1. Nominating Committee: Three Association members from different classes and not running for office, appointed by the president from the active or lifetime membership and approved by the Executive Board.
 - 2. Audit Committee: Audits will be conducted twice a year, once before the winter meeting and one before the summer meeting.
 - a. Members of the Audit Committee may not be current serving members of the Board or related to them by marriage or blood.
 - b. The Audit Committee will be comprised of three Association members from three different classes, appointed by the President from the active or lifetime membership, with experience or interest in finance and approved by the Executive Board.
- B. Program, Activity and Ad Hoc Committees
 - 1. Request for establishing a committee may come either from the Board or an Association member.
 - 2. Upon Board approval, the Board will send out a request for volunteers to Association members for a specific project or committee.
 - 3. Committee chair(s) will be chosen by the committee members.
 - 4. Chair(s) must maintain records of the committee proceedings. They will also provide written reports as requested by the President, including a debriefing report within one month of a large project/committee's completion.

Article IV - Duties of Officers

Section 1 – President

The President shall preside at all meetings of the Membership and Executive Board of the association, coordinate the work of the Executive Board and committees. The President can call special meetings of the Association and Executive Board. The President shall be authorized to sign checks drawn on the Association's checking account.

Section 2 - Vice President

The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the case of his/her absence, supports the President in the work of the Association. The Vice President shall be authorized to sign checks drawn on the Association's checking account.

Section 3 - Secretary

- A. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the Executive Board and general meetings and provide them to be sent to the membership by email or postal mail if the member has no email.
- B. The secretary shall also coordinate and document all correspondence of the Association.
- C. All records, including written complaints and conflict resolution correspondence, will be maintained by the Secretary and transferred to subsequent Secretaries.
- D. Maintain a current membership list.
- E. Take attendance at all meetings and identify voting status of those present.

Section 4 – Treasurer

- A. The Treasurer shall keep financial records of the Association, provide a written report at each meeting of the Executive Board and general membership and prepare the annual budget with input from the Executive Board and committee chair(s).
- B. The budget will be sent to the membership 15 days prior to the winter meeting.
- C. The Treasurer shall be authorized to sign checks from the Association’s bank account.
- D. The Treasurer will oversee Association committees with financial activities over \$500.

Section 5 - Trustees

The Trustees are a liaison between the Association membership and the Executive Board. They perform such duties as are needed for the operation of the organization. One trustee, designated by the President, shall be authorized to sign checks drawn on the Association’s checking account.

Section 6- Representatives to the State Association

Two representatives, or their alternates, will represent the Association at the monthly State Master Gardener Association meeting and report to the Executive Board and the general membership.

Section 7 - Advisor

The Advisor represents the County Extension staff and advises the Executive Board as requested.

Article V – Election of Officers

Section 1 – Requirements for Office

- A. All candidates must be Active or Lifetime Master Gardeners.
- B. All candidates must be willing to serve in the capacity for which they are nominated.
- C. No more than three consecutive Board meetings can be missed by a given Officer without Board review.

Section 2 – Nominations

- A. Members of the Nominating Committee can not run for elected office while on the Nominating Committee.
- B. The Nominating Committee members will be announced at the summer meeting. The committee will begin standing in July in order to receive nominations.
- C. It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to have a potential slate of officers with at least one candidate for each office sent to each member 15 days before the fall meeting.
- D. Nominations may be made to the Nominating Committee by the membership.
- E. Nominations may be made from the floor at the fall meeting.

- F. On the occasion that there are changes to the initial slate within 15 days prior to the meeting, those changes will be immediately emailed to the general membership.
- G. The Chair(s) of the committee will present the slate of officers to the membership at the fall general meeting for elections that day.

Section 3 – Election Procedure

- A. The Chair of the nominating committee will conduct the election at the fall general meeting.
- B. A member of the nominating committee will present the slate of officers for election.
- C. If there is only one candidate for each office, the vote may be by voice or show of hands or a motion may be made for the secretary to cast one vote for the entire slate.
- D. If there is more than one candidate for any office, a paper ballot must be used. In this case, two members will be appointed by the Nominating Committee Chair to count the ballots.
- E. Election is by majority vote of eligible members present if there are two candidates, by plurality if there are three or more candidates.
- F. In the case of a tie, the three Trustees shall cast the deciding votes.

Section 4 – Vacancies

- A. Resignation of any officer must be made in writing to the Executive Board.
- B. Presidential vacancy: term will be filled by the Vice President.
- C. Other vacancies: The President will appoint a replacement if less than 6 months of the term remains. If more, the president may appoint a replacement, but it must be approved by the membership at the next general meeting.

Section 5 – Conflict Resolution Guidelines

In case of a conflict that is serious enough to impact the Association, a series of steps will be taken to resolve this. This section will detail these steps. It will be updated shortly.

Section 6 – Transfer of Responsibility

- A. Newly elected officers assume office immediately.
- B. Both incoming and outgoing Board members will be present to expedite transfer of information.

Article VI - Meetings

Section 1 – Association General Meetings

- A. Frequency: Winter, spring, summer and fall, at minimum.
- B. To conduct business, a quorum of 15% of active, lifetime, and associate members is required.
- C. A majority of those present is required to approve a motion or elect a candidate unless otherwise stated in the bylaws.
- D. Votes on motions will be by voice or show of hands unless a written ballot is requested by a member.
- E. Notification: Members must be notified at least 15 days before the meeting with the date, time, and place of the meeting and the proposed meeting agenda.

Section 2 – Executive Board Meetings

- A. Frequency: Monthly, but no fewer than 8 meetings a year.
- B. Notification: Board and Members and general membership must be notified at least 15 days before the meeting with the date, time and place of the meeting.

- C. Meetings will be open to the general membership with the understanding that, unless asked for input, they are there as observers only. If a member wants to speak before the Board, the member must request time on the floor before the Board from the President within seven days prior to the meeting for consideration. Should there be a sensitive situation, the Board can choose to go into executive session.
- D. To conduct business, a quorum will be at least 6 members of the Board which includes 2 officers.
- E. Unless otherwise stated, a majority of those present carry a motion.

Section 3 – Special Meetings

- A. Executive Board:
 - 1. Calling: the President or two Board members may call a special Executive Board meeting.
 - 2. Notification: At least 72 hours prior to the meeting including the date, time and place of the meeting and reason for the meeting.
 - 3. A quorum is required to transact business.
 - 4. Discussion and action will be limited to the topic for which the meeting was called.
- B. General Membership
 - 1. Calling: the President with support from at least 2 Board members, the majority of the Executive Board, or at least 15 members or interns (currently enrolled students in the Master Gardener program) may call a special meeting.
 - 2. Notification: In writing and/or email, notification must be made to all members at least 10 days, but not more than 20 days, before the meeting and must include the date, time, and place of the meeting and an outline of the business to be discussed.
 - 3. A quorum is required to transact business.
 - 4. Discussion and action will be limited to the topic for which the meeting was called.

Article VII – By-Law Amendments

Section 1: Proposals

- A. Any Member may submit proposals for additions, changes, or repeals to the bylaws to the Executive Board. The proposal will include rationale for the changes.
- B. A majority of the Executive Board must approve of the proposal to send it to the general membership.

Section 2: Enactment

- A. Notification of the proposed changes with the rationale will be sent to each member at least 15 days before the general meeting.
- B. Each proposal will be a separate issue for voting; no lumping of all changes.
- C. Voting shall be by ballot.
- D. Passage of each amendment will be by two-thirds of the voting members present with a quorum present.

Article VIII – Association Monies

All monies held by the Association become the property of the Association regardless of the method of acquisition.

Section 1: Holding of Money

- A. The Association shall maintain a checking account for the purpose of providing reasonable access to control the fiscal flow of the normal operating expenses.
- B. An Association savings account may be maintained with approval of the Board to provide accumulated funding for special needs that require more monies than any one (1) year budget can support. All such special needs projects are to be audited for maintaining an on-track behavior pattern. All monies in a terminated special needs account status shall be returned to the Association's checking account.

Section 2: Dissolution of the Association

- A. Upon dissolution of the Master Gardener Association of Burlington County all just debts shall be paid. Residual monies shall be held for ninety (90) days to ensure that there are no outstanding accounts or debts. At the end of this 90 day period all residual monies shall be placed in an escrow account for a period of two (2) years. The seated bank account signatories are responsible for the oversight of handling the monies during the dissolution period.
- B. Should the Association re-activate prior to the terminal date of the escrow period, all monies shall be placed in the Association's newly established checking account.
- C. Should the Association fail to re-activate prior to the terminal date of the escrow account, the dissolved Executive Board shall designate which organizations within Rutgers Cooperative Extension promoting horticultural education shall receive the remaining funds, which will be dispersed at the end of the escrow period.
- D. By the act of assuming elected office, the Association bank signatories are responsible for the execution of any and all duties related to this dissolution process.

Article IX – Parliamentary Authority shall be Roberts Rules of Order for all Meetings