

MASTER GARDENER ADVISORY COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

SECTION 1. ROLE

The Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) of Cuyahoga County are the volunteer arm of The Ohio State University Extension. The Master Gardener Advisory Committee (AC) is the elected body that represents the entire county Master Gardener Volunteer membership. The AC provides opportunities, when appropriate, for non-AC MGVs to present information, concerns, ideas, etc. to the AC.

SECTION 2. PURPOSES

A. To promote the continuity of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program and the quality of the horticultural education received by its members.

B. To organize and direct the resources of the Master Gardeners of Cuyahoga County, Inc. (MGCCI) in providing horticultural information and education to the residents and organizations of Cuyahoga County.

C. To assist the Agricultural and Natural Resources Educator, (ANR), and The Ohio State University Extension staff wherever appropriate.

SECTION 3. MEMBERSHIP

A. NUMBER

1. The AC shall consist of twenty-one (21) elected regular members, including the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer. There will also be an Assistant Treasurer who may or may not be an AC member when appointed.
2. Each elected member shall have one vote on matters brought before the committee. However, if not a regular member when elected Assistant Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer will be an ex-officio member, without vote.
3. The Cuyahoga County Master Gardener Volunteer serving on the State Master Gardener Coordinating Committee shall be an ex-officio member, without vote.
4. The Ohio State University Extension staff (Executive Director, ANR Educator, Volunteer Coordinator) shall be ex-officio members, without vote.

B. TERM OF OFFICE

1. Regular members shall serve for a three (3) year term.
2. A member may serve two (2) consecutive terms.
3. A member may serve again after a lapse of two (2) years.
4. Officers shall retain the membership term for which they were originally elected.
5. When any term as an officer extends beyond the expiration of the three-year committee membership term, the officer shall be deemed elected to the next three-year membership term notwithstanding the two consecutive term limitation.

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6. Terms which will be expiring shall be filled by nominations and election.

C. MEMBERSHIP RESTRICTIONS

1. Members of the AC may not be employees of The Ohio State University Extension or other related organizations and shall be deemed to have resigned upon the commencement of such employment.
2. Interns may not serve on the AC.

D. REMOVAL/LEAVE OF ABSENCE

1. A member who has not attended three consecutive regular meetings of the AC shall be automatically removed from the committee, unless the member is on a Leave of Absence, or unless one or more of the absences has been excused by the Chairman or Vice Chairman.
2. A member of the AC may be granted a Leave of Absence for no more than six months upon approval by the Chairman of the AC.
3. The Chairman of the AC shall inform the AC of the Leave of Absence providing the name of the member who was granted the leave. No other information shall be provided.

SECTION 4. VACANCIES

- A. The AC shall fill, by a majority vote, vacancies on the AC.
- B. The Chairman shall appoint a committee of three current AC members to announce the vacancy and seek nominees for the vacancy.
- C. Vacancies shall be filled as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs.
- D. A member elected to fill a vacancy who serves more than half a term is considered to have served a full term.
- E. A Leave of Absence from the AC shall not constitute a vacancy.

SECTION 5. ELECTION OF MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

- A. The current AC shall elect new members and officers at the last regular meeting of each year.
- B. A majority of those present and voting shall elect the new members by voice vote.
- C. Contested elections shall be by ballot.
- D. Candidates for officer positions must have served on the AC for at least one year.

SECTION 6. OFFICERS' TERMS

- A. The elected officers shall be Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer.
 1. The Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Secretary shall serve one-year terms.
 2. The Vice Chairman shall become Chairman after their one-year term as Vice Chairman.

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3. The person serving in the Assistant Treasurer/Treasurer position shall serve for two years:
 - a. The first year, the person shall serve as the Assistant Treasurer and be mentored by the Treasurer. If not a member of the AC, the Assistant Treasurer shall be an ex officio member of the Advisory Committee with no vote.
 - b. The second year, the Assistant Treasurer shall become the Treasurer for a one-year term and will mentor the new Assistant Treasurer.
- B. AC member and officer terms shall correspond to the fiscal year.
- C. No officer may serve more than two consecutive terms in any one office.
- D. An individual may be elected as an AC member and an officer at the same meeting.
- E. In the event of a vacancy in any office, except Chairman, the AC, by a majority vote, shall fill the vacancy by election.

SECTION 7. ADVISORY COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Attend, as much as possible, major MGV events such as the Annual Meeting, Graduation Luncheon, etc.
- B. Approve, monitor, and evaluate all Cuyahoga County Master Gardener Volunteer continuing education programs.
- C. Evaluate and/or approve current and proposed programs and projects.
- D. Promote the recognition and support of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program in Cuyahoga County.
- E. Recognize the contributions of individual Master Gardener Volunteers, including the granting of Emeritus and Emeritus with Honors status.
- F. Nominate Cuyahoga County MGVs, programs and community supporters for state and national recognitions and awards.
- G. Form standing and special committees as needed.
- H. When necessary, conduct reviews of existing Master Gardener Volunteer activities and programs and make recommendations for improvement.
- I. Sponsor horticultural related fundraising endeavors.
- J. Adopt, implement, and monitor the yearly budget.

SECTION 8. DUTIES OF OFFICERS

- A. The Chairman shall
 1. Prepare an agenda for each official meeting of the AC and provide it to members by electronic or regular mail at least two weeks prior to any meeting of the committee.
 2. Conduct the meeting under the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* with fairness and impartiality, allowing time for full participation of members.
 3. Provide opportunities for non-AC members in attendance to express their views and concerns on specific agenda items.

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4. Be the official spokesperson for the AC.
 5. Report any actions taken by the Executive Committee on behalf of the AC, at the next meeting of the AC after the action is taken.
 6. Notify newly elected members of their election; provide a training session for them and provide them with the MGCCI Code of Regulations, the AC Guidelines, and other important information prior to the first meeting in January.
 7. Include on the first meeting agenda a review of the MGCCI Code of Regulations and the AC Guidelines
 8. Assure leadership for all programs and activities with the assistance of the Volunteer Coordinator.
 9. Communicate to MGVs, as necessary, via *News You Can Use*, the MGV management system, or current MGV communication tools.
 10. Review meeting minutes prior to their distribution.
- B. The Vice Chairman shall
1. Become the Chairman if the Chairman can no longer serve.
 2. Substitute for the Chairman if the Chairman is unable to attend a meeting or an event.
 3. Serve as Chairman of the MGCC Committee Chairmen and conduct at least two meetings per year.
 4. Purchase and present a gift from the AC to the outgoing Chairman.
- C. The Secretary shall
1. Record the minutes and complete attendance of each Advisory and Executive Committee meeting. These minutes, after adoption, shall be the official record of the Advisory and Executive Committee meetings.
 2. Distribute meeting minutes to the AC members no later than three weeks after the meeting of the committee.
 - a. These minutes have not yet been approved and, should not be shared or placed on the MGCC Website until approved.
 - b. Minutes approval may be done
 - i. at a regular AC meeting;
 - ii. electronically, as a response to an email; or
 - iii. during an electronic meeting held for that specific purpose.
 3. Maintain the records of AC membership, including term expiration, number of terms served, offices held, years when serving as an officer and make the records available to the Nominating Committee as requested.
 4. Be responsible for official correspondence as assigned, including condolences and appreciation.
 5. Forward the adopted minutes to the Webmaster after review by the Chairman.

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6. Provide a folder/computer file of sample letters, minutes, and basic instructions to the next secretary.
7. Inform the Chairman after an AC member has missed two consecutive AC meetings.
8. Maintain and be the guardian of the records of the AC.

D. The Treasurer shall

1. Keep the financial records of the Master Gardeners of Cuyahoga County program and report at each AC meeting.
2. The Treasurer shall purchase liability insurance for the corporation each year.
3. In November and December, with input from the MGCC Committee Chairmen, prepare a budget for the following year.
4. Submit for approval an annual fiscal budget to the AC at the first meeting of the fiscal year.
 - a. The proposed budget should be sent to the AC members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
5. Mentor the Assistant Treasurer in the duties of the office of treasurer.

E. The Assistant Treasurer shall

1. Learn the responsibilities of the office of treasurer.
2. Attend meetings of the AC and the Executive Committee.
3. Each officer shall surrender official records to their successor upon election. These records shall include the MGCCI Code of Regulations of the AC Guidelines

SECTION 9. ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS/QUORUM

A. The AC shall meet at least quarterly, and at other times as needed to conduct the business of the Advisory Committee.

1. Meetings may be held electronically provided that all members can see and/or hear the other members can participate in discussion and can vote. Links to electronic meetings shall be provided.
2. The AC members can vote by email, provided that information concerning the matter to be voted on has been disseminated to the members at least three days before the vote.

B. The Chairman and Vice Chairman shall determine the AC meeting schedule.

C. AC meetings are open to all Master Gardener Volunteers of Cuyahoga County in good standing.

D. A quorum at any meeting of the AC shall be a majority of the currently serving AC regular members, provided there are at least two officers, one of whom is the Chairman or Vice Chairman. The Assistant Treasurer, if a regular member, shall be counted in determining a quorum and shall be counted as one of the two officers in determining a quorum.

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E. The dates of future regular meetings shall be announced at the first meeting of the calendar year.

F. Notice for regular meetings shall be mailed or emailed to all AC members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

G. Special Meetings may be called by the Chairman or Vice Chairman.

H. Notice for special meetings shall be mailed or emailed one week prior to the special meeting. Such notice will include the date, time, location of the special meeting and the subject matter/s to be considered.

SECTION 10. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. The Executive Committee (EC) shall consist of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer per the MGCC, Inc. Code of Regulations, and only if already a regular member when elected, the Assistant Treasurer. However, if not a regular member when elected, the Assistant Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member without vote.

B. The County Extension Executive Director and the ANR Educator shall be ex-officio members without vote per the MGCC, Inc. Code of Regulations.

C. The EC may act on behalf of the AC between meetings of the AC. Any action taken shall be reported to the AC immediately by email.

D. The EC shall meet as needed with previous notice provided by telephone or email at least 24 hours in advance.

E. An EC meeting at which action is to be taken may be called by the Chairman or Vice Chairman with notice mailed or emailed, or by telephone, at least three (3) days in advance to all Executive Committee members setting forth the time, date and location of the meeting and the subject matter to be considered.

F. A minimum of three (3) officers shall constitute a quorum at Executive Committee meetings, provided that one of them is the Chairman or Vice Chairman. The Assistant Treasurer, if a regular member, shall be counted in determining a quorum and shall be counted as one of the two officers in determining a quorum.

G. Three (3) affirmative votes are necessary for approval of a motion.

H. The Executive Committee may meet by electronic means.

I. The Executive Committee may vote by telephone or email, provided that each member has been notified of the issue to be voted upon and the date for voting.

J. Only the Chairman, Vice Chairman or Treasurer may sign contracts on behalf of MGCC, Inc.

SECTION 11. NOMINATING COMMITTEE/NOMINATIONS

A. A Nominating Committee (NC) consisting of all AC members whose term is expiring shall be appointed by the Chairman at the third to last AC meeting of the year.

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1. The NC shall elect a Chairman from among its members.
2. The NC Chairman shall advise the MGV membership of the responsibilities for the positions which are to be filled for the coming year.
 - a. The NC shall solicit nominees for officers and committee members by providing written or electronic notice to the general membership prior to August 1, inviting the entire membership to submit member names in good standing (their own or others) for consideration by the NC.
 - b. Nominations from the general membership shall be in writing and mailed, emailed or hand delivered to the NC Chairman and shall be received no later than September 1.
 - c. The NC Chairman shall acknowledge to the nominator receipt of each nomination.
 - d. The NC Chairman shall contact each nominee to ascertain the nominee's willingness to serve if elected and to request the candidate's biographical information to be received prior to the election.
- B. The NC shall have the right to make other nominations in addition to those received from the general membership.
- C. The NC shall consider the following regarding AC composition:
 1. Representation from Master Gardener Volunteers who work in each major activity of the Master Gardener Programs is critical and is the primary criteria for AC composition.
 2. Nominees must be in good standing as Master Gardener Volunteers. Beyond having a desire to serve and being committed to Master Gardener programs, all candidates must have a willingness to contribute to MGCC programs and are expected to contribute at AC meetings.
 3. Although representation from each yearly training class and from each geographic area of the county is desirable in selecting nominees, it is not a requirement.
- D. The NC shall prepare and present a slate for the officers and AC members two weeks prior to the last regular meeting. Nominations for Chairman, Vice Chairman and Secretary will be every two years. The NC shall present a slate of all the qualified nominees who have volunteered to serve on the AC.
- E. The current AC Chairman and Vice Chairman shall present nominees for Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. Nominations for assistant treasurer will be made every three years.
- F. Nominations for AC membership and for its officers may be made from the floor, provided that written consent from each nominee has been obtained prior to the election.
- G. Elections to be held at final meeting of calendar year.

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H. Election results shall be shared with Cuyahoga County MGVs in *News You Can Use* and other communication tools.

SECTION 12. FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall be January 1 to December 31.

SECTION 13. ACTIVITIES/PROGRAM COMMITTEES

- A. The OSU Extension Master Gardener Program consists of activities and programs that support its goals and objectives.
- B. Activities and programs are formed, reviewed, and dissolved as needed.
- C. Examples of activities and programs include but are not limited to: Therapeutic Horticulture, Hotline, Demonstration Gardens and Fundraising.
- D. The Activity/Program Committees are composed of Master Gardener Volunteers in good standing and shall have a Chairman and a Vice Chairman, whenever possible, who shall serve for one year commencing in January.
- E. There is no limitation on the number of times an Activity/Program Committee Chairman and a Vice Chairman may serve in those positions.
- F. The Activity/Program Chairman shall submit to the AC Chairman a written annual committee report by December 31.
- G. Activity/Program Chairman shall submit a committee budget for the next year to the Treasurer by Oct. 31st.

SECTION 14. APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Any Master Gardener Volunteer may request that an activity be approved for volunteer hours by:

- A. Submitting a written proposal to the current Chairman of the AC and the ANR educator; submitting the proposal no later than two (2) weeks before the next scheduled meeting of the AC, for inclusion on the meeting agenda, discussion, and a vote.
- B. The proposal must include a description of the activity, expected cost, the goals and expected outcomes of the activity, the educational component of the activity, and the activity's compliance with the mission statement of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program.
- C. Volunteer hours for activities approved through this required process shall be accepted retroactively when posted.

SECTION 15 MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER--EMERITUS STATUS

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- A. The AC may grant Emeritus status to any Master Gardener Volunteer of Cuyahoga County in good standing who has made significant contributions to the organization but is unable to continue to meet annual recertification requirements of volunteer service and continuing education due to age, health or family issues.
- B. The request to be considered for Emeritus status must be made in writing to the Chairman of the AC stating the reasons for applying, the hours served, and a list of significant contributions made to the Master Gardener Volunteer Program in Cuyahoga County. The request must be approved in the AC's sole discretion by at least 15 members of the AC at their next scheduled meeting.
- C. Emeritus Master Gardener Volunteers of Cuyahoga County may participate in all Cuyahoga County continuing education and social events by registering and paying the continuing education or social event fee. They will receive *News You Can Use* and all other general communications.
- D. Emeritus status may be granted to non-Master Gardener Volunteers who have made significant contributions to the Master Gardeners of Cuyahoga County organization.
- E. Emeritus Status with Honors
1. This honorary status is conferred by the AC to recognize only the most active, long tenured Master Gardener Volunteers of Cuyahoga County for their breadth of contributions and volunteer service which must exceed 1000 hours.
 2. This status must be authorized in the sole discretion of the AC by at least 18 members of the AC.
 3. Every Emeritus with Honors grantee will receive the same privileges and be subject to the same restrictions as any other Emeritus member.

SECTION 16. GUIDELINE AMENDMENTS/REVISIONS

These Master Gardener AC Guidelines may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the AC, provided the proposed amendment/s was/were submitted electronically or in print to each AC member at least two weeks beforehand.

SECTION 17. SUSPENSION OF THE GUIDELINES

In an emergency, or when compliance with these Master Gardener AC Guidelines is not practical, these Master Gardener AC Guidelines may be suspended by a three-quarter (3/4) vote of the AC members and the matter may be addressed notwithstanding the limitations and requirements of these Master Gardener AC Guidelines.

SECTION 18. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

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The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the AC in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these guidelines and any special rules which the AC may adopt.

Revision Adopted March 30, 2009

Amended October 30, 2009

Amended March 22, 2010

Amended July 26, 2010

Amended June 27, 2011

Amended June 23, 2012

Amended March 19, 2012

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