

**Procedures & Guidelines  
for  
The Master Gardeners  
of  
Rutherford County, Tennessee**

**Article I. Name**

**Section 1.** The name of the Association shall be Master Gardeners of Rutherford County, Tennessee.

**Section 2 A. Public Law**

These Procedures & Guidelines shall not be enforced in any manner to conflict with public law. If any article, sections, sub-section or portion thereof of these Procedures & Guidelines should be held illegal, invalid or null and void by a court or competent jurisdiction, each provision of the remaining provisional guidelines shall remain in full effect.

**B. Master Gardener Official Volunteer Guidebook**

The State Official Volunteer Guidebook, as revised, is to provide the basic information to control the official activities of the Master Gardeners of Rutherford County, Tennessee.

**Article II: Purpose**

**Section 1. The purpose of the Association shall be:**

- A. To support and engage in projects which will foster horticulture and related activities.
- B. To cooperate with the Rutherford County Extension Service in projects that will enhance the quality of life of the citizens of Rutherford County

**Article III: Prohibitive**

**Section 1.** The Association shall not intervene in or participate in any campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

## **Article IV: Terms of Existence of the Association**

**Section 1.** The Association shall have a perpetual existence, but may be reorganized or have the form of its organization changed in compliance with these Rules and Procedures & Guidelines.

## **Article V – Powers of the Association**

**Section 1.** The Association shall have the following powers:

- A. To collect, receive, hold, manage, invest and expend dues and donations consistent with the purpose of the Association.
- B. To employ agents and enlist the services of independent contractors paying to each reasonable compensation for services provided.
- C. To incorporate as a nonprofit corporation, if the membership so desires.
- D. To perform all other lawful powers, deeds and acts consistent with the purposes of this Association.

## **Article VI- Management of the Association**

**Section 1.** The business affairs of the Association shall be managed by the officers of the Association as defined in Article X.

## **Article VII: Membership**

**Section 1.** The membership of the Association shall be open to all persons who have completed the required course of study and have had the title of Master Gardener conferred upon them by the Extension Service, University of Tennessee or any other state.

- A. To maintain an active membership status the member must continue to keep their certification current by completing 25 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of continuing education annually.
- B. Transfers: Individuals transferring from other counties or states must provide proof of certification, name and address of Training Coordinator, or Coordinating Agent, and proof of active status.

**Section 2.** Term of membership shall be one year with the following qualifications:

- A. Member is a certified Master Gardener Volunteer.
- B. Member has paid dues.
- C. Active membership is conditional on a member having either completed their Master Gardener certification in the prior year or

having fulfilled the requirement of completing 25 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of continuing education during the prior year.

**Section 3.** Provisional Membership without voting privileges will be granted with the following qualifications.

- A. Intern Member has finished the Master Gardener basic course, but has not completed the volunteer hours needed for full membership.
- B. Spousal Member is the spouse of a member who has the title of Master Gardener.
- C. Participating Associate Member is a member who has not participated in the Master Gardener required course of study but has an interest in horticultural activities.
- D. Inactive Status – Master Gardener volunteer may join this category if they are unable to complete the above requirements, but would like the opportunity to return to active service in the future. An Inactive Status Form must be completed for Extension Agent approval. The request is valid for one year. This time on leave of absence will not count toward VIP (as defined in the Official Volunteer Guidebook) or Lifetime Status.
- E. Lifetime Status – Available to Certified Master Gardeners who have provided 10 years of continuous active service to the program. Lifetime status does not require annual recertification. Program participation is still greatly appreciated and recognized. To be eligible for Lifetime status, record of service must be accurate for recommendation and approval by the appropriate Extension Agent. All records must be in line with the guidelines of the Tennessee Master Gardener Program.

**Section 4.** Transfer to inactive status may occur if:

- A. Member is eight weeks delinquent in paying dues.
- B. Member resigns in writing to executive board.
- C. Member fails to complete the additional training and volunteer hours required to remain a certified Master Gardener volunteer.

**Section 5. Dismissal of a Master Gardener Volunteer:**

Repeated and consistent disregard for the policies and guidelines established by University of Tennessee Extension and the Master Gardener Volunteer Program are grounds for dismissal of a volunteer. When the local Master Gardener volunteer coordinator finds it necessary to dismiss a volunteer, he/she will be informed in writing of the termination of his/her status. This notice of dismissal will be added to the volunteer's file.

### Dismissal Process:

- A. County Extension Agent and Officers identifies the problem/issue.
- B. Documentation will be made of each case. A written warning will be issued to the Master Gardener in question, stating the problem, how it should be corrected and a deadline for correction.
- C. The issue is reviewed after the specified compliance period. If the issue is unresolved, County Extension Director is notified and a second notice is sent to the Master Gardener. The second notice should include the dismissal documentation process, with steps of rebuttal and second deadline for compliance. The Master Gardener will be given the opportunity to appeal a dismissal in writing and correct the issue within the county.
- D. If the issue is still not resolved, or with repeated policy and/or guidelines violations, the County Extension office should send documentation to the state program director for permanent dismissal.
- E. The Rutherford County Extension Director and Master Gardener Coordinator/Agent must approve any dismissal.

## **Article VIII: Dues**

**Section 1.** Dues shall be payable not later than the end of the month of February of each Calendar Year. Dues shall be determined by a majority vote of the membership:

## **Article IX-Meetings**

**Section 1.** The normal regular meetings of the Association shall be held the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) Monday of each month at 6:30 P.M. unless there is a holiday conflict or scheduling conflict with the Rutherford County Extension Service at such places as shall be determined by the members of the Association.

**Section 2.** A quorum shall consist of a simple majority of the voting members of the Association present.

**Section 3.** Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern all meetings of the Association. Business can only be conducted at a regularly scheduled monthly meeting, or a duly called special meeting. Special called meetings should be by written notice mailed to all active members at least ten days prior to the date of the called meeting. The president may call special-called meetings or if necessary by a majority vote of the Executive Committee with the advice and consent of the Rutherford County Extension Leader.

- Section 4.** Annual elections of the Association shall begin with a nomination slate of officers being presented to the general Association meeting held in the month of November each year. Other nominations will also be entered at that time. The final vote on the slate will be held in the month of December at the general Association meeting. The new officers will be installed at the January meeting of the Association each year.
- Section 5.** The president shall appoint and charge all committees with the agreement of the Executive Board. All committees shall coordinate their activities with the Executive Board. The president is an ex-officio member of all standing and special committees. Each committee chairman will submit an oral report to the general membership on a timely basis and a written report on activities at the end of the year to the Executive Board detailing activities and expenses.
- Section 6.** Executive Board meetings shall be held as directed by the president.

### **Article X-Officers and Their Duties**

The officers of the Association shall be as follows:

- Section 1. President** – the president shall be the presiding officer at all meetings of the officers and the Association.
- Section 2. Vice President and Program Chairman** – The Vice President shall perform the duties of the president in his or her absence and shall become president for the unexpired term of the president upon his or her death, incompetence, or resignation. The vice president shall be responsible for planning the programs for the monthly meeting.
- Section 3. Secretary** – The secretary shall take minutes at all general and Executive Board meetings and be prepared to read the minutes of the previous meeting. The secretary shall be responsible for all Association correspondence and maintain complete records of minutes, attendance and correspondence.
- Section 4. Treasurer** – The treasurer will be responsible for collecting dues and all other income for the Association and issuing receipts. Funds will be disbursed by check and a report shall be prepared and read at each meeting as requested by the Executive Board. All income and expenditures will be maintained in ledger form and will conform to guidelines as suggestions of the Rutherford County Extension Service office, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

## **Article XI – Executive Board**

**Section 1.** The Executive Board shall be composed of the Association officers, the Rutherford County Agricultural Extension Service representative and the immediate past president of the Association. The County Extension Service and the immediate past president will be advisors to the committee and non-voting members of that committee.

The Executive Board shall:

- A. Approve standing committee recommendations for the Association.
- B. Meet at the discretion of the president.
- C. Approve the annual financial program and conduct a yearly audit.
- D. Have the authority to fill the unexpired vacancy of any officer for the remainder of the unexpired term.

## **Article XII – Amendments**

**Section 1.** The procedure for amending these Articles and Procedures & Guidelines shall be as follows:

- A. Any proposed amendment to these Articles and Procedures & Guidelines shall be reduced to writing, in resolution form, given to each member at least one meeting before a vote is taken on said proposed amendments.
- B. A copy of the resolution of the proposed amendment, in its entirety, shall be mailed to the members at the time of the mailing of the notice of the next regularly scheduled meeting.
- C. The Procedures & Guidelines of this Association may be amended only by a 2/3 vote of the voting members present at a regular or duly scheduled special meeting.