
BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I - NAME

SECTION 1. The name of this non-profit organization shall be the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County.

ARTICLE II - AFFILIATION

SECTION 1. The Master Gardener Society of Oakland County shall be a sponsored organization of Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) Oakland County in its common goal of public education. Liaison is through the Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

SECTION 2. No commitments or representations shall be made or contracted by any individual on behalf of, or using the name of, the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County without the approval of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County Executive Board (SEB.)

ARTICLE III - PURPOSE, MISSION, AND GOALS

SECTION 1. The purpose of this self-governing organization is to provide a networking forum, which will assure opportunities for Master Gardeners of Oakland County to increase and share their horticultural knowledge.

SECTION 2. It is the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County's Mission to assist, enable, and encourage its members to use their horticultural knowledge and experience to help the people of their communities enrich their lives through gardening and good gardening practices.

SECTION 3. The goals of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County are:

To promote gardening and good gardening practices through educational, volunteer, and social activities.

To heighten the awareness of dangers to the environment caused by incorrect gardening practices and to work toward the elimination of such practices.

To sponsor workshops, seminars, information booths, and other appropriate events that will educate as many of our neighbors as possible.

ARTICLE IV - GOVERNANCE

SECTION 1. The Master Gardener Society of Oakland County shall be governed by the provisions of these bylaws, as executed by the SEB.

SECTION 2. The SEB shall consist of all elected or appointed officers, and the Master Gardener coordinator (or Extension Service designee).

SECTION 3. The elected members of the SEB, excluding the office of Team Administrator, shall hold office for a term of two years. The Team Administrator shall hold office for a term of 1 year.

SECTION 4. If vacancies on the SEB occur before the term of office expires, the SEB president shall appoint a replacement to fill such vacancy. The seat of the Master Gardener Coordinator is exempt from this provision.

SECTION 5. All elected or appointed members of the SEB shall have an equal vote. The Master Gardener Coordinator (or Extension Service designee) is a non-voting member of the SEB. The appointed team leaders shall act as advisors to the SEB and shall be required to attend Board meetings.

SECTION 6. The number of SEB members necessary to constitute a quorum shall be a majority of the whole number constituting the SEB elected officers, the team administrator and the Master Gardener Coordinator. A quorum must be present in order to conduct a meeting and/or take a vote.

SECTION 7. The duties of the SEB shall include:

- a. Transaction of day-to-day business in the intervals between monthly meetings.
- b. Presentation of reports on its activities and plans at monthly meetings.
- c. Creation and oversight of teams to plan and prepare programs and activities, and to approve such plans, programs, and activities.
- d. Approve annual budget as prepared by the treasurer.
- e. Determine resources needed to accomplish acceptable projects.

SECTION 8. Board meetings will be conducted at least six times per year. The meeting time and date shall be determined by the SEB. Notice of the date and time of such meetings shall be given to membership no less than 10 days and no more than 60 days prior to the meeting.

SECTION 9. Official Publication

The Roots & Shoots newsletter shall be the official publication of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County. All legal and special notices and deadlines shall be printed herein. The Root & Shoots newsletter shall be delivered to members via regular postal service or electronic transmission.

SECTION 10. Privacy

The Master Gardener Society of Oakland County values its members, therefore any and all personal information gathered from its members shall be used solely and discretely by MSUE and the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County for MSUE or Master Gardener Society of Oakland County business. No information shall be sold or given freely to outside individuals or organizations.

SECTION 11. The Master Gardener Society of Oakland County and Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or family status.

SECTION 12. Parliamentary Authority:

These bylaws shall govern the operation of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County and its members. Board meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

SECTION 13. Policy and Procedures

The SEB shall develop policies and procedures in accordance with these bylaws.

SECTION 14. These bylaws may be amended or repealed, by the general membership, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present at a general membership meeting, provided that notice of the proposed amendment was made at the previous general membership meeting and published in the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County newsletter. Prior to the general meeting in which a bylaws vote is to be held, proxies will be accepted, provided an SEB member receives them. Amendments may be proposed by the SEB or the general membership.

ARTICLE V - OFFICERS

SECTION 1. All elected members of the SEB must attend a minimum of 75% of all general membership meetings and SEB meetings. Failure to meet this attendance requirement could result in that person's removal from the SEB. An elected SEB member, who shall absent him/herself from three (3) consecutive SEB meetings without notice, shall automatically cease to be a member of the SEB.

SECTION 2. Officers have the authority to develop procedures for the administration of his/her duties. Such procedures will be presented to the SEB for review and approval.

SECTION 3. The duties of the Officers shall be:

a. President: To preside over general membership and SEB meetings; to appoint standing team leaders on an annual basis; when necessary and with the approval of the SEB, may remove any team leader; to serve as ex-officio member of all committees; to oversee the execution of these by-laws and policies in order that the purpose, mission and goals of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County are served.

b. Vice-President: To perform the duties of the president in the event of his/her absence and such duties of other officers in their absence; to perform or to oversee an annual audit of the accounts and records of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County.

c. Secretary: To record the minutes of the SEB and general membership meetings; to record membership and attendance; to submit highlights of the minutes to the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County newsletter; to attend to all correspondence of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County and maintain complete files of minutes, attendance and correspondence.

d. Treasurer: To prepare and present annual budget to SEB; to keep account of money collected for programs, projects, and dues; to disburse all funds as required; to maintain a complete set of records and to prepare and present monthly and annually, financial reports for the SEB and the general membership meetings; to cooperate fully with the vice-president in the performance of audits; to surrender all books, records, and money to the succeeding treasurer. As an MSUE sponsored group, the treasurer is required to adhere to the financial accountability policy and procedures as established by the state MSUE directors.

e. Team Administrator: To perform duties as assigned by the SEB.

ARTICLE VI - MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1. Certified Master Gardeners, as verified by the Oakland County Extension Service, who support the purpose, mission and goals of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County shall be eligible for regular membership with full voting rights, upon payment of annual dues and confirmation of their certified status.

SECTION 2. Individuals who support the purpose, mission and goals of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County and who are registered participants in the Master Gardener Program, but have not yet received certification, are eligible for provisional membership upon payment of annual membership dues. An individual may be a provisional member until the end of their class year unless an extension is granted by the SEB. Provisionary members may attend meetings and functions, but shall have no other privileges of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County. Upon certification, the provisional membership converts to general membership status.

SECTION 3. All members must comply with the Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Policy Statement. See Addendum 1, attached.

SECTION 4. Any Member who violates any provisions of these bylaws will be subject to censure action, including termination of Membership, when the violation is made known to the SEB. The member is entitled to a hearing before the SEB. The decision of the SEB is final.

SECTION 5. Annual dues shall be determined by the SEB.

SECTION 6. All Members are encouraged to participate in service to, and through, the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County.

ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

SECTION 1. General membership meetings will be held at least once each calendar month. The meeting date and time shall be determined at least 30 days in advance by the SEB. General membership meetings may be opened to the general public at the discretion of the SEB.

SECTION 2. A majority of members in attendance shall rule at all meetings requiring a vote by members of the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County. Each member eligible to vote shall have one vote. In the case of a tie vote, the president shall cast the deciding vote.

SECTION 3. Special membership meetings may be called, upon a majority vote of the SEB.

SECTION 4. Guests may attend any general meeting for a nominal charge, as determined by the SEB.

ARTICLE VIII - ELECTIONS

SECTION 1. Nominations for elected SEB officers (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, team administrator) will begin with a notice from the Nominations Committee to be published in the August/September Roots & Shoots. Written nominations are to be submitted to the Nominations Committee prior to the October general membership meeting. Nominations for elected SEB officers may also be accepted at the October general membership meeting.

SECTION 2. Nominations for elected SEB officers shall be closed at the conclusion of the October general membership meeting. Ballots shall be mailed to all members entitled to vote via US mail within 5 days following the October meeting. Ballots must be returned via US mail or electronic transmission. Ballots must be postmarked or returned by electronic transmission, no later than 20 days after the ballot mailing date.

SECTION 3. Election results shall be announced at the November general membership meeting. Candidates receiving a plurality of votes cast for a particular office shall be elected for a term of two years. Elections will be held annually, with election of two officers, alternating between president/treasurer and vice-president/secretary. The team administrator shall be elected every year. The term for newly elected officers shall begin January 1st.

SECTION 4. Only those persons who have indicated their consent to serve if elected or appointed shall be nominated for office or other positions.

ARTICLE IX - TEAMS

SECTION 1. The SEB or president may initiate or authorize teams for special purposes.

SECTION 2. Any member may propose a team(s), to be approved by the SEB.

SECTION 3. Teams consist of members-at-large and a team leader.

SECTION 4. All team leaders must attend a minimum of 75% of all general membership meetings and SEB meetings. Failure to meet this attendance requirement could result in that person's removal as a team leader. A team leader, who shall absent him/herself from three (3) consecutive SEB meetings without notice, shall automatically cease to be a team leader.

SECTION 5. Team leaders are responsible for preparing and submitting an annual budget to the treasurer by a date determined by the SEB; each team leader is responsible for maintaining his/her approved budget.

ARTICLE X - FINANCE

SECTION 1. Master Gardener Society of Oakland County dues shall be fixed by the SEB.

SECTION 2. Membership applications and annual dues for all members shall be payable to the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County and remitted in one of the following ways:

- By mail to the MSUE Oakland County Master Gardener office
- To any SEB member. Applications and funds will be forwarded to the MSUE Oakland County Master Gardener office for processing.

Once the MSUE Oakland County Master Gardener Coordinator has verified the certification status of the individual, application and funds will be forwarded to the Treasurer.

SECTION 3. Authorized expenditures shall be those deemed necessary to allow the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County to function with ease and efficiency. The budget will be prepared and presented by the SEB to the general membership. Budget approval shall be by a majority vote of those members present. The Treasurer shall be empowered to pay unbudgeted expenditures not exceeding \$50.00.

SECTION 4. Any member having in his possession money belonging to the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County shall remit this amount to the treasurer at the earliest possible time.

SECTION 5. In the event that the Master Gardener Society of Oakland County should cease to exist, funds in the treasury shall be donated to the local MSU Extension Master Gardener Program.

SECTION 6. All dues are paid upon a calendar year basis and are non-refundable.

Definition of terms:

Quorum: A majority of SEB board members

Majority: One more than half.

Sponsored organization: Organizations that fall under the direct oversight of MSUE and use names and emblems commonly associated with Extension. Sponsored organizations agree to follow guidelines and policies set by MSUE, share MSUE's educational mission, derive assistance from MSUE staff to provide educational mentoring and direction, and cooperate with the local extension office to set educational goals and objectives.

**Michigan State University Extension
Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program
Oakland County Policy Statement**

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or family status. Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by calling the Oakland County program coordinator at (248) 858-0887 at least three weeks prior to the anticipated need to ensure sufficient time to make arrangements. Requests received after this time period will be met when possible.

Mission

Biological environments are essential to life. Michigan State University is a primary provider of plant research and education, dedicated to the preservation and enrichment of life. The Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program, available to all citizens of Michigan, is designed to develop a cadre of Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) volunteers trained in horticulture. Their knowledge and skills related to basic plant science and home gardening enables these volunteers to improve the quality of life in their communities. This is accomplished by increasing people's appreciation for and use of plants and by providing them with instruction on growing plants using environmentally sound practices.

Qualifications

An individual interested in becoming a Michigan Master Gardener must possess the following qualifications:

- A strong interest in horticulture and home gardening.
- Willingness and availability to undertake extensive training in consumer horticulture practices.
- Willingness and ability to provide forty (40) hours of horticulture-related volunteer community service as approved by MSUE for Basic Certification and additional volunteering in subsequent years as per the policy below.
- Ability to communicate and share knowledge effectively and diplomatically with others.
- Willingness to support MSUE staff in giving citizens up-to-date consumer horticulture information.

Educational Training Course

County Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Programs will offer the following core training classes:

- Orientation to MSUE and Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program
- Plant Science
- Soils for Plant Growth
- Herbaceous Ornamental Plant Culture
- Lawn Establishment, Care and Maintenance
- Vegetable Culture
- Small Fruit Culture
- Tree Fruit Culture
- Woody Ornamental Plant Culture
- Integrated Pest Management
- Indoor Plant Culture
- Household Pests

MSUE provides the formal training program. Instructors are Extension staff members, experienced Michigan Master Gardeners and other experts.

The training program provides a balanced, integrated, practical course in plant science. Special topics, based on local needs, are added to make up the 13 weeks of classes. Core training is held during a three month period, with follow-up training or in-service provided during the year according to local needs and resources.

Attendance: Each Michigan Master Gardener trainee is expected to attend every classroom session. If a participant misses more than one session and does not arrange to make up the session, he or she cannot become a certified Michigan Master Gardener.

Examination and homework: Every trainee, to become a Michigan Master Gardener will complete weekly homework and pass a final examination with a score of 70% or better. The final examination, a take-home test, emphasizes an individual's ability to gather accurate information from class notes and other reference material. This emphasis on problem solving techniques and resources will help Michigan Master Gardeners as they give horticultural assistance to others.

Volunteer Commitment

The state guidelines for the Michigan Master Gardener training course state that it will consist of a minimum of forty (40) hours of core instruction. In Oakland County the course consists of 52 hours of instruction. An equivalent amount of volunteer time, forty (40) hours, in horticulture/gardening-related activities, is a required prerequisite for becoming a Michigan Master Gardener. The purpose is to extend MSUE's educational programs in the areas of horticulture, gardening and small-scale food production.

These horticulture/gardening-related volunteer activities that count toward Michigan Master Gardener certification must have educational value for others and be nonpaying for the Michigan Master Gardener volunteer. The volunteer will provide reliable and accurate information to the public from requests received via telephone, office visits or letter inquiries and by use of displays, information booths, classes, and workshops in matters related to home gardening.

At the discretion of the Oakland County Michigan Master Gardener coordinator, a minimum of twenty (20) of the required forty (40) volunteer hours will be spent working on MSUE directed projects and activities related to horticulture.

If the participant chooses not to do all forty (40) volunteer hours in MSUE projects, they may perform the remaining 20 hours in a way that is especially meaningful to them. Approval by the Oakland County Michigan Master Gardener coordinator must be obtained before engaging in any volunteer activity. Through volunteering, Michigan Master Gardener trainees enrich their knowledge of horticulture, help others through education and launch exciting ideas.

Documentation: It is the responsibility of the Michigan Master Gardener trainee to document their time and report that time in writing to the Oakland County Michigan Master Gardener coordinator for tabulation. The reporting year for Michigan Master Gardeners begins on October 1 and ends on September 30 of the next year. Submitting reports once a year is mandatory, but monthly or quarterly reporting is encouraged.

Time limits: An individual has one year from the end of the Michigan Master Gardener training course to complete the required 40 volunteer hours.

Certification

Participants will receive Michigan Master Gardener certification after successful completion of the educational training course and the volunteer requirement. Certificates of completion and name badges will be awarded to successful candidates.

Re-certification

A Michigan Master Gardener may re-certify for participation in the program for another year by:

- Providing a minimum fifteen (15) hours of MSUE-approved volunteer service each year and,

Completing five (5) additional credits of horticulture training each year. All educational programs both MSU/MSUE and non-MSU/MSUE sponsored must be approved by the Oakland County Michigan Master Gardener coordinator. Full credit, hour for hour, will be issued for attending MSUE programs, state and international Master Gardener conferences and MSU courses. Non-MSU/MSUE-sponsored courses will be awarded one-half hour credit for each hour of class time.

Inactive Status

An inactive Michigan Master Gardener is one who is unable to commit to the annual re-certification requirement of fifteen (15) volunteer hours and five (5) credits of horticulture training. For re-certification a Michigan Master Gardener who has been inactive for one to three years must attend five (5) credits of acceptable horticulture training for each year of inactive status, and must also provide fifteen (15) hours of volunteer service for each year of inactive status.

To be re-certified a Michigan Master Gardener who has been on inactive status for more than three years is required to:

- Retake the basic Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program core training, and examination, to assure that their knowledge base is current and
- Provide fifteen (15) hours of volunteer service to the Oakland County MSUE office.

Out-of-State Transfers

Master Gardeners who are certified in another state may be admitted to a Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program by meeting the following criteria:

- Purchase a current MSUE Michigan Master Gardener training manual.
- Score a minimum 70% on the take-home exam administered by MSUE. The test emphasizes an individual's ability to gather accurate information.
- Comply with the re-certification process.

Liability

The Michigan State University indemnification policy is extended to Michigan Master Gardener volunteers performing services solely for and under the direction of MSUE.

Criminal History Background Check

As a policy of MSUE a criminal history background check must be run for any Michigan Master Gardener volunteer who will be volunteering under the following circumstance:

When working with children or impaired adults the volunteer will be alone, without another adult present for more than 15 minutes.

Guidelines

The title MSUE Michigan Master Gardener is to be used only and exclusively by individuals trained and certified to help MSUE. The title is valid only when the volunteer is certified under the current guidelines and participating in the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program. Training and experience gained by participating in the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program are valuable, and may rightfully be listed as qualifications when seeking employment. Employed Michigan Master Gardeners are allowed to display credentials at their place of business.

When performing Michigan Master Gardener speaking engagements it is appropriate to receive payment for expenses only, such as supplies and mileage. If an honorarium is offered, it may be accepted and given to the Oakland County Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program.

Michigan Master Gardeners do not give specific recommendations for use of fertilizers and pesticides. Michigan Master Gardeners must encourage others to follow label recommendations included with all products.

Standards of Behavior

The Standards of Behavior is a contractual agreement accepted by volunteers who commit to the MSUE Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program. The Standards shall guide the volunteers' behavior during their involvement with the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program. Just as it is a privilege for MSUE to work with individuals who volunteer their time and talents to the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program, a volunteer's involvement in the program is a privilege and a responsibility, not a right.

The MSUE Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program provides unbiased, research-based educational programs accessible to all Michigan residents. The primary purpose of this Standards of Behavior is to ensure the safety and well-being of all Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program participants (i.e., target audiences, professionals and volunteers).

Michigan Master Gardener volunteers are expected to function within the guidelines of Michigan State University, MSUE and the MSUE Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program.

The MSUE Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program volunteer will:

- Uphold volunteerism as an effective way to meet the consumer horticultural needs of Michigan residents.
- Uphold an individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.
- Accept supervision and support from professional Extension staff while involved in the program.
- Accept the responsibility to represent the Oakland County Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program and the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program with dignity and pride by being positive mentors for those with whom they work.
- Conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner, with fairness, honesty and integrity.
- Respect, adhere to, and enforce the rules, policies and guidelines established by the Oakland County Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program, the MSUE Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program, and MSUE.

- Not commit a felonious criminal act.
- Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws.
- Perform duties in a responsible and timely manner.
- Report immediately any threats to the volunteer's emotional or physical well-being to the Oakland County Extension professional coordinating the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program.
- Accept the responsibility to promote and support Michigan Master Gardener activities in order to develop an effective county, state and national program.
- Operate machinery, vehicles and other equipment in a responsible manner.