

**MASTER GARDENERS OF BERGEN COUNTY**  
RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
1 BERGEN COUNTY PLAZA  
HACKENSACK, NJ 07601

**Bylaws and Appendix to the Bylaws**

**Bylaws, revised 2020, pages 1-8**

**Appendix to the Bylaws, revised June 2021; pages 9-15**

**Mission Statement**

To expand the research and educational capacity of Rutgers Cooperative Extension in order to provide research-based information through a network of trained Master Gardener volunteers.

To develop and enhance community programs related to horticulture, environmental improvement, horticultural therapy projects, community and school gardening projects, and other programs as determined by local need.

To design and present educational programs to the public that address critical issues such as integrated pest management, water quality protection, yard waste management and composting, reduction of exotic invasive species, and the increased use of native plants.

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**BYLAWS**

**Article I      NAME AND GOALS**

Section 1      This nonprofit association of volunteers shall be known as the “Master Gardeners of Bergen County” (MG of BC).

Section 2      The goal is to facilitate the objectives of Rutgers Cooperative Extension. This is to be achieved through the continuing education of the members of the Master Gardener program in the techniques and uses of horticulture so that they may act to improve the lives and property of the citizens of Bergen County by:

- A. Answering horticultural and related questions posed by county residents.
- B. Augmenting the county’s efforts to maintain parks, gardens, and wildlife resources.
- C. Supporting activities such as horticultural therapy and community and school gardens.
- D. Engaging in educational outreach by participation in public events to present Rutgers’ current research-based information.

**Article II      EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Section 1      The elected officers shall be the President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 2      The Executive Board shall consist of the elected officers, the current Class Liaison (nonvoting), the standing committee Chairs, immediate Past President, and Bergen County RCE Master Gardener adviser (nonvoting). The Executive Board shall be responsible for the orderly operation of the association. Officer and committee reports shall be presented to the Executive Board for discussion and action.

The following standing committees shall conduct the specific activities of the organization. For specific duties see Appendix.

- A. Community Outreach Liaison
  - 1. Community gardens
  - 2. Existing public events like the Fall Festival
  - 3. One-day events
  - 4. Publicity
  - 5. School gardens
  - 6. Speakers Bureau
- B. Hospitality
- C. Membership
- D. Newsletter
- E. Programs
- F. RMGANJ delegates
- G. Site Coordinator Liaison
- H. Volunteer Records
- I. Webmaster

**Section 3**

The term limits of officers shall be:

- A. All officers shall be elected for a term of two years at the October general meeting and will take office after installation at the regularly scheduled January meeting.
- B. The president and vice president may serve no more than two consecutive terms. No one may hold more than one elected office at a time.

**Section 4**

The nominating committee shall consist of three members including the Chair, who shall be appointed by the President and the Executive Board at the May Executive Board meeting. The current President may not be a member of this committee. The slate of candidates may not include members of the nominating committee. The committee shall present a slate of officers at the September Executive Board meeting for confirmation or revision. The slate of candidates will be presented at the September general meeting at which time nominations from the floor will be accepted with the consent of the nominee. At the October meeting if there is only one nominee for each office, the Recording Secretary will cast a unanimous ballot for the entire slate. Voting shall be by a show of hands. When there is more than one nominee for any office, voting shall be by written ballot. The nominee receiving a majority of votes by Certified Master Gardeners present will be elected.

**Section 5**

Vacancies shall be filled by the President with the advice and consent of the Executive Board.

**Article III**

**DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Officers and Committee Chairs must be currently certified Master Gardeners

Section 1     The duties and responsibilities of the President shall include, but are not limited to:

- A. Conduct all Executive Board and general meetings in accordance with the Mission Statement.
- B. Call special meetings of the Executive Board to facilitate business and address emergencies. The results of said meetings shall be presented to the general membership at a general meeting or by way of the newsletter.
- C. Cast a tie-breaking vote.
- D. Appoint all committee Chairs with the advice and consent of the Executive Board and be an *ex officio* member of all committees, except the nominating committee.
- E. Appoint *ad hoc* committees to address special issues. Notice of the formation of an *ad hoc* committee and the results attained by said committee shall be presented to the general membership.
- F. Present a review of the previous year's activities of the MG of BC at the January general meeting or in the January newsletter.
- G. Appoint delegates to the RMGANJ.
- H. Coordinate with the extension office and Executive Board members to produce the annual report that is submitted to Rutgers for inclusion in the state Master Gardener program report. A summary of the report will be sent to the webmaster following its publication.

Section 2     The duties and responsibilities of the Vice-President shall include, but are not limited to:

- A. Perform the duties of the President during his or her absence.
- B. Serve as a delegate or alternate to the RMGANJ.

Section 3     The duties and responsibilities of the Recording Secretary shall include, but are not limited to:

- A. Take attendance and record the minutes at the Executive Board meetings and record any action items from the general membership meeting.
- B. Distribute minutes to Executive Board members.
- C. Maintain electronic copies of minutes.
- D. Distribute final copies of minutes for posting on the website.
- E. Collect year-end reports from all committees.
- F. Maintain electronic files (Archivist).
- G. Transfer electronic copies of previous minutes and records to the incoming Recording Secretary and to the incoming President.

- Section 4      The duties of the Corresponding Secretary shall include, but are not limited to:
- A. Handle both internal and external correspondence and communication.
  - B. Maintain records of significant or unique correspondence generated or received by the MG of BC.
  - C. Transfer a copy of records to the incoming Corresponding Secretary. A second copy should be transferred to the incoming President.
  - D. Prepare an annual summary of his/her activities to be given to the current President in December.
  - E. Provide appropriate communication when members are celebrating a happy occasion or facing a challenging time in their lives.

- Section 5      The duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer shall include, but are not limited to:
- A. Handle financial transactions as directed by the Executive Board.
  - B. Prepare an annual budget by December 31. The budget shall be presented to the Executive Board in January.
  - C. Maintain receipts, checkbooks, and bank statements; have the books audited regularly (at a minimum of once every three years).
  - D. Present an income and expense report at each Executive Board meeting.
  - E. Prepare year-end financial statements to be given to the current President as soon as available at the closing of the year.
  - F. Transfer accounts and records to successor; make arrangements so the President may also sign checks.
  - G. Reimburse requests of approved site budgeted purchased items with a signed receipt or documentation.
  - H. Reimburse requests for non-budgeted items over \$100 that have been approved in advance by the Executive Board.
  - I. File the appropriate reports and/or fees to government agencies annually that are needed to maintain non-profit status, incorporation, and the like.

- Section 6      The duties of committee Chairs shall include, but are not limited to:
- A. Establish goals for the year.
  - B. Recruit committee members.
  - C. Appoint a Vice-Chair.
  - D. Propose an annual budget.
  - E. Give the current President a written year-end report of activities by December 31.

## **Article IV      MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1      Definition of a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener: A Rutgers Master Gardener Training Program graduate who is an active volunteer and has completed the initial volunteer service requirement. To retain Rutgers Certified Master Gardener status, a minimum of 25 hours of annual volunteer service hours and 10 hours of annual continuing education must be completed. Certification is valid for one year only; therefore, all Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners must be recertified every year. Submission of a regularly updated record of all volunteer activities and continuing education hours is required.

Section 2      Definition of a Master Gardener Educator: A Certified Master Gardener who has advanced training and teaches within the Rutgers Master Gardener Program. For requirements to achieve this status, refer to Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program Policies and Procedures - June 2010.

Section 3      Definition of a Master Gardener Lifetime Member: This designation is for those who have been active, dues-paying members for the past 20 years and have accumulated 1,000 volunteer hours over those 20 years. The membership shall leave payment of dues and number of volunteer/ education hours up to the discretion of the member.

Section 4      Definition of a Rutgers Master Gardener Alumnus: A previously Certified Rutgers Master Gardener or Master Gardener Educator who no longer maintains his/her annual active volunteer status, including service and/or education updates requirements, but continues to pay required dues.

Section 5      Definition of a Master Gardener Intern: A participant in the Rutgers Master Gardener Training Program.

Section 6      Membership shall be open to all Rutgers Master Gardeners regardless of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

Section 7      Members shall renew membership and pay dues on an annual basis. The amount of dues is to be determined by the Executive Board. Interns are not required to pay dues.

## **Article V      GENERAL MEETINGS**

Section 1      Regular general meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month except when otherwise ordered by the Executive Board. Meetings are open to the public.

Section 2 Special meetings may be called by the Executive Board, and notice shall be sent by email or phone at least five business days prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 3 A quorum for transacting business at a general meeting shall consist of 20% of Certified Master Gardeners. Only Certified Master Gardeners may vote.

## **Article VI EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS**

Section 1 Meetings of the Executive Board are to be held at a time determined by the Executive Board membership. There should be a minimum of six meetings each year.

Section 2 Special Executive Board meetings may be called by any officer, and notice shall be sent by email or phone at least five business days prior to the date of the meeting.

Section 3 A quorum for transacting business at an Executive Board meeting shall consist of 50% of the Executive Board membership. Committee Chairs may appoint a representative who shall count as part of the quorum. The President or Vice-President must be in attendance.

Section 4 The Executive Board meetings are open to all active MG members and interns. With prior approval, non-Executive Board members may take part in the discussion of their agenda item.

## **Article VII AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS**

Section 1 All proposed amendments to the bylaws shall be presented to the Executive Board for discussion and possible modification. After Executive Board review, these bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the organization. The amendments are approved if accepted by a two-thirds vote of the Certified Bergen County Master Gardeners present and voting. Notice of the proposed changes must be submitted in writing to all Certified Master Gardeners by e-mail at least 20 days prior to the meeting at which they are to be voted upon.

Section 2 Every five years, the President will appoint a committee to review the bylaws.

## **Article VIII    ROLE OF THE RUTGERS EXTENSION AGENT**

The role of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Agent and/or Program Coordinator shall be the training and certification of interns for the participation in the Rutgers Master Gardener Program; adviser to the MG of BC; and serving as an expert in horticultural matters.

## **Article IX    PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

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

## **Article X    DISSOLUTION**

In the event that the MG of BC ceases to function and dissolves itself, and after all obligations and expenses have been satisfied, assets shall be transferred only to organizations that share goals similar to those outlined in Article 1, Section 2 of these bylaws and that enjoy a tax-exempt status in accordance with the provisions of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

These bylaws have been adopted on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_  
in the year 2020 by the membership of the Master Gardeners of Bergen County.

\_\_\_\_\_ President

\_\_\_\_\_ Recording Secretary



**MASTER GARDENERS OF BERGEN COUNTY**  
**APPENDIX TO THE BYLAWS**  
**Revised June 2021**

This document contains four sections:

1. **Committee guidelines, pages 10-12:** This section lists the committees, subcommittees, and board liaisons of the MG of BC and the responsibilities of each.
2. **New-site application guidelines/de-list procedures, page 13:** This section describes the process to designate a new MG of BC volunteer site and the process to “de-list” an inactive MG of BC volunteer site.
3. **Travel time/volunteer hours, page 14:** This section describes when you may count travel time as part of your volunteer hours.
4. **Years of service award pin policy, page 15:** This section describes eligibility for “Years of Service” Award pins.

## **COMMITTEE GUIDELINES**

### **Current Class Liaison**

- Attends all monthly Executive Board meetings as a non-voting participant and then reports back to the class.
- Reports as the current class representative to the Executive Board regarding class activities, comments, and questions.

### **Community Outreach Liaison**

- Brings the message and services of Master Gardeners and Rutgers Cooperative Extension into the communities of Bergen County through the following subcommittees: Speakers Bureau, Fall Festival, One-Day Events, Community/School Gardens, and Publicity.
- Represents the Outreach Committee by attending Executive Board meetings, presenting subcommittee plans, and announcing relevant events at general meetings.
- Reports event statistics needed for state report from subcommittee chairs.
- Collects from each subcommittee chair: His/her budget and his/her report containing statistical results from various events.

### **Community Outreach Subcommittee duties**

- ✓ **Speakers Bureau Chair** provides qualified Master Gardeners to present programs at requested public meetings.
- ✓ **Fall Festival Chair** works with RCE staff to manage the Master Gardeners tent.
- ✓ **One-Day Events Chair** works with RCE staff to set up and manage one-day events where Master Gardeners will have a presence.
- ✓ **Community/School Gardens Chair** advises on matters related to garden questions.
- ✓ **Publicity Chair** informs media outlets of upcoming events in a timely and non-partisan fashion.

### **Hospitality Committee**

- Coordinates refreshments for the monthly meetings.
- Makes arrangements and coordinates refreshments for the summer picnic, new class breakfast, graduating class luncheon, and holiday party.

### **Membership Committee**

- Provides, receives, and records annual Membership Renewal forms with dues and any donations, and forwards them to the treasurer for deposit.
- Updates information about MG graduates, members, alumni, and lifetime members in a database.
- Develops the annual Master Gardeners of Bergen County Rutgers Cooperative Extension Directory/Handbook.
- Provides a copy to the webmaster for password-protected website.
- Develops and maintains a members' discount card program.

### **Newspaper Editor Committee**

- Executes the production of *The Potting Shed* newsletter including layout, gathering information, editing, arranging photography, posting, and delivering electronic and paper copies as needed.

### **Program Committee/Trips and Tours Committee**

- Provide opportunities to obtain CEUs through the following subcommittees:

#### **Program Subcommittee**

- ✓ Sets the annual meeting calendar with the Bergen County building plus any additional events that may take place there.
- ✓ Arranges and schedules diverse educational speakers to meet the needs of the membership.
- ✓ Provides program summary and speaker bio to *The Potting Shed* and the MG of BC website one month prior to the presentation.
- ✓ Handles any speaker needs prior to and during presentations.
- ✓ Maintains a comprehensive ledger of speakers/topics.

#### **Trips and Tours Subcommittee**

- ✓ Selects, organizes, plans, and executes trips/tours for MGs.
- ✓ Publicizes plans at the general meeting and informs *The Potting Shed*.

### **RCE Liaison**

- Acts as communicator between RCE and MG of BC.
- Attends monthly Executive Board meetings as a non-voting member.
- Arranges site coordinators' presentations to the new MG class with the Site Coordinator Liaison.
- Distributes information concerning events proposed to the MG of BC.

### **RMGANJ Delegate**

- Attends monthly RMGANJ meetings as a representative of the MG of BC; prepares and reports any MG of BC events.
- Notes any information from Rutgers personnel pertinent to the MG of BC.
- Attends monthly MG of BC meetings to share state RMGANJ meeting information.
- Participates in the annual Rutgers Fall Conference planning and execution; handles RMGANJ conference tasks assigned to the MG of BC.
- Coordinates Award for Excellence recruitment and responsibilities with the state.
- Provides input to the Rutgers MG annual report.

### **Site Coordinator Liaison**

- Keeps the volunteer site list updated with current contact information and meeting dates and times following the board-approved New Volunteer Site Application Guidelines and the De-list Procedure for Inactive Volunteer Sites (see page 13). Informs webmaster of any updates needed on the MG of BC website.
- Contacts site coordinators quarterly by email to request any changes in site information.
- Assists site coordinators in scheduling presentations to the new MG class with the RCE.

### **Volunteer Records/Compliance Committee**

- Maintains and refines reporting methods and notifies membership and students.
- Transfers individual members' reports into the Master Volunteer and Education Activity Report for the RCE office.
- Reviews hours at approved volunteer sites and special projects annually and presents recommendations to the Executive Board.
- Instructs new MG class on volunteer reporting.
- Works with the Membership Committee to reconcile volunteer reporting and recommends status changes to the Executive Board.
- Contacts past Master Gardeners who have not submitted volunteer and education activity reports to confirm status and membership.
- Identifies Certified Master Gardeners who are eligible for anniversary pins and notifies members through *The Potting Shed* newsletter of the distribution of pins.
- Ensures that there are enough pins available.

### **Webmaster Committee**

- Refines and maintains current web pages.
- Maintains member database and information, including adding/deleting members.
- Maintains updated forms and documents.
- Aligns MG of BC website with the standards of the Rutgers Agricultural Experiment Station while supporting our individual identity as the Master Gardeners of Bergen County, a non-profit organization.
- Promotes other horticultural, environmental, and educational organizations that align with our mission statement. Maintains cross-promotion through hyperlinks.
- Maintains current social media videos and links.
- Promotes current events to members and the public.
- Maintains an online reporting and correspondence portal for members.

## **NEW VOLUNTEER SITE APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

Any active MG can propose a new site for consideration.

### **Criteria:**

1. The location must be in Bergen County.
2. It is open to the public.
3. It is accessible to people of all ages.
4. It offers educational opportunities, i.e., presentations, dissemination of environmentally related events, and/or gardening knowledge.
5. A volunteer MG site coordinator is available.
6. Volunteer MGs are already working there or are interested in working there.
7. The proposed site is either new or has been delisted in the past.

### **Site Visit:**

A committee consisting of the MG of BC president, liaison site coordinator, and/or volunteer records coordinator or designees will visit the proposed site to determine if the above criteria have been met.

### **Trial Acceptance:**

If the proposed site meets the criteria via the site visit, it will be presented to the Board for a majority vote of acceptance. Following Board approval, a two-year trial period will ensue at which time the site will maintain a coordinator and active volunteers who meet MG of BC requirements.

### **Formal Acceptance:**

Following the two-year trial period, if all criteria have been met, the proposed site will be presented to the Board for a majority vote for final acceptance.

## **DE-LIST PROCEDURE FOR INACTIVE VOLUNTEER SITES**

1. No volunteer hours reported for two years.
2. Site coordinator liaison will check with the site to see if there is an active site coordinator and if help is needed.
3. Determines from membership if a volunteer is available to coordinate and if members and students are available to volunteer.
4. Presents information to MG board for discussion and vote.

The de-listing procedure is to take place after Feb. 15 when all volunteer hours for the prior year have been tabulated.

## **TRAVEL TIME/VOLUNTEER HOURS** **(Approved Oct. 19, 2021)**

Each year, travel time of up to one hour to and from each MG of BC-approved volunteer activity may be counted as volunteer hours if both of the following criteria are met:

- You have completed the 25 volunteer hours required for annual certification; and
- You have spent a minimum of two hours at each volunteer activity.

**Example:** After the completion of 25 volunteer hours required for annual certification in any calendar year, you continue to volunteer. Your drive to and from Garretson Forge & Farm takes 20 minutes in each direction. You work at Garretson for four hours. Your total volunteer time for that day is four hours and 40 minutes.

The following week you volunteer at the Butterfly and Native Garden for two hours. Your round-trip drive takes 30 minutes. Your total volunteer time for that day is two hours and 30 minutes.

You may continue to count your travel time as volunteer hours for the remainder of the calendar year if you spend a minimum of two hours at each MG of BC-approved volunteer activity.

**Note:** For the New Jersey Botanical Garden (NJBG) only, the above criteria do not need to be met. All travel time to and from NJBG may be counted as volunteer time.

## **YEARS OF SERVICE AWARD PIN POLICY (Approved Oct. 19, 2021)**

Master Gardeners will be eligible for their “Years of Service” Award pin in five-year increments. The five-year period begins the first year after graduation. Pins will be awarded to all eligible members in the spring following completion of the fifth year.

**Example:** An MG graduates in 2005. 2006 counts as the first year of service. MG is eligible for a 10-year pin in 2015. Pin is awarded in the spring of 2016.

**Note:** Since volunteer/continuing education (CE) hours are unavailable prior to 2010, the volunteer/CE hours requirements for 2009 and prior years will be considered fulfilled. After 2009, all MGs who fulfill the Rutgers required minimum of 25 volunteer/10 CE hours each year will remain certified and be eligible to receive a “Years of Service” Award pin.

### **Distribution of pins**

- Rutgers minimum of 25 volunteer/10 CE hours certification requirements will be verified for eligibility prior to the distribution of pins.
- MGs eligible for pins will be notified through the Potting Shed newsletter in late spring after volunteer/CE hours have been submitted from the prior year. Pins will be mailed or distributed at a meeting.