

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

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. No officer may serve in a specific office for 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