

RMGUC By-Laws

Article I: Name

The name of the organization is the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Union County, hereinafter referred to as RMGUC.

Article II: Affiliation

The RMGUC is a volunteer program offered through Rutgers Cooperative Extension, NJ Agriculture Experiment Station (NJAES) and Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, in cooperation with the individual county governments.

Article III: Mission Statement

To provide horticultural - related services that assist and inform the communities of Union County.

Article IV: Goals and Objectives

The organization shall:

1. Expand the knowledge and capabilities of the RMGUC to better serve Union County communities.
2. Promote community awareness of and participation in RMGUC programs related to horticulture and environmental stewardship.
3. Sustain the interest, enthusiasm and knowledge of the RMGUC membership in programs and services.
4. Make the organization administratively self- sufficient.
5. Work with 4-H and other youth programs to encourage horticultural interest.
6. Provide an opportunity for the members to practice, enjoy and share the pleasures of horticulture in a learning and social atmosphere.
7. Utilize the Demonstration Gardens as a learning tool for both the membership and the general public.

Article V: Areas of Focus

The organization shall concentrate its efforts and resources on:

1. Professionalism, certification, continuing education, service opportunities, and improved communication among members
2. Funding, grants and donations
3. Community partnership and cooperation with others who support the RMGUC mission

4. Publicity and press releases about RMGUC programs, events and awards
5. Furthering the mission of RMGUC by cooperating with the Master Gardener Association of New Jersey and other organizations to improve Master Gardener services in the county and state
6. Resource management, transparency in budgeting, resource allocation and decision making
7. Emphasis on ensuring a learning environment that will result in horticultural support for our greater community.

Article VI. Categories of Master Gardeners

1. There are six categories of Master Gardeners:
 1. Intern: Individual currently enrolled in the Master Gardener Course or someone who has completed the course but not yet fulfilled the volunteer service requirement of 60 hours.
 2. Certified Active Master Gardener (CAMG): A Certified Master Gardener training program graduate has fulfilled the initial service requirement of 60 hours and the requirements for the training course. To maintain the status of Certified Active Master Gardener, the requirements are 25 hours of volunteer service and ten hours of Continuing Education credits annually. All Master Gardeners must be recertified every year.
 3. Aurum insigne: a CAMG who has accumulated 1000 hours of volunteer effort. Requires annual recertification of CAMG status.
 4. Alumnus: Previously CAMG who no longer maintains annual active volunteer status and/or education update requirements. Alumnus members may not vote at General membership meetings.
 5. Honorary Member: May be bestowed at the discretion of the Executive Board to any individual (not a member of the RMGUC) in recognition of their contribution to the RMGUC and/or their dedication to and support of the ideals of RMGUC. This designation does not confer any of the privileges, responsibilities or obligations extended to members.
2. Master Gardeners must be 18 or older.

Article VII: Membership

1. CAMG's from the Union County Master Gardeners program are considered members of the RMGUC. CAMG's from other counties or states may become members of RMGUC and will serve as interns for one year. Re-certification to become a RMGUC will be administered by the County Agent and may include auditing some or all Master Gardener training classes.
2. MG's are expected to conduct themselves in an adult, courteous and respectful manner when dealing with other members and the public.
3. Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension educational programs are offered to all without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, marital status, civil union status, domestic partnership status, military service, veteran status, and any other category protected by law.

4. A membership roster will be maintained which will include name, address, telephone number, email address and may indicate the member's special expertise and/or interest. A member may request that all information, except their name, be deleted from any published roster. It is the responsibility of the individual CAMG to assure that the information is correct. This information is considered personal information, made available only to CAMG Members for RMGUC business.
5. A monthly newsletter shall be sent to all MG's in the most efficient and cost-effective means possible.
6. MG's must report their volunteer and Continuing Education hours quarterly. All hours must be turned in by the end of the calendar year. Failure to report hours on a timely basis will result in the loss of voting privileges.
7. All MG's are expected to identify themselves as such *always and only* when doing approved MG volunteer service.
8. No MG shall display credentials or give the appearance of being a MG at a place of business for the purpose of increasing sales or product or service endorsement. MG's must not use their title in any form of commercial advertisement.
9. All MG's shall follow the Rutgers Master Gardeners Policies and Procedures guidelines available on the Rutgers website.
10. Only CAMG's may vote at General Membership Meetings, for Officers and for Amendments to the By-Laws.

Article VIII. General Membership Meetings

1. Monthly educational meetings shall usually be held on the third Wednesday evening of every month except January, July, August, September and December. The meetings will begin with a short RMUGC business update conducted by a Board member.
2. General Membership meetings may be called by the President for the purpose of transacting specifically defined business matters. Only the matters so specified may be discussed.
3. All matters that come to the membership for a vote, with the exception of changes to By-Laws and election of Officers, shall be ratified by simple majority of those voting.
4. In the event of a conflict with a holiday, inclement weather, or other significant circumstances, the President may reschedule any meeting with adequate notification to the membership.

The Executive Board

Article IX: Responsibilities

1. The Executive Board shall act in good faith and honesty as the governing body of RMGUC. Operational responsibility rests with the Board.

2. The basic responsibilities of the Executive Board are to:
 - Support the mission and objectives of the RMGUC
 - Monitor and strengthen programs and services
 - Ensure ethical integrity
 - Enhance the organization’s public image and standing
 - Develop a competent Board by providing guidelines and information.
 - Approve an Annual Operating Budget for the upcoming fiscal year.
 - Maintain a Policies and Procedures Compendium and ensure it is followed. The compendium is to contain:
 - A list of committees and their reporting relationships
 - Financial rules and procedures
 - Procedures for the nomination and election of Officers
 - Anything else deemed appropriate by the Board
 - Ensure that the nomination and election of Officers are conducted in a fair manner, consistent with procedures set out in the Policies and Procedures Compendium
 - Ensure adequate financial resources, protect assets, provide proper financial oversight and ensure effective planning

3. Special meetings of the Executive Board may be called by the President or at the request of a majority of the Officers.

Article X. Officers

1. **The elected officers shall be:**
 1. President
 2. 1st Vice President
 3. 2nd Vice President
 4. 3rd Vice President
 - Recording Secretary
 - Corresponding Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Historian

- **Terms of Office**
 - The terms of the President, First Vice President, Historian and Corresponding Secretary shall commence in January of odd-numbered years.
 - The terms of the Second Vice President, Third Vice President, Recording Secretary and Treasurer shall commence in January of even- numbered years.
 1. Elected officers shall hold office for a term of two full years and shall not hold any office for more than two consecutive full terms.

2. If, for any reason, an officer holds a Board position for less than a full term, that person is eligible to be elected to that office for two terms.
3. A two-term officer can become eligible to hold the same office after an absence of one term. (VII.2.5)
4. Officers of the Executive Board shall attend scheduled Executive Board meetings and Communication meetings.
5. No Officer shall act as an independent agent to set policy or to represent RMGUC without Executive Board approval.

Article XI. Non-Voting Members of the Board

The following shall be members of the Executive Board without voting rights:

1. The RCE Agricultural Agent who is the primary educator and authority on matters related to horticulture and the final authority on matters dealing with the Master Gardeners' program. The Agent also provides leadership and counsel to the Master Gardeners' program and serves as an advisor to the Executive Board.
2. Two Student Representatives from the current Master Gardener class who are invited to serve a non-voting, one-year term on the Board, commencing in January.
3. The two Representatives from the RMUGC to the State Master Gardeners Association are appointed by the Board for two year terms with no term limits. They are to convey information between the RMUGC and the State Board. The State Representatives shall report the activities of the State Board to the RMUGC Board.
4. The Immediate Past President shall serve in a support and advisory capacity to the current President for the first term of the current President.

Article XII. Conflict of Interest

1. Whenever a member of the Executive Board has a financial or personal interest in any matter coming before the Board, the affected person shall a) fully disclose the nature of the interest and b) withdraw from discussion, lobbying and voting on the matter. Any transaction or vote involving a potential conflict of interest shall be approved only when a majority of disinterested Officers determine that it is in the best interest of the RMGUC to do so. The minutes of meetings at which such votes are taken shall record the disclosure and abstention.

Article XIII. Executive Board Meetings

1. Executive Board meetings shall be held on the first Wednesday of each month except January, July and August.
2. An agenda will be prepared for the Executive Board by the President. Agenda items must be submitted no fewer than six business days before the meeting. No exceptions are allowed. MG's may submit agenda items to the President for inclusion at the meeting. An agenda for the

meeting will be distributed by the President to the membership at least four business days before the meeting.

3. A quorum of the Executive Board shall be six voting members.
4. The President shall have the deciding vote in the case of a tie vote.
5. The President may declare any Executive Board meeting to be a Special Session for Officers only.
6. MG's are invited to attend Executive Board meetings as observers. Discussion will be opened to MG's for a brief comment period on agenda items.
7. The acquisition of any decorative garden accessory or structure, regardless of value, whether purchased or donated, must be listed on the Agenda before the meeting and shall be subject to review and a formal vote by the Executive Board.
8. Significant proposed changes to the Demonstration Gardens such as new development, restructuring of the garden or other new MG programs/activities require a formal, written request submitted to the Executive Board for review. After Board review, a recommendation will be presented to the membership via email for comments.
9. The Executive Board shall review and approve the minutes of the previous month's meeting. The following information from the approved minutes shall be distributed to the membership:
 1. Motions made, by whom and the voting result.
 2. Action steps with responsibilities listed.

Article XIV. Duties of Officers

1. All Officers shall attend Executive Board meetings and Communication Meetings.
2. **The President shall:**
 1. Call and preside at all the RMGUC Executive Board and Communication Meetings.
 2. Call special meetings of the Executive Board, members or Committees in order transact RMGUC business.
 3. Fill vacancies that arise on the Executive Board until the next annual or special election with the approval of the Executive Board.
 4. Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except Nominating.
 5. Select and oversee the Nominating Committee.
 6. Prepare the RMGUC Executive Board monthly meeting agenda and distribute the agenda to Executive Board members, Class Representatives, County Agricultural Agent, Agriculture Secretary, and the membership.
 7. Distribute the approved Executive Board meeting minutes to Executive Board members, County Agriculture Agent, Agriculture Secretary. Distribute the summary of motions and action steps to the membership.
 8. Be authorized to sign all checks.
 9. Perform all other duties that pertain to the office of the President that are not in conflict with the duties of other officers.

3. The First, Second and Third Vice Presidents shall :

1. Oversee the various committees described in the RMGUC Policies and Procedures Compendium and report their activities to the Executive Board on a monthly basis and to the general membership in the Monthly Newsletter, as appropriate.
2. Maintain contact with committee Chairs and serve as an advisor to resolve any conflicts that may arise within each committee.
3. Supervise functional areas as follows:
 1. First Vice President:
 - a. Community Projects
 - b. Environmental Matters
 - c. Garden Preservation
 - d. Publicity
 - e. Helpline
 - f. Newsletter
 - g. Web site
 2. Second Vice President
 - a. Arts and Crafts
 - b. Demonstration Garden Committee
 - c. Introduction to Horticultural Therapy
 - d. Spring Fair Committee
 3. Third Vice President
 - a. Continuing Education
 - b. Sunshine Committee
 - c. Children's Programs
 - d. Social Events
 - e. Speakers' Bureau
 - f. Hospitality
 - g. Summer Events
 - h. Field Trips

In the temporary absence or the resignation of the President, the First, Second and Third Vice Presidents, in that order, shall perform the duties of the President.

4. The Recording Secretary shall:

Record attendance and minutes at the Executives Board meetings, Communications Meetings and all special meetings called by the President.

5. The Corresponding Secretary shall:

1. Handle all correspondence for all meetings and programs.
2. Maintain correspondence files according to year in the RCE office for a reasonable period of five to seven years.

7. The RMGUC Treasurer/Fiscal Officer shall:

1. Maintain all financial records, including a record of all receipts and disbursements, contributions, purchases, Memorial Fund contributions and names of donors in a secure location.
2. Present a monthly financial report to the Executive Board.
3. Oversee the Grants Committee and provide required financial information for grant applications.
4. Assure that any money received from grants or restricted donations will only be used for the express purpose for which the funds were received.
5. Arrange for and oversee the cashiers at the Spring Garden Fair.
6. Distribute financial information concerning the Operating Statement and Budget to the membership.
7. Work with the Committee Chairs to prepare the Annual Operating Budget.
8. As the fiscal year proceeds, communicate to Committee Chairs their spending versus the approved Operating Budget to assist them in staying within their authorized budget.
9. Be authorized to sign all checks.
10. Arrange for an annual audit of the financial records at the end of each fiscal year and present a written report of the auditor's findings to the Executive Board which will be posted on the web site.

8. The Historian shall:

1. Maintain as current, in a secure and readily accessible format, all RMGUC forms, guidelines, documents, records, the By-Laws, the Policy and Procedures Compendium, and lists of all honorees and awardees of Union County and any Master Gardener association.
2. Create and maintain a written/pictorial record of significant RMGUC events and activities.

Article XV. Committees

The Executive Board shall consider and appoint committees as deemed necessary to manage and/or conduct ongoing activities of RMGUC. Committees will consist of MG volunteers who may serve on more than one committee. The Executive Board creates committees with input from the membership

There are two (2) types of committees:

1. Standing Committees

1. Standing Committees exist from one year to the next and are charged with a continuing function.
2. A list of Standing Committees shall be maintained in the Policies and Procedures Compendium.
3. Filling positions on standing committees, including the Chair, is the responsibility of the Committee membership. The President shall offer assistance in filling an open Standing Committee Chair as appropriate.
4. Committee Chairs need not be fully Certified Active Master Gardeners.
5. Communications meetings shall be held twice a year on the last Wednesday of February and October. Participation in these meetings shall be limited to Executive Board Members and Committee Chairs or their representative if the Chair is unable to attend.

2. Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees are formed for a specific task or objective and dissolved after the completion of the task or achievement of the objective. Ad hoc Committees are created and dissolved by the Executive Board.

Article XVI: Nomination and Election of Officers

1. The schedule and procedures for the nomination and election of officers shall be maintained in the Policy and Procedures Compendium. It is the responsibility of the Executive Board to assure that this schedule is respected.
2. Any candidate for office must be a CAMG who:
 1. Supports the mission of the Rutgers' Cooperative Extension and The RMGUC
 2. Displays, supports and encourages positive attitudes in volunteering
 3. Attends required MG meetings
 4. Maintains annual certification requirements
3. All CAMG's in good standing shall be eligible to be nominated for Executive Board Officer positions without regard to race, religion, age, national origin, gender sexual orientation or disability.
4. Specific criteria for the various Officer positions and the job descriptions of these positions shall be maintained in the Policies and Procedures Compendium and clearly communicated in an accessible and timely manner to the membership before a scheduled election.
5. A two-term Officer can become eligible to hold the same office after an absence of one term.
6. A person who assumes an Officer position mid-term, for whatever reason, is eligible to hold the same office for two full terms.
7. It is necessary that forty percent of CAMG's vote for the election of Officers to be accepted as binding.
8. Officers are elected by a simple majority of those voting.

Article XVII. Officer Vacancy and Officer Termination

1. Officer Termination

Officers who are absent from regularly scheduled meetings for two months without good and sufficient reason and without notice given to the President and/or who do not otherwise fulfill the responsibilities of their position beyond a period of three months may be asked to resign their position by a majority vote of the other members of the Executive Board.

2. Officer Vacancy

1. Resignation of any officer shall be made in writing to the President who will present the resignation to the Executive Board.
2. In the event of the President's resignation, written notice shall be submitted to the County Agriculture Agent and to the First Vice President who will present the resignation to the Executive Board and assume the duties of the President for the remainder of the term.
3. Vacancies occurring for any of the elected offices before the expiration of the regular term shall be temporarily filled for the balance of the term through appointment by the President with the approval of the Executive Board. (2.3)
4. If more than six months remain in the term of the vacant position, a special election shall be held within thirty days to fill the position for the balance of the term.

Article XVIII. Amendments and Revisions to By-Laws

1. The By-Laws shall be reviewed every two years by the Executive Board. The Board shall notify the membership of the review process.
2. Proposed amendments to the RMGUC By -Laws may be made by any CAMG to the Executive Board for review prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting. The proposal must be submitted in writing and include the rationale for the proposal and how the proposal would improve focus on or attainment of our mission. The Board shall develop a recommendation concerning the proposed amendment.
3. After Board review, the text of the proposed amendment along with the Executive Board recommendation shall be distributed to the membership three weeks prior to the date of meeting called to vote upon the proposed amendment.
4. At least forty percent of CAMG's must vote for any election concerning the By-Laws to be accepted as binding.
5. Amendments and revisions to By-Laws must be passed by two-thirds of the votes cast.

Article XIX. Parliamentary Authority

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the RMGUC in all cases to which they are applicable. These By-Laws are subject and subordinate to the established rules or policies of the Rutgers' Cooperative Extension. Whatever conflict or discrepancy appears, the established rules or policies of the Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Rutgers University shall prevail.

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