



DCMGA MEMBER HANDBOOK

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Denton County Master Gardener Association Member Handbook

Table of Contents

I. MISSION STATEMENT	2
II. MEMBERSHIP	2
III. MASTER GARDENER CERTIFICATION FROM OTHER TEXAS COUNTIES OR OUT OF STATE	3
IV. DCMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS (DCMGA BOD)	4
V. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS.....	4
VI. CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE).....	4
VII. VOLUNTEER SERVICE (VS).....	6
VIII. MASTER GARDENER PROJECTS.....	7
IX. NOT USED	7
X. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE.....	7
XI. STATE ADVANCED TRAINING	8
XII. ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS	8
XIII. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	10

Denton County Master Gardener Association Member Handbook

I. MISSION STATEMENT

The Denton County Master Gardener Association (DCMGA) is a volunteer program under the guidance of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. As Master Gardeners, our mission is to educate and engage county residents in the implementation of research-based horticultural and environmental practices that create sustainable gardens, landscapes, and communities.

II. MEMBERSHIP

DCMGA membership requires commitment in the form of Initial Training/Education, Continuing Education (CE), and Volunteer Service (VS). In general, there are two major categories of membership: Member in Good Standing and Intern. A Member in Good Standing may be designated as a Life Member. Life Member status is reserved for senior members who have been recognized for long-term service and contributions to the DCMGA mission.

A. Members in Good Standing must:

- have successfully completed the Texas Master Gardener Training Program,
- have agreed to the DCMGA Photo Release policy,
- annually complete registration, which consists of:
 - consenting to comply with the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Service Agreement,
 - completing and recording at least 12 hours each of Continuing Education and Volunteer Service,
 - paying the required dues.

Members in Good Standing are permitted to vote in DCMGA matters.

B. Interns are individuals who are enrolled or have completed the Texas Master Gardener Training Program requirements in the current calendar year. This program consists of 70 hours of Initial Training/Education and 70 hours of VS (or as determined by CEA-Hort).ⁱ

Interns must:

- agree to DCMGA Photo Release policy,
- consent to comply with the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Service Agreement.ⁱⁱ

C. Life Members have been recognized for their distinguished service as well as significant and consistent active contribution to DCMGA over at least 10 years of membership. Life Members are nominated by DCMGA Members in Good Standing and designated by the County Extension Agent – Horticulture (CEA-Hort). Life Members' dues are paid by

DCMGA. The CEA-Hort approves CE and VS hour requirements. Life Members are voting members.

D. Inactive Members are individuals who have not completed all the annual requirements for Members in Good Standing (Paragraph A.). DCMGA recognizes that some members might have personal or family issues that preclude them from completing the requirements for a Member in Good Standing. Inactive Members who wish to return to active status must coordinate their return through the CEA-Hort. To renew status as a Member in Good Standing, an Inactive Member must complete CE and VS requirements as directed by the CEA-Hort. An Inactive Member is a non-voting member but may participate in DCMGA activities.

E. Member and Intern Responsibilities:

- Conflict of Interest (COI) - Neither Members nor Interns shall use their position with DCMGA to further the manufacture, distribution, promotion, or sale of any materials, products, or services for personal or material gain unless specifically authorized by the DCMGA Board of Directors (BOD). Suspected COIs shall be reported to a Director for investigation and disposition. Further details concerning the definition, reporting, and disposition of COI issues are contained in the DCMGA COI policy.
- Members and Interns are authorized to make purchases in support of DCMGA projects and activities. Limitations and further direction for these purchases are detailed in the DCMGA Procurement Policy.

III. MASTER GARDENER CERTIFICATION FROM OTHER TEXAS COUNTIES OR OUT OF STATE

Due to the uniqueness of each county's soil, climate, and plant material, full reciprocity of Master Gardener certifications is not feasible. The CEA-Hort determines the required number of Training/Education hours for transfers. VS hours are the same as those required for Members in Good Standing. Upon meeting the training criteria established by the CEA-Hort the transferee must:

- agree to DCMGA Photo Release policy,
- consent to comply with the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Service Agreement.

The transferee then becomes a Member in Good Standing and must complete the requirements in Section II.A. to maintain that status.

IV. DCMGA BOARD OF DIRECTORS (DCMGA BoD)

The DCMGA BoD oversees the financial and infrastructure resources needed for the organization to meet its mission. The BoD also complies with all applicable statutory requirements.

- A. DCMGA Bylaws define the DCMGA BoD positions and the related responsibilities.
- B. DCMGA BoD meetings are usually held the first Wednesday of every month. Members and Interns may attend. Please refer to DCMGA Member Calendar, available on the DCMGA website at <https://dcmga.com/members-calendar/>.
- C. DCMGA Bylaws define DCMGA BoD service terms and Texas Master Gardener Association (TMGA) delegate requirements.
- D. DCMGA is supported by various administrative functions. Standing administrative functions are detailed in Section XII. Other administrative groups—ad hoc committees—may be formed for specific topics. Unless otherwise specified, these administrative group leaders are appointed by the President and report to the DCMGA BoD. Group leaders will submit annual budget needs and, as needed, solicit volunteers from the general membership.

V. GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

- A. General Membership Meetings (GMMs) are usually held on the second Wednesday of every month from February to November. Refer to the DCMGA Member Calendar for time and place. Members, Interns, and the public are invited to attend. GMMs usually provide a business presentation and a CE program (eligible for one hour of CE unless otherwise specified).
- B. The annual Graduation/Awards Banquet occurs in January. Eligible Interns are certified as Members in Good Standing and individual Member achievements are recognized. (Not a CE-eligible event.)
- C. The annual Christmas Party occurs in December. (Not a CE-eligible event.)

VI. CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE)

CE is purposed to help Master Gardeners maintain and enhance their knowledge of research-based horticultural practices that advance our mission statement. CE includes Advanced Training (AT) hours for approved classes sponsored by and conducted for Texas Master Gardener Association (TMGA).

- A. Members in Good Standing are annually required to complete at least 12 hours of CE.

B. [Reserved.]ⁱⁱⁱ

C. CE guidelines and opportunities include:

- DCMGA GMM programs (one hour unless otherwise specified).
- Horticultural education classes, lectures, field trips, TMGA-sponsored Advanced Training courses, and/or workshops conducted/sponsored by DCMGA, other county Master Gardener Associations (MGAs), TMGA, and/or Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.
- Research for articles, lectures, and presentations conducted/sponsored by DCMGA; Help Desk assistance.
- Texas Forest Service presentations.
- Online classes offered by state extension offices located in plant hardiness zones 7 or 8. (Includes topics for which zones are irrelevant, such as indoor plants or propagation techniques.)
- Citizen Forester Certification classes.
- Native Plant Society of Texas (NPSOT): Native Landscape Certification Program (NLCP) classes and NPSOT-Trinity Forks Chapter monthly meeting programs.
- Discretionary (other horticultural-related programs): Members with up to 10 years membership may annually claim a maximum of three discretionary CE hours. Members with more than 10 years of membership may annually claim up to six CE hours. No prior approval is needed.
- DCMGA Members may annually take a maximum of two classes offered as part of the Intern Training Program. Pre-registration is required; fees may apply. Some classes (including but not limited to first day, last day, and field trips) are not eligible for Member CE.
- DCMGA Members may receive CE credit during approved DCMGA project workdays that include a CE component. CE components must be identified prior to the work session and must meet all other criteria for CE as defined in this section. Project Managers must notify all participants of the CE component availability. The CE component must be at least 30 minutes but no more than two hours long. Members

and Interns who participate in the work session's CE component have the discretion to report the CE component time as either CE or VS.

- Credit for CE from educational opportunities not included or pre-approved in this list must be submitted to the CEA-Hort via online form (<https://dcmga.com/member-forms/>) at least one week prior to the training event.

- D. Travel time may not be included when calculating CE or Initial Training/Education hours.
- E. Members and Interns must record CE and Intern Basic Training/Education hours on the DCMGA website via the Volunteer Management System (VMS). Hours should be entered on a timely basis (at least monthly). For credit towards membership requirements, CE hours for a calendar year must be completed by December 31st of the current year and entered in VMS by January 31st of the following year.

VII. VOLUNTEER SERVICE (VS)

VS is the time provided by Members and Interns in support of DCMGA projects and administrative functions.

- Members in Good Standing are required to annually complete at least 12 hours of VS.
- Interns are required to complete at least 70 hours of VS before the end of their intern year.
- VS hours include time worked on approved DCMGA projects and administrative activities; travel time may be included.
- Members and Interns must record their earned VS on the DCMGA website via VMS. Hours should be entered on a timely basis (at least monthly).
 - For Members, VS hours for a calendar year must be completed by December 31st of the current year and entered in VMS by January 31st of the following year to count as credit towards membership requirements and service awards.
 - For Interns, all VS hours for successful course completion must be completed and submitted by December 15th of the Intern year.
- Discretionary (other horticultural-related activities): Members with up to 10 years membership may annually claim a maximum of three discretionary VS hours. Members with more than 10 years membership may annually claim up to six VS hours. No prior approval is needed.

VIII. MASTER GARDENER PROJECTS

Mission-related activities are coordinated and executed through projects. Members are encouraged to help identify areas of opportunity for mission-related projects.

- A. All non-administrative DCMGA activities that use DCMGA resources are considered projects. Ongoing DCMGA projects are listed on the DCMGA website at <https://dcmga.com/projects-2/>.
- B. Members who wish to initiate a new project should first contact the VP-Projects to review the project proposal for mission compliance and resource availability. A Project Initiation form defining the intended goals and operating budget is required for formal consideration and is available on the DCMGA website at <https://dcmga.com/member-forms/>. DCMGA BoD approval is required before external commitments are made or resources are expended.
- C. Prior to each year's DCMGA BoD budgeting process, Project Managers (PMs) of ongoing projects must annually complete and submit a Project Continuation form, available on the DCMGA website at <https://dcmga.com/member-forms/>. The completed information serves to evaluate project performance and define a budget for the coming year.
- D. Should a project's budget, leadership, and/or scope change at any time, PMs must submit a Project Change form, available on the DCMGA website at <https://dcmga.com/member-forms/>. DCMGA BoD review and approval is required to proceed under new parameters.
- E. Upon completion or cessation of projects, PMs shall submit a Project Termination form, available on the DCMGA website at <https://dcmga.com/member-forms/>.
- F. PMs will complete an Event Summary Form, available on the DCMGA website at <https://dcmga.com/member-forms/>, for each project-related activity (i.e.: meetings, work sessions, etc.).

IX. (RESERVED)

X. RECOGNITION OF SERVICE

- A. Interns who successfully complete the DCMGA Master Gardener Training Program requirements will receive a certified DCMGA name badge.

- B. To honor length of service, distinctive badges will be presented to qualifying DCMGA members at the annual Graduation/Awards Banquet. The following benchmarks are recognized: 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years.
- C. Other awards for service or merit may be presented at the Graduation/Award Banquet or at GMMs at the discretion of the DCMGA President. Requirements for standard service and merit awards will be listed in the Awards and Recognition Procedure on the DCMGA website.

XI. STATE ADVANCED TRAINING (AT)

- A. TMGA offers several AT programs. With CEA-Hort approval, Members in Good Standing may apply.
- B. To help defray the cost of TMGA AT programs, DCMGA annually offers a limited number of Member scholarships (not to exceed \$200). The President and CEA-Hort will review applications and make recommendations to the DCMGA BoD for a final decision. The Scholarship Application for AT is available on the DCMGA website at <https://dcmga.com/member-forms/>.
- C. AT scholarship recipients will complete all TMGA training and volunteer requirements as well as an 8-hour DCMGA Help Desk requirement, or scholarship funds must be repaid.

XII. ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS

- A. Hospitality Coordinator
 - Coordinates refreshments for GMMs.
 - Coordinates refreshments for special events upon a Project Manager's request.
- B. Resource Room Coordinator
 - Oversees materials and equipment for DCMGA use.
- C. State & International Award Submissions Team
 - Considers candidates based on respective criteria and submits final recommendations to the DCMGA BoD for approval. The DCMGA BoD may suggest other nominees.
 - Creates and submits award nominations with oversight from the Immediate Past President.
 - All award nominations will be reviewed by CEA-Hort prior to submission. The DCMGA BoD will be notified of all submissions.
- D. Nominations Committee

- Considers, vets, and creates a slate of DCMGA BoD candidates.
 - The Nominating Committee Procedure, available on the DCMGA website, details actions and responsibilities.
- E. Audit Committee
- Periodically reviews DCMGA financial records.
 - The committee shall consist of at least three DCMGA Members, who are not currently serving on the DCMGA BoD. The Treasurer shall provide all financial records and be available to answer any committee inquiries. The Audit Committee Procedure, available on the DCMGA website at, details actions and responsibilities.
- F. [Reserved]
- G. Scholarship Committee
- Administers the DCMGA Scholarship Program, which provides financial assistance for collegiate level horticultural studies.
 - Reviews and recommends recipients and may work with outside organizations to identify potential recipients.
- Scholarships may be funded by:
- DCMGA General Fund (including but not limited to the annual \$1000 Tom Harpool Horticulture Scholarship).
 - Designated member donations.
 - Designated donations from external sources.
- H. [Reserved]^{iv}
- I. Sunshine Gardeners
- Serves as an unofficial group of DCMGA (ineligible for CE or VS hours).
 - The Chair of the Sunshine Gardeners is eligible for VS hours for this activity.
 - Provides encouragement and assistance to Members and their families who have experienced significant personal adversity (i.e.: Member death, immediate family member death, long-term debilitating injury or illness, etc.). The Sunshine Gardeners Procedure, available on the DCMGA website, details actions and responsibilities.
- J. Technology Committee^v
- Strategically plans management of technology-related applications, equipment, training, budget, and procurement.

- Reviews third-party software applications to determine DCMGA benefit.
- Provides technology support for automation, training, and process improvements.
- Supports DCMGA’s website by creating/maintaining web pages and forms.
- Provides audiovisual equipment support.

XIII. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Additional guidance (policies and procedures) may further support DCMGA operations.

- A. **Policy** - Guidelines formulated and adopted by DCMGA to support Association goals.
 - Policies may be written by any DCMGA Member. Policies and any subsequent revisions will be reviewed and approved by the DCMGA BoD prior to release.
 - Approved policies will be communicated to the general membership and included on the DCMGA website.

- B. **Procedure** - A recommended sequence of activities or course of actions to effectively perform a task.
 - Procedures may be written by any DCMGA Member and are intended for recurring tasks that involve multiple functions within DCMGA. Each procedure must identify a functional or positional “owner” to oversee and update procedural direction as needed. Procedures and any subsequent revisions will be reviewed and approved by the DCMGA BoD prior to release.
 - Approved procedures will be communicated to the general membership and included on the DCMGA website.

Revision Control Record – DCMGA Handbook

Current Revision	Prior Revision	Summary of Changes	Reason for Change
April 2021	May 2020	<p>II. Membership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section B. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add language: “or as determined by CEA-Hort”. ○ Eliminate voting rights language. <p>VI. Continuing Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section B. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deleted redundant information already covered under VII. Volunteer Service. <p>XII. Administrative Functions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section H. Grant Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Delete section; project terminated. • Section J. Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Edit description per expanded responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of CEA-Hort autonomy to determine requirements. • Consistency with ByLaws and CEA-Hort preference. • Eliminate redundancy. • Project terminated; ad hoc committee will be formed as needed. • Clarify expanded committee responsibilities.

ⁱ Add language: “or as determined by CEA-Hort”.

ⁱⁱ Language permitting intern voting eliminated for consistency with ByLaws and per CEA-Hort.

ⁱⁱⁱ Duplicate language regarding intern basic training requirements eliminated.

^{iv} Grants Committee project terminated; ad hoc committee will be formed as needed.

^v Description edited to encompass expanded responsibilities.