

# Advanced Master Gardener Certification



**Many are becoming Advanced  
Master Gardeners... You Can Too**

## **Our Vision**

The Advanced Master Gardener program motivates those with special gardening interests to develop those interests into specialized knowledge areas for the benefit of others.

## Advanced Master Gardener Certification (Local management program procedures under ACES-REA, find yours here)

The purpose of an advanced Master Gardener Program:

- To train and support certified Master Gardeners in specialized areas of horticulture.
- To invest in motivated volunteers. The ACES wants to encourage MG's to extend their knowledge in a garden related specialty for which they have a special interest or passion (with approval from the sponsoring ACES Home Grounds Agent).
- To develop partnerships for program delivery. This specialized group of volunteers becomes valuable partners with the ACES Home Grounds team in their educational outreach.
- To enrich other community projects with specialized, knowledgeable volunteers.

A critical part of the program is that Advanced Master Gardeners are willing and able to share their passion and advanced knowledge via public speaking forums such as giving seminars or demonstrations. Advanced Master Gardeners may also reach out to the public by writing articles for newspapers or journals. Advanced MGs assume a leadership role among MGs and within their communities.

### I. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. The Advanced Master Gardener (AMG) Committee is comprised of all existing Advanced Master Gardeners in the local Master Gardener Association (MGA). The AMG Coordinator for the local MGA (appointed by the Extension Agent), with a minimum of two AMGs will form a quorum to perform the following responsibilities:
  - i. Review applications from AMG candidates and recommend for approval to the Home Grounds Extension agent.
  - ii. Although all AMGs will mentor AMG candidates, each AMG candidate will be assigned a dedicated mentor from the AMG Committee. The mentor will assist the AMG candidate in preparing their application for review by the Extension agent.
  - iii. After the Extension agent approves the candidate's application, the mentor advises the candidate as needed through completion of their certificate.
  - iv. Attend a presentation given by the AMG candidate or review materials intended for publication and provide constructive feedback to verify that the AMG Candidate has achieved basic competency in their chosen area and demonstrated an ability to share that expertise **prior to executing** the community outreach portion of their AMG application.
  - v. Review the completed study outline from each AMG candidate and make recommendations to the Home Grounds Extension Agent for award of AMG certification.

- b. Advanced Master Gardener Candidate
  - i. The AMG Candidate will propose education material (classes, seminars, webinars, etc) that will raise their level of expertise in their chosen topic and document those materials as part of their application.
  - ii. The AMG Candidate will propose how they will conduct outreach to share their expertise, how this will benefit the mission of ACES and the Master Gardener program, and document that plan as part of their application.
- c. Home Grounds Extension Agent
  - i. The Extension Agent is the final approval authority for an AMG Candidate's application.
  - ii. The Extension Agent is the final approval for award of the title "Advanced Master Gardener".
  - iii. The AMG Committee's main purpose is to assist the Extension Agent with administration of the AMG Program. If a MGA does not yet have any AMGs to form an AMG Committee, these responsibilities are performed by the Extension Agent directly, or assistance can be requested from the AMG Committee from another Association.

## II. Training materials/Study outline.

- a. An AMG application documents at least 40 hours of proposed training. This training will be individual to each AMG Candidate. The intent is to prepare the AMG candidate to be a resource to the MG Program, to ACES and to the community at large. This training must be accomplished prior to award of AMG status.
- b. Training offered by ACES or AMGA for MG's may be counted as part of the Advanced MG certificate if it is part of their approved study outline.
- c. Training completed within the last three years may be included. Training older than three years may be included with a waiver from the Extension Agent.
- d. Training may include reading books, journals or online research.
- e. Training may include online courses.
- f. Hands-on training such as working with a professional in a field related to the AMG specialty may be included.
- g. Training may include attending workshops, classes and seminars at professional conferences, universities or other forums.
- h. The AMG candidate is encouraged to be creative, think "outside the box" and propose other ideas for training in their application.
- i. The AMG training plan may sometimes lack specificity as seminars on a particular topic may be anticipated but not yet scheduled. For example, seminars on pruning are usually offered every year by ACES, but the specific date, location, and exact nature of the seminar (fruit versus ornamentals for example) may not be known.

- j. The AMG candidate may take advantage of unforeseen training opportunities that occur and amend their training plan with concurrence from their AMG mentor and final approval of the Extension Agent.
- k. Make sure to document all completed training in the online Master Gardener Service Report for accurate record of accomplishments.

### III. Community Outreach

- a. An AMG application documents a minimum of ten hours proposed community outreach. This must be accomplished prior to award of AMG certificate.
- b. Outreach may include a presentation during a MG meeting, teaching an intern class, giving a workshop at the state conference, etc.
- c. Outreach may include conducting public programs (Garden Club, other civic groups, or the general public)...
- d. Outreach may also include writing informative articles for newspapers, magazines or journals. All information must come from research-based (Extension or other reliable) references.
- e. The AMG Committee will review the AMG Candidate's Community Outreach materials and presentations **prior to presentation or publication** to the public.

### IV. The Advanced Master Gardener Application will include

- a. Name
- b. Address
- c. Phone
- d. Email address
- e. Date and location of initial MG certification
- f. Planned start date of advanced training
- g. Master Gardener lifetime hours accumulated to date
- h. A study outline per paragraph II
- i. A description of plans for outreach per paragraph III.
- j. Mentor name

### V. AMG responsibilities after award of AMG certificate.

- a. AMGs will document their hours using the online Master Gardener Service Report system for tracking volunteer hours.
- b. AMGs may be asked to teach MG classes, develop community projects related to their new area of expertise, enrich existing projects, etc.