

Manitoba Master Gardener Association

HANDBOOK

March, 2023

Contents

- Who are we? 4**
 - Master Gardeners 4**
 - The Manitoba Master Gardener Association (MMGA)..... 4**
 - Mission Statement (2020) 4**
 - Goals and Objectives 4**
- Master Gardener Certification in Manitoba..... 5**
- Membership in the MMGA..... 6**
 - Eligibility and Requirements 6**
 - Benefits of Membership..... 6**
 - Study Groups..... 7**
- Approved Volunteer Activities 7**
 - Basic Principles 7**
 - Student Master Gardeners: Practicum..... 7**
 - Approval of Practicum Hours..... 8**
 - Certified Master Gardeners: Volunteer Opportunities 8**
 - Study Group Activities and Volunteer Hours 9**
- Guidelines for Volunteers..... 9**
- Policies Related to Volunteering..... 10**
 - Admission Fees 10**
 - Volunteering and Honorariums..... 10**
 - Staffing of MMGA-Sponsored Events 10**
 - Privacy 11**
 - Photos..... 11**
 - Expense Reimbursement 11**
 - Volunteer Etiquette..... 11**
- MMGA Continuing Education Guidelines..... 12**
 - Acceptable Educational Activities 12**
 - Quality Standards 12**
 - Additional Notes..... 13**
- MMGA Organizational Structure..... 14**
 - Board of Directors..... 14**
 - Elections 14**
 - Current Board of Directors (February 2023)..... 14**
 - Other Important Contacts 15**

Appendices..... 16
The Manitoba Master Gardener Story 17
Manitoba Master Gardener Association By-Laws, Revised 2022 20

Who are we?

Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners are individuals who belong to an international network of non-profit volunteer organizations devoted to gardening education. All Master Gardeners have been trained in horticulture through accredited universities or colleges and are certified according to prevailing standards. They maintain their certified status according to the requirements of the certifying body. They have committed themselves to continuous learning and to teaching and promoting good gardening practices in their communities through volunteer service.

The Manitoba Master Gardener Association (MMGA)

The MMGA is the certifying body and the supporting and networking organization for Certified Master Gardeners as well as student Master Gardeners or Interns in Manitoba.

Led by a volunteer board of directors that guides the strategic direction of the organization, the MMGA works to facilitate communication among Master Gardeners and within our greater community. We are committed to providing our members with continuing education through quality programming as well as up-to-date information and resources that will enhance their skills and gardening knowledge. We promote and support the Master Gardener Training Program offered by our educational affiliate. We help our members find appropriate volunteer opportunities and assist with the logging and recognition of their volunteer service. We encourage fellowship and friendship among gardeners in our organization.

In its community service role, the MMGA builds community partnerships with other like-minded organizations such as Assiniboine Park Conservancy, Parks Canada, and Communities in Bloom. We provide horticultural information to the public through workshops and presentations, information booths, radio appearances, our newsletter, and our website (mgmanitoba.com), which offers how-to-gardening videos and an Ask@ service for people with gardening questions. The MMGA also hosts an annual garden tour and special events such as film screenings, visits from high-profile guest speakers, and bus tours to outstanding Manitoba gardens.

Mission Statement (2020)

MMGA cultivates the development and continuous education of Master Gardeners, supports volunteerism, and encourages sustainable, proven gardening practices throughout Manitoba.

Goals and Objectives

1. To co-operate with and support the educational activities of our institutional affiliates in order to implement and develop the Manitoba Master Gardener training program;
 2. To provide a communication network for Manitoba Master Gardeners to exchange ideas, information and issues;
 3. To support the ongoing training of Manitoba Master Gardeners by providing information;
 4. To encourage the growth of horticultural communities by building connections with like-minded organizations;
 5. To serve as a source of horticultural information for the general public through our membership, website, and social media;
 6. To promote sustainable horticultural practices and environmental stewardship.
- (MMGA By-Laws)

Master Gardener Certification in Manitoba

There are five steps involved in certifying as a Master Gardener in Manitoba:

- 1. REGISTRATION WITH THE MANITOBA MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION.**
This happens automatically when you register for the Manitoba Program Certification course below. The MMGA will contact you by email.
As a recently registered intern, you receive a free 2-year membership in the MMGA with full member privileges except voting rights at the AGM. An Intern's name will not be on the list of MGs on the website until they have completed the Master Gardener program.
- 2. COMPLETION OF REQUIRED BASIC TRAINING** – These courses are offered online and on-demand through a partnership of the MMGA with the University of Saskatchewan's College of Agriculture and Bioresources: Gardening division. You can register at any time.

You have five years to complete all required courses:

- ❖ Manitoba Master Gardener Certification
- ❖ Garden Fundamentals
- ❖ Botanical Latin
- ❖ Tree and Shrub ID
- ❖ Insects in your Yard and Garden
- ❖ Plant Diagnostics for Home Gardeners
- ❖ Common Plant Diseases
- ❖ Safe Use of Pesticides and Alternatives
- ❖ Communications

FOR COMPLETE COURSE DETAILS AND TO REGISTER:

[Master Gardener Certificate - Gardening - College of Agriculture and Bioresources - University of Saskatchewan \(usask.ca\)](http://www.usask.ca/collegeofagricultureandbioresources/gardening/mastergardenercertificate/)

- 3. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A PRACTICUM THROUGH THE MMGA** consisting of 40 hours of approved volunteer service within two years. Details at mgmanitoba.com/mg-program/mgpracticum.
- 4. SUCCESSFUL ACHIEVEMENT ON A FINAL EXAMINATION** after completion of the required courses and the practicum.
- 5. PAYMENT OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEE** to participate in the MMGA as a full member (\$25/year) once your free 2-year membership expires.

Master Gardeners who have completed their certification in another jurisdiction may apply to the MMGA to have their credentials recognized in Manitoba.

Membership in the MMGA

Eligibility and Requirements

Membership in the Manitoba Master Gardener Association is open to certified Master Gardeners and Interns. Since the MMGA documents and vouches for members' qualifications, membership is mandatory for those who wish to be certified and recognized as Master Gardeners in Manitoba.

Membership dues

Interns who are registered in the training program receive a complimentary student membership for up to two years.

Membership fees are \$25 annually, with discounts for two-year and three-year memberships.

The fiscal and membership year runs from January through December.

Becoming a member

New Master Gardener Interns will be invited to join the MMGA once they have registered in the Manitoba Master Gardener Certification course. They must fill out and return the MMGA membership form that is sent to them in order to receive their complimentary two-year intern membership. Master Gardeners who have been certified and whose membership fee has been paid will be issued an official membership card.

Maintaining Status

Intern members must be actively pursuing the requirements for certification.

Certified Master Gardeners must log 20 approved volunteer hours per year. They must also log a certain number of approved continuing education hours per year (see the MMGA Continuing Education Guidelines below). Interns are not required to accrue education hours until they are certified.

Members may request a one-year sabbatical from membership requirements or they may apply for emeritus status; see the By-Laws.

End of Membership

Membership ceases if annual fees are not paid in a timely manner, or annual volunteer hours are not maintained according to the basic principles outlined under Approved Volunteer Opportunities, or if required annual continuing education hours are not maintained, or the member submits their written resignation.

Benefits of Membership

Newly certified Master Gardener members whose annual membership dues have been paid are issued a free name tag.

All members

- receive the information on how to sign up for the bi-monthly MMGA newsletter as well as news and events updates.
- have access to the members-only area of the website, including the Forum and MMGA Group Facebook page.
- get free or discounted admission to MMGA workshops and speaker presentations.

- receive discounts on their plant purchases at many local garden centres if they show MMGA identification.
- are enrolled in Volunteer Impact, an online volunteer management program. By logging into the Volunteer Impact portal, they can access information about available volunteer opportunities, schedule shifts at MMGA events and MMGA-supported community events, and maintain an official record of their volunteer and continuing education hours.

Certified Master Gardener members in good standing have voting rights at the Annual General Meeting. Only certified Master Gardener members in good standing can run for election to positions on the Board of Directors, but all members, including Interns, can volunteer for committees. Service in these roles counts as Master Gardener volunteer hours.

Study Groups

Since the fall of 2016, MMGA members have had the opportunity to join a Study Group. These are usually small groups of about 10–15 Master Gardeners and Interns who live within a convenient geographical area and meet regularly, often in each other's homes. The purpose is to network, share experiences, learn from one another, and take part in interesting discussions and activities, including field trips. Active contributions to Study Groups may be counted toward volunteer hours (see below).

- Each group shall have a leader or two co-leaders.
- There should be a planned program including educational content for each meeting.
- A report on the educational content of each meeting is to be submitted to the Study Group Blog on the MMGA website for sharing with all other MGs.
- A person appointed as Study Group Coordinator assists with group organization and programming and reports to the Board.

Approved Volunteer Activities

Basic Principles

Volunteering in the Master Gardener program should have a direct connection to horticulture, and it should involve some form of active, unremunerated community service, including MMGA administrative work. Therefore simply working in your own garden or a family member's garden is not enough. Moreover, anything you are paid to do, even if it involves gardening education or service, cannot be counted toward your Master Gardener volunteer hours.

Student Master Gardeners: Practicum

As indicated, Interns must complete 40 hours of approved volunteer work called a Practicum within a two-year period any time during their training, but within five years of beginning the program.

- Some Interns, due to health issues or disabilities, may require more flexibility or options in terms of volunteer hours they undertake. Such situations will be assessed on an individual, confidential basis.

- Attending an MMGA study group does not constitute volunteer hours unless the Intern has developed and makes a presentation to the group, writes up the blog meeting summary or hosts the group meeting.
- The pre-training that might be required to qualify to volunteer on some projects is not considered MMGA practicum hours. Example: Winnipeg's Assiniboine Park requires all volunteers to complete general volunteer training before working on site (these hours not approved by the MMGA).
- A downloadable MMGA volunteer hour log form to record the details of completed volunteer hours and for volunteer hour validating sign-off by project managers is available at https://www.mgmanitoba.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/intern_vol_hours_sheet.pdf . This form can be used for your records and to submit your hours that have been validated.

Approval of Practicum Hours

The MMGA must approve Practicum Hours prior to Master Gardener certification. When Practicum Volunteer Hours are clearly in line with the MMGA guideline of approved criteria for Practicum hours and are one of the examples of acceptable hours, the volunteer Practicum activity should be readily approved.

NOTE: If there are volunteer opportunities that are outside the MMGA Guideline for approved hours that you would like to participate in, contact the Director of Volunteers **before you begin the activity** to request approval: volunteers@mgmanitoba.com

Certified Master Gardeners: Volunteer Opportunities

As noted, Master Gardeners must log 20 approved volunteer hours per year to remain a member in good standing. What qualifies as volunteer service? As noted above, they must meet the criterion of unremunerated service to the community, including the MMGA community. The following are examples of volunteer activities that have been carried out by Master Gardeners in Manitoba and approved by the MMGA:

- Speaking to local community groups throughout the province
- Participating in a variety of horticulture-related community projects, including horticultural activity programs in hospitals and other institutions
- Designing, planting, or maintaining community gardens in public places such as hospitals, schools, parks, etc.
- Writing or editing garden-related articles for local newspapers and other periodical publications, the MMGA Newsletter and garden club newsletters
- Coordinating/volunteering at gardening-related events such as Gardening Saturday, Seedy Saturday, the MHA Convention, and MMGA-sponsored events
- Providing information in a garden hotline/forum for your city/town or area, or through the Ask@ service on the MMGA website
- Sitting on the board of horticulture groups or serving on committees, including the MMGA board (MGs only) and its committees (MGs or Interns)
- Designing, planning and educating volunteers in how to maintain and plant public greenspace such as flower boxes or flower beds at care homes and nursing homes, at churches, or similar facilities

- Mentoring volunteers (including Interns and fellow MGs) and participants in a neighbourhood community garden project
- Working with children to create green spaces and gardens in schoolyards
- Designing a website or volunteering as a webmaster for a Master Gardener program or garden club
- Teaching or assisting in gardening classes or workshops
- A volunteer opportunity in the community that allows you to communicate your skills and training as a Master Gardener to others who will benefit from your gardening knowledge.

This list of possibilities could be extended. Now that all members can access the Volunteer Impact online database, they have a powerful tool for discovering opportunities that are available and finding ones that suit their interests and schedule.

Study Group Activities and Volunteer Hours

In May 2021, following an internal review of practices related to MMGA Study Groups, the Board of Directors announced a revised policy on volunteer hours. MGs and Interns would no longer automatically receive volunteer hours for mere attendance at Study Group meetings. Volunteer hours are based on actual hours of contribution to each meeting, such as organizing the meeting, writing the meeting report, and preparing and delivering presentations.

Guidelines for Volunteers

No Appearance of Endorsements

Master Gardeners should avoid recommending specific products, businesses or services unless several choices can be provided, as that can appear to be an endorsement or show of favoritism by the MMGA.

No Health or Nutrition Claims

Master Gardeners should never make any claims about health or nutritional benefits supposedly derived from plants or gardening products. Only persons with professional health training may make such claims.

Substantiation from Reputable Sources

Master Gardeners should be able to substantiate from reputable independent sources any claims about the value and efficacy of the gardening techniques and remedies they present. In particular the recommendation of home remedies should be avoided. (These products are not standardized and come without warnings of potential harm that they could cause to humans, animals, or plants if applied without caution or in too high a concentration.)

Fair Warning About Plants

If you are describing a plant for garden use, check if it is on the [Declaration of Noxious Weeds in Manitoba](#) and the invasive plants list of the [Manitoba Invasive Species Council](#), and flag it as aggressive. Toxic garden plants should also be flagged, e.g. Brugmansia.

Know the limitations of your horticulture knowledge and expertise

It is fine to say I don't know, do more research, and get back to an inquirer.

Presentations

If you are creating a series of slides for a presentation (e.g. PowerPoint), there is a standard template for a presentation given by the MMGA. Available in the VI files, its use gives a branded appearance.

Interns who give presentations to the public are strongly encouraged to review their presentation with a certified Master Gardener, and if possible, have a Master Gardener accompany them to the event as a resource.

Article for MMGA newsletter

The **article length** should be between 800-1200 words and submitted as a Word document, no special font required. Articles should also be formatted as simply as possible as all articles have to be reformatted to the newsletter and website blog templates, and formatting options are very limited in both.

Submit photos separately in their original size as JPG or PNG. If you include photos retrieved from the internet please be aware of copyrights. Only photos under a creative commons license/free to share or with the photographer's permission to use and credited properly can be posted in your article.

Note that the editorial process checks horticultural facts and grammatical inconsistencies. The editors are also very careful to avoid any form of plagiarism. Edited articles are sent back to the author for approval.

Policies Related to Volunteering

Admission Fees

Admission fees are waived for members who volunteer at MMGA-sponsored events (Board of Directors policy passed March 21, 2019).

Volunteering and Honorariums

MMGA members are asked to decline any cash honorariums or fees that they may be offered for presentations or other work they do as Master Gardeners, as this runs counter to the principle of volunteerism. However, if they wish, organizations can make donations directly to the MMGA (Board of Directors policy, April 18, 2017). If a presentation has originated through the MMGA, any fees offered and received are to be given to the Association. Exceptions are made for travel, hotels, and office supplies directly related to the work done; these are allowed expenses that the member may accept if they are offered. If a member accepts cash or items such as gift cards in exchange for work done as a Master Gardener, the hours may not be claimed as volunteer hours.

Staffing of MMGA-Sponsored Events

Volunteers at events sponsored by the MMGA such as information booths, fundraisers, or projects, whether they be Master Gardeners or Interns, should be active members of the MMGA. Exceptions would be allowed at events that are in partnership with another organization, where members of that organization would also be volunteers (Board of Directors policy, April 2014).

Confidentiality

Board of Directors members and members of all subcommittees of the MMGA will not disclose or use information belonging to, or obtained through, their affiliation with the MMGA to any person, including their relatives, friends, and business and professional or non-profit group associates, unless the MMGA Board has authorized disclosure or use of that information, such as for educational purposes (Board of Directors policy, November 6, 2014).

Privacy

MMGA respects the privacy of individuals and acknowledges that the information that members provide on the form is personal information and will be used solely for Membership Application purposes. Email addresses are for the MMGA use only and will not be shared to any other organizations without the person's consent (Board of Directors policy, February 21, 2019).

Photos

Any individuals wishing to opt out from having their photo published in any MMGA publications must contact the Newsletter Director and/or the Website/Communication Director (Board of Directors policy, February 21, 2019).

Expense Reimbursement

Expenses for reimbursement should be submitted with the original receipts to the Treasurer – treasurer@mgmanitoba.com.

Volunteer Etiquette

1. Volunteer with a good attitude.
2. Be on time.
3. Dress appropriately (wear your name tag).
4. Follow the rules.
5. Do the best job you can.
6. Be a team player.
7. Acknowledge others.
8. Communicate.
9. Be discreet: respect confidentiality.
10. Be flexible.

Adapted from thespruce.com/volunteer-etiquette-guidelines-4102037

MMGA Continuing Education Guidelines

After attaining the designation of Master Gardener, all MMGA members who have completed their certification are required to continue their education by regularly completing a certain number of hours of continuing education activities. It is considered essential that members remain engaged with the latest horticultural research so that they are able to deliver reliable, research-based information to the public.

For 2023, the requirement is (as before) six hours of educational activities during the period 2021-2023.

Beginning in 2024, the requirement is four hours of educational activities per year.

Each continuing education activity must be no less than **60 minutes in duration**. This may include the question period that follows a presentation, but may not include travel time, refreshment breaks, or other non-educational activity.

Acceptable Educational Activities

The following educational activities are acceptable, subject to the quality standards outlined below:

- Conferences, seminars, presentations, guided tours, and workshops where the content is of educational value (technical, scientific, or experimental) to horticultural activities
- Auditing horticultural classes
- Earning credits in university and community college courses relevant to horticulture
- Horticultural workshops and presentations sponsored by organizations such as other Master Gardener associations and community-based, provincial, or regional societies
- Webinars and recorded presentations related to science-based horticulture
- Horticultural tours that include an instructional or educational component
- Self-directed research in support of horticultural activities such as preparing presentations and articles for publication. Hours spent on research for specific volunteer activities should be counted either as volunteer hours or as education hours, but not both.

Quality Standards

- Science-based horticultural research should underlie all educational content. The educational events sponsored by the MMGA are designed to meet this standard of educational quality and may be counted.
- Presentations at garden clubs or similar venues may not meet the standard of research-based horticultural education and should be evaluated carefully. Certified Master Gardeners have enough knowledge and judgement to make this evaluation.
- Speaker qualifications should be considered when judging the educational quality of presentations.
- Presentations of 60 minutes' duration given in MMGA study groups may be counted. This includes those given by interns, assuming the group's certified Master Gardeners agree.
- Self-directed research should rely on reputable sources such as books and articles written by trained experts and websites of legitimate research institutions. (In Google, search using "site:edu".)

Additional Notes

The MMGA website, newsletter, Volunteer Impact, and email updates will publicize appropriate continuing education activities.

If a member is unable to determine whether an activity qualifies for continuing education credits, the details regarding the activity may be submitted to the MMGA Continuing Education Committee for approval.

Members are encouraged to keep their own records of their educational activities. For the purposes of maintaining MMGA membership in good standing, continuing education hours should be reported annually in whole hours with particulars in Volunteer Impact under the category Continuing Education Hours.

If the VI record indicates that a MMGA member has not met the continuing education requirement for membership in good standing, they will be notified by the Membership Director and given an opportunity to explain or correct their record.

If the member does not agree with their MMGA continuing education standing, they may appeal to the MMGA Educational Standards Committee for a review of their records.

MMGA Organizational Structure

Board of Directors

The Officers are the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.

The Directors positions are the Past Chair, Educational Standards Director, Online Media Director, Membership Director, Special Events Director, Director of Volunteers, Newsletter Director, and the Members at Large.

For descriptions of the Directors' duties, refer to the text of the By-Laws in the Appendix. To assist them in the performance of their duties, there are sub-committees consisting of Members in Good Standing and Intern Members. In addition to receiving valuable assistance, Directors in turn can provide direction and mentorship to sub-committee members, who may in the future become Board candidates.

Elections

Election of officers will be held at the Annual General Meeting, normally held in April. Members in Good Standing of the MMGA may vote. Only certified Master Gardeners who are Members in Good Standing may hold Board of Directors positions. Each position is for a two-year term, except for the Past Chair, who has a one-year term.

For the nominations process and the conduct of elections, refer to the text of the By-Laws in the Appendix.

Current Board of Directors (February 2023)

Director Position	Incumbent	Residence	Contact
Chair	Shelley Walker	Winnipeg	chair@mgmanitoba.com
Vice-Chair	Sandra Venton	Winnipeg	
Past Chair			
Online Media	Marilyn Dudek	Winnipeg	info@mgmanitoba.com
Education Standards (Interim)	Linda Dietrick	Winnipeg	education@mgmanitoba.com
Membership	Lori Graham	Winnipeg	membership@mgmanitoba.com
Newsletter	Lisa Renner	Winnipeg	newsletter@mgmanitoba.com
Secretary	Lynne McCarthy	Winnipeg	secretary@mgmanitoba.com
Special Events	Elsie Kathler	Steinbach	specialevents@mgmanitoba.com

Treasurer	Jayne Heaton	Winnipeg	treasurer@mgmanitoba.com
Volunteers	Diane Daignault	Winnipeg	volunteers@mgmanitoba.com
Member at Large	Vacant	Winnipeg	
Member at Large	Virginia Stephenson	Winnipeg	

Other Important Contacts

Study Group Coordinator - Virginia Stephenson – studygroup@mgmanitoba.com

Volunteer Impact Administrator - Diane Daignault – volunteers@mgmanitoba.com

Appendices

The Manitoba Master Gardener Story

In the United States, Master Gardener programs are delivered by the cooperative extension services in each state. Extensions are part of a national system, based at major land-grant universities, that was set up in 1914 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide expert advice to local agricultural communities. Among the other activities sponsored and funded by extension services are 4-H Clubs and conferences like the annual Gardening Saturday in Grand Forks, North Dakota, which many Manitobans have heard of and some have even attended.

It was thanks to the extension system that the very first Master Gardener program began in Washington State in 1973. David Gibby and Bill Scheer, horticulture faculty at Washington State University, were assigned to provide extension services to counties with large urban centres, and they found themselves overwhelmed by requests for plant information. So they decided to train volunteers to take over some of their work. Having both been students in Germany, where *Gartenmeister* is the highest designation for a trained horticulturist, they elected to call their trained volunteers Master Gardeners. The first courses took place in Seattle and Tacoma in the spring of 1973.

The concept was adopted by other extension services and eventually spread across North America and beyond. Today Master Gardener programs are offered in all 50 states and across Canada (including in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and the Atlantic region), as well as in South Korea. An International Master Gardener Conference takes place every two years (see www.internationalmastergardener.com).

At one time, Canada too had extension services based at agricultural universities. As the population engaged in farming declined, however, government funding for extensions was withdrawn, and most extensions were discontinued by the 1990s. Ontario offers an example of how government defunding affected Master Gardener programs. In 1986, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) founded the first Master Gardener programs in Canada when it began funding pilot programs in various Ontario cities. In 1996, however, OMAFRA withdrew funding, which resulted in the establishment two years later of the Master Gardeners of Ontario Inc. (MGOI) as a non-profit umbrella group. MGOI asks its trainees to take certain online courses from the University of Guelph or Dalhousie University and to demonstrate successful completion of them before applying for certification by MGOI, which also sets the standards for Master Gardeners' volunteer service and continuing education in Ontario.

The University of Saskatchewan Master Gardener program was founded in 1989 by Sara Williams under the auspices of that university's extension service. Although the U of S extension was "disestablished" in 2007, the popular Master Gardener program continues to be delivered by Gardening at the U of S, the community outreach arm of the College of Agriculture and Bioresources, with instructors from the College. This program has served as the basis for Master Gardener training in Manitoba.

Manitoba's Master Gardener program originated in the mid-2000s with the delivery in Winnipeg and selected rural communities of the core courses developed by the University of Saskatchewan. In 2007, however, local delivery of the courses was halted due to cost-cutting. Registrants in the program had the option of completing their courses in either Saskatoon or Regina. Many chose to attend the University of Saskatchewan's annual Hort Week in order to complete all the core courses at one time or to complete any outstanding courses.

At that point, while Master Gardener communities in other provinces continued to grow thanks to the availability of the program through educational institutions, the Manitoba community remained small because there was no locally delivered program. But demand for a made-in-Manitoba program continued to grow. In 2009, Master Gardeners Colleen Zacharias and Karen Loewen began approaching educational institutions in the province in the hope that core courses could once again be made available in urban and rural centres.

By the fall of 2009, it was clear that the only interested educational partner was Assiniboine Community College (ACC) in Brandon, the institution that had previously brokered the program from the University of Saskatchewan. Advocacy efforts gained support from Master Gardeners in communities around the province, who pledged to support and promote the program in Manitoba. With this assurance, Assiniboine Community College agreed to broker the program from the University of Saskatchewan once again and to relaunch it on a trial basis in Winnipeg in October 2010. Its advocate and sponsor at ACC was Mary Petersen, Program Coordinator for the Agriculture Extension of the School of Agriculture and Environment. On September 15, 2010, she helped present the first Master Gardener program information evening. Over 70 people attended, and many went on to enrol in the initial course offerings that fall in Winnipeg. Core courses were also offered in Brandon in January 2011 and in Steinbach in 2012.

In 2011, the Manitoba Master Gardener Association was founded with the following board of directors:

- Co-Chairs—Colleen Zacharias (Winnipeg) and Karen Loewen (Steinbach)
- Treasurer—Ed Czarnecki (Winnipeg)
- Secretary—Jeannette Adams (Winnipeg)
- Governance and Planning Director—Stephanie Tretiak (Gimli)
- Education Standards Director—Lenore Linton (Winnipeg)
- Communications (Website) Director—Marilyn Dudek (Winnipeg)
- Membership Director—Deborah Petrie (Brandon)
- Members at Large—Carol Bender (Beausejour) and Barbara-Jean Jackson (Brandon)
- Ex-Officio: Program Coordinator at Assiniboine Community College—Mary Petersen

After the retirement of Mary Petersen in 2011, ACC moved responsibility for the program to its Centre of Continuing Studies, where it was administered on a part-time basis by Jodi Madill, administrative assistant, later joined by Brad Hack, coordinator for job skills and industry certifications. ACC hired instructors recommended by the MMGA, provided them with lecture materials developed by the U of S, and managed the completion of the internship hours and exam.

By 2016, because of minimum enrolment requirements, courses were only being offered once a year at ACC's Winnipeg location. In response to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020-2021, ACC shifted to offering the courses virtually via Zoom, but struggled to attract viable enrolment numbers. Meanwhile, the U of S had extensively revised its training program and converted it to enable on-demand, online delivery. In 2021, it ended its brokering agreement with ACC. Also in 2021, the MMGA took over responsibility from ACC for supervising and approving the internship (practicum) component of the program. ACC decided to offer something it called the "Manitoba Gardener" program with some of the former instructors and similar courses, but enrolments remained low, leading to cancellation of several classes. Students were referred to the U of S online program. Starting in January 2022, the MMGA officially recognized the U of S program as training for Manitoba Master Gardeners, and in May 2022, the MMGA board decided to make the U of S its sole educational partner for the delivery of the Master Gardener training and examination. Since then, Manitobans have been able to register for courses through a special portal on the Gardening at the U of S website.

Since 2011, the Manitoba Master Gardener Association has promoted Master Gardener education and served as the certifying and support organization for interns and graduates in Manitoba. It has been a reliable source of volunteers and horticultural information for the community. As of 2023, the MMGA has over 100 members who are certified Master Gardeners and over 70 who are training to become Master Gardeners.

Linda Dietrick
February 2023

Sources

- “About Us.” Manitoba Master Gardener Association website. mgmanitoba.com.
- Adams, Jeannette. “Manitoba Master Gardeners: The Resource for Quality Information for Every Gardener.” Article submitted to Winnipeg community newspapers, March 2020.
- Adams, Jeannette. Personal communication, March 15, 2021.
- Extension Master Gardeners (U.S.) website. mastergardener.extension.org.
- Gibby, David, et al. “The Master Gardener Program: A WSU Extension Success Story. Early History from 1973.” Online at mastergardener.wsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/History-of-early-MG-Program-011618.pdf.
- Graham, Lori. Personal communication, April 2, 2021.
- International Master Gardener Conference website. internationalmastergardener.com.
- “Master Gardener Certificate Program.” Gardening at the U of S website. gardening.usask.ca/certificates--degrees/master-gardener1.php.
- Master Gardeners in Ontario website. www.mgoi.ca.
- McLean, Scott. “University Extension and Social Change: Positioning a University of the People in Saskatchewan.” *Adult Education Quarterly* 58.1 (Nov. 2007): 3-21.
- Petersen, Mary. “Master Gardener Program for Manitoba.” *The 2011 Prairie Garden*. 118-119.
- “University of Saskatchewan Master Gardener Program.” ICanGarden website. icangarden.com/clubs/SaskMasterGardeners.
- Zacharias, Colleen. Personal communication, Feb. 12, 2021.

Manitoba Master Gardener Association By-Laws, Revised 2022

Article 1 – Name

The organization shall be known as the Manitoba Master Gardener Association, hereinafter referred to as the MMGA.

Article 2 – Mission Statement

The MMGA cultivates the development and continuous education of Master Gardeners, supports volunteerism, and encourages sustainable, proven gardening practices throughout Manitoba.

Article 3 – MMGA Organization and Purpose

Master Gardener Associations belong to an international network. The Master Gardener Associations differ from other horticultural associations in that they require a specific horticultural training followed by the successful completion of an exam in order to acquire full membership. A further obligation to maintain membership in the Association is the provision of volunteer hours and proof of ongoing education to assist the development of horticultural knowledge and skills in the community.

The MMGA is an independent organization established in 2011. It serves as a networking and governing body for its members who are Master Gardeners and Master Gardener Interns for whom it provides oversight and educational programming. The MMGA is also an educational resource for the gardening public.

While the MMGA may have occasion to consult or work with another horticultural organization, the MMGA shall continue to exist as an independent organization. Further, as an independent organization, the MMGA shall not act as an arm of another organization nor come under the umbrella/direction of the Board of another organization.

Article 4 – Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the MMGA are:

1. To co-operate with and support the educational activities of our institutional affiliates in order to implement and develop the Manitoba Master Gardener Training Program.
2. To provide a communication network for Manitoba Master Gardeners to exchange ideas and information.
3. To support the ongoing training of Manitoba Master Gardeners by providing information.
4. To encourage the growth of horticultural communities by building connections with like-minded organizations.
5. To serve as a source of horticultural information for the general public.
6. To promote sustainable horticultural practices and environmental stewardship.

Article 5 – Membership

Membership in the MMGA will be made up of persons who have paid their annual membership fees and fulfill the requirements of one or more of the following categories:

- 1. Member in Good Standing** – Certified Master Gardener (MG) who fulfills the required number of volunteer hours per year and maintains their educational upgrade status. A Master Gardener who has received certification in another province or state, but has relocated to Manitoba, must provide proof of certification, volunteer records, and educational upgrade records. Members in Good Standing have voting privileges.
- 2. Inactive/Sabbatical Member** – A member may request a one-year sabbatical if circumstances prevent them from fulfilling the requirements to maintain membership in good standing. After the one-year period, the member must decide if they can return to membership in good standing or request Emeritus status. Annual fees must be paid to maintain status. Inactive/Sabbatical Members have no voting privileges.
- 3. Member Emeritus** – Master Gardeners who have been active members for at least 10 years, but can no longer fulfill all requirements to maintain active status. Members Emeritus must pay annual fees and have non-voting status.
- 4. Intern Member** – Master Gardener Intern who is actively pursuing the requirements needed for certification. Interns are granted a complimentary membership in the MMGA for up to but not exceeding two years of enrolment in the Manitoba Master Gardener Program. Complimentary membership ends upon certification. Non-voting status.

Standards for volunteer hours and activities will be set by the MMGA. Educational requirements/upgrades will be set by the MMGA in co-operation with the institutional affiliates and periodically reviewed.

Membership in the MMGA ceases if annual fees are not paid in a timely manner, or volunteer hours are not maintained according to acceptable criteria and submitted on an annual basis, or the member submits their written resignation.

Reactivation of former members – If membership has lapsed, a former member wishing reinstatement must pay the membership fee and supply the pro-rated volunteer hours.

The fiscal year for membership in the MMGA is January 1 to December 31.

Article 6 – Statement of Privacy

Personal information on members collected by the MMGA shall be for the exclusive use of the MMGA in order to inform members about educational opportunities, activities, and events that are relevant to the MMGA and will not be shared with any other persons or organizations without permission of the member. All Board of Directors and Committee members having access to this information will strive to preserve its confidentiality .

Article 7 – Meetings and Elections

The Board meeting is integral to the Board's ability to fulfill its responsibilities to the membership of the MMGA and to further the goals of the organization. Regularly scheduled meetings of the Board of Directors shall be called by the Chair no fewer than three times annually. One of these meetings shall be the Annual General Meeting. Full attendance is requested of Board members. Attendance will be documented in the Minutes of Board meetings and made available to the membership prior to elections for Board Directors at the AGM.

In order to facilitate attendance, meetings will be scheduled well in advance so that if necessary, meetings can be rescheduled so as to coordinate with Board members' schedules. Board members are expected to attend a majority of the meetings. In addition, the Board will ensure that its meeting room has remote interactive accessibility to enable remote participation by directors unable to be present in person. All other MMGA business will be conducted through electronic correspondence.

Annual General Meeting dates will be determined by the Board of Directors and published on the web page and/or in the newsletter and Volunteer Impact system, stating meeting date, location, and agenda at least one month prior to the date of the meeting.

Election of officers will be held at the Annual General Meeting. Members in Good Standing of the MMGA may vote. Only certified Master Gardeners who are Members in Good Standing may hold Board of Directors positions. Each position is for a two-year term, except for the Past Chair, who has a one-year term. If an incumbent wishes to run for the same or another position, they must follow the nomination process. In order to maintain some continuity within the Board of Directors, 50% of the positions will come up for election each year.

The process for elections shall require the submission of a signed and seconded nomination form by the person seeking a Board position to the sitting Board Secretary two weeks prior to the Annual General Meeting. The Secretary will prepare the Nomination Slate to be considered. An Elections Officer who is a Member in Good Standing not seeking a Board Position will be appointed by the Board. At the Annual General Meeting, the Elections Officer will read the Nomination Slate and ask for any further nominations to be submitted no later than two hours prior to scheduled voting, at which time nominations will be declared closed. Voting will be done by secret ballot. Ballots will be counted by the Elections Officer with the help of a second Member in Good Standing. Results and the newly elected Board of Directors will be presented to the membership. In event that an open Board position is uncontested, the vote shall be made using a show of hands and a majority vote of those present.

Should a position be unfilled or become vacant midterm, the sitting Board of Directors can appoint a qualified Member in Good Standing.

Quorum for election of Board of Directors and motions shall be:

51% of Board and Committee members for Board of Directors meetings and online decisions.

25% of eligible voting members for the Annual General Meeting.

Article 8 – Board of Directors

The Board of Directors of the MMGA will strive to uphold the Goals and Objectives of the MMGA on behalf of the association's membership. They will conduct the business of the MMGA in a timely fashion, keep accurate records, and strive to share pertinent information with the members. Business will be conducted through electronic communication as well as the required number of scheduled meetings. The MMGA Board of Directors positions are strictly voluntary and no remuneration shall be given to Directors for performing the duties connected with their positions. Each Board Director holds one vote except for the Secretary, who only votes to break a tie.

Board positions shall consist of Officers, Directors, and Members at Large. The Officers are the Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Directors positions are the Past Chair, Educational Standards Director, Online Media Director, Membership Director, Special Events Director, Director of Volunteers, Newsletter Director, and the Members at Large.

Chair – Schedules regular and annual meetings. Drafts agendas for all meetings. Chairs all meetings. Represents the MMGA as required. Serves as liaison between educational affiliate(s) and the MMGA. Holds signing authority for banking and legal purposes. Monitors financial situation of the MMGA.

Vice-Chair – Performs the duties of the Chair in his/her absence. In the event of a vacancy in the office of the Chair, serves as acting Chair until a General Meeting is held. Chairs the Nominating Committee. Assists the Elections Officer with preparations for the Board of Directors elections.

Treasurer – Oversees the association’s financial matters, including but not limited to: managing accounts receivable and payable; producing and distributing financial statements and reports; maintaining accurate files and documents; purchasing insurance policies and licenses; administrating online banking for deposit accounts and investments; holds signing authority for banking purposes.

Secretary – Transcribes and distributes minutes of all meetings to the MMGA Board of Directors and upon request to MMGA members. Helps the Chair draft the agendas for all meetings. Maintains the MMGA files. Handles necessary correspondence.

Past Chair – One-year term. Serves as information resource for the new Chair and the Board.

Educational Standards Director – Provides opportunities and information on professional development opportunities such as guest speakers, links to resources, recommended reading and conferences. Provides liaison with other prairie associations and experts for the purpose of developing opportunities of interest to the MMGA membership and other organizations. Recommends educational programming and presentations for members and the general public. Assists the Chair in communicating with the educational affiliates to insure the effective delivery of the Manitoba Master Gardener Program.

Online Media Director – Manages and updates the website and the social media platforms of the MMGA. Ensures links to resources and groups are in place. Posts current news and information on the website.

Membership Director – Maintains the membership database of members’ volunteer and education hours. Works with the educational affiliate to ensure the list of graduates is updated regularly. Distributes membership cards.

Special Events Director – Co-ordinates and plans special events at which the MMGA is represented as an organization, including the Annual General Meeting. Works with the Educational Standards Director to arrange for necessary venues for professional development events. May request the formation of an Ad hoc committee for specific events.

Director of Volunteers – Advises on any volunteer opportunity, determining if it constitutes MMGA volunteer hours. Advertises volunteer opportunities to the membership and works with other organizations to develop and present volunteer opportunities. Creates and maintains an annual record, in conjunction with the Membership Director, of members’ volunteer activities and hours for the purposes of an overview of Master Gardeners’ and Intern participation and contributions in communities in Manitoba.

Newsletter Director – Produces and distributes an electronic newsletter for the MMGA membership and subscribers six times a year.

Members at Large – two positions. Attend Board meetings and assist as needed. If a Board Position becomes vacant in mid-term, would assist with those duties until a replacement is found. Have voting privileges.

Ad hoc Committees – Upon the approval of the Board of Directors, a Director can establish a temporary committee of Members in Good Standing and Intern Members to assist with planning or executing a specific event or task. The Director will act as chair of such committees. Once the event or task is completed, the Chair will make a report to the Board of Directors and the Ad hoc committee will be disbanded.

To assist them in the performance of their duties, Board Directors are encouraged to form sub-committees consisting of Members in Good Standing and Intern Members. In addition to receiving valuable assistance, Directors in turn can provide direction and mentorship to sub-committee members, who may in the future become Board candidates.

Article 9 – Finances

The fiscal year of the MMGA is January 1 to December 31.

The MMGA will be operated exclusively for educational, scientific and community enhancement purposes. No part of its net earnings will be for the personal benefit of individual members.

The Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer will be authorized to register at the designated financial institution as Signing Officers. Two signatures will be required to issue cheques for approved expenditures. The Board of Directors shall approve expenditures for normal operating costs. A financial statement will be prepared and presented by the Treasurer at the Annual General Meeting. This Annual Financial Report will be posted along with information for the Annual General Meeting for review by the MMGA members.

Mileage allowance is available for those Board Directors who have to travel to events to promote the MMGA.

Article 10 – Amendments

Revisions to the By-Laws may be proposed by any MMGA member and presented to the Board of Directors no later than two months prior to an Annual General Meeting. Upon review by the Board of Directors an Amendment to the By-Laws shall be presented to the membership for approval. Should an immediate decision be required, a majority vote of the Board of Directors can temporarily enact the revision.

Article 11 – Dissolution

In the event that the membership or finances of the MMGA present circumstances that indicate the organization is no longer viable, a Proposal for Dissolution must be presented to the membership and voted upon. Upon approval, all accrued assets will be disbursed to organizations whose purposes are deemed in accordance with those of the MMGA. The decision of the Board of Directors is final.

Article 12 – Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order in Brief, Newly Revised (latest Edition) shall govern the association in all procedural matters not contained in the By-Laws.

By-Laws of the MMGA officially accepted:

Date: April 9, 2022

Location: Annual General Meeting, Winnipeg

Signed: (Shelley Walker, Chair)