

# **ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION, INC.**

**(AMGA)**

## **BOARD MANUAL**



**THIS MANUAL HAS BEEN  
PREPARED FOR AMGA BOARD  
MEMBERS**

Contents are the property of  
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**(Amended June 3, 2025)**

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## **TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS OF AMGA**

On behalf of the Extension Master Gardeners of the State of Alabama, thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of this important board.

This manual has been prepared to assist you in becoming familiar with the Alabama Master Gardeners Association, its responsibilities, and its relationship with the Alabama Cooperative Extension and the local Alabama Master Gardeners Associations. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask any questions that you may have.

Again, thank you, and we hope that your experience on this Board will be fulfilling and enjoyable.

## **STATE ORGANIZATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS**

### **State Organization**

We are fortunate that a lady named Mary Lou McNabb (and her husband Bob) moved from New York to Huntsville, Alabama. Mary Lou had become a Cornell Extension Master Gardener volunteer in New York, and, in 1981, she asked Gary Murray, Madison County Extension Agent, if he could help start a Master Gardener Program in Alabama. As they say, “the rest is history.”

In 1993, Master Gardeners established the Alabama Master Gardeners Association, Inc. (AMGA) a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational organization to enhance and support the work of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and to expand knowledge of an interest in horticulture and related subject areas.

Today local Master Gardeners association throughout Alabama have a common goal of meeting and sharing information about Extension Master Gardener Volunteer service opportunities, common interests in making the community a better place to live and learning more about their passion .... Gardening (Please refer to the Bylaws for AMGA’s Objectives.)

### **AMGA’s Relationship with Local Associations**

AMGA’s objective is to provide leadership for Extension Master Gardeners in the State of Alabama through the local associations. This includes providing guidance for efficient operation of the Associations. AMGA’s responsibilities also include providing educational opportunities through conferences, seminars and other appropriate programs.

The AMGA State Advisory Council and the Board of Directors Communications Committee were created to provide a clear line of communication between AMGA and the local associations. Details regarding the responsibilities of the Advisory Council and the Communications Committee are contained in separate sections of this manual.

### **AMGA’s Relationship with ACES**

Extension Master Gardeners are the volunteers and the outreach ambassadors of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. ACES provides research-based information that we share with our communities through their network of subject specialists, university research and extension agents. ACES also provides the quality training that all Extension Master Gardener Volunteers receive through their intern training and through continuing education. We are proud to work hand in hand with ACES to better serve our communities throughout the state.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESPONSIBILITIES**

The AMGA Board of Directors consists of four (4) elected AMGA officers and seven (7) board members elected at large at the Annual Business Meeting of AMGA generally held in conjunction with the State Conference. All board members of AMGA shall be active members in good standing of AMGA, a state member at large and/or of a local EMG association. If a local association exists, the board member must be an active local member. All local and state dues should be current and all board members shall have completed and recorded the minimum volunteer service hours and CEUs each year. Officers of AMGA shall be elected for a two-year term, and board members are elected on a staggered-term basis for three (3) years. No Officer or Board Member may serve consecutive terms in a position.

Board Members are expected to commit the time and resources necessary to accomplish the mission of the AMGA Board by:

- attending quarterly board meetings, the Annual Business Meeting and State Conference, and any special meetings that may be called by the President.

- chairing or working on one or more standing or special committees as requested or as assigned by the President.

- providing recommendations/advice on policies and programs based on background and experience.

- maintaining computer and Internet skills, since a large part of AMGA business is conducted via the Internet.

- being financially responsible for costs incurred related to attending board meetings. The AMGA has no provisions to cover travel, food or lodging costs associated with attendance at board meetings, special meetings or any Extension Master Gardener Volunteer activity that requires board/committee members to be present.

## **OFFICERS OF AMGA**

All Officers of AMGA shall have served a minimum of one term on either the AMGA Board of Directors in any capacity which includes voting positions, committee chairs or any other state level positions, committee chairs or any other state level position such as Advisory Council Chair or Vice Chair. This requirement can only be waived by a vote of the Board of Directors.

### **PRESIDENT**

The President of AMGA shall:

- preside over the operation of the Association, in accordance with Bylaws and other policies in place.
- schedule quarterly meeting dates.
- develop board meeting agenda and provide to Secretary for distribution to board members a minimum of two weeks prior to all board meetings.
- preside at all board meetings of AMGA.
- preside over the business session at the Annual State Master Gardeners Meeting.
- appoint Chairs of all standing and special committees subject to the approval of the Board of Directors.
- serve as an ex officio member of all standing and special committees.
- review AMGA documents (Board Manual, Local Association Handbook, Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation) annually and amend as needed to maintain consistency with current operational practices and across documents. All modifications will be subject to the approval of the Board of Directors and as necessary approval by the AMGA membership.
- manage access to the AMGA website.
- serve as a signer on the AMGA bank accounts.
- write and submit a column to the editor of the AMGA quarterly newsletter. Length to be determined by newsletter editor.

## **VICE-PRESIDENT**

The Vice-President of AMGA shall:

- assume all duties, authority, and responsibilities of the President in the absence or incapacity of the President.
- serve as chairperson of the conference committee.
- assure that each Board Member has access to the most recent Board Manual.
- conduct an annual board orientation for all new board members and committee chairs.
- coordinate appropriate recognition of outgoing President during the annual conference.
- perform other duties as requested by the President or the Board of Directors.
- write and submit a column to the editor of the AMGA quarterly newsletter. Length to be determined by newsletter editor.

## **SECRETARY**

The Secretary of AMGA shall:

- be the official record keeper for AMGA.
- maintain an up-to-date list of officers, elected board members and Committee Chairs containing all pertinent contact information and distribute said list to Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs.
- schedule meeting facility and notify officers and other board members of time, location and other pertinent information regarding the Board Meeting, or special called meetings.
- send agenda and committee reports to all Board Members and Committee Chairs at least one (1) week prior to each meeting.
- record the proceedings at the AMGA Board of Directors and Annual Business Meetings, and after acceptance transfer to the Records and Retention Chair.
- conduct a roll call from the associations represented during the business session of the Annual Meeting.
- review the records of past minutes so that information can be provided regarding previous action taken by the Board of Directors if the need should arise during a meeting.
- possess a working knowledge of the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws.

- keep and maintain all records of the AMGA, except those assigned to others by the President or the Board of Directors.
- handle any compilation of reports or general correspondence as directed by the President or the Board of Directors.
- perform any other duties requested by the President or the Board of Directors.

## **TREASURER**

The Treasurer of AMGA shall:

- -be the custodian of all financial books and financial records of AMGA.
- oversee the overall financial activity of AMGA.
- receive and disburse all funds in accordance with AMGA Board policies.
- work closely with the AMGA Membership Chair to ensure continuity of records regarding memberships and dues payments.
- present year-to-date financial reports at the Board Meetings and an annual financial report including the annual financial review/audit at the Annual Meeting.
- prepare and present a written budget for the coming year based on input from appropriate committees and programs.
- present for acceptance by the general membership at the annual meeting a written final financial report for the past year and a written board-approved budget for the current year.
- make available to the financial review/audit committee all records, books, and papers required for examining the accuracy of the books.
- at the end of term, prepare a list of all outstanding debts with names and addresses to present to the incoming Treasurer. The incoming Treasurer will notify the entities involved of where to send bills and related correspondence.
- be responsible for the investment of excess AMGA funds with the approval of the Board of Directors.
- be responsible for preparation and filing of tax returns.
- monitor the \$10,000 AMGA reserve and notify the Board of Directors if the amount falls below the specified amount.
- transmit copies of the financial reports to the Records and Retention Chair after presentation to the Board of Directors quarterly or to the membership at the annual Business Meeting.
- transmit copy of the results of the annual financial review/audit to the Records and Retention Chair after presentation to the Board of Directors.

- be responsible for maintaining financial records in accordance with 501(c)(3) requirements.

### **ASSISTANT TREASURER**

The Assistant Treasurer of AMGA shall:

- be familiar with all responsibilities of the Treasurer.
- work closely with the AMGA Treasurer.
- assume the duties and responsibilities of the Treasurer if the Treasurer is unable to perform the duties.
- be on-call to assist at the request of the AMGA Treasurer or President.

### **COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD**

AMGA Committees shall consist of three (3) members each unless otherwise specified in the committee description.

Each committee shall exercise only those powers and responsibilities that are delegated to it. No committee or member thereof may authorize the expenditure of AMGA funds or obligate the AMGA in any manner unless authorized by the Board of Directors to do so. Committee Chairs shall be responsible for submitting to the Board of Directors their proposal for such authorization.

Each Committee Chair will:

- recruit committee members and ensure that members have the information needed to do their jobs.
- prepare a summary report of committee activities which will be provided to succeeding committee chair.
- provide a report, listing any anticipated action item(s) at the end to the Secretary two (2) weeks prior to each Board Meeting.
- provide committee reports to the Newsletter Editor for inclusion in the quarterly AMGA Newsletter when appropriate.
- provide copies of all relevant documents to the Chair of the Records and Retention Committee for permanent storage.

## **AUDIT/FINANCIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**

An Audit/Financial Review Committee, none of whom are members of the Board of Directors, shall be appointed by the President and approved by the Board of Directors at least ninety (90) days prior to the end of the fiscal year. The Audit/Financial Review Committee shall examine the Treasurer's accounts for the fiscal year and, at the annual meeting, submit in writing a report signed by all members of the committee.

The Audit/Financial Review Committee shall:

- review all financial records maintained by the Treasurer including verification of expenditures.
- prepare a report to the AMGA President and Board of Directors giving the results of the audit/financial review.

## **AWARDS COMMITTEE**

The Awards Committee, consisting of a minimum of five (5) members, administers the AMGA Awards Program that annually recognizes Extension Master Gardener Volunteers for exceptional service to the Master Gardener Program. The Awards Committee Chair, with the approval of the President, identifies another AMGA member of serve as the "Reach for the Stars" Chair.

Awards include:

- Mary Lou McNabb Alabama Master Gardener of the Year Award.
- Gary Murray Award for Outstanding Service and Dedication to the Alabama Master Gardener Program.
- Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award.
- Top Hours of the Year Award.
- Outstanding Newsletter Award.
- Reach for the Stars Program.

The awards are described in detail in Appendix 1 - AMGA Awards Program, pages 22-27. Award winners are announced at the AMGA Annual Conference.

The Awards Committee shall:

- determine the types of awards to be given to Extension Master Gardeners across the State of Alabama and submit these recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval.

- solicit nominations from local associations through written correspondence with each local association President and/or ACES Regional Extension Agent.

The Reach for the Stars Chair shall:

- serve as custodian of the stars for the program.
- receive requests from local associations for stars and badges and send the stars to local associations for presentation.

## **COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

The primary responsibility of the Communications Committee is to promote communications between all facets of the Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program and its membership.

The Communications Committee Chair shall:

- develop and maintain an annual AMGA calendar of significant and mandatory dates for both the AMGA and the local EMG associations. The approved calendar will be provided to the AMGA Webmaster for inclusion on the AMGA Website.
- attend Board of Directors meetings and Advisory Council meetings to facilitate communications with AMGA.
- work with the newsletter editor and the webmaster to facilitate their roles as chairs of subcommittees of the Communications Committee.
- perform other tasks when assigned by the President or Board of Directors.

## **NEWSLETTER SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Newsletter Editor shall chair this subcommittee, which will consist of the Editor, Copy Editor and Proofreader. The Editor shall work with the Communications Committee Chair, as content manager.

The minimum requirements for an editor include:

- be familiar with a style manual such as the AP Style Guide for current guidelines relating to usage “for the digital age.”
- check all articles for readability, correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- check that names of individuals, places and organizations are spelled properly and that facts, dates and statistics are accurate.
- check that illustrations and photos are correctly captioned.

- when necessary, research cited sources to make sure they are reputable and that proper credit is given.
- make sure the writing is easy to read, and rewrite and update written content when needed.
- make necessary changes to articles to meet AMGA's standards.

The Editor shall, with the assistance of the committee as needed:

- work with the Board of Directors, Officers, Committee Chairs, Happenings Reporters and State EMG Program Coordinator.
- establish deadlines for when newsletter articles are due based on the board-established publication schedule.
- send a reminder to Pathways contributors and Happenings Reporters one month prior to the deadline for submission. A second reminder will be sent at the due date of minus two weeks as needed.
- adhere to established criteria regarding submission of articles, such as text submission format, word count, or picture criteria (See full criteria on website [www.alabamamga.org](http://www.alabamamga.org)).
- edit all submissions as needed and prepare the first draft following the format approved by the Communications Committee and the Board of Directors.
- provide first draft to copy editor for editing.
- make corrections noted by Copy Editor and send second draft to Copy Editor for review. Send revised draft to the Proofreader for editing.
- send edited documents in pdf form to the President and Vice President for final editing and approval.
- attend AMGA Board of Directors meetings and Advisor Council meetings.

The Copy Editor shall assist the Editor as needed:

- be familiar with a style manual such as the AP Style Guide for current guidelines relating to usage "for the digital age."
- check all articles for readability, correct spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- check that names of individuals, places and organizations are spelled correctly and that facts, dates and statistics are in proper format. If there are any doubts or questions about this, the Editor checks with the reporter when the article is first received.
- check that illustrations and photos are correctly captioned.
- suggest changes to articles to meet AMGA's standards.

The Proofreader shall assist the Editor as needed:

- be familiar with a style manual such as the AP Style Guide for current guidelines relating to usage “for the digital age.”
- proof the edited copy of the newsletter before it is submitted to the President and Vice President for final editing and approval.
- check that spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct and consistent.

### **WEBSITE SUBCOMMITTEE**

The Webmaster shall work with the Communications Committee Chair, as content manager, to maintain the association’s website.

The Webmaster shall:

- maintain the association’s website, [www.alabamamga.org](http://www.alabamamga.org).
- coordinate with Officers, Board Members and Committee Chairs to maintain current information on the website.
- maintain the website hosting company to host the site.
- acquire photographs of association events to post on the website.
- maintain a list of contacts to include AMGA Officers, Board Members, and Committee Chairs.
- coordinate with Alabama Cooperative Extension System (State Master Gardener Program Coordinator) to post information about future Extension Master Gardener classes and Extension related information.
- report on the status of the website to the Communications Committee.
- ensure that articles and photos are posted and removed in a timely manner.
- attend AMGA Board of Directors meetings and Advisory Council meetings on an “as needed” basis.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The State Master Gardener Program Coordinator serves as Chair of the Continuing Education Committee that consists of at least three additional members.

The primary purpose of the Committee is to develop programs that will offer continuing education (CEU) opportunities for certified Extension Master Gardener Volunteers to assist the membership in meeting annual continuing education requirements.

The Continuing Education Committee shall:

- determine a host location 12-18 months in advance with the event location changing each year as a convenience to all members.
- work with the hosting county association to organize and provide a one-day Fall Seminar each year.
- identify continuing education subject matter in the many areas of horticulture that should interest and benefit Extension Master Gardeners in their volunteer efforts.
- any profit from the Fall Seminar will be split equally between the hosting entity and the AMGA.

## **ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE**

It is the policy of AMGA to support Alabama resident students seeking degrees in horticulture or closely related course of study at Auburn University through both undergraduate and graduate scholarships funded through endowment funds established by AMGA in cooperation with Auburn University (AU). The Endowment Committee cooperates with Auburn University (AU) in the administration and promotion of the AMGA/Auburn College of Agriculture Endowment funds per the endowment agreements.

The Endowment Committee shall:

- determine if sufficient funds are available to offer a scholarship. Any deviation from the stated policy is subject to approval of the Board of Directors.
- work with AMGA Board of Directors and Auburn College of Agriculture to maintain endowment agreements.
- communicate and follow-up with the AMGA Treasurer to forward scholarship funds to Auburn University within the established timeframe.
- may attend the yearly Scholarship Awards Ceremony at Auburn University and participate as requested by AU.
- report to the membership at Annual Business Meeting regarding fund balance/performance and status of recipients.
- work with the AMGA Board of Directors and Auburn College of Agriculture to update the agreements as necessary.

## **MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

The Membership Chair shall have primary responsibility for maintaining records and for working with local associations and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) in increasing and retaining Extension Master Gardener Volunteer membership.

The Membership Committee shall:

- oversee maintenance of an up-to-date database (Dues Tracker) of dues-paying members, including name, address, telephone number and email address.
- work closely with the AMGA Treasurer to ensure continuity of records regarding membership and dues payments.
- notify local association membership chairs by January 31 each year of delinquencies in submission of Dues Tracker database update information and follow up on those delinquencies until the needed updated information is recorded.
- assist local association membership chairs as needed in entering and maintaining membership records.
- provide a list of members entitled to vote at annual or specially called meetings at least 10 days prior to such meetings.
- issue membership cards each year to the local associations for distribution to each Extension Master Gardener Volunteer who has paid state dues or is a state Lifetime Member.
- identify database changes/upgrades needed to improve membership information reporting and coordinate the proposed changes with the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator.
- when requested by the Board of Directors, develop a plan that encourages anyone with an interest in gardening to participate in the Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program, or a plan that encourages graduate Extension Master Gardener Volunteers to remain active in their associations.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating Committee shall be composed of three (3) members: one of whom is elected each year to serve a two-year term and one (1) appointed by the newly elected President.

The Nominating Committee shall:

- work with the AMGA Advisory Council to obtain nominations of qualified candidates for officers/board members/committee positions. Nominees must be members in

good standing (current on both state and local dues, having met the minimum volunteer hours requirement and the minimum CEUs requirement) of both local and state associations. If a nominee lives in an area with no access to a local association, they must be a state member at large and have met the minimum volunteer hours requirement and the minimum CEUs requirement.

- provide candidates with the responsibilities associated with the position as defined in this manual.
- present the slate of candidates to the Board of Directors at the December Board Meeting.
- publish the slate of candidates with their resumes in the winter issues of Pathways for AMGA general membership's review before the annual meeting. The slate shall be presented to the Board of Directors at the December Board Meeting and before publication to the general membership.
- prepare the ballot and conduct the election of candidates during the business meeting at the annual Master Gardener Business Meeting. The Nominating Chair shall have a copy of qualifications for all offices at the annual meeting. If there are nominees from the floor during the election process, said nominees must meet the requirements of the office for which they are nominated. If said nominees are qualified to hold the position, then the election process moves to a secret ballot. Only state Master Gardener members are eligible to vote, and their membership shall be verified before they are given a ballot to vote. The sitting Secretary and two past Presidents will count and verify the votes.
- provide names of potential candidates to the AMGA Board of Directors if vacancies occur during the year. The Board of Directors shall fill such vacancies. If the vacancy occurs on the Nominating Committee, the Board of Directors shall identify potential candidates and appoint a qualified candidate to fill the unexpired term.
- maintain a list of potential candidates for officer positions and Board Member at Large positions to pass on to the successive nominating committees.
- candidates for any state Master Gardener office must be willing to commit the time and resources necessary to effectively perform duties of their elected or appointed office.

## **PROJECT FUNDING COMMITTEE**

The purpose of the Project Funding Committee is to develop and administer a Project Funding program that annually awards AMGA financial assistance to qualified Master Gardener projects throughout the State of Alabama.

The Project Funding Committee shall:

- work with the AMGA Treasurer to determine the amount available for the yearly allotment to this project.
- with the Treasurer, bring this proposed budget to the Board of Directors for approval at the Fall Board Meeting.
- update the criteria for selecting projects for funding.
- update the application packet to be distributed to interested EMG groups.
- if updates are made to the criteria and applications, the Board of Directors shall approve those changes before publication.
- post the updated criteria and application packet on the website ([www.alabamamga.org](http://www.alabamamga.org)).
- solicit applications at Advisory Council meetings and via the email distribution process.
- secure volunteers to serve on the evaluation committee.
- with the committee, evaluate the applications based on the current criteria and present identified projects to the Board of Directors for approval.
- notify associations whose projects were selected for funding.
- notify associations whose projects were not selected for funding as to why they were not selected for funding.
- request the approved funding checks from the AMGA Treasurer.
- submit an article to Pathways (AMGA quarterly newsletter) announcing the winners.
- establish guidelines to be followed in executing the projects and notify the award winners of the financial accountability requirements of the AMGA.
- request periodic reports of project progress.
- coordinate any publicity/recognition activities associated with these projects and announce the awarding of grants at the Annual Meeting.

## **RECORDS AND RETENTION COMMITTEE**

The Records and Retention Committee is composed of one member. The Records and Retention Committee shall:

- maintain hard copies of all board and committee approval documents until transferred into a digital retrieval system.
- maintain digital retrieval system.

- receive all board/committee approved documentation and other correspondence as deemed necessary by the Board of Directors and ensure that it is archived into the proper repository for posterity.
- establish guidelines for handling and maintaining all approved board/committee documentation and correspondence from cradle to grave.
- seek the Board of Directors assistance within 24-48 hours of identification of major problems.
- report to the Board of Directors quarterly about any progress and/or difficulties encountered during the quarter.

### **SPEAKERS' BUREAU COMMITTEE**

The Speakers' Bureau Committee is composed of one oversight member.

The Speakers' Bureau Committee shall:

- promote the public outreach mission of Alabama Extension through presentations by Extension Master Gardener Volunteers.
- maintain a list of certified Master Gardener speakers and their research-based topics available for booking by local Master Gardener associations, other gardening groups, and civic organizations.
- establish guidelines for the inclusion of qualified speakers and their topics and the conditions of their availability.
- report quarterly to the Board of Directors on the status of the Bureau.
- attend Advisory Council meetings to promote the Bureau and recruit speakers.
- work with the AMGA Webmaster to maintain timely updates to the website's Speakers' Bureau listings.
- submit quarterly reports to the Pathways (AMGA newsletter) editor for publication.

### **STATE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE**

The State Conference Committee, chaired by the AMGA Vice President, is composed of at least seven (7) members: (1) the chairperson(s) of the Conference Committee from hosting local association, (2) conference chairs from the previous conference, (3) the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator, and (4) the Conference chairs for the next two conferences. Each local hosting association will develop their subcommittees to plan and coordinate the Annual Business Meeting, and all the activities associated with the

conference. The major responsibilities of the local hosting associations are contained in the AMGA Conference Manual.

Each member of the State Conference Committee shall:

- follow the guidelines provided in the AMGA Conference Manual.
- provide a summary of planning activities at each Board Meeting leading up to the conference.
- use other members of the committee as a resource if problems arise.
- ensure that a final conference report and a written financial report of the conference is completed in a timely manner after the conference is completed.
- a copy of the written reports shall be provided to the Vice President, the Records and Retention Chair, and to each of the future Conference Chairs.
- work with AMGA to promote the annual conference through the state newsletter, the state website and other media.
- schedule time on the agenda of AMGA Board of Directors meetings for briefings by local hosting associations.
- review the AMGA Conference Manual, Guidelines for Conducting a State Conference, annually for inclusion of appropriate input from each hosting association's final conference report. All modifications will be subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. The program committee also maintains a separate archive of past conference summary reports.
- assist with the promotion of local associations' activities, including field trips, special workshops and conferences.

### **STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL (AC)**

Each local association shall select a representative and an alternate to serve on the Advisory Council (AC). The AC shall meet on a quarterly basis at a location determined by the representatives. A Chair shall be elected to a two-year term by the membership. The AC Chair acts as a liaison between the AMGA Board of Directors and the AC. To facilitate communication between the two, it is recommended that the Advisory Council Chair attend AMGA Board Meetings. Responsibilities of the Advisory Council are:

- serve as a link to local Master Gardener Programs. It helps to keep the local membership informed about activities at the State Association level and the activities of other local association groups. A responsibility of the AC is to identify problem areas or areas that need clarification and offer solutions for the known problems.

- the Chair of the Advisory Council uses the minutes from the AMGA Board Meetings as a basis for preparing the agenda for the AC Meeting that is conducted two months following the AMGA Board Meeting.
- encouraging AC representatives and local associations to submit qualified candidates for officers and board members to the AMGA Nominating Committee.
- identifying and assisting in identification of volunteers for the AMGA's standing and special committees.
- communicating with the AMGA Board of Directors and the State Master Gardener Coordinator on occasions when the program is not effective or responsive to the needs of Master Gardeners.
- performing other duties as determined by the Board of Directors.

If an Advisory Council member is elected as a State Association officer or board member, that member's position on the Advisory Council will be considered vacant and a new Council Member shall be appointed by the local membership of that association.

If the Advisory Council Chair is elected to an AMGA Board of Directors position, then the Advisory Council Vice Chair will assume the Chair position for the unexpired term of the Advisory Council Chair.

# APPENDIX 1

## AMGA AWARDS PROGRAM

It is AMGA's policy to recognize exceptional volunteer service in support of the Master Gardener goals. This is accomplished by giving the following annual awards:

1. Mary Lou McNabb Alabama Master Gardener of the Year Award.\*
2. Gary Murray Award for Outstanding Service and Dedication to the Alabama Master Gardener Program.\*
3. Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award.\*
4. Top Hours of the Year Award.\*
5. Outstanding Newsletter Award.
6. Reach for the Stars Program.

\*Recipients of these awards are ineligible to receive the award in the future.

The stars earned under the Reach for the Stars Program are sent to the local associations for presentation to the recipients. The Gold and Platinum badges, plus silver star jewelry pins, and Lifetime Membership pins are available for pickup by a designated representative of a local Master Gardener Association after the Business Meeting at the State Conference.

Each of the awards is explained in detail in the following pages of this manual.

For responsibilities of the Awards Committee, see Page 7. Except for the Reach for the Stars Program, awards are presented at the annual meeting and conference.

**NOMINATIONS FOR ALL AWARDS MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED TO THE CHAIR OF THE AWARDS COMMITTEE NO LATER THAN JANUARY 31 OF THE AWARD YEAR.**

### **THE MARY LOU MCNABB ALABAMA MASTER GARDENER OF THE YEAR AWARD**

Each local association is encouraged to nominate a member for this award. An Extension Agent may nominate an Extension Master Gardener, even if an EMG Association is not located in his or her area.

A detailed summary must be prepared addressing all the points for consideration. This narrative should be submitted in 12-point type and should not exceed two pages in length. No photographs or scrapbooks will be accepted. Accomplishments should be pertinent to

gardening and should not include personal history or family. The year-by-year volunteer hours may be listed on a separate sheet of paper.

Minimum qualifications:

- an average of 100 volunteer service hours per year is required. Documentation, preferable in the Alabama Master Gardener Volunteer Service Reporting System, is required. Failure to report hours will result in an automatic disqualification.
- current active membership in the Alabama Master Gardeners Association and a local Extension Master Gardener group (if available).
- leadership in a local project (multiple projects will enhance a nominee's resume).
- attendance at local and state association meetings.
- service as an officer, board member or committee chair of the AMGA or in the AMGA Advisory Council.
- attendance at local and state association meetings.
- presentation of programs to the public about Extension Master Gardeners or on one of the areas covered in training.
- promotion of the image of the Extension Master Gardener Program.
- involvement in volunteer service activities that are supportive of the mission and purpose of the Alabama Master Gardener Program.

The Mary Lou McNabb winner will be allowed to choose to attend either the International or the Regional Master Gardener Conference within a two-year period following selection and will be reimbursed for expenses not to exceed \$1500. All requests must be made in writing and accompanied by receipts. A Lifetime Membership in the Alabama Master Gardeners Association will be awarded to the Mary Lou McNabb Alabama Master Gardener of the Year recipient.

Award recipients are ineligible to receive this award again.

NOTE: If nominees in any given year do not meet the criteria, the award will not be given that year.

### **THE GARY MURRAY OUTSTANDING SERVICE AND DEDICATION AWARD**

The Gary Murray Outstanding Service and Dedication Award is presented annually by the Alabama Master Gardeners Association. This award honors non-master gardeners who have contributed to the Extension Master Gardener Program in an outstanding way. Each association may select one nominee annually for this award. Although typically given to an

Extension Agent or specialist, it may be given to an individual not affiliated with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System who meets the criteria.

The criteria for this nomination include:

- outstanding service, leadership and dedication in providing superior educational programs to Extension Master Gardeners.
- teaching Extension Master Gardener classes.
- speaking at conferences.
- offer support and special services to Extension Master Gardeners to support our mission.

### **JEAN LEE LIFETIME HOURS AWARD**

The Lifetime Hours Award was introduced in 2002 and renamed The Jean Lee Lifetime Hours Award by the AMGA Board of Directors in March 2005.

Each local EMG Extension Agent is requested to submit the name of the EMG volunteer, who, based on the Agent's records, has reported the most volunteer hours since they completed the Extension Master Gardener Intern Training and became a certified Extension Master Gardener Volunteer.

Beginning in 2005, each recipient of the Award will be given Lifetime membership in AMGA.

Award recipients are ineligible to receive this award more than once.

### **TOP HOURS OF THE YEAR AWARD**

The Top Hours for the Year Award was introduced in 2002. The Volunteer Hours Coordinator should give the local Extension Agent the name of the individual who has reported the most volunteer hours for the year preceding the AMGA Conference. Each local EMG Extension Agent is then requested to submit the name of the EMG volunteer to the AMGA Awards Chair.

### **OUTSTANDING NEWSLETTER AWARDS**

The Outstanding Newsletter Award was introduced in 2011, to honor the local association judged to have the best newsletter in the state. In 2014, the AMGA Board of Directors voted to revise this award into two (2) categories. More recently, the AMGA Board of Directors voted to broaden the scope of this award into three categories:

- less than 32 AMGA members are a small association.
- 33 to 59 AMGA members are a medium association.
- 60 and more AMGA members are a large association.

The newsletters are evaluated on several criteria including:

- calendar/list of local association events.
- calendar/list of local ACES events.
- calendar/list of volunteer opportunities.
- link to report service hours.
- time, location of upcoming meetings.
- stories/pics of community outreach projects.
- balance of hard news vs. lighter news.
- President's monthly column.
- current and future AMGA events.
- links to AMGA website ([alabamamga.org](http://alabamamga.org)).
- newsletter design/attractiveness.
- color and art effectively used.
- catchy headlines.

Two specific issues (months to be named by the Awards Committee in the Winter issue of Pathways) are to be sent to the Awards Committee Chair. It will be imperative that issues submitted list the number of members in the association, the association/newsletter name and the month of the issue.

A check in the amount of \$100 will be awarded to the winning association in each category.

Newsletters that have won previously may be resubmitted after a three-year period has elapsed.

NOTE: If no newsletters in a category meet these criteria, the award for that category will not be made.

### **REACH FOR THE STARS PROGRAM**

Reach for the Stars is a volunteer service recognition program approved by the State Master Gardener Board of Directors in February 1999. Participation in the Reach for the Stars Program is optional for each local association. All are strongly encouraged to participate.

The purpose of the program is two-fold:

- to recognize Extension Master Gardener Volunteers who have assisted Extension in educating and improving their communities.
- to encourage Extension Master Gardener Volunteers to keep records and report volunteer hours as requested by ACES to educate and train Extension Master Gardener Volunteers.

The only hours that will count toward the Reach for the Stars program are those earned while the EMG is a member of the AMGA in good standing.

Extension Master Gardener Volunteers will follow the volunteer hours policies/guidelines established by the Steering Committee in recording volunteer hours.

The program is effectively retroactive to the inception of the Alabama Master Gardener Program in 1981. Hours earned should comply with the Volunteer Hours Policies. The annual reporting period will be January 1-December 31. Star recipient names will be submitted to the Reach for the Stars Chair no later than January 31 immediately following the award year.

**Requirements for earning stars, advanced badges and silver star jewelry pins are as follows:**

Bronze Star: 100-299 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star: 300-499 volunteer service hours.

Gold Star: 500-999 volunteer service hours.

Gold Name Badges: 1,000-1,999 volunteer service hours.

Platinum Name Badges: 2,000-3,999 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star Pin with ruby colored gemstone: 4,000-5,999 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star Pin with emerald colored gemstone: 6,000-7,999 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star Pin with diamond colored gemstone: 8,000-9,999 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star Pin with amethyst colored gemstone: 10,000-11,999 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star Pin with navy blue colored gemstone: 12,000-14,999 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star Pin with garnet colored gemstone: 15,000-16,999 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star Pin with rainbow colored gemstone: 17,000-19,999 volunteer service hours.

Silver Star Pin with champagne colored gemstone: 20,000+ volunteer service hours.

**NOMINATIONS FOR ALL AWARDS MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED TO THE CHAIR OF THE AWARDS COMMITTEE NO LATER THAN JANUARY 31 OF THE FOLLOWING YEAR.**