

**ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.
(AMGA)**

BOARD MANUAL



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

**Contents are the property of AMGA
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(Amended September 6, 2016)

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TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS OF AMGA

On behalf of the 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 System and the local Alabama Master Gardener 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 a fulfilling and enjoyable one.

Jeanon Massien

AMGA President

2014–2016

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 familiar with the Master Gardener program in New York, and, in 1981, she asked Gary Murray, Madison County Extension agent, if he could help get a Master Gardener Program started in Alabama. As they say, “the rest is history.”

In 1993, Master Gardeners established the Alabama Master Gardeners Association, Inc. (AMGA), a 501(C)(5) non-profit educational organization to enhance and support the work of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and to expand knowledge of and interest in horticulture and related subject areas.

Today local master gardener associations throughout Alabama have a common goal of meeting and sharing information about 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 role is to provide leadership for 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.

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 of AMGA and of a local MG association. 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 given 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 master gardener 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 the AMGA 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 Gardener Meeting.
- appoint chairmen of all standing and special committees subject to the approval of the board
- serve as an ex officio member of all standing and special committees.
- manage access to the AMGA website.

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.

SECRETARY

The Secretary of AMGA shall:

- be the record keeper for AMGA.
- maintain an up-to-date list of officers, elected board members and committee chairmen 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 transmit to the Records & Retention Chair.
- conduct a roll call of 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 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.
- handle any compilation of reports or general correspondence as directed by the president or the board.
- 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 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 approval 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 audit committee all records, books, and papers required for examining the accuracy of the books.
- at the end of the 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.
- be responsible for preparation and filing of tax returns.
- monitor the \$10,000 AMGA reserve, and notify the board if the amount falls below the specified amount.
- be responsible for disposing of 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 treasurer in the event that the treasurer is unable to perform the duties.
- be on-call to provide assistance at the request of the AMGA treasurer or president.
- if called upon to perform the treasurer's duties, communicate every action taken with the 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 to do so. Committee chairmen shall be responsible for submitting to the board their proposals for such authorization.

Each committee chairman will:

1. recruit committee members and ensure that members have the information needed to do their jobs.
2. prepare a summary report of committee activities which will be provided to succeeding committee chair.
3. provide a report, listing any anticipated action item(s) at the end to the secretary two (2) weeks prior to each board meeting.
4. provide committee reports to the newsletter editor for inclusion in the quarterly AMGA newsletter when appropriate.
5. provide copies of all relevant documents to the chairman of the records and retention committee for permanent storage.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

An Audit Committee, none of whom are members of the board, shall be appointed by the president and approved by the board at least ninety (90) days prior to the end of the fiscal year. The audit 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 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.

AWARDS COMMITTEE

The Awards Committee, consisting of a minimum of five (5) members, administers the AMGA Awards Program that annually recognizes Master Gardeners for exceptional service to the Master Gardener program. The awards committee chairman, with the approval of the president, identifies another AMGA member to serve as the “Reach for the Stars” Chairman.

Awards include:

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

The awards are described in detail under the Awards Program, pages 16–20. Award winners are announced at the AMGA Annual Conference.

The Awards Committee shall:

- determine the types of awards to be given to 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 agent.
- review nominations and select the award winners or appoint an ad hoc subcommittee to review the nominations and select the winners. If an ad hoc subcommittee is used, suggested subcommittee members include the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator, the AMGA President, the AMGA Past President, and others who have a working knowledge of the Master Gardener Program and its objectives.

The Reach for the Stars Chairman 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.
- work with the manufacturer to acquire badges/advanced stars to be presented to recipients at the Annual Meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The primary responsibility of the communications committee is to promote communications between all facets of the Master Gardener Program and its membership.

The Communications Committee shall:

- develop and maintain an annual AMGA calendar of significant and mandatory dates for both the AMGA and the Local MG associations. The approved calendar will be provided to the AMGA Webmaster for inclusion on the AMGA Website. (The Calendar can be found in Appendix B).
- research and resolve questions raised by Alabama master gardeners regarding policies and procedures, at both the local and state levels.
- 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 and as necessary approval by the AMGA membership.
- work with the newsletter editor and the webmaster in order to facilitate their roles as chairs of subcommittees of the communications committee.
- perform other tasks when assigned by the President or BOD.

NEWSLETTER SUBCOMMITTEE

The Newsletter Editor shall chair this sub-committee, which will consist of the editor, copy-editor and proofreader. The editor shall work with the communications committee chairman, as content manager.

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

- work with local MGA newsletter editors across the State.
- establish deadlines for when newsletter articles are due based on the board-established publication schedule.
- send a reminder to individuals responsible for regular columns two to three weeks prior to the deadline for submission. A second reminder will be sent when needed.
- adhere to parameters regarding submission of articles.
- edit all submissions as needed and prepare first draft following the format approved by the communications committee and the board.
- provide first draft to copy-editor for editing.
- make corrections noted by copy-editor, and send second draft to the proofreader for final editing.
- prepare final electronic copy and submit to communications committee chair for approval and posting to the AMGA website. (Newsletters will be emailed to members in good standing.)
- attend AMGA BOD meetings and Advisory Council meetings on an “as needed” basis.

The Copyeditor shall:

- 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 Proofreader shall:

- be familiar with a style manual such as the AP Style Guide for current guidelines relating to usage "for the digital age."
- proof the final copy of the newsletter before it is submitted to the communications committee and the board.
- check that spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct and consistent
- check that names of individuals, places and organizations are spelled properly and that facts, dates and statistics are accurate.

WEBSITE SUBCOMMITTEE

The Webmaster shall work with the communications committee chairman, as content manager, to maintain the association's website.

The Webmaster shall:

- maintain the association's web site.
- maintain the website hosting company to host the site.
- coordinate with Officers, Board Members, and Committee Chairmen to maintain current information on the web site.
- acquire photographs of association events to post on the web site.
- 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 Master Gardener classes and Extension related information.
- report the status of the website to the communications committee.
- insure that articles & photos are posted and removed in a timely manner.
- attend AMGA BOD meetings and Advisory Council meetings on an "as needed" basis.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The State Master Gardener Program Coordinator serves as chairman 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 Master Gardeners to assist the membership in meeting annual continuing education recommendations.

The Continuing Education Committee shall:

- coordinate a one-day fall seminar with the event location changing each year as a convenience to all members.
- prepare a budget request, and submit it to the AMGA treasurer for approval by the AMGA board of directors.
- identify continuing education subject matter in the many areas of horticulture that should interest and benefit master gardeners in their volunteer efforts.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

It is the policy of AMGA to support Alabama resident students seeking degrees in horticulture or closely related courses of study at Auburn University through both undergraduate and graduate scholarships funded through endowment funds established by AMGA in cooperation with Auburn University. 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 within the established time frame.
- attend the yearly Scholarship Awards Ceremony at Auburn University and participate as requested by AU.
- attend other events at AU when invitations are issued.
- maintain records of yearly fund performance as provided by AU.
- report to membership at annual business meeting regarding fund balance/performance and status of recipients.
- work with the AMGA BOD and Auburn College of Agriculture to update the agreements as necessary.

FUND RAISING COMMITTEE

The Fund Raising Committee works in conjunction with local conference fund raising committees to generate donations and sponsors for the annual AMGA Conference. All recommendations of the fund raising committee are subject to the approval of the Board.

The Fundraising Committee shall:

- design the Conference Package, and present it to the board for approval.
- maintain current sponsor, vendor, and donor lists.
- contact potential sponsors, vendors, and donors by email and/or phone, as necessary, to obtain participation in the annual AMGA Conference
- work closely with local conference fundraising committee, which will provide AMGA fundraising committee with the list of local sponsors, vendors and donors to eliminate duplication of contacts.
- work with the local program chair to obtain logos and ads by the program deadline.
- work with other local conference committee chairs to facilitate obtaining essentials for the conference, i.e., registration bags, plants for decorations, etc.
- attend local conference steering committee meetings when possible.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

The Membership Chairman shall have primary responsibility for maintaining records and for working with local associations and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) in increasing and retaining master gardener membership.

The Membership Committee shall:

- oversee maintenance of an up-to-date database of dues-paying members, including name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
- work closely with the AMGA treasurer to ensure continuity of records regarding memberships 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 update information is recorded.
- assist local association membership chairs as needed in entering and maintaining membership records.
- provide an up-to-date membership list to the newsletter editor for the issue of the AMGA newsletter announcing the annual meeting.
- provide a list of members entitled to vote at annual or special called meetings at least 10 days prior to such meetings.
- issue membership cards each year to the local associations for distribution to each master gardener who has paid dues or is a lifetime member.

- identify database changes/upgrades needed to improve membership information reporting, and coordinating 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 Master Gardener Program, or a plan that encourages graduate master gardeners to remain active volunteers and association members.

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 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 of both local and state associations.
- provide candidates with the responsibilities associated with the position as defined in this manual.
- publish the slate of candidates with their resumes in the state newsletter for AMGA general membership's review.
- prepare the ballot and conduct the election of candidates during the business meeting at the annual master gardener meeting.
- 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.
- candidates for any 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 master gardener projects throughout the State of Alabama.

The Project Funding Committee shall:

- prepare an annual budget request to be submitted to the AMGA treasurer for approval by the board of directors.
- prepare criteria for selecting projects for funding.
- develop an application packet to be distributed to interested MG groups.
- solicit and evaluate applications and present identified projects to the board of directors for approval.
- notify associations whose projects were selected for funding.

- 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 approved documents until transferred into a digital retrieval system.
- maintain digital retrieval system when one is implemented.
- receive all board/committee approved documentation and other correspondence as deemed necessary by the board, 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 board assistance within 24-48 hours of identification of major problem.
- report to the board quarterly any progress and/or difficulties encountered during the quarter.

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 chairpersons from two previous conferences, (3) the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator, and (4) the conference chairpersons for the next two conferences. This committee shall plan and coordinate the annual business meeting and all activities associated with it. The major responsibilities of this committee are contained in the AMGA Conference Manual.

The State Conference Committee shall:

- secure a local association as host for a conference a minimum of two years prior to projected conference date.
- work with the local hosting associations to organize the annual AMGA conferences.
- secure a written conference report and a written financial report from the hosting association as soon as possible after the end of the conference.
- present summaries of these reports to the board of directors at the board meeting following the conference.

- 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. 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 to serve on the AC. The AC shall meet on a quarterly basis at a location determined by the representatives. A chairman shall be elected to a two-year term by the membership. The AC chairman acts as a liaison between the AMGA Board and the Advisory Council. To facilitate communication between the two, it is recommended that the chairman attend AMGA Board meetings.

Responsibilities of the Advisory Council are:

- Serving as a link to local Master Gardener Programs. It helps to keep the local membership informed about activities at the State Association level and also 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 chairman of the AC uses the minutes from the AMGA Board Meetings as a basis for preparing the agenda for the AC meeting that is held the month 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.
- Assisting the Board 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 shall be considered vacant and a new Council member shall be appointed by the local membership of that association.

AMGA AWARDS PROGRAM

It is AMGA 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, Platinum and Lifetime badges and the Stars Advanced Awards, earned under the Reach for the Stars Program, are presented at the business session of the annual meeting and 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 CHAIRMAN 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 a Master Gardener, if a Master Gardener association is not located in his/her area.

A detailed résumé 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.

Minimum qualifications:

- 100 hours per year are required in volunteer service. Documentation, preferably 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 Master Gardener group (if available).

Areas to be considered:

- Leadership in a local project (multiple projects will enhance nominee's résumé).
- Attendance at local and state association meetings.
- Service as an officer in local and/or state associations and Advisory Council.
- Presentation of programs to the public about Master Gardeners or on one of the areas covered in training.
- Promotion of the image of the 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 2-year period following selection and will be reimbursed for expenses not to exceed \$1,000. 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 Award recipient.

Award recipients are ineligible to receive this award in the future.

THE GARY MURRAY OUTSTANDING SERVICE AND DEDICATION AWARD

The Gary Murray Outstanding Service and Dedication Award is presented annually by the Alabama Master Gardener Association. This award honors non-master gardeners who have contributed to the 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 that meets the criteria.

The criteria for this nomination include:

- Outstanding service, leadership and dedication in providing superior educational programs to Master Gardeners;
- Teaching Master Gardeners classes;
- Speaking at Conferences;
- Other support and special services to Master Gardeners to support our mission.

A detailed résumé must be prepared addressing all specified criteria. The narrative should be submitted in 12-point type and should NOT exceed two pages in length. No photographs, newspaper articles, etc., will be accepted.

NOTE: If none of the nominees meet the stated standards, the award will not be presented.

JEAN LEE LIFETIME HOURS AWARD

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

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

Beginning in 2005, each recipient of the award will be given a Lifetime Membership in AMGA.

Award recipients are ineligible to receive this award in the future.

TOP HOURS FOR 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 that has reported the most volunteer hours for the year preceding the AMGA Conference. Each local MG Extension Agent is then requested to submit the name of the MG volunteer.

OUTSTANDING NEWSLETTER AWARD

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 voted to revise this award into two (2) categories, associations with:

1. up to sixty (60) AMGA members.
2. sixty-one (61) or more AMGA members.

The newsletters are evaluated on several criteria including but not limited to:

- News/Public Relations stories
- Lists/Calendars of events
- Photographs of activities
- Monthly columns
- Announcements
- Contact information
- Attractiveness
- Imagination
- Color/Art

Two specific issues (months to be named by the Awards Committee in the Winter issue of Garden 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 re-submitted after a three-year period has elapsed.

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 an option for each local association and all are encouraged to participate.

The purpose of the Program is two-fold:

1. To recognize Master Gardeners who have assisted Extension in educating and improving their communities.
2. To encourage Master Gardeners to keep records and report volunteer hours as requested by ACES. Recorded hours are utilized in justifying the resources expended by ACES to educate and train Master Gardeners.

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

Master Gardeners will follow the Volunteer Hours Policies/Guidelines established by the Steering Committee in recording volunteer hours.

This program is effective retroactive to the inception of the 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 and badge requirements will be submitted to the AMGA Awards Chair by January 31.

Requirements for earning stars and badges are as follows:

- Bronze Star: 100 – 299 hours
- Silver Star: 300 – 499 hours
- Gold Star: 500 – 999 hours

- Gold Name Badges: 1,000 – 1,999 hours
- Platinum Name Badges: 2,000 – 3,999 hours

- Silver Star Pin with ruby colored gemstone: 4,000 – 5,999 hours
- Silver Star Pin with emerald colored gemstone: 6,000 – 7,999 hours
- Silver Star Pin with diamond colored gemstone: 8,000 – 9,999 hours
- New Badge with lifetime membership in AMGA: more than 10,000 hours

**REACH FOR THE STARS, BADGES AND GEM STAR AWARDS
ORDERS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE ORDER FORM AND A CHECK
PAYABLE TO AMGA, MUST BE SENT TO THE
AMGA REACH FOR THE STARS CHAIRMAN, NO LATER THAN
JANUARY 31ST OF THE AWARD YEAR.**