



FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER STRUCTURE

Revised 10-06

A formal Master Gardener organization is not required for each county. Whether to develop a formal organizational structure or not, is up to the discretion of the County Master Gardener Coordinator. If your county already has a structured organization or you develop one later, the following bylaws are sanctioned by the University of Florida and must be used. All counties regardless of structure shall follow articles I, II, III, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X. Counties may add additional requirements with the approval of the state Master Gardener Coordinator.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA/IFAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE *St. Lucie* COUNTY MASTER GARDENER BYLAWS

ARTICLE I NAME

The name of this organization shall be the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners.

ARTICLE II PURPOSE

The University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardener program trains and maintains horticulture volunteers for the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service. The goals of this program are to increase the availability of horticultural information for the community at large and to improve the quality of life for the residents of *St. Lucie* County through horticulture volunteer activities.

ARTICLE III MEMBERSHIP

A. Membership in the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners program will be granted upon successful completion of Master Gardener training classes and the final exam, and by remaining a member in good standing. (See section D) The program is open to all interested persons without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, gender, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status.

B. Upon completion of the Master Gardener training class conducted by the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service, first year Master Gardeners are required to pay back 75 volunteer working hours in activities approved by the Master Gardener Coordinator and acquire an additional 10 hours of continued education within 12 months of the completion of their class.

C. To remain a Master Gardener in good standing after successful completion of their first year of service, one must:

- 1) Complete 35 volunteer hours during the membership year.
- 2) Complete 10 learning hours during the membership year.
- 3) Must comply with the Florida Master Gardener policy statement and code of conduct.

D. If an individual's annual working and learning hours are not completed within the first twelve (12) months after the completion of the Master Gardener Training class, he or she will no longer be considered a Florida Master Gardener. Those who have completed their first year of service and are unable to continue to donate a minimum of 35 hours each year will be placed on inactive status. Inactive status is defined as:

An inactive Master Gardener is one who is unable to commit to an additional 35 hours annually at present, but would like the opportunity to possibly recertify themselves in the future. The following policies apply:

- 1) An inactive Master Gardener is one who has completed their original commitment of 75 hours of volunteer service in the first twelve months following the completion of their training, but is not able to continue to volunteer the minimum of 35 hours per year.
 - 2) The inactive Master Gardener must apply to the county Master Gardener for recertification. He or she must then attend or have attended 10 hours of acceptable horticultural training to re-certify.
 - 3) The inactive Master Gardener must take and pass a comprehensive examination provided by the county Master Gardener coordinator.
 - 4) An inactive Master Gardener can re-certify at any time as long as the above criteria are met.
 - 5) Inactive Master Gardeners are ineligible for applying for awards of excellence, receiving mailings, monthly meetings, or registering for advanced training opportunities.
- The county Master Gardener Coordinator can make exceptions in unusual circumstances.

E. Persons who have successfully completed the Master Gardener training in another Florida county and were members in good standing in that county, may petition for immediate membership in another county if they have moved their residence to that county.

F. The reporting year for University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners is January 1 to December 31. All hours must be turned in by the date specified by the county Master Gardener coordinator.

G. All Master Gardeners are expected to report their working and learning hours in order for UF/IFAS Extension to comply with federal requirements. Failure to do so will result in dismissal. Master Gardeners are also expected to keep and report clientele contact numbers and information as instructed by the County Master Gardener Coordinator.

ARTICLE IV OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS

A. The members of the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners who shall serve as the Executive Committee shall be: Past President; President; President Elect; Secretary; Treasurer; two members selected at-large from the membership and one member selected from the current or most recent training class, by the president. The County Master Gardener Coordinator shall serve as advisor (See Article VI). The President Elect, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting by majority vote of the membership for a term of one year or until their successors are elected. The President Elect transitions to President and serves for one year in this roll. The at-large members and new member representative shall serve for a term of one year, at the first business meeting following the conclusion of the training classes. No person may hold more than one office at the same time. No person may hold any office for more than two successive years except the Treasurer.

B. The President, with the approval of the Executive Committee, shall appoint a nominating committee of three members. The committee must supply a slate of nominees at a membership meeting at least one month before the annual meeting. All nominees shall be University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners in good standing. Following the report of the nominating committee, additional nominations may be made from the floor, provided that consent has been secured from the nominee.

C. Vacancies among the officers and standing committee chairs shall be appointed by the President, with approval of the Executive Committee, for the remainder of the unexpired term. If the office of the President becomes vacant, the President Elect will assume this office. However, if the office of both the President and the President Elect become vacant, they will be filled by a special election by the general membership. If an officer has served more than half a term, the individual is considered to have served a full term in that office.

ARTICLE V DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS

A. The President shall preside at all member meetings at which he or she is present. The president and County Master Gardener Coordinator shall be responsible for selecting

committee chairs for various committees and for assuring that the committees are functioning as necessary. The President shall appoint an auditing committee at least 60 days prior to the annual meeting to review the financial records.

B. The President Elect shall serve as Program Committee Chair for membership meetings and also preside over the rules committee. He / she shall perform the duties of the President whenever the President is absent or unable to perform his or her duties.

C. The Secretary shall maintain written records of all *St. Lucie County* Master Gardener general meetings and meetings of the Executive Committee.

D. The Treasurer shall set up such accounts as necessary to fulfill the business of the Master Gardeners. The Treasurer shall:

- 1) Pay out all money, by check only or with other appropriate documentation, to cover the expenses of the group as authorized by the Executive Committee and the County Master Gardener Coordinator.
- 2) Report the amount of money in the treasury at each meeting of the general membership.
- 3) Prepare an annual budget in consultation with the Executive Committee and County Master Gardener Coordinator.
- 4) Work with the audit committee to facilitate the annual audit of the books.
- 5) Provide an annual written financial report at the end of the reporting year.
- 6) Supply a copy of the annual report to the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie County* Cooperative Extension Service to be filed as a permanent record by Jan 30th.

Funds generated by the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie County* Master Gardener organization through fees, donations, sales etc are owned by the *St. Lucie County* Master Gardener organization and are the sole property of the group and are under their respective control and management at all times. The UF/IFAS Florida Cooperative Extension Service (Extension) seeks to establish a clear understanding that the funds are not the property of Cooperative Extension and are not controlled by its employees. The responsibility and oversight of the funds rests with the Master Gardener organization itself and not with Extension. However, Extension does have an interest in ensuring that the Master Gardener Program does not improperly use their relationship with Extension when collecting monies, receiving donations or expending resources. There should be no fundraising activities without preplanned goals for the money raised and prior approval from the County Master Gardener Coordinator. Care should be taken to ensure that the use of any funds matches the purpose and mission of the University of Florida Master

Gardener Program and the *St. Lucie* County Master Gardener organization and that these funds are used in a timely manner rather than reside in dormant accounts. Extension reserves the right to withdraw educational support and endorsement of the *St. Lucie* County Master Gardener organization, if it determines that the Master Gardener organization does not use its resources consistent with the purposes of the Master Gardener program.

E. The duties of the Executive Committee shall be to act as an organizational body of the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners and to assist the County Extension Agent in the running of the program. The University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardener Coordinator will provide leadership to the Master Gardener Program in the county. The coordinator will have the final decision regarding all business conducted by the executive committee

ARTICLE VI ROLE OF THE COUNTY AGENT

The County Extension Agent is advisor to and administrator of the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners and as the University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service representative in *St. Lucie* County is the final authority on its Master Gardener Volunteer program. However, to facilitate everyday management, the organizational directives set forth in these bylaws will provide a functioning set of guidelines. Should the county Master Gardener Coordinator leave his or her position the County Extension Director will assume the role as Master Gardener Coordinator or will appoint an interim coordinator until such time as the position is filled.

ARTICLE VII COMMITTEES

The President and County Master Gardener Coordinator may create committees as needed and shall appoint committee chairpersons. These committees will be categorized as one of three types:

- 1) Project Committees - committees to manage ongoing University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners sanctioned projects;
- 2) Ad Hoc Committees - short term committees to meet an immediate and short term goal; or
- 3) Standing Committees - permanent committees necessary for the continued existence of the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners.

ARTICLE VIII MEETINGS

A. General Membership meetings shall be held ***Bi - monthly***. At business meetings, members present shall constitute a quorum. Meetings shall be conducted following *Robert's Rules of Order*.

B. The annual meeting of the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners, with election of officers, shall take place in ***November*** of each year.

C. The Executive Committee shall meet as needed. All Executive Committee members and the County Extension Agent will be notified of meeting time and location by the President. Members of the Executive Committee present, if not less than three, shall constitute a quorum.

D. Special meetings of the Executive Committee may be called by the President, County Master Gardener Coordinator, or at request of a majority of the officers.

ARTICLE IX FINANCES

A. A proposed budget of anticipated revenues and expenditures as prepared by the Treasurer shall be submitted to the Executive Committee and County Extension Agent for approval to be presented to the general membership for adoption.

B. Fund-raising activities for the University of Florida/IFAS *St. Lucie* County Master Gardeners must be authorized by the County Master Gardener Coordinator.

D. At the end of the reporting year (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31) the Treasurer shall provide an annual financial report, which has been reviewed by the audit committee to the County Master Gardener Coordinator, the County Extension Director and the state Master Gardener office no later than Jan 31.

ARTICLE X AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended at the annual meeting or at an approved meeting sanctioned by the County Master Gardener Coordinator by two-thirds of the votes cast by the membership, provided that the changes are agreeable to the County Master Gardener Coordinator, County Extension Director and State Master Gardener office. All requests for changes must be approved by the state office prior to notifying the membership. Written notice of the approved proposed changes must be sent to the membership twenty-one days before the time of the vote.