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**College of ACES**  
Cooperative Extension Service

New Mexico State University Extension Master Gardener  
PROGRAM BYLAWS

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be Master Gardeners, also known as the San Juan County County Extension Master Gardeners, hereinafter referred to as the “Chapter”. The Chapter’s office is located at 213-A South Oliver Dr, Azte.c, NM 87410

**Definitions:**

**Extension Master Gardener (EMGs)** – trained volunteers working in cooperation with NMSU’s Cooperative Extension Service.

**Chapter Management** – A County Agent or Chapter Board composed of EMGs and the agent.

**State Program Coordinator** – EMG Program state level coordinator, an employee of NMSU.

**State Advisory Board** – a statewide decision-making body that includes all program partners, NMSU, County Extension and Chapter members.

**Member in Good Standing** – A member who has met the annual requirement for training and service and paid their dues.

Article II – Not for Profit

- A. The Chapter is a “non-profit organization” incorporated under the laws governing New Mexico State University. The Chapter is a charitable, educational, and scientific organization qualified as an exempt organization under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. As such, it may receive, distribute, and administer funds consistent with its charter and purposes. Nothing in these Bylaws shall conflict with NMSU’s Department of Extension Plant Sciences, the University’s College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, the laws of the State of New Mexico, or the United States of America.
- B. Remuneration:
  - a. No part of the net earnings of the Chapter shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to its members, trustees, officers, or other private persons, except that the Chapter shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered, and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Articles Three and Four.

- b. No substantial part of the activities of the Chapter shall be the carrying on of lobbying, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, and the Chapter shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.
- c. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the Chapter shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation exempt from Federal income tax under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law).

### Article III – Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the organization is to assist the County Extension Agent in providing research-based horticultural information to the public. EMGs promote horticultural best management practices, sustainability, and environmental initiatives supported by New Mexico State University (NMSU).

### Article IV – Mission Statement

The Extension Master Gardeners of this county volunteer to preserve and beautify the environment while improving the quality of life in the community. This is done by providing current research-based horticultural information to the public through education and outreach. EMGs promote horticultural best management practices, sustainability, and environmental initiatives supported by NMSU Research and Extension. This organization embodies the horticultural education objectives of the County Extension in cooperation with New Mexico State University (hereinafter referred to as the University) and the United States Department of Agriculture.

### Article V – State Advisory Board

- A. The State Advisory Board shall perform the following functions:
  - a. Serve in an advisory and support capacity to the State EMG Program Coordinator.
  - b. Establish guidelines for training and define the minimum volunteer requirements that meet state standards.
  - c. Assist in policy formulation and provide direction for the EMG Program.
  - d. Promote a close working relationship between EMG Chapters, County Extension Agents and University staff.
- B. Representation
  - a. Representation on the State Advisory Board and participation in meetings is mandatory for all NM EMG Chapters.
  - b. The current County Agent that either has an EMG Chapter or desires one, is automatically a member.
  - c. An additional Chapter Representative is selected by the Chapter Management or elected by the membership. An alternate representative may also be appointed

when the representative cannot attend a meeting or perform other board member duties.

- C. Representative Qualifications
  - a. Any EMG in good standing shall be eligible for membership on the State Advisory Board.
  - b. Candidates being considered should have an ability to communicate effectively, possess top organizational skills, the ability to work well with people and the means to participate in statewide board meetings.
  - c. An understanding of the vital role of the Chapter Representative in serving as the communication link between the local Chapter, other Chapters and the University.
  - d. A representative may be selected by the County Agent, the Chapter's Board or elected by the membership.
- D. Terms of Office
  - a. The County Agent serves until they no longer hold their position with Extension or their EMG Chapter is dissolved.
  - b. The Chapter Representative's term is 2 years and may be re-appointed for one term only.
  - c. Following a 2-year hiatus, they may once again be appointed to serve.
- E. Compensation:
  - a. All State Advisory Board members shall serve without compensation.
  - b. Special requests for financial assistance may be made to the Chapter, County Agent or State Program Coordinator.

## Article VI – Chapter Membership

- A. Application
  - a. Admission to the Chapter as an EMG requires that the applicant complete an application; possess a broad interest in horticulture; understand and support the educational objectives of this County Extension program; and be selected by the Chapter to participate.
  - b. Applicants from outside the county may be admitted at the Chapter Management's discretion.
- B. Applicant Training

Successful completion of the EMG Chapter's Core Training Modules and initial volunteer contribution hours are required of the accepted applicant for certification.
- C. Service Requirements

Continuing as an EMG in good standing requires annual completion of a minimum number of volunteer service hours as determined by the Chapter, and participation in advanced training hours (Continuing Education) as approved and determined by the County Agent/Chapter Board.
- D. Performance Requirements
  - a. EMG volunteers may not participate in the EMG Program for personal gain or provide commercial recommendations or endorsements.

- b. EMGs will provide research-based horticultural information, and educational program assistance in support of the Extension education program.
  - c. A certified EMG has no personal agenda. The EMG is qualified and able to meet and greet the public, provide appropriate information and responses to questions, and is eager to grow his/her own horticultural knowledge and practice.
  - d. The local Chapter operates through the oversight of the count's Extension Agent. The Agent is responsible for ensuring excellent program management and that state program standards are being met. The Agent monitors EMG activities, program performance and the regular program evaluation.
- E. Membership Categories:
- a. Provisional Membership (Intern status)
    - i. Provisional membership is granted Interns during their training and first year of volunteer service of 40 hours.
    - ii. Provisional members do not have voting privileges.
    - iii. Provisional members who are unable to complete required volunteer hours or advanced training may petition the Chapter Management in writing before the end of the current calendar year citing the circumstances which kept them from meeting the requirements.
  - b. Certified Membership (Veteran status)
    - i. Certified membership is granted to those persons meeting the following criteria:
      - 1. Completion of the EMGs Program's core training modules.
      - 2. Completion of the 20 hours of volunteer service in activities approved by the Chapter Management during the first year following their training and in each subsequent year of active service, as well as 8 hours of approved continuing education.
      - 3. Has paid the yearly membership dues. (SJC Master Gardener Dues \$25/annually)
    - ii. Certified members have voting privileges.
    - iii. EMGs who are unable to complete required volunteer hours or advanced training may petition the Chapter Management in writing before the end of the current calendar year citing the circumstances which kept them from meeting the requirements. Extenuating circumstances are defined as reasons of personal health, employment, family matters, or others that may be deemed appropriate by the Chapter Management. Requests for extenuating circumstances will be reviewed and, if approved, will be granted for the year in which the request was made. EMGs retain voting privileges while under extenuating circumstances.
    - iv. An EMG who did not complete their annual approved activities and did not request extenuating circumstances will be placed on Associate membership status for the subsequent year. Failure to complete the requirements for Active status during the subsequent year may result in cancellation of membership. Associate members do not retain voting privileges.

- v. EMGs may transfer membership from another county or state by providing proof of membership and good standing under their current organization's bylaws. Once the request for transfer has been made, transferring EMGs will be required to participate in (all or select) modules of the NMSU Program's core training. Transfers into the EMG Program will be on Associate status their first year and must complete the minimum hours of pre-approved volunteer service in State Advisory Board-approved activities and complete required training hours during the first year following their transfer.
- c. Emeritus Membership
  - i. EMG Emeritus is a special category of membership which can be requested by an EMG in good standing and is bestowed as an honor upon an active member at the discretion of the Chapter Management.
  - ii. Minimum requirements to qualify for the designation of Emeritus shall be determined by the State Advisory Board and these are:
    - 1. The EMG must have completed the minimum number of years of active service as determined by the Chapter.
    - 2. The EMG must have accumulated at least 100 volunteer hours during at least one of their years of service.
    - 3. They must have served in a leadership position or provided consistent service to the organization.
  - iii. An EMG Emeritus shall remain on the current membership roster and have all the rights and privileges of a certified member.
  - iv. To retain Emeritus status an EMG must:
    - 1. Meet the same annual additional training/continuing education requirements as active members.
    - 2. Report any volunteer hours annually on the same schedule as active members (Emeritus members are exempt from minimum volunteer service hour requirements).
    - 3. Pay the annual membership dues.
- d. Reinstatement
  - i. Reinstatement of an EMG who has been dropped from membership rolls can be sought by submitting a letter to the Chapter Management.
  - ii. The State Advisory Board may be consulted.
  - iii. The Chapter, at its discretion, may reinstate the petitioning member provided they meet the requirements of a Provisional Member. Until Certified Membership requirements are completed the member is placed on Provisional membership (Intern) status.
- e. Termination of Membership
  - i. The Chapter Management may terminate any member who is unwilling or unable to comply with the requirements of their signed *Volunteer Agreement* or *Code of Conduct*.

- ii. Issues of concern that include public or member safety must be addressed immediately. The State Program Coordinator/State Advisory Board may be consulted.

#### Article VII – EMG Chapter Board (Optional)

- A. The Chapter operates through the oversight of the County Extension Agent. The Agent is responsible for ensuring good program management and that state standards are being met. The County Agent may work with the Chapter members to instate a Chapter Board to oversee and facilitate the day to day operations of the EMG Chapter.
- B. The Chapter Management shall determine roles and responsibilities for the members of the board.
- C. The Chapter Board shall perform the following functions:
  - a. Work in tandem with the County Agent responsible for the Chapter.
  - b. Serve in an advisory and support capacity to the Agent and Chapter membership.
  - c. Ensure adherence to established state policies and guidelines for management, training, and project activities, and provide the necessary leadership when going beyond these standards. Provide for representation on the State Advisory Board.
  - d. Assist and sustain local initiatives unique to the EMG Chapter.
  - e. Promote understanding and close working relationships between Chapter members, the County Extension Agent/staff, the State Program Coordinator, and University Specialists/staff.
  - f. An accountant may be hired to:
    - i. Serve an unspecified number of years determined by the Chapter Management and in agreement with the appointed person
    - ii. Manage the financial transactions and business of the organization
    - iii. Keep a record of all financial transactions
    - iv. Be responsible for preparing monthly financial reports for the Chapter Management.
  - g. If disagreement about oversight occurs, an appeals board consisting of two Chapter Board members, two members of the State Advisory Board and the State Program Coordinator will review the issue and make recommendations.
- D. Board Member Qualifications:
  - a. All EMGs in good standing shall be eligible to serve on the Chapter Board.
  - b. Candidates being considered should have an ability to communicate effectively, have excellent organizational skills, the ability to work well with people, a working knowledge of the EMG Chapter and its history, and the capacity to participate in board meetings.
- E. Board Meetings
  - a. The Chapter Board is free to choose the platform for meetings that works best (e.g., in person, by email, conference call, etc.,)
  - b. They are also free to choose the number of meetings per year required to adequately and appropriately manage Chapter activities.

- c. It is recommended that meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*.
  - d. Board meetings are open to all EMGs and the public.
- F. Compensation:
  - a. All Chapter Board members shall serve without compensation.
- G. Composition:
  - a. The County Agent may serve as a member of the Chapter Board.
  - b. The number of officers and roles of board officers are to be determined by the Chapter Management.
  - c. The need for additional board members is determined by the Chapter Management.
  - d. Term of office and term limits are to be determined by the Chapter Management.
  - e. New Leadership from the membership and a change of leadership are to be encouraged.
- H. Nominations:
  - a. A Nominating Committee shall consist of the County Agent and Chapter members.
  - b. A request for nominations shall be made of the membership two months prior to the elections meeting.
  - c. The Nominating Committee shall submit to the board all qualified nominations to fill vacancies on the board for the following year.
- I. Elections:
  - a. All active members are eligible to vote (format to be determined by the Chapter Management and must be accessible to all).
  - b. Elections shall be held annually for the following program year with nominations being announced one month prior to the election.
  - c. All EMGs in good standing are eligible to vote in the election.
  - d. A simple majority of those voting is required for election.
  - e. Write-in Candidates:
    - i. Candidates for office may be written in on the official ballot.
    - ii. All those, written-in by members, must meet the qualifications of Article Six, A., and be willing to serve.
- J. Appointments to Vacated Offices
  - a. The Chapter Management may upon receipt of a resignation of any board member, appoint at their discretion, a member in good standing to fill the unexpired term.

## Article VIII – Dissolution of the Corporation

- A. If at any time, dissolution of the EMG Chapter is required, the dissolution and financial wind-up will be done consistent with applicable federal and New Mexico state laws governing non-profit corporations in the state of NM.
- B. Any monies held in the Chapter's financial accounts are to be forwarded to the State EMG Program and will be held by the Extension Plant Science Department to be

distributed at the discretion of the State Program Coordinator for meeting EMG Program needs.

#### Article IX – Amendment and Revision

These bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the State Advisory Board, provided a notice of changes in writing is given to the State Advisory Board members ten days prior to the date set for action. Amendment of these bylaws requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the State Advisory Board members.

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