

Bexar County Master Gardeners

SUBJECT: M-3 – Membership Categories – Bexar County Master Gardeners (“the Corporation”)

POLICY:

Texas Master Gardener (MG) Title Defined (adapted from the Texas MG Program Management Guide)

The title, Texas Master Gardener, is to be used only by individuals trained in the Texas Master Gardener program to assist Texas AgriLife Extension Service. A trainee must receive a minimum of 50 hours of instruction, pass an examination administered by the Extension Service, and volunteer a minimum of 50 hours of service to earn the title of “Texas Master Gardener.” Once a trainee completes the instruction and examination phase, the individual gains the title of “Master Gardener Intern.” From that point, the Intern has a maximum of one year to complete a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service. Master Gardener trainees, Interns and Master Gardeners are encouraged to participate in local Master Gardener associations/groups and to attend State/Regional Master Gardener Conferences.

Recertification of Master Gardeners (adapted from the Texas MG Program Management Guide)

In order to retain the Texas Master Gardener title, individuals in Bexar County are required **each year** to meet certification requirements set forth by the County Extension Agent - Horticulture (CEA-HORT). Documentation requirements, validation of training through Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and volunteer service hours (VHs) for recertification are under the purview of the CEA-HORT or individual designated by the agent.

The title of Texas Master Gardener is valid only when the volunteer is participating in a Master Gardener program being conducted by Texas AgriLife Extension Service. When an individual ceases active participation in the Master Gardener program and/or does not meet recertification requirements, the individual’s certification as a Texas Master Gardener becomes void. The individual’s membership status changes from Active to Inactive.

For Bexar County Master Gardeners, the minimum numbers of hours and units shall be determined by the Board of Directors and approved by the CEA-HORT. In no case shall the minimum hours be less than prescribed by the State organization. The Board of Directors will review requirements annually. Requirements will be published annually in the Corporation’s members’ newsletter throughout January.

Granting Master Gardeners Emeritus(a) Status (adapted from the Texas MG Program Management Guide)

“Texas Master Gardener Emeritus(a)” is an honorary title awarded to a retired Master Gardener volunteer for distinguished service to Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Eligibility. Nominations for emeritus(a) status are limited to formerly certified Texas Master Gardeners.

Nomination. Nominations can be made by County Extension Agents and Texas Master Gardeners. The Board of Directors for the BCMG will provide further guidance to anyone wishing to make a nomination.

The bestowal of emeritus(a) status is administered and granted by Texas AgriLife Extension Service. This status is a distinctive honor, not a right.

Categories of Membership in Bexar County Master Gardeners

Active members: MGs who have met certification/recertification for the year, who have successfully cleared the required background checks, and have paid dues (if required). Active members may vote, hold elected office, and chair committees for the Corporation.

Intern members: Individuals who are attending or have completed the Master Gardener training classes but who have not yet completed their required volunteer hours and first year of service are designated as Intern MGs. They may volunteer but may not vote or hold elected office.

Inactive members: MGs who have did not meet certification/recertification for the year, or have not paid required dues, are designated as Inactive members and are placed on an Inactive roster. Within three years of going Inactive, members may request reinstatement to Active membership from the CEA-HORT, and if accepted, acknowledge the requirements to be met in a Reinstatement Agreement, and complete the stated requirements. If accepted by the CEA-HORT, the Inactive member becomes a Provisional member until the stated requirements are met. Inactive members may not volunteer nor identify themselves as Master Gardeners.

Provisional members: MGs who have been accepted for transfer, or BCMGs who have been Inactive and have been accepted for reinstatement but have requirements that have not yet been met. Upon completion of requirements Provisional members will become Active members.

Emeritus(a) members: MGs who have been awarded the emeritus(a) status through the recommended Texas Master Gardener Association procedure (see above). They may not vote, hold elected office, or chair committees for the Corporation.

Honorary members: Honorary Bexar County Master Gardener should not be confused with the title of *Texas Master Gardener Emeritus(a)*. The title *Honorary Bexar County Master Gardener* may be granted to someone outside the organization (such as philanthropists/patrons, politicians, and those providing important services to BCMG) who are not members of the Bexar County Master Gardeners. A person may be granted Honorary status for one year. Each year the Board of Directors may approve the honor for another year. This extension of the *Honorary* status should be made based on the person's continued support of the BCMG program.

Important Change: Prior to 2021, the title *Honorary Bexar County Master Gardener* was awarded to Master Gardeners both Active and Inactive, as well as people outside the organization.

Active MGs currently holding this title (*Honorary*) prior to January 14, 2021, may also retain their Honorary status as it pertains to the payment of dues as long as they remain Active MGs with all rights, privileges and responsibilities.

Inactive Honorary MGs who were given Honorary status prior to January 14, 2021, may continue to hold the title but may not hold office, vote, or serve on a committee. Inactive Honorary members may not volunteer nor identify themselves as Master Gardeners.

Each November the Membership Director will request verification that the Inactive Honorary member desires to remain affiliated with the Bexar County Master Gardeners.

Responsibilities and Benefits of Bexar County Master Gardeners and Members

Membership Category	BCMG Dues owed	Badge Type	Membership Card Issued?	Insurance paid by BCMG?	TMGA Dues by BCMG?	Earns Service Years
Active MG	yes	MG	yes	yes	yes	yes
Inactive MG	no	none	no	no	no	no
Provisional MG	yes	Provisional	no	yes	yes	yes
Emeritus(a)	no	Emeritus(a)	no	no	no	no
Honorary MG	no	none	no	no	no	no

RATIONALE:

This policy is designed to ensure consistency in membership categories and the privileges accruing to each category of membership. This policy also brings our definitions of membership categories into alignment with the state Master Gardener definitions of membership.

DATE APPROVED: 14 January 2021

DATE REVIEWED: