



Oregon Master Gardener (tm) Association Strategic Plan

Preliminary Draft for Review and Comment

Executive Summary: This document represents the work of the OMGA Strategic Planning committee. The committee was tasked with developing a strategic plan that would be used to guide the OMGA in the near and long-term. The outcomes of the committee's work are:

1. draft mission statement
2. list of strategies, and
3. list of strategic action items

The draft mission statement and associated strategies are summarized, below. The list of strategic action items can be found in the section entitled '[Action Plan](#)'.

Draft Mission Statement

We are committed to Sustainable Gardening through:

- *Partnering with the OSU Master Gardener (tm) Program to promote sustainable gardening practices;*
- *Advocating for funding to deliver the Master Gardener Program across Oregon; and*
- *Fostering continuing education of all Master Gardeners.*

Fun sustains our energy in carrying out these commitments.

List of Strategies

1. Build public understanding of the Master Gardener Program and its benefits
2. Build political support for the Master Gardener Program
3. Provide continuing education opportunities for all Master Gardeners
4. Strengthen the OMGA

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

This plan sets forth the mission, vision and values of the Oregon Master Gardener Association (OMGA). The strategies and associated actions presented are intended to provide ongoing and continuing guidance for the future.

Planning Process

A committee was formed to bring together multiple parties with a variety of perspectives and experience to provide advice and help guide the process. The committee met in person and via polycom video conference on several occasions, to review the mission and vision of the OMGA, and to lay forth strategies and actions that will help guide the organization now and in the future.

Meeting dates were:

- June 21, 2010
- July 28, 2010
- September 13, 2010
- October 11, 2010



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At the June 21st meeting, we reviewed the programs/domain of the OSU Extension Master Gardener Program, relative to the OMGA.

OSU Extension Master Gardener Program	OMGA
Develops and disseminates research-based and objective information/programs/curricula on sustainable gardening and community food production. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension Publications • Plant Clinic at Extension office, fairs, farmer's markets, etc. • School / Demonstration / Community Gardens • Youth Garden Programs • Annual Master Gardener training and recertification 	Supports the OSU Home Horticulture (Master Gardener) Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endowment Gifts • McNeilan Scholarship and other Scholarships to OSU Students • Co-Sponsors Mini-College • Purchase of PNW Handbooks for OR counties with an MG Program • Extension Educator Grant
Administers the training and supervision of Master Gardener volunteers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance • Background Checks • Reporting 	Raises Funds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant Sales • Garden Tours
	Supports OMGA Members and Chapters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Development (Leadership Day at Mini-College) • Dialogue/Idea Exchange at OMGA meetings • Files IRS paperwork, financial reporting Satisfy regulatory requirements for corporate documents & records such as bylaws and Articles of Incorporation.
An individual becomes a Master Gardener through satisfactory completion of the training course and volunteer internship.	An individual becomes an OMGA member by paying dues to the OMGA and to their local chapter.

At the **July 28, 2010** meeting, we took part in an exercise that helped us to identify WHO is the OMGA's audience, WHAT the OMGA is about and HOW the OMGA is going to accomplish its mission. The top three choices for these three items are listed below.

- WHO is our audience
 - OSU MG Program
 - Public Policy Makers
 - Fellow MG's
- WHAT are we about
 - Sustainable home gardening
 - Advocacy
 - Learning
- HOW are we going to do it
 - Plant Clinics
 - Media
 - 501 3 C organizational structure

At the next two meetings, committee members focused on developing a mission statement, and identifying strategies and actions to realize the mission.



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Committee Members: The OMGA Strategic Planning Committee consists of a dedicated and experienced group of Master Gardener volunteers, as well as individuals with knowledge and experience with OSU Extension. The committee members are:

- Tam Martin, Washington County Master Gardener and 2010 OMGA President
- Sherry Sheng, Clackamas County Master Gardener and 2010 CCMGA President
- Dave Rugg, Jackson County Master Gardener and OMGA 2nd Vice President
- Gail Langellotto, OSU Extension Statewide Master Gardener Program Coordinator
- Nellie Oehler, Benton County Master Gardener and OSU Extension (retired)
- Chuck Petersen, Columbia County Master Gardener and OMGA representative
- Jack Wright, Douglas County Master Gardener and OMGA President 2000

Draft Mission Statement

It is important to note that this draft mission statement reflects extensive discussions. The committee made lists then prioritized to highlight three primary audiences (OSU MG Program, policy makers who affect OSU MG Program funding, and fellow MG's). Through the same process, the committee identified three terms (sustainable home gardening, advocacy, and learning) that best describe what we are about. We constructed the mission statement by pairing each primary audience with a term while adding important concepts such as 'partnership' and 'sustaining the organization' to complete the statement.

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Strategies

This list of four strategies is intended to support the draft mission statement and the vision of the OMGA. With each strategy, the committee came up with a list of associated actions.

1. Build public understanding of the Master Gardener Program and its benefits
2. Build political support for the Master Gardener Program
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Action Plan

Strategy 1: Building public understanding of the Master Gardener Program and its benefits.

- Develop a message (a paragraph, a brochure, or in some other form) to highlight MG Program and its benefits and consistently use it in public communications
- Develop a media toolkit and cultivate media contacts
 - Develop sample press releases
 - Create roving display board
- Utilize OMGA logo for branding recognition



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- Network with similar organizations (non-profits or gardening groups)
- Implement honorary & associate memberships
- Train members on public information and speaking to the media
 - Develop a list of talking points and focus on consistent common language
- Selling OMGA flyer. Goal: reader gets good grasp of our function.

Strategy 2: Building political support for the Master Gardener Program

- Work with OSU Extension and OMGA Chapters to ensure timely communication about potential plans for Extension funding measures in counties
- Ensure that association members know of and understand the importance of advocacy
 - Include a section on advocacy on the OMGA website
 - Include a column on advocacy in the Gardener's Pen
- Develop an advocacy toolkit that OMGA chapters and members can use to support OSU Extension in their county or region. The advocacy toolkit may include the following:
 - OSU Publication intended to provide guidance for OMGA chapters, Master Gardener volunteers and other supporters in counties considering Extension funding measures: PUNCHES, John and Gail Langellotto-Rhodaback. 2010. Master Gardeners and the Creation of Extension Service Districts. Oregon State University Extension Service. 4 pages. Blind review organized by Extension Regional Director Keith Diem. http://extension.oregonstate.edu/internal/sites/default/files/master_gardener-service_district-edit.pdf
 - Educational content to help MG's recognize the need to direct resources here - well in advance.
- Ensure that legislators are aware of OMGA activities and successes
 - Send letters to legislators (e.g. county commissioners, state senators, etc.) when Master Gardeners or MG Chapters win awards within their district
 - Invite legislators to be a special guest at OMGA and MG chapter events

Strategy 3: Providing continuing education opportunities for all Master Gardeners

- Offer Master Gardeners continuing learning through Mini-College, Gardener's Pen, webinars.
 - Develop Mini-College programs to maximize educational opportunities for Master Gardeners.
 - Increase participation at Mini-College by broadly advertising the merits and process associated with the Send a Friend Scholarship
 - Redesign the Gardener's Pen newsletter to incorporate educational content.
 - Improve access to training opportunities for Master Gardeners by encouraging OSU Extension faculty to develop online training opportunities or to offer online webinars
- Support chapters with resources.
 - Encourage continuing education through monthly speakers and workshops at the chapter level; compile a list of speakers and their specialties at chapter monthly programs and share it statewide.
 - Develop a standard form that can be used to evaluate effectiveness of workshops and classes.
- Improve access to information about training for Master Gardeners.
 - Highlight workshops for Master Gardeners via an online calendar at <http://calendar.oregonstate.edu/today/month/mastergardener/>.
 - Redesign the Gardener's Pen newsletter to incorporate listings of educational programs and events.



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- Advertise the webinars on the OSU MG Facebook page, the OMGA Gardener's Pen, the OSU MG online calendar, etc.
- Encourage donations and/or broadly advertise the Send a Friend Scholarship
 - Include instructions for how chapters and individuals can donate money to SAF, online
 - Advertise the availability of Send-A-Friend scholarships (to both potential recipients and potential donors) well in advance of SAF application deadlines

Strategy 4: Strengthen the OMGA

- Maintain timely communications with members
 - Keep OMGA database current
- Attend trainings, on advocacy, financial management and/or other topics, that will support the growth and effectiveness of the OMGA
 - Support local chapters in retaining members
 - Grow our membership into emerging MG county groups
- Join the Nonprofit Association of Oregon
 - network with other non-profits
 - take advantage of leadership education
 - expand our horizons
- Set key metrics to guide us towards our goals
 - Increase membership of x% by MM/DD/YY
 - Increase attendance at the Gardener's mini-college event by X%
 - Continuation of the OMGA President's Project each year
 - Increase attendance of the Leadership Day event by X%
- Redesign Gardener's Pen to a 2 page, quick ideas, tips, advocacy, & educational opportunities.
- Create benefits package showing worth. Include list of companies around state that give discounts.
- Promote the Statewide MG Endowment.
- Facilitate chapter ideas around state such as clearing house of events, ideas, interests.
- Conduct member survey including generation X's to see what interests them and to keep them involved.
- OMGA website to include gardening tips, member benefits. Goal: Number one source for reliable gardening information.
- OMGA flyer to include mission statement, strategic goals, fund raising efforts and what the money is used for, optional membership enrollment form.
- Improve the OMGA Representatives and Board member handbooks.