

**St. Charles County Master Gardeners Association**  
**Steering Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**July 11, 2025**

**Attendees:** President: Laura Steimel                      Demo Garden Leads: Cindy Platzer, Beka Davis  
Vice President: Jackie Johnson                      Education/Hortline: Patti Kolek  
Secretary: Sandra Newsom                      Plant Sale Coordinator: Donna Lindsey  
Treasurer: ~~Mary Coyle~~                      \* line through indicates absence

MU Program Coordinator: ~~Eli Isele~~

**Invitees:** Kevin Lynch (Membership), ~~Joe Walker (Immediate Past President)~~, ~~Bonnie Winkeler~~, Valerie Mertz, ~~Deana Dothage~~, ~~Melanie Elick~~

**Call to Order:** President Laura Steimel called the meeting to order at 9:09 a.m.

**Quorum and Attendance:** Sandra Newsom verified Quorum and Attendance.

**Secretary's Report:** Sandra Newsom | Minutes of the June 13, 2025 meeting were distributed on July 9, 2025 and were available during the 7/11/2025 steering committee meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2025 Steering Committee meeting as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Mary Coyle | June financial reports were not available. Financial reports for June and July will be available at the August Steering Committee meeting. Mary advised not to change the Steering Committee meeting time for the time being. She will try to attend the meetings when she can. In addition to the regular monthly reports, the Steering Committee requested a year-to-date budget vs. expenditures report through July. Laura will confirm that the \$3,000 transfer from the checking account to the savings account that was approved at the June Steering Committee meeting has been completed.

**MU Horticulturalist Specialist/Coordinator:** Eli Isele | No report.

**MU Extension Engagement Specialist:** Deana Dothage | No report.

**President's Report:** Laura Steimel | Laura reported that a response to MU Extension was required by August 1 on the matter of SCCMGA's status as a 501(c)(3) entity. Three options were offered by MU Extension: 1. Dissolve the 501(c)(3); 2. Register with the University of Missouri, 3. Remain a 501(c)(3) but operate independently. Discussion was held about the financial consequences of the choices. It was noted that the required independent audit of SCCMGA would be performed by the MU Extension Council. All agreed that Option 2: Register with the University of Missouri was the preferred choice.

Some questions and responses relating to Option 2:

- MOMGA Membership

Chartering with the University does not prevent the chapter from maintaining membership in the Missouri Master Gardener Association (MOMGA). The affiliation with the university applies to the administrative and programmatic relationship with MU Extension. MOMGA membership is independent and may be retained.

- Volunteer Hours, Badging, Active Status, and Emeritus Designation

Chartering as an affiliated 501(c)(3) does not affect the volunteer status of the chapter volunteers. Think of it as chartering is for the group, not the individuals – individual volunteers of a chartered 501(c)(3) are still MU Extension volunteers. Chartering would also not have any implications on emeritus status.

- Volunteer hours may still be tracked in the approved system
  - Badging and status levels (Active, Emeritus, etc.) still apply
  - University Defense & Protection coverage continues for volunteers acting within approved roles.
- This distinction is important: volunteers affiliated through a chartered group retain MU Extension volunteer status, while those in an unaffiliated (Option 3) group would not.

#### Summary option 2

- Maintain 501(c)(3) status
- Submit required annual filings
- Operate under an affiliation agreement
- Access MU Extension branding and support
- University fundraising policy still applies (no games-of-chance fundraising events)

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved that Laura should begin the process of gathering the required information and submitting the forms by August 1, 2025 to obtain registration with the University of Missouri as outlined in Option 2.

### Standing Committee Reports

**Membership:** Kevin Lynch | Website/reporting accounts have been set up for all the most recent MG Core Class trainees. The newest members are completing the volunteer hours requirement and badges are being ordered for presentation at the General Membership Meetings. Kevin said that he would like assistance with the Membership Committee work. He would like to spend time reviewing the master file setup process and reviewing 2024 year-end hours reporting. Once he has a full grasp on that, he will reach out to recruit members to the committee. Kevin reported that he had provided information to another MG association regarding the SCCMGA nametags and insignia denoting volunteer hours worked. The question generated from attendance at the recent MOMGA annual meeting.

**Continuing Education/Advanced Training:** Bonnie Winkeler | Discussion on the proposed Advanced Training Guidelines was brought from the table. Eli recommended accepting the policy proposed by the Education Committee. The proposed policy follows that recommended by UM Extension with a few exceptions. Discussion on the definition of “horticultural disciplines” within the policy was held. It was suggested that the terminology should be “horticultural subjects (or categories) (e.g. soils, vegetables, natives, propagation, etc.)”

A motion to approve the proposed Advanced Training Guidelines policy was made and seconded. The Steering Committee agreed with all the Advanced Training Committee’s recommendations and discussed extensively the need to require advanced training in at least 3 horticultural subjects/categories with no more than 10 hours per subject/category. The importance of the required 15 hours of work in Hortline support, speaking engagements or teaching classes was also stressed. The motion to approve the revised Advanced Training Guidelines Policy was unanimously approved. The Guidelines will be posted on the Members’ Only section of the SCCMGA website.

Continuing education and advanced training opportunities are published weekly in the *Monday Blooms*.

**Education:** Patti Kolek | The SCCMGA will participate in local farmer’s markets including:

St. Charles Market	1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday – May 3 <sup>rd</sup> through November 29 <sup>th</sup>
Pollinator Palooza	September 27, 2025

An *In the Garden* Fall class is scheduled for September 13, 2025. Presenters include Candy Boyle, Kevin Minard and Chuck Baur. The fee is \$20 and registration will open in Mid-August. The 2026 schedule for

*In the Garden* classes calls for sessions in January, February and September. There is interest from the public for summer gardening classes targeted for youth, but no volunteers have stepped forward to develop this concept.

The Hortline is going very well with sporadic activity. There was a good turnout for the July 5<sup>th</sup> farmers market. Patti thanked Tom and Tammie Wright for manning the booth.

**Plant Sale:** Donna Lindsey, Catherine Ebone, Cindy Heider  
**Greenhouse:** Jeanne Debold, Nancy Torke  
**Hoop House:** Donna Lindsey

The Plant Sale Team leaders are busy working on plans for the 2026 Plant Sale.

**Demonstration Gardens:** Cindy Platzer, Beka Davis | Stressed the need to keep the tool shed clean and organized. The hydroponics equipment needs to be inventoried and organized so that it can be offered to MGs interested in that discipline. The berry boxes need to go. Beka Davis and Phebe Martin are planning a complete renovation of the Pantry Beds. Wood will no longer be used for bed construction. There are issues with getting parts for one of the mowers. Three push mowers are currently in service.

The Fruit Arboretum team would like to host a couple of open houses before upcoming General Membership Meetings. No fall Public Tours are scheduled. Phase 2 of the Herb Garden renovation continues. There are two extra beds and seating has been added throughout. An issue still to be addressed is that of providing shade in the gardens.

The Warren County Nutritionist (part of the Missouri Extension Nutrition Program) toured the gardens and was very excited about the possibility of a collaboration where the nutritionists could be trained in growing and harvesting the Pantry Garden crops.

**Communications:** Melanie Elick | Laura will schedule time with Jackie Johnson and Melanie to discuss communication training needs in the areas of: Constant Contact, Website, Face Book and Google Cloud Storage.,

**Upcoming Speakers and Meetings:** Val Mertz | General Membership Meetings are held monthly except November and December. Social time begins at 6:00 and the program begins at 6:30 followed by a business meeting. Program topics for upcoming meetings are:

July 24	<b>What's Bugging You</b> presented by Patrick Bellrose, an integrated pest management consultant and former owner of Fahr's Greenhouse and Nursery.
August 28	Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, an organization dedicated to planting and growing a resilient tree canopy across Missouri, to support healthy people, healthy habitats, and a healthy planet.
September	Speaker is not confirmed.
October 23	<b>Our Missouri Native Hollies and More</b> presented by Joe Corio, an active Emeritus Gardener in Jefferson County. Joe is currently the board chairman of Kress Farm Garden Preserve.
November	No monthly membership meeting.

**Old Business:** The 2024 preliminary Audit Committee report that was reviewed by the Steering Committee in April was finalized and provided to Audit Committee Chairman Jackie Johnson. This report represents an internal audit performed annually by a committee of MGs appointed by the president. The final draft of the audit report was reviewed by the Steering Committee. Discussion was held about the requirement to submit a packing slip to the treasurer to confirm delivery of purchased items. Alternate methods for providing proof of delivery when packing slips are not provided were discussed. Cindy Platzer will make sure the garden leads are compliant with

the requirements. The Steering Committee accepted the 2024 Internal Audit Committee report which will be posted on the SCCMGA website along with the Steering Committee Meeting minutes.

The topic of a central storage plan for spreadsheets and other operating documents that are maintained by the Garden Leads and MG Association officers remains an item of unfinished business. Google Cloud storage has been suggested as an option. Management of access to those records will be important to prevent the inadvertent deletion of important records.

**New Business:** None

**Good of the Order:** Donna Lindsey investigated the opportunity for the MU Extension Garden to become designated as an All-American Selections (AAS) Garden. AAS was founded in 1932 as an independent non-profit organization that tests new, never-before-sold varieties for the home gardener. That designation has been granted to the MU Extension Garden. The first year will be a learning experience as beds are identified (Stone Bed and Square Foot Garden) to grow the selected seeds and signage is added to the property. Leslie Mitchell Jackson will lead this with assistance from Laura Steimel and Peggy Hammond.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the July 11, 2025 Steering Committee meeting at 10:30 a.m. The motion received unanimous approval. The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for August 15, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Newsom".

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Sandra Newsom

Audit  
Committee:  
Karen Graves  
Cindy Heider  
Jackie Johnson  
Mary Coyle, Observer

The audit committee met on March 27, 2025, to perform the audit of the SCCMG financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2024. Treasurer Rebecca Poon was also present and provided access to all supporting documentation for the 2024 receipts and disbursements and to answer questions.

As requested, we performed the audit procedures as outlined in the SCCMG document titled 'Audit Procedures'. We believe the audit procedures were sufficient and that the financial statements are materially correct. Our audit also included tests of certain SCCMG expense policies and procedures.

Our recommendations:

It is important that all expense reimbursement forms have two signatures for approval, which was not always the case.

When items purchased online are delivered to the SCCMG, the packing slip/invoice should be signed as part of the receipt information to ensure that the entire shipment was received in full. If a shipment is incomplete, that should be clearly noted by the MG accepting delivery. This is currently not being done.

The membership of the SCCMG should be informed that reimbursement requests need to be submitted in a timely manner, and it should be very clearly stated that reimbursement checks must be cashed within 60 days or the check may be voided.

Policies should be instituted that recognize that, on occasion, items may be ordered that are not received for more than 60 days. Members may be required to pay for the order and should be able to be reimbursed with the understanding that the plant material (primarily seeds but could also include soils, plants/trees and pot supplies) may not be shipped for more than 60 days. If the MG member and garden lead approve the purchase, the member should be reimbursed with the understanding that further verification by packing list or invoice will be provided as soon as the supplies are delivered.

Since the Clover and Eventbrite receipts account for a large portion of the income, it makes sense to print the Clover and Eventbrite reports every month and save them in the files along with all the other documentation the Treasurer keeps. Not currently being done. As Clover and Eventbrite disbursements are handled differently (regarding the fees that are charged and when they are deducted), this would help clarify the paper trail.

For 2025 and beyond, we want to stress the importance that at least one member of the Steering Committee obtain the bank statements and reviews the bank reconciliations each month. The Steering Committee should investigate any reconciling items that are outstanding for more than 60 days. The Steering Committee should take advantage of Quickbook options that allows another user

to review transactions ("review only" permission, not able to change anything). This would show more oversight into the Treasurer's activities.

In addition, the organization's expense policies and procedures should be made easily accessible to all MG's. We suggest a communication to all MGS that they should review these newly created policies and procedures and ask for their diligence in fully completing any SCCMG forms when required.

The Audit Procedures document has been updated and clarified for next year's use.

#### General Comments:

Overall, the Audit Committee finds that the SCCMG accounting practices and procedures are working well. A tremendous thank you should be given to the current Treasurer, Rebecca Poon, for her outstanding organizational skills and attention to detail.