

St. Charles County Master Gardeners Association
Steering Committee Minutes
June 13, 2025

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

MU Program Coordinator: Eli Isele

Invitees: Kevin Lynch (Membership), Jean Debold (Greenhouse), Cindy Heider (Plant Sale), ~~Joe Walker~~
~~(Immediate Past President)~~, ~~Bonnie Winkler~~, ~~Valerie Mertz~~, ~~Deana Dothage~~, ~~Melanie Elick~~

Call to Order: Vice President Jackie Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Quorum and Attendance: Sandra Newsom verified Quorum and Attendance.

Secretary's Report: Sandra Newsom | Minutes of the May 9, 2025 meeting were distributed on June 3, 2025 and were available during the 6/13/2025 steering committee meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2025 Steering Committee meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: Rebecca Poon | The financial position as of 5/31/2025 was reported as \$47,938.90 in the checking account and \$8,088.45 in the savings account. The treasurer's report also included the Statement of Financial Position, Reconciliation Report and Bank Statement for May 2025. A motion was made and seconded to accept the financial report. The motion to accept the treasurer's report for May 2025 received unanimous approval.

MU Horticulturalist Specialist/Coordinator: Eli Isele | Eli was back from his extended trip to Slovenia. Eli's work is spread across the county, and he works from several Extension offices. He did a walkthrough of the Brown Road Extension Gardens with Cindy Platzer. The Fall 2025 Core Class for Master Gardener training is scheduled to begin in August.

President's Report: Laura Steimel | Rebecca Poon resigned the treasurer's position as of May 31, 2025. Laura appointed Mary Mason-Coyle to serve as treasurer effective June 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025. Elections will be held in October to fulfill the remaining term of office through 2026. Rebecca provided a detailed transition plan and recommended an audit of financial records for January – May 2025. On related transition matters:

- The corporate card assigned to the treasurer has been transferred to Mary Coyle effective June 1, 2025.
- The current approved online signers for Commerce Bank are Laura Steimel (president) and Mary Coyle (new treasurer as of June 1st).
- Equipment (HP Laptop and printer), supplies (printed checks, envelope, postage) and files will be transferred to Mary.

With the mid-year change in the Treasurer's position, a discussion was held regarding the need for an audit for the first five months of 2025. The consensus was that the recently appointed treasurer would be asked to review the May 2025 treasurer's report and confirm the beginning balances for June. If any discrepancies were identified, an audit of the first five months of 2025 could be conducted but a new audit committee would need to be formed.

Once the monthly reporting is closed, all the paperwork should be filed monthly in the MU Extension office file storage area.

Standing Committee Reports

Membership: Kevin Lynch | Kevin reported an issue with the newest Master Gardeners (trainees, interns) receiving the *Monday Blooms* weekly email newsletter and requested clarity on the authorized distribution list. It was a consensus that the *Monday Blooms* should be distributed to all Core Class trainees as soon as they start the class and have signed the Volunteer agreement. There were many eager volunteers from the most recent classes who possibly missed out on the volunteer opportunities posted in the weekly newsletter. The issue might be concentrated within the recent on-line training class. Kevin will confirm that the communications team has received the class email roster.

Kevin has received questions about the 10-year active status requirement before a Master Gardener can request Emeritus status. Does the MG wait until the end of the 10th year to apply for emeritus status or can the MG apply once the annual volunteer hour commitment for the 10th year has been fulfilled? Traditionally, it has been required that the MG must wait until the end of the 10th year to apply.

Kevin submitted a request for membership badges to Eli at the first of June for processing by the Extension office on June 5.

Continuing Education/Advanced Training: Bekah Davis | Requirements for the MG Advanced Training Guidelines have been discussed for some time. The Membership Committee (Bonnie Winkeler) submitted proposed requirements for Steering Committee approval. The proposed requirements mirror those of UM Extension in most instances. Discussion focused on those areas where the requirements are specific to SCCMGA and whether the proposed requirements were necessary. Eli offered to assist with the review of the Advanced Training Guidelines and asked to see all of the printed documentation related to this topic. Discussion was tabled until Eli can meet with the Advanced Training Committee.

Opportunities for continuing education and advanced training are published in the *Monday Blooms* newsletter. The CE/AT team has noted the difficulty in identifying advanced training opportunities. It was suggested that the chapter investigate hosting Advanced Training classes for the members.

Education: Patti Kolek | Rainout cancellations have been an issue with the farmer's markets. The SCCMGA will participate in local farmer's markets including:

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

The Education Committee will meet on June 26th just prior to the General Membership meeting.

An *In the Garden* Fall class is scheduled for September 13, 2025.

The Hortline is going very well with a lot of activity although volunteer scheduling has been problematic. There were 50+ contacts via the Hortline in May. Patti mentioned that Eli was missed by the Hortline team during his absence.

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

The Propagation Team welcomed new volunteers Deb Hedges, Lisa Berry and Keelin Russell. All the pots and trays in the Greenhouse and Hoop House have been cleaned and stored.

Demonstration Gardens: Cindy Platzer | The public and private garden tours are wrapping up. Two scheduled tours remain, and 112 people have toured the gardens so far this season. Tours are not conducted during the summer because of high temperatures. The supply of garden brochures that is helpful for self-guided tours is diminishing, indicating that there is some activity with visitors who are not

part of a scheduled tour. Preliminary discussions are being held with the Cultural Arts Center where they are interested in placing art in the Extension Garden. The Herb Garden is currently in phase 2 of renovation. The State Extensive Nutrition Program is interested in doing some of their training at the Extension office and Deanna Dothage will be involved in those discussions. A Safety and Design Inspection has been conducted, and the team will work with MU Extension facilities to point out potential safety hazards. A Leads meeting is scheduled for Saturday evening, June 14 and will include a Garden Stroll.

Communications: Melanie Elick | No report. Laura was instrumental in recruiting new members for the Communications Team. Some MGs who have signed up to assist the Communications Team have received no contact. It was noted that this concern probably applies across the board with the management of volunteers and should be addressed with all Team Leads. The issue involves acknowledging those who sign up via various promotions and consistent communication within each team regarding scheduled work days and volunteer opportunities.

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

June 26	Landscaping the Arch Grounds presented by Nicholas Krekler. He will explain his work as general manager, landscaping and planting the Arch grounds with Site Systems. The intricate project includes bioremediation of the soil and hand-picked specimens.
July 24	Speaker not confirmed.
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 25	Speaker is not confirmed.
October 23	Our Missouri Native Hollies and More 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. Jackie will distribute the report to the Steering Committee for review before posting along with the Steering Committee minutes and General Membership Meeting minutes on the SCCMGA website.

A motion was made and seconded to transfer \$3,000 (partial proceeds of the 2025 Plant Sales) from the SCCMGA checking account to the savings account. When possible, this transfer is made annually to increase the funds available in the emergency reserve savings account. The motion was unanimously approved.

There was no update on the status of the communication dated 5/2/2025 from Eric Jackson, Extension Risk and Volunteer Management Director that contained important guidance for volunteer Master Gardener groups organized as 501(c)(3)s. Laura and Joe attended meetings during the 2025 Extension Master Gardener Conference on June 6-7 related to this topic. Information will be forthcoming.

Old Business Pending: Advertising placement for plant sale and garden tour information was discussed briefly in the report on Education.

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. Volunteers should be identified to join a committee to develop a records retention policy that identifies a permanent file storage solution for important documents.

New Business: Discussion was held on changing the Steering Committee meeting date/time. Treasurer Mary Coyle is not available to meet on Friday mornings. The time set for Steering Committee meetings has changed in the past based on the convenience of the officers. It is important that the treasurer attend the meetings and many possibilities that would best accommodate all attendees were considered. Discussion was tabled. Jackie will explore the possibilities with Laura and Mary.

Discussion was held on the definition of an “outside garden” for the purpose of awarding volunteer hours for work done at an outside garden. Work in an “outside garden” is not meant to be free labor. It should be consultation/design work and educational in nature. The beneficiary should be an institution (such as a church, a non-profit, or another association) and not an individual. Approval for volunteer work at an outside garden should be received from the Membership Committee before the work is done. Kevin Lynch will review the current guidelines and send that to the Steering Committee for review.

Discussion was held on ways to motivate members to attend the monthly membership meetings. Some comments: members may not realize there is a business meeting following the program; have the president give all the reports rather than calling on the individual Leads/Chairmen; shorten the break between the program and the business meeting; conduct the business meeting prior to the program; improve business meeting content; streamline the badge presentation process; use a facilitator to keep the business meeting on track; offer attendance incentives such as participation in a drawing. Some comments related specifically to the Membership portion of the meeting included preparing those who are to receive badges to be ready to go to participate and taking one group picture rather than individual photos unless family members are attending. There is no action resulting from these comments, but discussion should continue.


The recent 2025 Extension Master Gardener Conference included a program by All-American Selections (AAS) Gardens. AAS was founded in 1932 as an independent non-profit organization that tests new, never-before-sold varieties for the home gardener. After a full season of anonymous trialing by volunteer horticulture professionals, only the top garden performers are given the AAS Winner award designation for their superior performance. The purpose of an AAS Display Garden is to grow and display AAS winners; to educate visitors on AAS and the AAS trialing process and to introduce top performing garden varieties to the public. Missouri has 10 locations designated as AAS Display Gardens. Donna will investigate the opportunity for the Extension Garden to earn the designation of AAS Display Garden. Participation as an AAS Display Garden will require a designated Lead volunteer and interest has been expressed by some members.

Good of the Order: Congratulations to **Joe Walker**, who was recognized as the 2024 Master Gardener of the Year at the recent Extension Master Gardener Conference. The 2026 Conference will be held in Springfield, MO on June 5-7, 2026, hosted by the Green County Master Gardeners Association.

The SCCMGA received a donation of a hydroponic growing system. It is not feasible to install a hydroponic system at the Extension gardens. The donation may be offered to a member. If a member accepts the donation, the member could respond with an educational presentation that would benefit other members and/or donate some of the produce to Pantry Garden beneficiaries.

Adjournment: A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the June 13, 2025 Steering Committee meeting at 10:45 a.m. The motion received unanimous approval.

Respectfully submitted,


Sandra Newsom