

St. Charles County Master Gardeners Association
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
September 12, 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), ~~Bonnie Winkler~~ (CE/AT), ~~Valerie Mertz~~ (Programs), ~~Deana Dethage~~ (MU Extension Engagement Specialist), ~~Melanie Elick~~ (Communications)

Call to Order: President Laura Steimel 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 August 8, 2025 Steering Committee meeting were distributed on 9/11/2025 and were available during the 9/12/2025 meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 8, 2025 Steering Committee meeting. The minutes were reviewed, and minor corrections were made. The motion was amended to approve the minutes as revised. The motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report: Mary Coyle | August reconciliation reports for the period ending 8/31/2025 were distributed on 9/9/2025. The statement ending balance in the Operation/Checking account is \$43,332.82 and the balance in the Savings Account is \$11,099.81. The Transaction Detail report by account for the period August 1-31, 2025 was reviewed. A motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report. The reports were reviewed and discussion was held. The Clover (credit card processor) report showed a charge for fees of \$12.50 on 9/2/2025. Laura will follow up with Mary regarding the Clover fee charge and will work with the bank to confirm terms and conditions for using Clover and setting the correct user access to the account. The motion to accept the treasurer's report was unanimously approved.

Mary will meet with Cindy Platzer and Beka Davis on 9/27/2025 for a Demo Garden knowledge transfer meeting.

Mary submitted a discussion topic related to the process for approving and submitting expense reimbursement forms. Laura will forward the 2025 audit report of calendar year 2024 operations to Mary and request specific examples of improper procedures so the Steering Committee could better understand the issue. It was felt that the correct approval process was being followed, and it was confirmed that all reimbursement requests must be submitted via the reimbursement request form according to established procedures. It is never acceptable to submit reimbursement requests/receipts via email to the treasurer. Mary referenced the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) requirements, and it was noted that the Act applied to publicly traded companies, not non-profits, although some non-profits have adopted some aspects of SOX as a best practice for sound financial controls. Educating/reminding the membership on proper procedures was recommended.

MU Horticulture Specialist/Coordinator: Eli Isele | Registration for an in-person MU Extension Master Gardener Core Class will open on October 1 with the class scheduled to begin January 15, 2026. Patti Kolek has a list of those interested in joining the class where the request for information came through the HortLine. Eli noted that the MU Extension program was longer (15 weeks) than programs offered by other Master Gardener groups in Missouri (frequently 12 weeks). Discussion of combining some classes (insects and diseases, for example) or

eliminating some classes was held. Patti will solicit MG volunteers to facilitate the 2026 Core Class training sessions later this year.

Eli confirmed that the application to become a University of Missouri affiliated 501(c)(3) organization had been received by the University but no response has been received to date. He suggested waiting to hear from MU Extension Horticulture Specialist Debi Kelly about the impact on local operations and necessary changes to the MOU and SCCMGA bylaws.

Eli commended the Master Gardeners for the excellent condition of the gardens. He stressed that the Extension was a public-facing organization and keeping the garden displays to a high standard was critical to creating a good impression.

MU Extension Engagement Specialist: Deana Dothage | No report.

President's Report: Laura Steimel | The State Extension Master Gardener office will conduct a Zoom meeting titled "Bylaws and Policy/Procedures" for all chapters on Monday, September 29, from 6:00 to 7:30 PM. This session will cover essential information regarding bylaws, including what should be included, as well as the distinctions between bylaws and policies/procedures. Attendees will have access to sample bylaws and policies/procedures.

Laura is receiving information about ordering seeds and plugs related to the All-America Selections garden project. This first year is a learning experience, but it seems that ordering information and delivery may occur earlier than originally expected. Previews of available plants have been received. Leslie Mitchell is the designated Lead for the project.

Standing Committee Reports

Membership: Kevin Lynch | Eight Master Gardeners will receive badges at the September General Membership Meeting. There has been an issue with the correct spelling of names. An easy-to-use Badge Order Form has been deployed.

Discussion was held on several items related to **Guidelines for Reporting Hours**. The Steering Committee confirmed that all travel time should be recorded as Volunteer (VOL) hours.

Kevin proposed revised language related to **Offsite Garden**: *The hours volunteering in an offsite nonprofit garden. This category only applies when on-hand teaching is the main focus of the effort. Activities that are mainly manual, such as weeding and mulching, and that aren't focused on teaching, are not to be recorded under this category. Any requested exceptions to this policy need to be forwarded to the Membership Committee which will present it to the Steering Committee for consideration. If recommended by the Steering Committee, the request will be submitted to the St Charles County Horticultural Specialist for disposition.*

Kevin proposed to correct minor grammatical errors in the section related to **General Public Assistance** and add an introductory sentence to the current policy: *Due to the complexity of this category, any proposed project must receive prior approval from the Steering Committee.*

Discussion was held on the proposed changes. The Hickey Elementary School offsite garden was recognized as a special case where the tornado (act of God) has closed the school and prevents MGs from working there in a consulting capacity. Phebe Martin will continue working the garden awaiting decisions on the future of the school. Kevin will incorporate the revisions and submit a complete policy to the Steering Committee for approval.

Continuing Education/Advanced Training: Bonnie Winkeler | Continuing education and advanced training opportunities are published weekly in the *Monday Blooms*. Publication in the *Monday Blooms* is evidence of pre-approval.

Education: Patti Kolek | Upcoming education events include:

In the Garden class	September 13, 2025 (20 people registered as of 9/12/25)
Pollinator Palooza	September 27, 2025 (volunteers needed)
In the Garden class	January 17, 2026
In the Garden class	February 21, 2026

The final St. Charles Farmers Market for MG attendance was September 6, 2025. Activity was brisk with lots of interest in the MU Master Gardener program and 200 business cards were distributed. The Hort Line team will wrap up the in-person presence in the MU office at the end of October. A year-end appreciation luncheon is planned for the Hort Line volunteers. Computer problems created some difficulties for the team, but the issues seem to be resolved.

The Education Committee will meet on 9/25/2025 at 5:00 prior to the General Membership Meeting.

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

Donna reported on the **Plant Sale Team** meeting held on 9/11/2025. The meeting was well attended with excellent discussion on plans for the

2026 Plant Sale. Discussion on a selling price increase continues. The **Greenhouse** cleaning is scheduled for 10/18/2025. The cleaning involves sanitation of the tables and cleaning of the interior. The Propagation Garden **Dig & Divide** work will start on 9/13/2025 and continue through the Fall. All MGs are invited to participate. The Plant Sale Team will adjust Plant Sale operations to coordinate with the shipping schedule for seeds related to the AAS garden and will work with the individual Garden leads to incorporate the AAS selections into the gardens and the Plant Sale. MG volunteer opportunities within the Propagation Garden are published in the *Monday Blooms*.

Demonstration Gardens: Cindy Platzer, Beka Davis | Beka reported on the 9/6/2025 Garden Leads meeting where the main topic was 2026 budget planning. The next Leads meeting is scheduled for 10/25/2025. Cindy is gathering samples for the upcoming Home and Garden Flower Show. Franklin County MGs are planning a tour of the Extension gardens. St. Charles Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS) has scheduled a day-long training session at the MU Extension office. Cindy and Beka will coordinate tours of the Pantry and Herb Gardens and the Arboretum for the attendees.

Discussion of reallocating unused Herb Garden project funds to the Pantry Garden that occurred at the August Steering Committee meeting was revisited. Approximately \$3,459 of the special allocation was unused because a grant was received to purchase material for the Herb Garden project. A motion was made to approve reallocation of the funds from the Herb Garden to the Pantry Garden for use in renovating the Pantry Garden beds to include purchasing materials and soil. The reallocated funds must be used by 12/1/2025 to comply with expense reporting requirements. It was noted that any structural changes in the gardens would require approval by MU Extension. The motion to reallocate the unused funds was approved unanimously.

Communications: Melanie Elick | Jackie Johnson will contact Melanie to discuss communication training needs in the areas of: Constant Contact, Website, Face Book and Google Cloud Storage. Several MGs have volunteered to work with Communications, and their continued interest should be confirmed.

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:

September 25	Amy Nau will provide an update on her work and success at Pearce Hall (Wentzville Alternative School) . She is doing phenomenal things through gardening with the students.
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.
December 5	Holiday Party
January	TBA
February	Annual Awards Program

Old Business: DJ Sutcliffe and Cindy Heider will coordinate the Chili Cookoff at the October general membership meeting.

New Business: The Steering Committee is responsible for organizing the holiday event that is scheduled for December 5. Room C has been reserved, and initial plans were discussed. Some money should be available from the Chapter Meeting Expenses account, but Laura requested approval to budget an additional \$400 for the October and December social events. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to allocate \$400 for expenses related to the October and December social events.

Good of the Order: None

Adjournment: A motion was made, seconded and unanimously approved to adjourn the September 12, 2025 Steering Committee meeting at 10:53 a.m.

The next Steering Committee meeting is scheduled for October 10, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Newsom, Secretary