

**MISSISSIPPI MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION  
(MMGA)**

**GUIDELINES  
FOR  
CONDUCTING  
STATE CONFERENCE**

This notebook has been prepared to guide the local associations as they host a Master Gardener State Conference.

Updated: July 2008

Thank you and your local association for agreeing to host the State Conference.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### GUIDELINES

	<u>PAGE</u>
I. Purpose	3
II. Planning/Scheduling	3
III. Conference Chairperson	4
IV. Conference Committees	5
A. Finance Committee	5
B. Registration Committee	6
C. Program Committee	8
1. Program Subcommittee	8
2. Speaker Subcommittee	8
3. Publicity Subcommittee	9
4. Transportation Subcommittee	9
D. Facilities Committee	10
1. General	10
2. Meeting Room Subcommittee	10
3. Exhibit/Display Subcommittee	11
E. Food Functions Committee	12
1. Banquet Subcommittee	12
2. Refreshment Breaks & Box Lunch Subcommittee	12
3. Decorations Subcommittee	13
F. Printing Committee	13
G. Hospitality Committee	13
1. General	13
2. Speaker Hospitality Subcommittee	13
3. Door Prize Subcommittee	14
4. Souvenir Subcommittee	14
5. Tour/Information Packet Subcommittee	14
H. Book Sales/Signing Committee	15
I. T-Shirt Sales Committee	15
V. Evaluation	15
Appendices:	
A. Example of Budget Submission to MMGA Board	17
B. Example of Post-Conference Report	18
C. Form A - Conference Expense Record	19
Form B - Conference Travel Expense Voucher	20
<b>QUICK REFERENCE OUTLINE</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)</b>	<b>26</b>

## MISSISSIPPI MASTER GARDENERS ASSOCIATION

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE GUIDELINES

#### PURPOSE:

The annual meeting is to include and benefit the entire state membership. The membership shall elect board members and transact such other business as may properly come before the annual meeting. This annual meeting also provides an opportunity for advanced training, networking among local associations and promotion of the Master Gardener Program throughout the State of Mississippi.

#### PLANNING/SCHEDULING:

- A. The conference will be host on a rotation of the 4 districts: Southwest, Northeast, Northwest, and Southeast. Planning should begin two years prior to the anticipated conference date. At each annual conference, there will be a request for a county to host the conference two years hence from the appropriate district. This request should be followed by a letter of intent from the interested county to the Board of Directors. *(Note: The time of the year of the Mississippi annual conference is left up to the host county).*
- B. A conference budget should be developed as soon as practical with copies furnished to the Board of Directors, for review and approval. A listing of items that should be included in the budget are shown in Appendix A. **VERY EARLY IN THE PLANNING PROCESS, THE CHAIRPERSON SHOULD START DEVELOPING A PLAN TO SOLICIT BUSINESSES THAT WOULD BE WILLING TO SPONSOR PORTIONS OF THE CONFERENCE.** This practice has proven very successful by the planners of the Alabama MG Conferences. As an example, a business could sponsor a "break". Large posters are placed at the "break" area to give the business recognition. The Chairperson of the hosting district for conference should plan to attend the MMGA Board Meetings, to brief the Board of Directors on the status of the conference planning and to answer any questions.
- C. A meeting facility should be secured immediately by the host association, following approval of the budget. The Committee should plan for 175-250 attendees. At the hotel of choice, a block of rooms should be reserved for the group. Attempts should be made to negotiate a reduced rate. At the meeting facility, at least one meeting room should be able to accommodate all registrants at one time. This is necessary for the opening session and for the business meeting.
- D. A "theme" for the Conference and appropriate program topics should be established early in order to solicit and confirm speakers. The most sought-after speakers are booked two to three years in advance. All speakers should be

confirmed six (6) to seven (7) months prior to conference date to allow sufficient time for design of the program and registration material.

- E. Start submitting articles for the state newsletter at least nine months prior to the conference outlining the upcoming events. In addition, this information should be included at the MMGA website.
- F. The Conference Program and Registration materials will be included in the State Newsletter 3 months prior to the conference. The host association will need to work with the Newsletter Editor to determine format and content requirements. The MMGA Treasurer will provide the names of state paid Master Gardeners for the mailing of the newsletter. The conference is usually a day and a half (full day on Thursday and one half day on Friday); however, this can be adjusted based on the program developed by the hosting association. If pre-conference workshops are planned, they should be scheduled on Wednesday.

### III. CONFERENCE CHAIRPERSON:

- A. Fill all conference committee chairperson positions. It is recommended that the Conference Chairperson appoint a Co-Chairperson to share the responsibilities.
- B. Determine a budget for the Chairperson's responsibilities and keep an account of all expenses incurred. All bills should be submitted to the Finance Chairperson.
- C. Arrange for location of conference and negotiate for extras. It is very important, since conference facilities sometimes have hidden costs, to understand all of the costs involved, before the contract is signed.
- D. Schedule meetings of committee chairpersons as needed during the time preceding the conference. It is extremely important to record minutes of the planning meetings, for future references. In addition, it is recommended that you follow up with written correspondence on any agreements with speakers, vendors or exhibitors, to ensure a mutual understanding of the arrangements.
- E. Organize the mailing of all thank you notes at the end of the conference. Each committee will submit names of recipients to the Conference Chairperson who will then write them and send them out under their signature.
- F. Submit a post-conference report to the MMGA Board of Directors and the State MG Program Coordinator. *This report should be prepared using the format outlined in Appendix B.*

### IV. CONFERENCE COMMITTEES:

The following are recommended committees and sub-committees. It is important that you put an organization in place that distributes the responsibilities of the conference to several individuals/groups and not place the majority of the responsibilities on the Conference Chairperson and the Co-Chairperson.

**A. FINANCE COMMITTEE:**

1. The conference fee, plus any sponsorship, should cover all expenses of the conference. The fee should be held to the lowest possible amount in order to make the conference affordable for all Master Gardener members.
2. In recent years, sponsorships have become an important part of the financial support to the conference. A separate subcommittee should be appointed, preferably individuals who are familiar with the business community, to solicit sponsorships for the conference.
3. The MMGA State Treasurer will provide seed money to the local hosting association to cover any up-front expenses incurred by the host association in preparing for the conference. This amount will be \$1,500. The seed money is considered a sponsorship and will be calculated into the financial report for the conference. An addition requested made to the board will not be considered seed money.
4. The host association may open a special checking account. "Mississippi Master Gardener Conference Fund". This account can have the benefit of the 501c3. This account should be closed after all bills have been received and paid.
5. Fees are collected and deposited in the MMGA Conference Fund bank account as they are collected by the hosting association.
6. *Each committee should submit bills to be paid to the Finance Chairperson. Make sure each committee chairperson understands how to submit bills to be paid.*
7. *A record of all income and expenses should be kept. Expenses will be recorded on one of the two financial forms. The Conference Expense Record (Form A) is to be used to document those expenses of a particular committee. The Conference Travel Expense Voucher (Form B) is to be used to document the expenses of speakers invited to participate in the conference. The forms are included as Appendix C.*
8. A final report of all deposits and expenses should be submitted to the Conference Chairperson as soon as possible following the conclusion of the conference. The Finance Chairperson should work with the MMGA Treasurer to reconcile the financial report and resolve any differences. This report will be submitted by the Conference Chairperson to the MMGA Treasurer and to the MMGA Board of Directors.
9. The following policy was approved by the MMGA Board of Directors, regarding the sharing of profits from the Conference. Any requested funds other than sponsorship/seed money should be repaid at 100%. Any profit will be split 50%-50% between the host and the MMGA. Should the conference result in a loss of funds, the loss will be borne by MMGA, and not the hosting association.

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**B. REGISTRATION COMMITTEE:**

1. Determine a budget for registration. Keep a record of all expenses and submit all bills to be paid to the Finance Chairperson on the Conference Expense Record. (See Appendix C)
2. The Conference Program and Registration information will be included as a special insert of the MMGA Newsletter 3 months prior to the conference. This

Committee will need to work with the Newsletter Editor to determine format and content requirements. Prepare the registration insert, which will include: a schedule of conference events, information on the keynote speakers, maps and directions to the conference location, and registration forms. Make it clear what costs are per person *and that spouses must register separately if they plan to attend sessions*. Based on the capacity of the conference facility, limitations may be placed on attendees. Hotel information should also be included in the package. Request e-mail information and consider sending the registration confirmation via e-mail to save on postage. Establish a firm date for registrations. In some cases, two registration dates have been set with a savings for early registration and a larger charge for late registration.

Work with the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator to send a letter to the Extension agents responsible for the Master Gardener Program in their area. MG County Agents must pay the registration fee and all other associated costs. MG County Agents must also pre-register. The letter should also ask the agents to promote the conference in their area. NOTE: The hosting association's workers and volunteers also must pay the registration fees. It must be understood that as local host, it is your turn to "work" the conference and you may not be able to attend all sessions. Remember, next year you can go to the conference and enjoy the fruits of other MG's labor.

Collect and record the number of people for each event. A computer spreadsheet (Excel) is very helpful and provides the flexibility of gathering in the information in many formats. Information should include: the number of attendees from each **district**, number of spouses/guests, number of attendees at banquets tours, workshops, etc. This information is useful to future planners and to the MMGA Board of Directors. Keep all registration forms in a three-ring binder and have it available at the registration desk in case of questions. Some form of confirmation should be sent upon receipt of each individual registration. Where possible, e-mail is recommended. Collect and deposit all monies as directed by the Finance.

Prepare name tags that show the person's name (in large print), county and district represented, and the events/activities that the person has paid to attend. Prepare a report of "Continuing Education" for each attendee showing the total hours of that they earned by attending the conference. Submit this report to Board of Directors and State Master Gardener Program Coordinator for approval.

9. Assemble packets to be distributed to registrants upon arrival. This packet should include the program, tickets for special events, directions, name tags, information on local attractions and local nurseries, etc. Have these registration packets assembled prior to the conference and day of registration.

## **C. PROGRAM COMMITTEE:**

### **1. Program Subcommittee:**

- a. Begin work immediately on a "theme" for the conference and a tentative list of topics and workshops.
- b. Consult with MMGA President and the State MG Program Coordinator regarding time needed for MMGA Awards, group pictures

- and Business Meeting. Installation of Officers/Directors will take place, as well as recognition of outgoing Officers/Board Members.
- c. Determine a budget for printing the program as well as speaker expenses. **Submit all bills to the Finance Committee for payment using the Conference Expense Record. (See Appendix C)**
  - d. Design Programs to be handed out at the conference. Biographical sketches of the speakers should be included in a special section of the program. Using advertisers for the program is optional and will help underwrite the costs of printing. Search for friends and family in the printing business that might help with this work.

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## 2. Speaker Subcommittee:

- a. Secure speakers for each topic, assigning a time on the program and securing their bios at this time. Bios should be included in the promotion materials for the conference, including the MMGA newsletter and the MMGA website. Your Regional Extension Agent is a valuable contact person for knowledge of speakers, as well as the **State MG Program Coordinator.**
- b. If a speaker has books that will be sold during the conference, obtain information for the Book Sales/Signing Committee. Negotiate an equitable arrangement for the selling of books, whereby the conference would receive some financial benefit.
- c. Speakers may be paid honorariums plus expenses. Expenses include mileage and/or actual travel cost, hotel and food. Mileage will be the current rate accepted by IRS. **Expenses should be submitted to the Finance Chairperson on the Conference Travel Expense Voucher.** If air travel is involved, it is suggested that the speaker be allowed to make all the travel arrangements and pay the costs; then, we will reimburse him/her. This can become complicated, if changes in schedules are required. Be sure to include a deadline date for submission of expenses, in your instructions to the speaker. **The speaker expense form is included in Appendix C.**
- d. Once a commitment from a speaker has been received, either verbally or written, prepare a letter back to the speaker, outlining the schedule and all expectations (including the amount of time they have been allocated on the program, including questions and answers), to avoid any miscommunication of information. In addition, ascertain the needs of each speaker for their presentation (video projector, slide projector, etc.). Upon receipt of the requirements, pass this information to the Meeting Room Subcommittee. In addition, determine the itinerary of the speaker and whether they will be attending lunch and dinner events. Customarily, the meals are covered by the conference. Ensure that this information is communicated to the Chairperson of the Food Functions Committee.
- e. Assign a person to greet the speaker at the hotel or the airport and help in any way they can.
- f. Do not alter the published schedule unless absolutely necessary. Have a speaker available as backup, in case of an emergency with your speakers. If you have someone in your local MG group that can do a presentation, it would be good to have them on standby.

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- g. If possible, schedule your speakers to arrive the night before to give them time to rest.

**3. Publicity Subcommittee:** Information promoting the Conference should be given to the State MG Program Coordinator, to the Editor of the MMGA Newsletter and to the MMGA webmaster. Work with the Registration Committee to coordinate the release of the information. Arrange for photographic coverage of the entire conference.

**4. Transportation Subcommittee:**

- a. Determine a budget for the transportation needs.
- b. Submit any bills to be paid to the Finance Chairperson on the Conference Expense Record. (See Appendix C)
- c. Make arrangements to reserve any buses needed. Do this as far in advance as possible. Arrange guides/hosts for each bus who will collect tickets and talk to the group while in route. Make sure each guide/host has adequate directions to the designated destination. Cell phones will also be helpful in case of the need to communicate a problem. As a note, if at all possible, consider giving the attendees "clear" directions to the designated locations and allow them to travel on their own. Transportation costs can increase the costs of a conference by a substantial margin.

**D. FACILITIES COMMITTEE:**

**1. General:**

- a. Secure location as suggested under II. Planning-Scheduling. Arrange for space needed for large meeting room, rooms for concurrent sessions, and areas for refreshment breaks, displays, vendors, registration, exhibits, book sales/signing and T-shirt sales.
- b. Negotiate hotel and/or conference center costs. Attendees will make their own reservations from the block of rooms reserved for their use. Negotiate a deadline for use of the rooms, at which time they are turned back to the hotel. Try to negotiate a free room for every 20 or so rooms that are booked. These free rooms can be used for the speakers and help with the costs of the conference. Also try to negotiate for a hospitality room, which can be used by your volunteers, as well as the speakers (if they need a break) and also can be used by the MMGA Board of Directors, who may need a small room to conduct meetings before, during and after the conference.
- c. Determine a budget for the committee. Submit any bills to the Finance Chairperson.

**2. Meeting Room Subcommittee:**

- a. Check each meeting room prior to the session to be sure it is set up properly. The Speakers Chairperson should provide a list of each speaker's needs (i.e. microphones, projectors, and screens, etc.).
- b. Do a walk-through of the conference site to learn how to control lighting, sound systems, air conditioning, heating, etc. Make sure rooms can be darkened by having all windows covered.

- c. Try not to have the room set up so that the entrance/exit is at the front where the speaker is located. Also, make sure the podium is set in a location that the speaker can see their slides as they are speaking. If possible, have the speaker on a "riser" so that they can be seen by the audience.
- d. The State MG Program Coordinator's office and County Agent's office have equipment available (laser pointers, video projectors, slide projectors, extension cords, etc.) for use at no charge. Check with them first before renting the equipment from the conference site.
- e. Have additional equipment available in case of mechanical failure or bulb burnout.
- f. Assign monitor to each room for each session. This is an extremely important job. This person should introduce the speaker, help with lighting and equipment and keep the program on schedule. It is helpful to let a speaker know that they have five minutes remaining.
- g. A copy of the schedule should be posted at various locations at the conference.

### **3. Exhibit/Display Subcommittee:**

- a. Determine a budget for the subcommittee. Submit any bills to be paid to the Finance Chairperson on the Conference Expense Record. (See Appendix C)
- b. Contact and solicit both commercial and Master Gardener vendors, who have plants and other garden-related items to offer for sale. Determine a fee that will be charged for the vendor space. Traditionally, the Master Gardener vendors have been charged a lower rate than commercial vendors. In most cases, Master Gardeners are selling items as fundraisers for their local association. Proceeds from the rental of vendor space should be used to offset the costs of the conference.
- c. In addition, each county with a MG Program and a local association should be contacted at least nine (9) months prior to the conference and encouraged to provide a display sharing their local projects and ideas. This space is provided at no costs to the local associations. If space is available, it is recommended that these displays be located in a separate area from the commercial vendors. They could be located in the main conference meeting room, assuming space is available. Local associations are also encouraged to send their banners to be displayed during the conference. Request the banners be mailed at least two weeks prior to the conference. Work with conference facility management to determine where banners will be displayed. Local associations are not charged.
- d. It is suggested that this committee be separated into two groups - one handling the commercial vendors and one handling the local association's displays.
- e. Coordinate the layout of the tables for vendors with the Conference Chairperson,
- f. Communicate with the vendors to establish a specific time for setup, times when the booths will be open and a time when the booths can be taken down. Make sure individuals are there to assist with the setup and to work any problems that arise.

## **E. FOOD FUNCTIONS COMMITTEE:**

### **1. Banquet Subcommittee:**

- a. Select a time, the location and the program for the banquet
- c. If a buffet style dinner is used, make sure the setup includes two serving lines, to speed up service.
- d. Determine a budget for food requirements. This, in most cases, is the greatest expense to the conference. Work closely with the caterer to provide quality food at the best possible price. **Be sure to include the costs of taxes and gratuity, when pricing the costs of the meal.**
- e. Provide this information to the Food Functions Committee Chairperson, who will submit the information to the Finance Committee Chairperson, for inclusion in the budget,
- f. Ensure that the registration packet includes requirements for the attendees to indicate the meals/lunches they will be attending. This is critical in determining a headcount for each of the food events, hopefully, avoiding over-ordering of food. Coordinate this requirement with the Registrations Committee Chairperson.

### **2. Refreshment Breaks and Lunches Subcommittee:**

- a. Work with the Program Committee to determine the requirements for refreshment breaks and lunches during the conference,
- b. Work with the caterer to determine the most cost-effective method of providing these services.
- c. Work with the Registration Committee to ensure that the attendees indicate whether or not they will be attending lunch.
- d. Provide caterer with headcount for these events,
- e. Prepare budget for these events and include in the Food Functions Committee for inclusion in the budget submitted to the Finance Committee. Work with the Food Functions Committee Chairperson to submit Conference Expense Record to cover the costs of these events. (See Appendix C)
- f. Lunch should have a short feature program. MMGA Awards are usually given at this event

### **3. Decorations Subcommittee:**

- a. Determine a budget for decorations. Submit any bills to the Finance Chairperson for payment on Conference Expense Record. (See Appendix C)
- b. Table decorations at the refreshment breaks and at the banquet are usually given as door prizes. Work with the Door Prize Subcommittee in setting up and obtaining decorations.

## **F. PRINTING COMMITTEE:**

1. Determine a budget for all printing costs. Submit all bills to be paid to the Finance Chairperson on Conference Expense Record. (See Appendix C)

2. Work with the Program Committee on the layout of the written program and any other materials that need to be printed. Search for friends and family of printing companies to obtain the best price on printing services.
3. Have all tickets and nametags printed as per direction of the Registration Committee. The programs and tickets are to be delivered to the Registration Committee by the deadline determined by that Committee, who is responsible for preparing the individual registration packets.

**G. HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE:**

1. Determine a budget for hospitality requirements. Submit all bills to the Finance Chairperson for payment on Conference Expense Record. (See Appendix C)

**2. Speaker Hospitality Subcommittee:**

- a. Provide fruit baskets or flowers and a welcoming note in each speaker's hotel room.
- b. Work with Facilities Committee Chairperson to ensure that a room is provided as a "hospitality" room. This room can be used by the local hosting volunteers, the speakers, and possibly as the meeting room for the MMGA Board of Directors. Refreshments (soft drinks, coffee, and snacks) should be provided in this room.
- c. Assist the Program Committee with greeting the speakers at the hotel or airport. Be sure they have a copy of the conference materials, including the conference schedule.

**3. Door Prizes Subcommittee:**

- a. Organize the collection of door prizes. Solicit donations from local merchants as well as national gardening companies. This committee should work with large gardening companies, such as Scotts. Contact with these companies will need to be made well in advance of the conference, since their budgets are planned years in advance.
- b. Coordinate set up and display of prizes with the Conference Chairperson. Also work with the Decorations Subcommittee since the door prizes may be part of the overall decorations.
- c. Try to give as many of the door prizes away during times other than business meetings or sessions.
- d. Provide a list of thank you notes to the Conference Chairperson. This can be done easily by collecting business cards of those who donate and writing on the back of the card the item donated. It also provides the name and address of the person to be thanked.
- e. Methods of giving away door prizes vary greatly depending on the number of prizes. One method is to number each nametag and it would correspond to a number drawn for a prize. Be cautious of the amount of time taken up for door prizes. Determine the prize and draw a number. If winners are allowed to choose a prize, too much time is taken from the conference schedule.

**4. Souvenir Subcommittee:**

- a. Solicit as many souvenirs as possible from various businesses, individuals and the local Chamber of Commerce, as well as national gardening companies,

- b. Coordinate with the Registration Committee to assemble and prepare packets for each registrant.
- c. Assist the Registration Committee at the desk during registration,
- d. Provide a list to the Conference Chairperson of those who would require thank you notes.

**5. Tours/Information Packets Subcommittee:**

- a. Tours of particular interest to Master Gardeners are desirable and should be optional. Cost of these should be clearly delineated on the registration form. Depending on the tour, mass transportation may need to be arranged rather than have individual cars used. In this case, be sure and coordinate with the Transportation Subcommittee,
- b. An information packet given out upon arrival might include a listing of area points of interest, local restaurants in close proximity and of course, local nurseries and a map. The local Chamber of Commerce is a good source for items to be included in this packet. Coordinate the information with the Registration Committee Chairperson for inclusion in the registration packets.

**H. BOOK SALES/SIGNING COMMITTEE:**

1. Speakers having books to sell may do so at the conference. Some will bring their books while others will expect our organization to handle the ordering. Authors receive all proceeds from these sales, unless they indicate a willingness to share with Master Gardeners.
2. Work with the Facilities Committee and the Program Chairpersons to arrange for a table and location for the book signing.
3. Assign a person to assist the author in the signing.

**I. T-SHIRT SALES COMMITTEE:**

1. Occasionally, MMGA has T-shirts, sweatshirts and other items for sale at the conference and throughout the year. The MMGA Treasurer will handle the ordering of the items. The hosting association will be expected to provide an individual to handle sales at the conference. Proceeds from the sales along with a detailed report of what was sold by size should be turned over to the MMGA Treasurer at the end of the Conference.
2. In addition, the hosting association could provide a conference T-shirt that would include the conference theme, logo, and lettering as a memento of the conference. These shirts could be ordered on the registration form and would be available for pickup at the conference. Most local T-shirts companies have a short "turnaround time" on printing the shirts and could have them available by the time the conference opens. The proceeds from the sale of the T-shirts are used to underwrite the costs of the conference. This is an excellent way to help with the costs of the conference.
3. It is the policy of MMGA that the hosting association will not use the conference as a means of fundraising for their association. The sales of notecards, aprons, T-shirts, etc. at the conference by the hosting association to

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raise funds for their association is discouraged. Such sales should be a part of the conference proceeds.

## V. EVALUATION

1. An evaluation form should be handed out near the end of the conference, 01 could be included in the registration packet. The hosting association, working with the MMGA Board of Directors should develop this form. All attendees are encouraged to fill out the form. The information should be compiled into a format that would show an overall rating of the conference. This information is important to the MMGA in planning future conferences.
2. The Conference Chairperson will submit a detailed report to the State MG Program Coordinator, and the MMGA Board of Directors, containing conference information requested throughout this manual and contained in Appendix C and outlining any changes to these guidelines and any recommendations. The MMGA Board of Directors will be responsible for transmitting the report to the local associations' Conference Planning Committees who are working on future conferences.

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**APPENDIX -- A**

EXAMPLE OF BUDGET TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE MMGA BOARD of DIRECTORS for \_\_ (year)

INCOME -- Estimated.

<u>Item:</u>	175 Attendees	225 Attendees
Registration	@ \$ _ _	per person
Workshops	@ \$ _	per person
Cocktail Party	@ \$ _	per person
Banquet	@ \$ _	per person
Garden Tours	@ \$ _	per person
Sales: T-shirt	@ \$ _	per person
Vendors - Commercial #_	@ \$ _	per booth
Vendors - MG's #_	@ \$ _	per booth
Sponsorships		
Advertisements		
Total Income-----		

EXPENSE

- Item:
- Facility Rental w/equipment
  - Food: Cocktail Party
    - Banquet
    - Breaks
    - Lunch
  - Decorations:
    - Flowers/Seeds
    - Baskets
  - Printing/Publicity:
    - Letterhead w/logo
    - Program
    - Program Folders
    - Name Badges with hangers
  - Program:
    - Speakers:
      - Honorarium
      - Rooms/Meals/travel
      - Gift Baskets
    - Tour Transportation
    - Materials for Workshops
  - Door Prizes:
    - Prizes
- Expenses TOTAL**  
**PROFIT (LOSS)**

APPENDIX B  
EXAMPLE OF A POST-CONFERENCE  
REPORT

Report should include the following:

- Copies (originals, if possible) of the Registration information, the printed Program given at the meeting and the banquet.
- Summary of the Conference, including lessons learned and recommendations for upcoming conferences.
- Financial Report that shows:
  - Breakdown of income, expenses and profit (loss) for the total conference. Detailed spreadsheets should accompany this report.
  - Breakdown of attendees:
    - Number registered, categorized by MG, spouse/guest, speakers.
    - Number attending workshops, tours, etc.
    - Number attending banquet and cocktail parties
- Reports from the following committees, explaining the process followed in accomplishing their task, along with lessons learned and suggestions for upcoming conferences:
  - Finance Committee
  - Registration Committee
  - Program Committee
  - Facilities Committee
  - Food Committee
  - Banquet Subcommittee
  - Decorations Subcommittee
  - Vendors Committee
  - Sponsorships Committee
  - Printing Committee
  - Hospitality Committee
- Summary of the Evaluation sheets collected at the end of the conference.

Signed by Conference Chairperson

**APPENDIX C**

**FORM A**

**MISSISSIPPI MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION, INC.  
CONFERENCE EXPENSE RECORD**

All reimbursements for expenses incurred will be made by the **Finance Chairman**.  
This form must accompany any request for reimbursement. Please attach all pertinent receipts to this completed form.

Return forms to the Finance Committee Chairperson.

Name/Payee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENSES:	AMOUNT
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
_____	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT CLAIMED</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

Please use back of form if additional space is needed.

Approved by Finance Committee Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Conference Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Reimbursed: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX C**

**FORM --B**

**MISSISSIPPI MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION, INC.  
CONFERENCE TRAVEL EXPENSE VOUCHER**

All reimbursements for expenses incurred will be made by the Finance Chairman. This form must accompany any request for reimbursement Please attach all pertinent receipts to this completed form.

Return forms to the Finance Committee Chairperson.

Name/Payee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENSE	AMOUNT
Hotel	\$__
Transportation:	
Airlines	\$__
Mileage: __miles@\$__ \$__	\$__
Meals:	
Breakfast	\$__
Lunch	\$__
Dinner	\$__
Housing	\$__
TOTAL AMOUNT CLAIMED	\$__

Approved by Finance Committee Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Conference Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Reimbursed: \_\_\_\_\_

Check Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## MMGA CONFERENCE MANUAL QUICK REFERENCE

### OUTLINE OF DUTIES OF EACH COMMITTEE

This outline is provided for quick reference. Continue to look at the manual for more details of each committee's responsibilities:

#### FINANCE COMMITTEE:

- Prepare budget and give to Chairperson for presentation and approval of the MMGA Board of Directors
- Develop a plan for soliciting sponsorships from the business community and national gardening companies.
- Work with Chairperson to determine the amount of seed money needed to support the conference and make formal request from the MMGA Board.
- Work with MMGA Treasurer to obtain guidelines for depositing monies from registration. Collect fees and deposit in MMGA conference fund account. Work with Registration Chairperson to determine who will make deposits.
- Collect bills from committees and submit bills to Finance Chairperson for payment.
- Submit Final Financial Report to MMGA Board of Directors and the State MG Program Coordinator.

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#### REGISTRATION COMMITTEE:

- Prepare a budget and submit to Finance Committee Chairperson.
- Prepare registration information, which will be included in the Botanical Blurbs at least 3 months before conference.
- Work with State MG Program Coordinator to provide registration information to the MG County Agents. The Coordinator will send a letter to all MG County Agents.
- Collect registration forms and checks and record the participants for each event.
- Send confirmation e-mail or letter to each participant - assign each participant a number to be used for door prizes and other tracking
- Collect monies and work with Finance Chairperson to determine who will make deposits.
- Design name tags and tickets as appropriate, and work with Printing Committee on reproduction.
- Prepare a Certificate of Continuing Education for each attendee showing total CEU's earned for the conference.
- Assemble packets to be given to participants upon arrival. (Packet includes program, tickets for special events, directions, name tags, etc.) (Souvenirs Subcommittee will help.)
- Schedule personnel to work registration desk (Souvenir Subcommittee will help in staffing the desk).
- Desk will be closed during conference sessions.
- Note registration times in confirmation e-mail or letter.
- Handle late registration (money).
- Give Food Committee list of paid attendees for each event where food is required.

**PROGRAM COMMITTEE:**

- Develop budget and submit to Finance Committee Chairperson for MMGA Board of Directors approval. Budget would include speakers' honorariums plus expenses, printing programs, etc.
- Determine theme and logo.
- Determine topics, speakers and workshops.
- Work the MMGA Board of Directors to determine business meeting requirements and time required for awards presentations at the banquet.
- .-Develop Program and design program booklet (including bios of speakers).
- May use advertisers.

**SPEAKER SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Secure speakers and the costs and obtain bio's.
  - Encourage speakers to have HANDOUTS.
  - Arrange for book sales, if needed, (coordinate with Book Sales Committee)
  - Determine speakers' needs (slide projectors, tables, etc.) (coordinate with Facilities Committee)
  - Assign someone to meet speakers at hotel or airport, as appropriate.
- Introduce speaker to Room Monitor.
- Make arrangements for backup speakers.

**PUBLICITY SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Provide information to the State MG Program Coordinator, to the Editor of the MMGA Newsletter, and to the webmaster of the MMGA Website.
- Arrange for state and local media coverage to the greatest extent possible.
- Arrange for photographic coverage of the entire conference.

**TRANSPORTATION SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Determine transportation needs based on topics, workshops, locations and tours.
- Include costs in budget preparation for Program Committee.
- Arrange guides/hosts for each bus/tour, as appropriate

**FACILITIES COMMITTEE:**

- Secure location.
- Develop budget and submit to the Finance Committee Chairperson for presentation and approval of the MMGA Board of Directors
- Negotiate hotel/conference room costs. Secure a rooms for MMGA Board meeting and if needed a hospitality room for speakers.
- Determine number of tables needed for registration, speaker displays, vendors, and local association displays. If tables are not available from hotel, obtain source and include in budget.

**MEETING SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Check meeting rooms prior to sessions.

- Obtain from Speakers Subcommittee a list of each speaker's equipment requirements and make arrangements for equipment rental (check with Extension Office first on availability of their equipment).
- Give this information to the person responsible for each specific speaker.
- Learn what controls lights and where sound system is located,
- Assign Monitor to each room for each session. The Monitor is responsible for introducing speaker, help with lighting and equipment and keeping program on schedule.
- Post schedule at each location.

**EXHIBIT/DISPLAY SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Contact each association with a MG program (9 months prior to the conference) to determine if they want a table to display projects and ideas.
- Contact commercial vendors and determine interests. Contact MG Associations to determine their interests in vendor booths. Determine Vendor's fee.
- Develop a layout of tables for MG association displays and commercial vendors.
- Determine costs for tables and other requirements and submit budgets.
- Check with Book Sales and T-Shirt Sales to determine table and location requirements.
- Arrange for MG volunteers to be at conference site to assist in set up.

**FOOD COMMITTEE:**

- Develop a budget and submit to the Finance Committee Chairperson for presentation and approval of the MMGA Board of Directors.

**BANQUET SUBCOMMITTEE:** (Responsible for Night Banquet)

- Make arrangements for Night Banquet, including determining menu, room set up and social hour.
- Work with Program Committee on Speaker
- Design and coordinate with Printing Committee any tickets you may require.
- Registration will provide "counts" for event and a list of paid attendees.
- Make arrangements to collect tickets or check list of paid attendees.
- Submit budget for the banquet to the Food Committee Chairperson.

**REFRESHMENT BREAKS & LUNCH SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Work with Program Committee on times and locations of breaks. Determine items to be served for the breaks and also the menu for the lunch. Most conference facilities will require you to purchase beverages from them.
- Submit budget for refreshment breaks & lunches to the Food Committee Chairperson.

**DECORATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Provide decorations for refreshment tables, and dinner event
- Solicit MG volunteers to help in setting up.
- Work with Door Prize Committee to use door prizes as decorations to the greatest extent possible.
- Submit budget for decorations to the Food Committee Chairperson.

**PRINTING COMMITTEE:**

- Submit budget for printing to the Finance Committee Chairperson.
- Work with Program Committee on layout of the written program and arrange for printing of the program. (If a MG works for a company with a printing department, solicit their help in getting the programs/tickets printed, as a donation.)
- Have tickets and name tags printed per directions of Registration Committee.
- Allow enough lead time for Registration Committee to prepare individual registration packets.

**HOSPITALITY COMMITTEE:**

- Submit budget for Hospitality to the Finance Committee Chairperson.

**SPEAKER HOSPITALITY SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Provide appropriate welcome gift (fruit basket/lowers) and note in each speaker's room.
- Provide refreshments for speakers' hospitality room.
- Assist Program Committee in greeting speakers.

**DOOR PRIZES SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Collect door prizes from local merchants/individuals.
- Work with Decorations Committee to use door prizes as decorations.
- Arrange for door prizes throughout the conference. Registration Committee will assign each attendee a number to be used for door prizes. (Note: "fewer, nicer" prizes are preferred)
- Provide Conference Chairperson with list of donors for thank you notes.

**SOUVENIR SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Solicit souvenirs from businesses, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- Coordinate with Registration Committee to assemble packets.
- Assist Registration Committee at the desk during registration.
- Provide Conference Chairperson with a list of donors for thank you notes.

**TOURS/INFORMATION PACKETS SUBCOMMITTEE:**

- Work with Program Committee on tours planned and develop information necessary to accompany the tours.
- Develop information packet of area "points of interest", local restaurants and an appropriate map with directions. Give to Registration Committee for inclusion in Registration Packet.

**BOOK SALES/SIGNING COMMITTEE:**

- Work with Program Committee, as appropriate.
- If book sales are required, work with Facilities Committee on table requirements, location of book signing, etc.

**T-SHIRT SALES COMMITTEE:**

- Provide table for MMGA T-Shirt sales, IF REQUESTED.
- Staff table (same hours as registration and then at breaks and between sessions) --
- Turn in monies to **MMGA Treasurer**.

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How does the local "hosting" association go about getting funds needed for up-front costs, such as, deposit on facility rentals, and printing costs.

Answer: The MMGA Treasurer will issue a check as seed money-sponsorship.

Often a deposit is required well in advance of the Conference.

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2. How do we handle mailing of the registration materials?

Answer: The registration materials are provided to the Editor of the MMGA newsletter for inclusion in an issue 3 months before the event.. The materials are included as a center insert and can be removed for easy mailing. MMGA members from the current year will receive this issue of the newsletter.

3. Do County Agents pay to attend the conference?

Answer: Yes. It should be noted that the Master Gardener Conference is considered "in service" training for county agents and they travel on expenses, including per diem for lodging, food and mileage, as well as the registration fee, provided there are enough travel funds in the Extension's budget.

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4. Do the members of the local association hosting the conference pay registration fees?

Answer: Yes. While some of the members maybe not able to participate in all of the conference, they are required to pay the registration fee. This is a part of the responsibility of serving as host. (Note: When Adams County MG hosted Conference they choose to pay half of their member fee to attend the conference from the local treasurer

5. Do we allow partial registration? (Only want to attend a specific session)

Answer: No. There are no partial registrations. The reason for this policy is that partial registrations may prevent you from having a full registration, assuming you have a sold out conference. This could mean a loss of revenue for the conference. At most locations, we are limited in space and sometimes it is necessary to cut off registration.

6. Do we refund registration fees?

Answer: It is important to set a deadline for cancellations in the registration packet and stick to it. Any cancellations after the deadline will be non-refundable.

7. Who is responsible for the conference's finances?

Answer: The MMGA Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for the finances of the Annual Conference. If the Conference results in a profit, the MMGA Board shares the profits with the hosting association. If the Conference results in a loss, the loss is borne by MMGA.

8. Can the hosting association sell T-shirts, notecards, tote bags, etc. to raise funds for their association?

Answer: No. The hosting association should not sell T-shirts, notecards, tote bags, etc. with the Conference logo to raise funds for their association. The sale of these items should be included in the conference revenue and the conference should benefit from the sales.