

MASTER GARDENER FOUNDATION OF THURSTON COUNTY
Policy and Procedure Handbook
WEBSITE COMMITTEE GUIDELINES
Board Approved: February 9, 2022

The role of the Website Committee is to ensure that the content and format of the Master Gardener Foundation Thurston County (Foundation) Website encourages participation by members and the public, is easy to navigate, timely updated and kept relevant.

Objectives:

- Ensure website is an accurate and useful tool for Foundation members and the public,
- Encourage participation by members as contributors to website content,
- Ensure adequate backup support for critical website functions.

Procedures:

1. **Committee Membership:** Membership shall consist of interested Foundation members and webmaster(s). The President shall appoint a Website Committee Chairperson, or Co-Chairs, to ensure Committee guidelines are followed and updated as necessary and to provide periodic reports to the Board.
2. **Meeting Frequency:** The committee should meet at least quarterly to identify and address website issues including suggested ideas and changes submitted by members, webmaster(s), and/or the public.
3. **Authorization to Post:** At least annually the Committee shall develop and maintain a list of members authorized to make website changes, including Google Calendar.
4. **Role of Webmaster:** Persons interested in serving as webmaster should be technically proficient in website maintenance skills, have experience with website software and security priorities and perform the following tasks:
 - a. Work with the Foundation President if the Committee Chair or Chairs is not available.
 - b. Maintain the website; create backups at regular intervals/maintain a test environment.
 - c. Annually review required licenses, domain name, and other requirements or changes to ensure they are appropriate in advance of expiration and prior to renewing.
 - d. Ensure annual updates to website are completed in January each year.
 - e. Routinely provide timely updates to Calendar as events and activities are scheduled.
 - f. This may be a shared responsibility.
 - g. Post materials to webpages as provided by Committee Chairs or Board members.
 - h. Troubleshooting.
 - i. Fix broken links.
 - j. Serve as point of contact and coordinate with necessary contractors as determined by the Foundation Board for new or complex website changes.

- k. Maintain material for and update “Member's Only” pages as determined by the Board.
 - l. Provide an annual update to a Confidential document kept by the Board Secretary that contains all pertinent software logins and passwords for site maintenance.
5. **Content Changes:** Refer to attached *Guidelines for Posting* below. Committee should ensure that at least three (3) persons are trained in editing/posting web content consistent with the Guidelines.
6. **Content Review:** All pages of the website shall be reviewed at least annually to ensure the information is of value. If dated materials are noted they should be corrected ASAP.
7. **Links for Resources:** Review of links shall be conducted at least annually to direct viewers to appropriate external resources on the web.

ATTACHMENT: GUIDELINES FOR POSTING

This guidance covers all content on the website, including web banners and other postings. It also covers review and approval protocols.

It is the intent of these guidelines to assure that the content of the MGFTC website reflects the values and mission of the Master Gardener Foundation and the WSU Master Gardener Program. Any member of the Foundation may propose materials to be posted either on the website. However, it is the intent of these guidelines to require a review by either the Foundation Board President or the Web Committee prior to any posting on the website.

This document includes both content and process guidance.

1. Who can add/edit/delete items directly on the Foundation website?

- a. Webmaster, at the request of the Foundation President, Board or website committee,
- b. Foundation President; or
- c. Website Committee members.

2. What is the process by which materials for posting should be reviewed?

- a. Any posting must be reviewed in advance by one of the following: Board President or a member of the website committee. At least two (2) members of the website committee must review a document before posting. The best practice is to have another member of the website committee review a post in advance to ensure appropriate content, proper spelling, and correct grammar.

3. What type of content is appropriate for placement on the Foundation website?

- a. Any article consistent with the WSU Master Gardener program.
- b. Foundation members may receive CE credits for drafting articles, so record the time that is spent on the content.
- c. Any article written by others (or referencing other interesting gardening sites) if those sites are WSU/MG approved and offer scientifically based information. A partial list of such approved sites includes:
Hortsense: <http://hortsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/Home/HortsenseHome.aspx>
Pestsense: <http://pestsense.cahnrs.wsu.edu/Home/PestsenseHome.aspx>
Gardening in WA State: <http://gardening.wsu.edu/home>
WSU Extension: <https://extension.wsu.edu/>
Center for Urban Horticulture: <https://botanicgardens.uw.edu/center-for-urban-horticulture/>
National Pesticide Information Center: <http://npic.orst.edu/>
OSU Extension: <https://extension.oregonstate.edu/>
- d. Remember to properly cite or acknowledge materials written by others. When copying text from other articles or websites, you are allowed to copy several

paragraphs without first getting permission, but the user must cite the author or name of the site. It is also best to include a clickable link to the original article. The copied text should generally be put in quotation marks and italicized. Example: *“The 1979 debut of Sugar Snap pea on the gardening stage was received with extraordinary enthusiasm. It was featured on catalog covers, and All-America Selections made it a Gold Medal winner. Food and garden writers raved about the new vegetable: Nothing short of sensational,” wrote James Beard in the New York post. “Article by Deborah Wechsler from the National Gardening Association website: <https://garden.org/learn/articles/view/311/>*

e. **Is it OK to post photos on the website?**

Yes, so long as permission exists to use the photo. You may post pictures of plants or gardens you have taken. Do not post pictures of people or children without their express written permission. Unless the photos are from copyright free websites, you must first get permission to use it. The best way to provide attribution is usually a standard photo credit, such as “Photo/Image by: John Doe” with the person’s name.

f. **Embedded Media:** So long as content is acceptable, it is appropriate to include video clips from sites like YouTube, so long as the video is accessed via a URL link. That being said, some inline links pointing to the creator’s site or profile is usually considered polite and is well-advised. Good attribution is simply good manners.

4. What type of content is inappropriate for the Foundation website?

Please do not post articles or references about medicinal herbs/food, mushrooms, or marijuana cultivation. Also, it is inappropriate to recommend any business, such as recommendations on arborists, exterminators, what nursery sells a specific plant, etc. Brand names of pesticides, fertilizers or additives, etc. must have a disclaimer at the bottom of the article if being used. An”*” must be used next to the product name and the following disclaimer must be listed at the bottom of the article. “* Tradenames are mentioned for educational purposes only. No product endorsement is intended or implied.” See the following example:

“About the only redeeming feature of this weed is the fact that it has a very shallow root system and can be easily pulled from the soil. Its prolific nature however has many gardeners asking if there is an herbicide option that can be used. There are no selective herbicides that can be used to control annual bluegrass in home lawns and not also kill desirable grass. One option is to use weed killers containing glyphosate (Roundup) and then reseeding the sprayed area once the annual bluegrass is dead.”*

“Maintaining overall turf grass vigor will help to reduce infestations of annual bluegrass. Years of research conducted at WSU’s Puyallup Research Station continues to validate that using fertilizer with at least 50% of it in slow-release form gives the

best return when it comes to turf grass vigor. Use a complete fertilizer with a 3-1-2 ratio (N-P-K) on established lawns to supplement any lacking phosphorus and potassium. Often sold as 15-5-10 or 12-4-8, the fertilizer should be applied at a rate which is equal to approximately one pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet of turf. If you are using 15-5-10 for example, you would need to apply approximately 6.5 pound of actual fertilizer product per 1000 square feet in order to get one pound of actual nitrogen. WSU recommends the second of four annual applications of fertilizer be made near the time of the Memorial Day holiday.”

** Trade names are mentioned for educational purposes only. No product endorsement is intended or implied.*