

Central Gorge Master Gardener™ Association
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

OSU Extension Meeting Room

Held In Person and via Zoom on Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Next meeting: Wednesday, September 10, 2025

Attendees: Bill Winfield, Donna DesRochers, Eric Bosler, Jen Harty, Joanne Willis, John Stevens, Kat Sullivan, Mary Corl, Margo Dameier, Megan Wickersham, Sandi Rousseau, Shari Bosler, Tracy Willett

Jen called the meeting to order at 10:07 am.

Secretary's Minutes: (Donna) The minutes were approved without corrections.

Branding Strategy (Kat) A brand vision presentation centered on evidence-based gardening knowledge and neighborliness, with a tone that emphasizes warmth, curious listening, and joy was outlined. She shared a color palette, font recommendations, and photo guidance that prioritizes people in action rather than posed shots. The group discussed the importance of posting action photos rather than group pictures, noting each style has a use. Kat introduced three audience personas (a Gen Z gorge resident, a busy mom, and a curious child) and discussed research showing young people's distrust of institutions, concerns about affordability, and feelings of hopelessness that could influence communication approaches. The group discussed how to better reach young people who are interested in gardening for affordable food and sustainability, with suggestions for container gardening workshops. New trainees frequently ask about the program's involvement with food insecurity and sustainable food systems. Megan noted that the state-level branding already includes six components: sustainable gardening, cultural connections, climate resiliency, soil health, food systems, and connecting people with these concepts even if they don't identify as gardeners.

Kat was thanked for a presentation and agreed to share the slideshow as a PDF.

Fire Prevention The effectiveness of fire prevention measures was noted, with Bill Winfield sharing a success story of a house that survived three fires while 70 others in the area burned down.

Treasurer's Report (Joanne) The treasurer's report was presented and approved, after clarifying confusion about a Summit Embroidery invoice that was paid by check and not by credit card. The group unanimously voted to discontinue the Shopify subscription since it no longer is needed for plant sales. All the necessary data has been saved elsewhere. Information, plant sale items and swag can be offered on CGMGA website. The Hood River Soil and Water Conservation website was used as an example.

Swimming Meet Fundraising Opportunity (Sandi) A fundraising opportunity to provide timers and safety marshals at a Hood River Master Swimming meet on April 18-19, 2026 was presented to the group. \$1,500 for two days of work was offered. The benefits include community partnership, visibility for Master Gardeners, and possible volunteer hours (not eligible) for trainees were examined. Concerns were raised about the number of people needed (18 timers per day). Sandi, the meet director, requested a decision before the September Master Swimmers board meeting on September 8th. Options like committing staff only one day or partnering with a high school soccer team to cover part of the event were discussed.

Budget Committee Formation and Planning (Joanne) The Budget Committee with Sandy, Eric, and Jennifer M will prepare next year's budget. A Google Doc template for committee chairs to input their budget needs will be available. A draft budget will be ready for approval at the October executive meeting, then shared with the general membership prior to the recognition ceremony.

Coordinators Report (Megan) Plant clinics have been busy with a constant stream of visitors. She noted that the White Salmon library and Tum-A-Lum locations haven't had sufficient interactions, so we are shifting focus to Farmers Markets in Hood River and White Salmon. Hood River is already scheduled for July and October. Hood River Ace Hardware logs up to 15 visits per session. The group discussed the benefits of Farmers Markets as outreach venues, noting they attract local questions. Quickly identifying where visitors are from helps to provide relevant recommendations.

Grant Planning Rachel has been focusing on applying for grants, attending grant classes, and working with Joanne and Debbie Chenoweth (Spirit of Grace) to identify funding opportunities through foundations.

Garden Tour The Front Yard Garden Tour is scheduled for Saturday, September 13th from 9 to 1, featuring 9 gardens including the Hood River Library Garden, locations spread across Columbia, Cascade, May Street, and near the Children's Park. The event will be posted on our website. A QR code linked to a map will be updated in real time and printed on flyers the week before the tour. Margo will coordinate publicity.

Speaker Selection for 2026 Classes Potential speakers for classes, including a woman from the Hardy Plant Society, Glenn Ahrens for a tree class, and Steve's drip irrigation class are being considered. Suggestions are welcome.

OMGA (Eric) OMGA meeting formats were presented, with Eric explaining that pre-COVID meetings were held in person (hosted by chapters around the state). The meetings shifted online during the pandemic, which also reduced the budget line item. Now there's consideration of returning to some in-person meetings. Many feel face-to-face interaction strengthens the organization. There is still a question about who would help fund travel costs for these meetings-the state or local chapters or both.

Fish Food Bank (Tracy) The Fish Food Bank garden is doing well this year, with Rachel making a significant difference by implementing long-discussed ideas. The group again circled back as to what to do with their lightly used lawn mower. It was

decided to auction it off to the highest CGMGA member bidder, after Underwood Conservation declined it.

Educational Outreach (Jen H) The film event was successful and volunteers attended Families in the Park on the 7th, where we gave away Frisbees to children. Seed packets will be given away at El Grito in September. New stretchy tablecloths with logos worked very nice. There was discussion of various options for signage at events, including banners and small table displays that can withstand wind. Plans were made to partner with Ferment Brewing for their March fundraising event supporting Fish Food Bank and scheduling workshops for next year have begun. Recent educational events, including a pollinator class attracted 12-15 attendees, a film had 45 people attending and a propagation event where participants worked with roses, St. John's Howard, stone crop, and ajuga all went well.

Waterwise Garden (Jen H) For over two years, we have been looking for a volunteer to take over the HR Library Waterwise Garden from Norma with no luck. Options considered were hiring someone to maintain it or turning over to the Library. It was reported that maintenance volunteers is not a problem, but the leadership role is the issue. It was agreed that the Waterwise Garden is very visible, easy to take care of and a showcase for CGMGA. John volunteered to take over the leadership of the Waterwise Garden, noting that he does not like to do irrigation.

Sustaining Many Gardens (Jen) Managing multiple gardens, including the Learning Garden, with limited volunteers was brought up for discussion. Questions asked: Should we eliminate some gardens or portions of gardens? Should our focus be on maintenance/weeding or at tables with volunteers educating/meeting the public? Do we need gardens for education? How do other Chapters maintain gardens? The broader issue of maintaining too many gardens for our small organization is an ongoing concern. This matter will be taken up in a separate meeting in the future.

Fire Victims (Shari) We have been asked if MG could supply plants/volunteers to help establish green yard space in recent burned areas. Supporting fire victims who need plants for yard restoration was discussed. It was decided that individual members can donate plants/time personally but not as an official Master Gardener.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 pm.

Minutes taken by AI and edited by Donna DesRochers.

