

Tennessee Master Gardener Search For Excellence Application

2011 APPLICATION DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 30, 2011

Sponsored by the Tennessee Master Gardener Endowment and the Tennessee Master Gardener Advocacy Board, the Tennessee Search For Excellence (SFE) program recognizes outstanding Master Gardener projects throughout the State of Tennessee. While all work done by volunteer Master Gardeners is significant to the community, not all work done by Master Gardeners qualifies for this honor. All projects submitted for consideration of a SFE Award must demonstrate a high level of learning and outreach that carries on the mission by Master Gardeners to the general public. SFE recognizes outstanding **group** projects as opposed to recognizing an **individual** who does outstanding work.

There are seven categories identified for the SFE awards. The highest-scoring Master Gardener project, rather than the individual Master Gardeners volunteering with the project, will receive the Search for Excellence Award in each category.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

1. The application is posted on the TMG website as a writable pdf document and as a Word document. Download the application in your preferred format and save it on your computer as "SFE [County Name] [Project Name]." For example: SFE Shelby PAR. Complete the application. Email the completed application to Donna Smolinski at buschmandonna@bellsouth.net **no later than November 30, 2011**. The subject line of your email should be SFE [Master Gardener program], [County],[Category]. Example: SFE Memphis Area Master Gardeners, Shelby, Youth.
2. Do not send photos or any files that are zipped or compressed.
3. NO hard copy or mailed applications will be accepted. Do not send handouts or other large files with this application. Submit only this completed application. Any files, pictures, handouts, etc., will be discarded.
4. **A verification email from your County Extension Coordinator/Advisor is required and must come directly from that individual. This email must verify that all Master Gardeners involved in the project are currently in good standing with their local program. The deadline for this email is the same as the application. Any application for which a verification email is not received by the due date will not be considered.**
5. The SFE Committee will acknowledge receipt of the application and of the Extension Coordinator verification email within two days of receipt. If you fail to receive acknowledgment, contact Donna Smolinski at buschmandonna@bellsouth.net.

THE SCORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Projects are rated using a 100 point scale. All applications will be evaluated by seven judges selected by the TMG Advocacy Board. Judges will include three of last year's winners, three members of the SFE committee and one MG Coordinator. Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Simplicity of project (easy to replicate)

10 points

A goal of SFE is to share excellent ideas and programs that can be replicated by other Master Gardener groups. A 20 acre botanic garden would be difficult to replicate but the gardening ideas inside it would be easy to create somewhere else.

Practicality, usefulness or relevance of project for situation

10 points

A SFE project must appropriately support the needs of the target group.

Originality or creativity

10 points

The project must reflect the creativity and personality of the Master Gardeners who are working with it. This doesn't mean that you have to reinvent the wheel, just put your own touch on the project.

Consistent with Extension and MG missions

20 points

- Projects must include an educational component
- Projects must be available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin and marital or family status.
- Projects must extend UT Extension resources to assist participants solve problems at work, at home, or within the community.
- Information must be university researched based.

Clarity and completeness of project application

20 points

All components of the application must be completed. By doing so, applications will evoke a mental picture of the project's planning, implementation, and result.

Level of learning

20 points

Significant learning and change in attitude and/or practices are outcomes that Extension uses to evaluate services and programs. SFE Master Gardener projects improve people's lives, and this impact must be identified. Objective measurements, such as user surveys, will be preferred over anecdotal evidence.

Number of people impacted

10 points

If you build it, they will not necessarily come. How did you target your audience? How did you make them aware of the program? How many people did the project serve? How did you measure the number of participants?

TOTAL 100 points

Scores will be totaled and then divided by the number of judges for an average score. Projects that do not achieve an average score of 80 points or better will not be considered for a SFE Award. All decisions and scoring by the judges will be considered final.

No judge will review an application from the county in which he or she works or volunteers as a Master Gardener.

Score sheets will be provided to the applicants after the winners are announced. The winning applications (not the score sheets) will be posted on the TMG Website at www.mastergardener.tennessee.edu.

The judges will provide constructive comments, noting reasons points were not awarded in each evaluation component.

All projects must have completed at least one cycle and must have been worked on over the past two years.

Projects that have previously won Tennessee Master Gardener or International Master Gardener Conference SFE awards are not eligible for submission.

EXPECTATIONS OF WINNERS

1. **PRESENTATION:** All SFE winners will be expected to give a short (3 minute maximum) address describing the project at the next Tennessee Master Gardener Winter School or State Conference. Several digital pictures of your project must be submitted for the group PowerPoint presentation of SFE winners.
2. **POSTER:** If you are selected as a top three finalist within a category, you may be asked to prepare a 40" x 30" poster to be displayed at the Tennessee Master Gardener Winter School or International Master Gardener Conference. Posters should include photos of the project, a state map showing where the project is located, name and information of the Master Gardener Group, as well as other pertinent information.
3. **INTERNATIONAL SFE COMPETITION:** All Tennessee Master Gardener SFE winners will be encouraged to submit their winning project to the International SFE contest.
4. **JUDGES FOR THE NEXT YEAR'S COMPETITION:** Winners will be added to the judging pool for the following year and three will be selected by draw to judge in next year's SFE competition.

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

There is no reimbursement for registration fees or travel expenses to the Tennessee Master Gardener Winter School or State Conference. If reimbursement money should become available, MG organizations will be notified.

SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

If you have any questions or need help with this application, please contact:

Beth Babbit	ebabbit@utk.edu
Donna Smolinski	buschmandonna@bellsouth.net
David Craig	craigdavid@bellsouth.net
Suzanne Allen	sallen0126@gmail.com
Nancy Christopherson	critterswn@frontiernet.net

Thank you for your interest in the Search for Excellence Awards.

Please note that if you use the pdf format, **you must use Adobe Reader 8 or higher in order to save what you type onto the form.** This is a free program. Please contact Suzanne Allen if you have any questions.

Application Code: _____
(for committee use only)

**Tennessee Master Gardener Search For Excellence
2011 Application**

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 30, 2011

NAME OF MG GROUP: _____

COUNTY: _____

MASTER GARDENER CONTACT:

NAME _____

EMAIL _____

MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR/EXTENSION STAFF:

NAME _____

TITLE _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

CATEGORY---MUST SELECT AND SUBMIT IN ONLY ONE CATEGORY

- Youth
- Demonstration Garden
- Workshop or Presentation
- Community Service
- Innovative Project
- Research
- Special Needs Audience

COMMENCEMENT DATE OF PROJECT: _____

LIST THE NAMES OF MASTER GARDENERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT. Do not include their roles or any other individuals in this listing. *(Place the cursor in the box to type a name.)*

If you are using Word, place your cursor in the boxes and click twice. If using PDF, place your cursor in the box and begin typing.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT (include name, location, target audience, goals, and partnerships)

DESCRIBE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT.

[Empty box for describing the planning and implementation of the project.]

HOW HAS THE PROJECT BEEN FUNDED AND HOW HAVE THOSE FUNDS BEEN SPENT?

[Empty box for describing how the project has been funded and how those funds have been spent.]

DESCRIBE THE OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT. HOW HAS IT AUGMENTED LEARNING, INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OR CHANGED PRACTICES TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE? INCLUDE THE METHODS YOU USED TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT. (These impacts could be economical, educational, environmental, health or community based. SFE projects should be developed to reach the most people possible from the target audience. Impact numbers are not significant if the target audience does not learn or utilize the information. Make sure that you ask participants how this information helped them and record this as an impact. For example, evaluation questions that ask, “How do you plan to use this information?” or “Can you share specific information that you learned today?”

