Developing a Winning Award Application

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Why Enter Awards?

- To showcase your awesome volunteer work!
- To receive feedback on what you could do differently.
- To provide recognition to hardworking volunteers.

Great MG Projects…

- Provide home horticulture education in a responsive and timely manner
- Collaborate with local nonprofit and municipal groups to offer educational leadership for better gardening practices in area communities
- Foster a learning environment for volunteers

Great MG Projects…

- Encourage continued education and the recruitment and training of new Master Gardener Volunteers
- Offer information and education to citizens through innovative programs with creative and new approaches

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Award Opportunities

- Florida Master Gardener
- International Master Gardener Search for Excellence
- National Junior Master Gardener
- Youth Excellence
- Group Service & Achievement

Judges are NOT mind readers

- Judges award points based upon
  - information provided within the application
  - personal assessment of the quality of the project
- Judges do NOT assume anything outside of the application itself

Start Early

- Award entries require a lot of work and revision
- Start at least a month early
- Gather materials
- Leave plenty of time for reviewers
- Be aware of schedules

Choose Entries Wisely

- Not every entry is award winning
- Make sure it represents these tips before spending time on the application
- Don't submit entries that aren't ready

Follow the Rules

- Make sure to read all of the instructions
- Use the forms provided
- Format according to the guidelines

Follow Submission Guidelines

- **Compile your PDFs into one file**
- Separate files still have to be compiled by someone – usually Wendy or Emily
  - This can delay all of the process

Formatting

- Use standard serif fonts
- No Comic Sans or any other childish fonts
- Maintain margins
- Be aware of word or page limits

Proof Read & Review

- Proof Read Yourself
- Have someone else Proof Read
- Proof Read AGAIN
- Get a reviewer who is not an MG to proof and provide feedback
  - What makes sense to someone in the MG world may not make sense to a judge who is not directly involved with MGs.

Be Aware of Deadlines!

- Judging programs are difficult to organize and administer
- Deadlines are there to help out the administrator programs

Fit within award dates

- Most award programs are based on calendar year or fiscal year
  - Project started and finished within award dates
  - OR project completed before entries due

Use Correct Logos

- UF logos have changed AGAIN
- Make sure to use the correct logo placement
- County Logos
- Master Gardener Logos
  - http://gardeningsolutions.ifas.ufl.edu/mastergardener/pdfs/resources/mg_branding_guide.pdf
- UF/IFAS Branding Guidelines
  - http://ics.ifas.ufl.edu/branding.shtml

Collaborators, Partners, & Funding Sources

- Most projects have these, but rarely are they listed
- This provides credibility and community support to the project
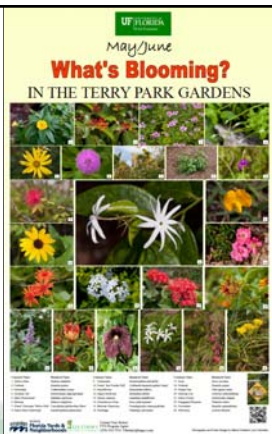
Check Accuracy & Citations

- Make sure submissions accurately reflect the university's statement on the subject
- Cite accurate sources – university and government

Team Members

- Great projects include a team of people

Pictures

- Pictures should represent the project
- Show project progression
- High resolution

Captions

- Always include a caption
- Full sentences
- Describe what's being done

Example of Caption

- "rose garden, just planted looking west"

- The Library Rose Garden looks out the western side. Visitors to the new rose garden see new rose varieties and rose best management practices. This encourages garden visitors to ask more questions about growing roses.

Support Materials

- Letters of support
- Newspaper articles
- Garden plans

Educational Component

– Available to all persons
– Extend the resources of the University to the public wherever they live, helping them use knowledge to solve problems at work, at home, and in their communities.
– Information provided should be University research-based.
– Did Significant Learning occur and number of people impacted by program.

Target Audience

- Target group and its needs were clearly identified, including how those needs were determined

Educational Goals & Objectives

- Provide goals that are realistic and reachable
- Objectives help to provide a "to do" list to meet for projects

Simple to Replicate

- Excellent ideas and programs can be replicated by other Master Gardener groups
- Explained how the project was started and maintained
- Demonstrated the simplicity of project and how it could be replicated

- A 20 acre botanic garden would be difficult to replicate but the gardening ideas inside it would be easy to create somewhere else.

Practicality

- Appropriately support the needs of the target group
- Target group and its needs were clearly identified, including how those needs were determined
- Explained how this project is practical, useful, or relevant to the target group

Original and Creative

- Explained the features of this project that made it original, creative, or unique to the group
- 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

- 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 UF Extension resources to assist participants solve problems at work, at home, or within the community.
- Information must make use of university or equivalent research, e.g. NOAA or the EPA.

Clarity & Completeness

- Good writing skills
- Organize your thoughts into a cohesive narrative that will evoke a mental picture of
  - how you went about planning your project
  - how the project was funded and how the funds were spent
  - how you executed it, including any obstacles you had to overcome
  - how the project contributed to an increase in gardening knowledge.

Clarity & Completeness

- Included project name, location, target audience, goals, and partnerships
- Clearly described the planning and implementation of the project
- Clearly described how the project has been funded and how those funds have been spent
- Clearly described the learning/impact outcomes of the project

Level of Learning/Impact

- Explained the methods used to measure levels of learning/impact and where and when those methods (surveys, checklists, pre-/post-tests, observation, etc.) were applied
- Outreach and marketing efforts were described.
- Described how the project augmented learning, increased knowledge, or changed practices to enhance quality of life. Impacts were identified as one or more: economic, educational, environmental, health, community enhancement.

Number of People Impacted

- 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?

Number of People Impacted

- Explained how the audience was targeted and made aware of the project/program. Outreach and marketing efforts were described.
- Quantified the number of people served by the project and explained the methods used to determine the number impacted.

Winning Projects Demonstrate

- Overall excellence
- High levels of learning
- Community outreach that embody the values of the Master Gardener Program

Final Tip

Make it easy on the judges!