



2017 4th Quarter Board of Directors Meeting (Approved)

Saturday, November 4, 2017

Auditorium at the Josephine County Extension Office

215 Ringuette, Grants Pass, Oregon

Board of Directors Meeting Attendance

Benton: Rich Taylor

Central Gorge: Sandy Montag

Central Oregon: Jeanine Johnson

Clackamas: Seamus Ramirez, Harry Wise,
Dick Nelson

Columbia: Wes Bevans, Katherine Johnson

Curry: Pam Leslie

Douglas County: Nancy Fuller, Kish Doyle

Jackson County: Barbara Davidson

Josephine County: Candace Bartow, Terry
Ruiter, Pamela Zaklan

Lane County: Loraine Palmer, Sharon Faust,
Julie Huynh

Lincoln County: Ann Geyer

Linn County: Janice Gregg

Marion: Jim Liskey

Multnomah: Lorna Schilling

Polk County: Marsha Graciosa

Tillamook: Sam Sadtler, Marcille Ansorge

Wasco County: Louise Sargent

Yamhill County: Sue Nesbitt

Statewide: Gail Langellotto

Welcome and Introduction

The meeting was called to order by the President, Seamus Ramirez (Clackamas), at 10:10 am. Seamus announced that Marcia Sherry, Gardeners' Pen editor, and Susan Albright would not be attending. He asked that those attending sign an attendance list with their name and county. He noted that the meeting was being audio recorded.

Terry Ruitter (Josephine) welcomed members on behalf of the Josephine County Master Gardener Association and thanked them for coming. She acknowledged Mark and Breezy Schallheim for providing the snacks and lunch and noted the wide variety of items available in spite of asking for something simple.

Agenda Review and Approval

Seamus Ramirez (President, Clackamas) asked for a review of the Agenda. There were no changes suggested from the floor. Seamus said that he would provide the reports from Marcia Sherry.

Approve Board of Director Minutes 3rd Quarter September 16, 2017

Seamus Ramirez (President, Clackamas) asked for changes or corrections to the minutes. Jeanine Johnson (Central Oregon) noted that her name had been misspelled. On page 2 Seamus wanted to add a “yes” to the statement that “prizes were expensive.” On page 5, Nancy Fuller (Douglas) noted that in the sentence reading “The 2017 Statewide Behind the Scenes recipient is _____” that the winner’s name was intentionally left blank because the presenters of the award did not want the winner to know beforehand that she had won the award.

Terry Ruitter (Josephine) moved and Louise Sargent (Wasco) seconded that we accept the minutes with the changes and corrections. Motion passed.

Leadership Forum

Sue Nesbit (President-Elect, Yamhill) reported that all had a good time the day before learning project management from Hart Wilson from Southern Oregon University. Hart covered a great deal of information and will be sending all her information to all members of the Board of Directors.

Leadership Forum Attendance: Louise Sargent (Wasco), Seamus Ramirez (Clackamas), Sam Sadtler (Tillamook), Phylis McIntosh (Josephine), Marsha Graciosa (Polk), Nancy Fuller (Douglas), Kish Doyle (Douglas), Sue Nesbitt (Yamhill), Candace Bartow (Josephine), Sharon Faust (Lane), Laramie Palmer (Lane), Julie Huynh (Lane), Rich Taylor (Benton), Janice Gregg (Linn), Harry Wise (Clackamas), Dick Nelson (Clackamas), Lorna Schilling (Multnomah), Katherine Johnson (Columbia), Wes Bevans (Columbia), Jim Liskey (Marion), Pam Zaklan (Josephine), Terry Ruitter (Josephine), Marcille Ansorge (Tillamook)

Request of Oral Chapter Reports

Seamus Ramirez (President, Clackamas) asked if there were any requests to give an oral report. There were none.

Gardener’s Pen Update

Seamus Ramirez (President, Clackamas) passed out information that Marcia Sherry had sent for submission for articles for the December 2017 Gardener’s Pen, which included the following:

Deadlines for Article Submission for the December issue is: November 23rd – and the theme is: “Container Gardening”. Send articles about your chapter, events, etc. in an email or as an attachment in Word, PowerPoint or Publisher format to GardenersPenNewsletter@gmail.com.

If you have any events you wish to have included, such as plant sales, speaker event, etc., please send to the email above with these details: Host Chapter, Name of Event, Date, Time, Location Address, Short description of event, Contact information (phone, website, email, etc.)

Articles about your chapter with a picture or two.

Have you read an interesting book you might want to share in a review?

An article relating to the given theme or a personal gardening experience you may want to share.

An article in your chapter newsletter that may be of interest to other MGs across the state.

Is there an expert of sorts in your chapter, i.e. on insects, specific plants, etc. that might contribute an article—please let me know who they are and their contact information so that I can get in touch with them.

Is there a specific topic or theme you may want to explore?

I’m open to suggestions???

Again, send articles about your chapter, event, etc. in an email or as an attachment in Word, PowerPoint or Publisher format to GardenersPenNewsletter@gmail.com.

Seamus Ramirez (President, Clackamas) added that Marcia would like ideas for themes for future Gardener’s Pen newsletter.

Katherine Johnson (Treasurer, Columbia) added that chapters should at the beginning of the year send dates and information about events to her and she will post it on the OMGA calendar on the OMGA website and will have these posted within a day or two of being sent. Chapters may send information about events at any time of the year and she will have them posted.

G2 Update

Ann Geyer (Lincoln) will co-chair the G2 in 2018 with Jeanine Johnson (Central Oregon). The theme for G2 2018 is Growing Gardeners; this is to transition the name change of the event from Mini College to Growing Gardeners. Ann is looking at including more advanced information related to gardening as a jumping off point from the Master Gardener (MG) curriculum, in order to improve skills and to determine what it is to mature as an MG. The co-chairs need ideas and suggestions for speakers to fill the 42 sessions available. They are also considering bringing back tours as part of the event and need ideas for these. Presently, G2 is scheduled for July 12, 13, 14, 2018 at Linfield College in McMinnville, where it was held in 2016. They are considering adding the date of July 11 to the event to have time to add the tours. They have a budget and intend to have fees the same as 2016. They will be creating a website that will be available through the OMGA website before the end of the year. Three areas of presentations could be gardening for education purposes, advancement of skills, which would include mechanics of what we have to do to have a good local chapter and how to present the information we receive to our community, and then have some fun stuff. Questions were

raised about repeat sessions and this will be considered. The chairs are also keeping in mind that non-Master Gardeners may attend and some of the sessions should be of interest to them.

Jeanine Johnson (Central Oregon), as 2nd Vice President will head the search for speakers and wants all MGs to send ideas and contacts for speakers.

A call for volunteers in the many positions available at G2 will soon be sent out.

Mentorship Project Update

Jeanine Johnson (Central Oregon) has taken over this project and hopes to have a report by the March 2018 meeting.

Website Update

Jim Liskey (Database Manager, Marion) has the site running. It receives quite a few hits and is a good tool for disseminating information. Any information about local chapters that is submitted will be posted. Ann Geyer (Lincoln) suggested that a page be added where each chapter could list highlights and successes of the year. Discussion followed on how this was to be designed. This would be in addition to the quarterly reports. Gail Langelloto, MG Statewide Coordinator, said that the quarterly reports are important to her for writing the annual reports which are sent out in January and February. Barbara Davidson (Jackson) said that what would be posted on the highlights page should be something unusual and different and be short and meaty. Seamus Ramirez (President, Clackamas) appointed a committee of Julie Huynh (Lane), Marcia Sherry (Yamhill), and Barbara Davidson (Jackson) to consider the guidelines for such a page and to be ready to present these at the 1st Quarter meeting in 2018. Ann Geyer will write an example of what could be considered.

Database Information and Updates

Jim Liskey (Database Manager, Marion) reported that a few weeks before this meeting he had sent out the database and asked for updates from the chapters. He sent out this updated list a few days ago and since has received 18 emails with additional changes. He asks for members to take a closer look at the lists for their county and let him know of any changes.

Report on Audits

Wes Bevans, (Columbia) reported on recent audits. While it was voted earlier this year to have one annual audit in place of the quarterly audit, that is to take effect next year. The committee met and did an audit in September for the period of June 1 to September 25 and found all in order and no problems. Terry Ruitter (Josephine), Jim Liskey (Marion) and Wes met with Katherine Johnson (Treasurer, Columbia) yesterday and performed an audit for the period from September 25 to November 4 and found all in order and no problems. Another audit will be performed at the end of 2017.

Financial Reports

Katherine Johnson (Treasurer, Columbia) presented the financial report. She announced that a Ray McNeilan scholarship has been presented to Christopher Holt, an online OSU student in horticulture with a 3.4 GPA. He interned at the Walt Disney horticulture program in Florida and then was hired to work for them. He plans to continue his education with the goal of teaching in the area of agriculture.

The net worth of OMGA is \$95,485.21 with no liabilities. To date OMGA has income of \$26,904.07 and expenses of \$27,026.47. One of the items for income was a donation of \$200.00 from Lincoln County for the Send-A-Friend Scholarship Fund. OMGA has money invested in an E*TRADE account; at the beginning of the year, the value was 45,308.55. As of this report, its value is \$50,493.29, an increase of 11.44% and a very high rate. Katherine asked for input from members of how to handle the account. Her main question was whether there was a point at which she should withdraw the money to prevent loss in case of losses to the stock market. Members questioned the source of the money and its purpose. It was profit from the previous international conference sometime in the 1980s. The purpose was to have enough money for OMGA to operate for 3 years. After discussion, it was felt that she should get more information about the investment in terms of risk and why it is doing so well. She will get more information and report to the Executive Committee.

Presently there are 2,855 paid members and 631 trainees for a total of 3,486 members, a figure at the lowest in the last 10 years. In response to why the figures are lower, Gail Langellotto, Statewide Coordinator, said that the numbers were up 10 years ago because of the economic recession and more people had time to enroll in classes. Now that employment has increased there are fewer people having time available. She also stated that there have been transitions in county extension positions resulting in lack of leaders to promote the program.

Katherine asked that members remind their treasurers that they are to send in April, along with dues and the list of paid membership, the number of trainees also.

2018 Budget

Katherine presented the budget for 2018. It showed a projected income of \$53,458.00 and expenditures of \$59,430.00 resulting in a net loss of \$5972.00. Katherine noted that the amount for Extension Educator Grants was increased from \$3000.00 to \$4000.00 because the Chair reported that they were not able to fulfill all the requests for grants in 2017; the grants that were funded were given less than the amount requested. Members were asked to make suggestions for items that could be reduced or eliminated. One possibility is to not buy the PNWs for the chapters. Ann Geyer (Lincoln County) felt that their county did not need the books and could use the online version only. Most other members felt that there was a need to have the printed copy available because they had members who could not use the online version. Other members stated that it was necessary to have them at Farmers' Markets and plant clinics because many places did not have computers or connections for them. Seamus Ramirez (President, Clackamas) asked for a survey of which counties felt that they could do without the PNWs and three responded: Benton, Lincoln, and Marion.

After further studying of the budget, the following items were changed:

Line 33 Karl Carlson Grant reduce from \$1250 to \$750, the amount funded in 2017.

Line 37 MC Scholarship McNeilan Candidate remove \$200.00 (this is money for the winner of the McNeilan Scholarship to attend Mini College; in the past these funds have not been used.)

Line 42 Presidents Recognition Placard remove \$150.00

Line 43 Presidents Project reduce from \$250.00 to \$200.00

Line 44 Past Presidents Project reduce from \$250.00 to \$200.00

Line 51 Organizational Dev. Training/Retreat remove \$2000.00 (this year there is no cost for the Retreat facility at Hopkins Demonstration Forest)

Line 86 Equipment remove \$500.00

Line 87 State Awards reduce from \$350.00 to \$200.00

This reduces the deficit to \$2372.00. Barbara Davidson (Jackson) moved that we accept the 2018 proposed budget with the above changes. Sharon Faust (Lane) seconded the motion. Candace Bartow (Josephine County) asked that OMGA work toward a balanced budget in the future. The motion passed.

Statewide Program Leader's 4th Quarter Report to the OMGA Board from Gail Langellotto, Statewide Coordinator

See [Appendix A](#) on page 9 of this document.

In addition to this report, Gail added further information. During this year, she had reduced the number of speaking engagements because of other responsibilities but does intend to be more available next year.

OSU is reorganizing its website and county-based web pages will no longer be on the website. Since many counties depend on these pages for information about their program, groups will be studying ways of dealing with this.

Gail recently attended at her own expense a Listening Session of the National Food Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), part of the United States Department of Agriculture. More information about this session is in Gail's report above. Gail reported that one issue of concern is labor in agriculture both from a political and a technological viewpoint. She had an opportunity to speak with leaders of the Master Gardener programs in California and was able to discuss strengths and weaknesses of the respective programs.

Jeanine Johnson (Central Oregon) expressed a thank you to Gail for all she has done this year and noted that it is a long list.

Complaint Form

Ann Geyer (Lincoln) had been given the task of developing a form for those wishing to make a complaint. Ann submitted a form with one page for writing in the actual complaint and another with an explanation of how to proceed to make the complaint. After a discussion, it was noted that Article 1.12 of Policies and Procedures addresses the issue and gives guidelines. The form without the guidelines will be added to the website under Documents and Forms and anyone wanting to make a complaint is to use that and consult Policies and Procedures for guidance.

Vote on Bylaws

At the 3rd Quarter Meeting, a proposed change to Article VI, Section 3 was presented. The change would have new terms coincide with the calendar year and begin January 1 instead of November 1 as presently stated in the bylaws. Lorna Schilling (Multnomah) moved and Jeanine Johnson (Central Oregon) seconded a motion to accept the revision. The motion passed.

Vote for 2018 positions and Special Consideration for Katherine Johnson (Columbia)

Treasurer

Sue Nesbitt (Yamhill) presented the slate of officers:

Past President Seamus Ramirez (Clackamas)

President: Sue Nesbitt (Yamhill)

President-elect: no candidate

1st Vice-President: Ann Geyer (Lincoln)

2nd Vice President: Jeanine Johnson (Central Oregon)

Secretary: Marcille Ansorge (Tillamook)

Treasurer: Katherine Johnson (Columbia)

Sue stated that special consideration was needed for Katherine Johnson (Columbia) for Treasurer since she has held the position for many years and a special vote was needed to have her continue. Terry Ruiter (Josephine) moved and Louise Sargent (Wasco) seconded that we elect Katherine for another term. Motion passed.

Sue asked for a nomination for President-elect. There were none. She asked for write in candidates for each of the positions. There were none.

She announced that Jim Liskey (Marion) and Julie Huynh (Lane) would count the votes. Janice Gregg (Linn) moved and Candace Bartow (Josephine) seconded that we accept the slate unanimously. The motion passed.

Sue also announced those who had accepted appointed positions:

Historian: Barbara Davidson (Jackson)

Extension Educator Chair: Eric Bosler (Central Gorge)

Karl Carlson Awards Chair: Barb Casteel (Tillamook)

Search for Excellence: Chris Rauch (Douglas)

Silent Auction: Jan Coleman (Yamhill) and Diane Lockwood (Yamhill)

Send a Friend: Marcia Sherry (Yamhill) and Kathy Burdett (Yamhill)

Database Manager: Seamus Ramirez (Clackamas)

Laminated Garden Brochure Committee

Marcia Sherry indicated that the committee will begin work in approximately six weeks.

Job Descriptions Committee

Seamus Ramirez (Clackamas) said that the Committee will meet for one day in Newberg on November 29.

2017 Executive Committee Retreat

The Retreat is scheduled for December 4th and 5th at Hopkins Demonstration Forest. All members are invited. Members are to RSVP to Seamus Ramirez or Sue Nesbitt. Sue announced that there will be a mini SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. The purpose is how to go forward for 2018. She encouraged members to invite the new OMGA representatives.

Dates for Meetings and Locations in 2018

Sue announced that Multnomah County had been listed as host for the 1st Quarter meeting in March but asked that they host it in November instead. The dates are March 2nd for Leadership Forum and March 3rd for Board of Directors meeting.

The location is open and chapters are asked to consider hosting the Meeting and Forum.

The 2nd Quarter Leadership Forum and Board Meeting will be held June 1st and 2nd in Douglas County.

The 3rd Quarter Leadership Forum will be held July 12th at the time of G2.

The 3rd Quarter Board Meeting will be held Saturday, September 15th, location to be announced.

The 4th Quarter Leadership Forum and Board of Directors Meeting will be held November 2nd and 3rd in Multnomah County.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:00 pm.

<u>Executive Committee</u>	<u>Leadership Forum</u>	<u>Board of Directors</u>
February 2nd Linn County Extension Office	March 2nd TBD	March 3rd TBD
May 4th Linn County Extension Office	June 1st Douglas County	June 2nd Douglas County
TBD	July 12th G2	September 15th TBD
October 6th Linn County Extension Office	November 2nd Multnomah County	November 3rd Multnomah County

APPENDIX_A

Statewide Program Leader's 4th Quarter Report to the OMGA Board from Gail Langellotto, Statewide Coordinator

There's a lot going on!

CHAP | Advanced MG Training | Citizen Science: The Consumer Horticulture Advisory Panel (CHAP) is off and running. Our charge is to re-examine Master Gardener annual training, and to offer recommendations that will make trainings more accessible, more interactive, and more fun. Our reading list has been set. We have surveyed faculty and volunteers. Our first meeting is set. Learn more about our committee, our work plan, and our progress at:

<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/mgcoordinators/chap/>

Also of interest to MG training ~ Brooke Edmunds will continue the advanced training webinar series. Each month, a new IPM topic will be streamed, online. MGs can use the webinars (live or archived) for continuing education units needed for recertification. Learn more at:

<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/ediblegardens/?tag=webinars>

Brooke and I are continuing work on a science literacy training for gardeners. Follow along at:

<http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/gardencitizenscience/>

New Extension Regions: Extension is going through a re-organization at the top level: moving from Regional Administrators to Regional Directors. Extension 'regions' are also getting larger.

From the OSU Extension Blog:

When will the six new regions go into effect?

- While the map is set, the staffing and implementation plan is in development and will be phased in as appropriate. Here's what is in effect now, and what is coming next.
- The Coast Region is in place, and Dr. Wiley Thompson began serving as Regional Director on Oct. 30.
- The [West Central Regional Director position](#) search is in progress.

The Regional Administrator role is changing to Regional Director. Will the County Leader job change, too?

- County points of contact remain vital in our organization.
- There are no changes now to the county leader role.
- At their November meeting, the OSU Extension Collaborative will be discussing and developing potential scenarios for consideration about the future of the county leader position.

MG Program Staffing:

- Lincoln County~ Liz Olsen has announced her retirement. A person will be hired, with responsibilities to MG / Small Farms / Forestry. I believe this will be a Professor of Practice position, at 1.0 FTE (Full Time Equivalents), but I have not seen the position description draft. I am serving on this search committee.
- Josephine County ~ Karen Pleasant has announced her retirement. A Professor of Practice will be hired at 0.70 FTE, with responsibilities to MG / commercial horticulture. The position description is being revised, to specify percent effort to MG and commercial horticulture.
- Hood River County ~ The EPA position is being converted to a Professional Faculty position, which will better recognize the scholarly contributions made by the MG coordinator.
- Baker County ~ We no longer have a coordinator in Baker County ~ which is unfortunate, as an Eastern Oregon program had been my highest staffing priority for many years. The loss of the Baker County Coordinator necessitates some tough decisions.

Revisiting Growing Healthy Kids (GHK): GHK is a curriculum that uses gardening to teach healthy habits in children aged 7-8. I was the lead author for the curriculum, which launched, statewide, in 2009. I have not worked on the curriculum for several years, but was pleased to see the results of a recent impact evaluation, conducted in by the OSU College of Public Health. The evaluation found that children who received the GHK curriculum displayed significantly greater changes (pre-test to post-test), compared to children in the comparison group, for the total number of fruits and vegetables eaten ($p < 0.001$), and the mean score for 'liking' 10 different vegetables ($p = 0.002$). In addition, the gain scores of GHK students were greater than those of comparison group students, at borderline significance levels, on two outcomes: having fruits and vegetables to eat at home ($p = 0.067$) and having a positive preference for trying new vegetables ($p = 0.063$).

We work on so many projects . . . that it was nice to return to one I have 'left behind', and to see the positive impacts of that work.

Garden Ecology Lab: The recommendations that we give out in the Master Gardener Program are often derived from research conducted in conventional agriculture. Farm-scale studies differ in size and in scope from home and community gardens. There is a need to conduct research that is specific to gardens, to develop and disseminate best management practices for home gardens.

I run the Garden Ecology Lab at OSU. This summer, we launched three research projects: native plants | garden soils | garden pollinators. Follow along with our progress at: <http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/gardenecologylab/>

Native Plants: With one season in the books, we have some purely anecdotal impressions of which wildflower species are the most attractive to bees. Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) and Douglas aster (*Symphyotrichum subspicatum*) were both highly attractive to a wide diversity of native bees, as well as to a variety of beetles, bugs, and syrphid flies. As an added bonus, both these species had long bloom durations, providing habitat and colorful displays for significant portions of the summer. Annual flowers *Clarkia amoena* and *Gilia capitata* attracted a range of native bees; *Clarkia* was also visited by leafcutter bees for a different purpose – cutting circular petal slices to build nest cells with. How sweet to think of mother bees, wrapping their young in flower petals!

Urban Soils: We conducted an observational study of urban garden soils in Portland and Corvallis. Prior to sampling, we recorded weed pressure, season extension techniques, and crops grown, for each site. We sampled soil from every vegetable bed, at each garden site. Samples are currently being analyzed for nutrient content, heavy metal contamination, as well as biological and physical characteristics. We intend to contrast soil characteristics from raised-beds versus in-ground beds. In addition, we will look at soil characteristics as a function of each site's proximity to the urban core. Heavy metal contamination increases near heavy traffic: cars 'whip up' contaminants on the road, and also emit heavy metals associated with gas combustion. We want to see if gardening in raised beds offers protection from particulate-pollution, or if we need to develop another set of recommendations.

Our initial observations are that garden soils have high levels of organic matter, and that this high level can complicate soil analyses. We suggest modifications to current guidance regarding soil sampling in gardens. Ultimately, this effort will provide novel data about the current state of urban garden soils, enabling recommendations for best management practices to be more focused on the urban scale rather than adapted from data derived from conventional agriculture.

Garden Pollinators: In June, July, and August, we sampled 24 Portland area gardens for pollinators. In each garden, we hand collected bees for 10 minutes, and set out six water pan traps for ~24 hours. We close to pinning the final set of August bees, and will be identifying all specimens to species.

Initial impressions:

- Gardening for pollinators works. One of our most urban gardens had the highest pollinator abundance and diversity. Every decision this gardener makes is focused on pollinators, and we see the results in our samples
- Gardeners who have sprinkler systems tended to have lower bee abundance and diversity, compared to those that used drip irrigation. This observation will be the focus of more intense study, next year.
- Lots of bee diversity in Portland gardens. We just need to finalize IDs.

IMGC: The IMGC financials are still being reconciled by OSU Business office. We had one non-payment that we could not collect on (Swarm Portland), despite repeated attempts. We had one payment we needed to make (Friends of Elk Rock Garden), where the vendor did not turn in paperwork to get paid,

despite repeated calls. We finally wrote off Swarm Portland, and were able to get paperwork back from Friends of Elk Rock ~ just this week. I also need to pay forward the \$5,000 seed money that the 2015 IMGCC gave to the 2017 IMGCC. We will pay forward the \$5,000 to the 2019 IMGCC folks (Pennsylvania). I also need to pay \$1,000 into the International Search for Excellence fund. This money pays for certificates, plaques, and a small cash award for 1st place winners. All told, the IMGCC cleared between \$28,000 and \$29,000 in revenue.

I wrote up 'lessons learned' from the 2017 IMGCC as two articles that will be submitted to the Journal of Extension for publication consideration. One is on general lessons learned (co-authored with Amy Jo Detweiler and Sherry Sheng). The second is on tours, including a worksheet that can be used to pre-audit tours for a Master Gardener audience (co-authored with Claudia Groth). I continue to consult with the 2019 (PA) and 2021 (VA) organizers. Our conference was well-received. Still, there were a few things I would do differently, if I had known better.

The website for information about the 2019 IMGCC is: <http://internationalmastergardener.com/>. It will be held June 17-21, 2017 in Valley Forge, PA (at the Valley Forge Casino Resort). Many sessions are being held at local gardens, including Longwood Gardens.

USDA Listening Sessions: The USDA is taking comments on what NIFA's priorities should be, in the near future. Below is more information for those interested in submitting comments (due December 1st), and a template provided by the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture.

The National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA), USDA's primary division supporting agricultural research in the US is soliciting input to inform research, extension and education priorities. NIFA's mission is to invest in and advance agricultural research, education and extension to solve societal challenges.

NIFA seeks input on 2 questions:

- 1) What is your top priority in food and agricultural research, extension or education that NIFA should address?*
- 2) What are the most promising science opportunities for advancement of food and agricultural sciences?"*

Comments: Written comments are due by December 1, 2017. Written comments must be submitted electronically through <https://nifa.usda.gov/nifalistsens> or emailed to NIFAlistsens@nifa.usda.gov

In developing comments it's important to focus on answering the two questions. Agencies generally ignore extraneous comments. Also, customizing your comments is vitally important by adding a few sentences about who you are and your role in the horticulture industry. If you can share a personal/professional story to illustrate your answer to one of the questions, that will make the biggest impact.

Here are some bullets that can be included. However, if you wish to include only your own input and not mention NICH or any of this, that's good too. You will be putting comments in for the ornamental/consumer horticulture industries. It is the volume and quality of the comments coming from various sectors that will make the best impression on the agency. Please be sure to mention Consumer Horticulture.

TEMPLATE

Investing in Science to Transform Lives – USDA NIFA

Federal Register Document #: 2017-19714, pages 43325-4332

Dear Sir or Madam:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX Paragraph about your company/entity XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

In response to NIFA's request for stakeholder input, I offer the following:

Question 1) What is your top priority in food and agricultural research, extension or education that NIFA should address?

My top research priority is a focus on consumer horticulture (CH).

Home gardening, residential and commercial landscaping and urban land management drive the consumption of an array of specialty crops. The sector known as consumer horticulture (CH) contributes more than \$196 billion to the US economy.

CH encompasses the cultivation, use, and enjoyment of plants, gardens, landscapes, and related horticultural items to the benefit of individuals, communities, and the environment. CH embraces public and private service industries, such as landscape design and maintenance, park maintenance, arboriculture, irrigation, public gardens and other services that have multi-faceted impacts on the economy, environment, and public health.

CH stakeholders are a diverse group. They include direct consumers of specialty crops (e.g., community gardeners, home gardeners, homeowner associations, public gardens, non-profits, municipal stakeholders, schools, and hospitals) as well as CH industries that purchase and support the use of specialty crops.

The Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) has made an important positive impact on the production of commodities such as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, nursery crops and floriculture. However, funding for CH projects has been absent. Of the 162 projects receiving SCRI funding from 2008 and 2015, all have focused on production.

Through the National Initiative for Consumer Horticulture (NICH), a collation of academic, non-profit, extension and industry throughout the horticulture sector is developing core priorities to advance CH. Among them are:

- Stimulate entrepreneurial opportunities in Consumer Horticulture.
- Strengthen the adoption of Consumer Horticulture as an effective tool for improving human health and well-being.
- Develop and promote sustainable practices specific to Consumer Horticulture.
- Identify and implement the positive environmental impacts of Consumer Horticulture on water quantity and quality resources.
- Identify and develop plants, products, and technology appropriate to the diversity of landscape and gardening practices to enhance ecosystem services.

Question 2) What are the most promising science opportunities for advancement of food and agricultural sciences?

The most promising science opportunity is inclusion of CH as an essential component of human life.

The social, environmental, financial/economic, health and well-being benefits associated with gardening, landscaping and managing landscapes is an area receiving increased focus as the United States continues to develop more land and urbanize. An increasing evidence base of the benefits of “green infrastructure,” those vegetated spaces serving man where we live, work, play and pray shows people benefit when plants are part of their lives. These benefits are being identified across multiple disciplines within, but primarily external to CH. The opportunity to validate, articulate and implement vegetated green infrastructure through CH offers society a path to creating living spaces where humans thrive.

CH research would support more than 2 million jobs at commercial businesses, retail operations and consumer service providers. When CH becomes engaged in validating the environmental impacts, sustainable practices and developing plant, products and technology benefits, people will benefit too through better health, wellness and happiness as well as lower costs to public utilities for climate modulation and stormwater management and a vibrant economic sector that touches just about every county in the nation.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input as an agricultural stakeholder.

End of Report