



**OMGA End of Year Retreat
December 5, 2025 3:30-5:30p via Zoom**

Agenda Item	Discussion/Notes		Discussion Leader
<p>Welcome, Agenda Review</p>	<p>Chris opened the meeting at 3:30p.</p> <p>Those in attendance introduced themselves.</p> <p>President - Chris Rusch Pres. Elect - Shelby Schuppe Vice-president - Leslie Ray Treasurer - Patrice Sipos Secretary - Lindsey McNab Past President - Eric Bosler Historian - Linda Coakley Newsletter - Ann Kinkley Database/List Serve - not present Advocacy - Vacant OSU Prog Coor - Leslie Madsen</p>	<p>Benton - Shelby Schuppe, Alan Taylor Central Gorge - Eric and Sherry Bosler Central Oregon - Karen Simonet, Patty DaGaetano, Bonnie Oherne Clackamas - not represented Clatsop - not represented Columbia - Karen Harte Coos - Mary Dixon Curry - Cindy Meyers, Lauralee Cundiff Douglas - Chris Rusch Jackson - Lindsey McNab Klamath - not represented Lane - Laura Hoover Lincoln - Trish Riley Linn - Ann Kinkley Marion - Lee McKenzie Malheur - not represented Multnomah - Angela Myatt, Rich Becker Polk - Becky Jay Tillamook - Alice Danta Umatilla - not represented Wasco - Marilyn Richardson Washington - Deb Hansen Yamhill - Linda Coakley</p>	<p>Chris Rusch</p>
<p>Review of 2025 Goals</p>	<p>Goal #1: Advocacy OMGA commits to advocating for the OSU Extension Master Gardener™ Program. Through its Advocacy Task Force, OMGA will: execute a letter campaign in support of the OSU Extension Statewide Program request of Continuing Service Level funding; develop and execute a Local Level Advocacy Plan to bring awareness of the Master Gardener Programs' outreach and impact on local communities; provide updated materials and resources to OMGA Advocacy Team members on the OMGA Advocacy webpage; provide a briefing to the OMGA BOD at the March 7, 2025, quarterly meeting.</p> <p>Goal #2: Growing and Belonging The Oregon Master Gardener Association (OMGA) is committed to being an organization that is culturally sensitive that supports diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility towards all our membership and the community at large. OMGA supports the work of the Growing and Belonging Committee through participation and advocacy. OMGA board</p>		<p>Chris</p>

	<p>members will include how they are supporting this goal within their chapters in their quarterly reports. OMGA will provide information to chapters on how to apply for the Growing and Belonging chapter and statewide award during the annual orientation.</p> <p>Goal #3: Annual Educational Event OMGA commits to providing leadership and support for the successful future Joy of Gardening Conferences.</p> <p>Goal #4: Training in new technologies OMGA will assist chapters with technology challenges. OMGA commits to offering training on zoom meetings, Facebook development, and improving websites. Use OMGA Website to post articles and training information for use by all county chapters.</p> <p>Goal #5: Communication OMGA commits to improving communications with chapters. This includes providing training on how to encourage active engagement when dealing with conflicts; provide the opportunity for Chapters to share ideas about new projects and programs through quarterly “Sharing Forums” where all are invited to participate and contribute.</p> <p>Goal #6: Creation of a 5-year Strategic Plan OMGA commits to creating a 5-year strategic action plan for the organization. This will include a statewide survey and analysis to help to determine current strengths and weaknesses, and to devise a successful strategy for the future.</p>	
<p>2025 Goal Accomplishments & Shortcomings Discussion</p>	<p>Goal #1: Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A letter campaign was initiated. Over 25 letters were written by Master Gardeners to their representative legislators. - A group of Master Gardeners attended a legislative lobby day along with other volunteers from Extension to talk directly to legislators. - The OMGA website was updated to reflect the newest strategies of advocacy for Extension - http://omga.org/advocacy/. - The Advocacy position is currently vacant. <p>Goal #2: Growing and Belonging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 chapters awarded the Growing and Belonging award to MG volunteers in 2025. - The statewide Growing and Belonging award was given to 3 MGs. - The JOG Conference held a special session on Growing and Belonging. - A Growing and Belonging Committee headed by Shelby Schuppe grew out of the session held at JOG. They have already had a couple of meetings in 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A big thank you to Shelby for her hard work on this! She is currently planning the next meeting and encourages those interested in joining the committee to reach out to her. 	<p>Chris</p>

- Low participation in providing Growing and Belonging progress was observed in the quarterly reports.

Goal #3: Annual Educational Event

- A successful JOG Conference was held in 2025. It was supported by positive reviews by both attendees and speakers.
- Over 220 people attended which was short of the 300 attendee goal but is more than attended in 2024.
- Over 25 speakers participated.
- 6 MG leadership guidance panels were included in the 2025 conference - this was new and very successful.
- Over \$6000 was raised during the silent auction.

Goal #4: Training in new technologies

- A session on creating social media and websites was held at the JOG Conference.
- The Gardeners Pen newsletter carried articles on social media and website development citing examples - <http://omga.org/newsletter/>.
- Treasurer Patrice Sipos helped chapter treasurers on various aspects of their accounting duties. She has also prepared IRS tax returns for all 19 chapters, which is a free service for them.
- The OMGA website has been updated to include a new tab called "Chapter Resources" that includes information and links to local websites.
- Not a lot of requests for assistance with this came in 2025 so not a lot was done as a result.

Goal #5: Communication

- Quarterly reports provided by chapters are easily accessible on the OMGA website, but participation in sending chapter reports needs improvement - <http://omga.org/minutes-and-reports/>.
- \$10,000 in grants were awarded to specific counties which are featured on our website to highlight the wonderful work the counties are doing - <http://omga.org/wp-content/uploads/20/25/09/2025-OMGA-Grant-Awards-Amounts.pdf>.
- Over 70 longevity awards were given to MG volunteers.
- OMGA provided Josephine County with support and guidance during their 2024/25 challenges.
- OMGA shared all the many activities occurring locally with chapters through the Gardeners Pen newsletter. This is the largest communication tool we currently have.
- The OMGA website was revised and updated in 2025.
- "Sharing Forums" were only accomplished through the quarterly reports but an actual forum was not held.

Goal #6: Creation of a 5-year Strategic Plan

- A Memorandum of Agreement was completed with OSU that lays out the roles and responsibilities of OMGA and OSU Statewides. This is effective for 3 years and is a big deal - <http://omga.org/wp->

	<p>content/uploads/20/25/05/MOA-2025.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A statewide survey is needed to facilitate the statewide administrators. - A strategic plan itself was not accomplished. 	
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Open Discussion

<p>Thoughts on 2025 Goals</p> <p>Planning for 2026 Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal #1: Advocacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris gave a great description of how important advocacy is to the organization and the beneficial work that can be done for Extension by OMGA through advocacy. ○ Eric commented that he believes that advocacy is a primary goal of OMGA and should always be on our yearly priorities list. ○ Alan agreed that advocacy should be kept but that we should consider lowering its rank on the goals list since this is an off year. ○ Becky said that we should not forget that the legislators may be called into session and that they Extension offices are of vital importance. ○ Patty Drisscoll commented that advocacy is crucial to continue for the county level. ○ It was also noted that OSU has lost a lot of grants recently, so letter writing has been pushed as important to combat this loss. ○ Leslie would like to see the goals be made measurable. For instance, letter writing could be made to say that at least 1 person per chapter will write a letter to their legislator in 2026. ○ It was also suggested that letters could be sent on behalf of the chapter with attached names of those in support, but Becky Jay noted that letters from individuals have more impact. ○ Mary Dixon commented that both could happen, a letter from the chapter with all who support and attach individual letters to that as well. ○ Alan agrees with Leslie's desire to see the goals be measurable in order to show that a difference is being made so that more are encouraged to participate. ○ Some noted that they would like to see more communication sent from the Advocacy Team for what to send when and to who. ○ Dr. Madsen noted that we must work with the OSU Advocacy Committee lead Heidi Luquette and that we must differentiate what is OMGA/OSU related and what is individual to comply with all policy. ● Goal #2: Growing and Belonging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It was decided that we should definitely keep this goal especially now that a committee has been formed for it. ○ Shelby suggested a measurable goal of having a certain 	<p>All</p>
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percentage of chapters involved and submitting for the award in 2026.

- Dr. Madsen suggested finding a way to highlight what is going on in each county with regard to Growing and Belonging including initiatives that address the underserved, language barriers, gender considerations, etc.
- It was decided to include Seed to Supper information in this goal. Lindsey and Shelby will consult on this.
- Dr. Madsen noted the success she has seen when surveys are offered after workshops to get an immediate understanding of the impact they are having.
- Lee suggested that OMGA provide counties with information on what to do, and what is successful and not.
- It was noted that we need more participation towards providing progress on this goal, at the county level, in the quarterly reports.
- Chris would like to see more counties participating in the award giving in 2026 as only 8 were given in 2025.
- A discussion about including food donations in this category sprang up, but some questioned its relevance to Growing and Belonging.
 - An alternative idea was to include information about donations or education to underserved and food insecure groups as well as potentially growing culturally relevant foods for certain food banks and providing education for this. Ensuring that anything that gets included aligns with Growing and Belonging specifically was highly emphasized.
 - There is a goal to get 50 tons of food donated to celebrate the 50 years of the Master Gardeners in 2026. It was suggested that we consider this for a separate goal.

- **Goal #3: Annual Education Event**

- Items that could be measurable include number of attendees, speakers, etc.
- This goal was suggested as more important this year since it is the 50th anniversary.
- The planning committee goals would be good to include here.
- Dr. Madsen asked if a call for proposals process had been conducted. Chris confirmed that a request was sent to all Extension coordinators for the 2026 conference.
- Alice commented on the dorms and the facility set up as potential barriers for reaching our goal for attendance.

- **Goal #4: Training in new technologies**

- Although not much was asked for with regard to training in new technologies in 2025, the JOG panel on this topic was well attended.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris noted that the main thing that has been done with respect to this goal is that connections to resources were made. ○ Patrice suggested having training in organizational procedures as well as new technologies. ○ Bonnie suggested that we trim the goal and provide resource information to connect the dots for people including webinars and to also keep the panel at JOG. ○ Eric suggested that media be added to the goal. ○ Lindsey suggested creating a digital resource library which could include instructional videos linked through the website and YouTube, which could be accessed anytime by anyone looking for a certain topic. ○ Dr. Madsen emphasized utilizing the best practices that do and have worked (not just what the kids are doing today). It was noted that LeAnn would be very helpful on this goal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal #5: Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chris noted that we always strive to encourage communication with chapters and always fall short. ○ Alan thinks we have done a good job pushing info out but there has been a poor response rate and notes that he has experienced difficulty when trying to communicate across the county. He stated that we need to pledge to do better to respond to one another. ○ Chris and Eric second Alan's comments. ○ Leslie suggested cross county working groups/committees. ○ Lindsey noted that each goal could have its own working group. ○ It was suggested that the "Sharing Forums" get hosted each quarter in 2026. ○ Much discussion was had about creating a better process for following up on grants that are given out each year. ● Goal #6: Creation of a 5-year Strategic Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Leslie and Chris both commented on the difficulty of creating a 5-year plan for this type of organization. ○ Alan, Lindsey, and Patrice all noted that 5 years is probably too long, but having a longer term outlook (longer than one year) is good and worthwhile. 	
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Next Steps

<p>Prioritization of Goals</p>	<p>Communication moved to #1</p> <p>Annual Educational Event suggested as #2 since it is the 50 year anniversary</p>	<p>Chris</p>
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	<p>Growing and Belonging suggested also as #2 or at least #3</p> <p>Advocacy moved down from #1</p> <p>The others to follow in no particular order</p>	
<p>Assignments to work on goal wording</p>	<p>Communication - Alan, Patty Drisscoll, Chris</p> <p>Annual Educational Event - JOG Planning Committee</p> <p>Growing and Belonging - Shelby and Lindsey</p> <p>Advocacy - Chris</p> <p>Technologies - Lindsey and Chris</p> <p>Long Term Planning - Chris</p> <p>Draft of 2026 Goals to be accomplished by Friday December 12th.</p>	<p>Chris</p>