

The Santa Fe Master Gardener Association (SFMGA) and NMSU's New Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners (SFEMG) Chapter

Background

In a move to ensure compliance with federal tax law governing nonprofits, New Mexico State University (NMSU) has revisited its relationship with all 4-H and Master Gardener organizations statewide. Beginning in January 2019, all of the state's 15 existing county-based Master Gardener programs will be operated as chapters of the NMSU County Extension Service's new Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) program. 4-H youth organizations throughout the state have already transitioned to a

similar organizational structure.

Q1: Which county programs are affected?

A: Below is a list of the NMSU Extension Master Gardeners chapters, all of which operate under NSMU's 501(c)(3) nonprofit status:

Bernalillo County
Chaves County
Colfax County
Doña Ana County
Grant County
Lea County
Lincoln County
Los Alamos County
Otero County
Sandoval County
San Juan County
San Miguel County
Santa Fe County
Taos County
Valencia County

Q2: What does this mean for Master Gardeners in Santa Fe County?

A: The Santa Fe County program has long been a partnership between the Santa Fe Master Gardener Association (SFMGA) and NMSU in coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. SFMGA has operated under the auspices of NMSU's Cooperative Extensive Service for the past 20 years and incorporated as a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2010. Under the new organizational structure, the electronic assets of SFMGA have been transferred to the new Extension Master Gardeners organization, including the website, newsletter, email addresses, and SignUpGenius and Track It Forward accounts. These assets will reflect the name of the new chapter—Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners (SFEMG)—beginning this month.

Q3: What happens to the Master Gardener projects started by SFMGA?

A: Current projects that will continue to be supported by the new Extension Master Gardeners chapter include:

- Ask a Master Gardener (office hours and hotline)
- Demonstration cactus, herb, and vegetable gardens at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds, on Rodeo Road
- El Rancho de los Golondrinas
- Harvey H. Cornell Rose Garden, between Galisteo Street and Galisteo Parkway
- Historic Santa Fe Foundation's Garden at El Zaguán, on Canyon Road
- Municipal Tree Inventory, with the City of Santa Fe
- National Earth-Kind Rose Field Trial, at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds

- New Mexico Wildlife Center, in Española
- Santa Fe Compost Action Team (SCAT)
- Santa Fe Native Plant Project (SNaPP)
- Seed Stewardship Program
- “The Garden Journal” weekly radio show on KSFR
- Wildlife and native plant gardens at the Randall Davey Audubon Center

Q4: What about the Master Gardener internship program, Let’s Grow, and the annual garden fair and plant sale?

A: The internship program, the Let’s Grow monthly education series, and the annual garden fair and plant sale will continue under the new EMG organization. Planning has already begun for the 2019 spring plant sale, which will take place on May 4, the first Saturday in May.

Q5: Does this mean SFMGA will no longer exist?

A: After months of negotiation with NMSU, the SFMGA board elected to retain its nonprofit status, primarily for the purpose of overseeing the disposition of about \$44,000 in reserve funds. This is money that was raised over a number of years through membership dues, intern fees, and the annual garden fair. These funds accrued after SFMGA covered costs associated with its various projects and the annual plant sale.

Q6: Why doesn’t SFMGA simply turn over the reserve funds to the new Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners chapter?

A: The new arrangement, whereby SFMGA will retain the reserve funds, ensures that they will be used exclusively to support Master Gardener projects in Santa Fe County.

Q7: How are funding transfers from SFMGA to SFEMG going to work?

A: Provisional criteria for distributing reserve funds to SFEMG have been approved by the SFMGA board. These criteria support needs and initiatives not included in regularly budgeted Extension Master Gardeners operations. The SFMGA board voted on the first disbursement at its December meeting. This was to sponsor training for a second Seed School teacher, in 2019.

Q8: Who are the officers of the two organizations?

A: Below is a list of board members elected in October 2018:

**Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners
(SFEMG)**

**Santa Fe Master Gardener Association
(SFMGA)**

Tom Dominguez, Program Coordinator*

Cullen Hallmark, Co-President

Donna Wynant, Secretary

Jamie Painter, Co-President

Jan Christine, Communications Director

Kathy Brechner, Vice President

Carol Horn, Public Relations Director

Chesney Gulas, Treasurer **

Darcy Anderson, Co-Internship Director

Barbara Ellis, Co-Internship Director

Steve Schmelling, Project Coordinator

Ellen Premack, Education Director

Tammy McLellan,
Membership Coordinator

Gail Dodge, Member-at-Large

Linda Fleming, Member-at-Large

Holly Henry, Member-at-Large

Bonnie Martin, Member-at-Large

Chesney Gulas, Treasurer **

* Driven by the new organizational structure put in place by NSMU, local county extension agents oversee all Extension Master Gardeners programs throughout the state.

** Chesney has agreed to serve in this capacity during the transitional period for both organizations.

In both cases, board members serve without compensation.

Q9: I have paid my dues for 2019. Where is this money going?

A: Whether you already paid your dues or plan to pay them by December 31, 2019, they will be used to support the new SFEMG chapter.

Q10: What will the new Extension Master Gardener organization do with the membership dues?

A: Money raised through membership dues, the internship program, and the plant sale primarily will be used to support existing garden projects in Santa Fe. NMSU will collect \$100 per intern statewide to help support the growth of Extension Master Gardeners programs throughout New Mexico. The enrollment fee for the internship program that begins on Monday, February 4, is \$200 per person. There are 65 interns in the 2019 class.

Q11: Who will have membership in the respective organizations?

A: Those who pay 2019 dues will be members of the SFEMG. Any dues-paying SFEMG member who completed the required hours in 2018, including the 2018 interns, will also be members of the SFMGA, at no additional cost. Those who do not wish to be SFMGA members can contact any of that organization's board members to request to be removed from the SFMGA membership list.

Q12: I completed the internship program in 2018 but have not yet received my Master Gardener credentials. How is this being handled?

A: The Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners will host a graduation ceremony for the 31 individuals who successfully completed their internships in 2018. The event, which is open to all SFEMG/SFMGA members, will be held on Saturday, January 19, in the Exhibit Hall at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds. A networking social is scheduled from 5 to 6 p.m., to be followed by a potluck dinner and the graduation ceremony.

Q13: What are the requirements for maintaining Master Gardener status under the new Extension Master Gardeners program, and are there any changes in 2019?

A: Continued certification as a Master Gardener requires completion of 30 hours of volunteer service in three categories by November 30 of each calendar year. NMSU has increased the required number of Continuing Education (CE) hours from 6 to 10 and requires 15 hours of Organization Support (OS) and 5 hours of Public Education (PE). In addition, one-way travel in excess of 30 minutes to and from EMG projects can be counted toward the total number of volunteer hours achieved in a year but cannot qualify as Continuing Education or Public Education hours. These requirements are more fully described on the Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners website (sfemg.org).

Q14: Will the new Extension Master Gardeners program provide office space and support for Ask a Master Gardener?

A: The Santa Fe County Extension Office will continue to provide office space and equipment for Ask a Master Gardener. The AAMG office will remain in its current location in the Annex building at the Santa Fe County Fairgrounds.

Q15: What is the best way for me to stay abreast of what is happening with the two different organizations?

SFEMG

Content from the SFMGA website has been transferred to the new SFEMG website (sfemg.org). The new site is being updated to consistently reflect the identity of SFEMG. Email messages from the new organization will be sent from SFEMG from this point forward. The Extension Master Gardeners chapter will meet at 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month, in the conference room of the new County Extension Office, at 3229 Rodeo Road.

SFMGA

SFMGA will periodically send email updates to members announcing fund transfers to the Extension Master Gardeners, changes to the criteria for such transfers, proposed changes to the bylaws or leadership structure, scheduled elections, and other matters of general interest. SFMGA plans to create a new website to share organizational information and will alert members when the site is live.

Q16: What if I have questions that have not been addressed here?

A: You can send questions about the new SFEMG to sfemg1@gmail.com.

For questions about the legacy SFMGA, contact any of the following:

- Jamie Painter, jamesrpainter@gmail.com
- Cullen Hallmark, rider@icloud.com
- Kathy Brechner, kdbrech@gmail.com
- Chesney Gulas, gulas@mindspring.com
- Helena va Heiningen, hvanhein@yahoo.com