Knox County Extension Master Gardener Executive Committee
2018-19 Strategic Plan
2.22.18

KCEMG Mission:
Helping Tennessee Grow Better Communities

In support of Extension in Tennessee, the mission of the Knox County Master Gardener program is to educate and serve the community using research-based information on best practices in horticulture, environmental stewardship and integrated pest management.

2018-19 Strategic Vision: To focus the activities and mobilize the talent of our entire membership in serving the community-based mission of the Knox County Extension Master Gardener program and to respond to suggestions and concerns noted in the 2017 KCEMG volunteer survey.

2018-19 Strategic Goals

Goal 1: Update Monthly KCEMG Meetings (Feb – Jun 2018)
Team Leader: Ron Pearman

• Objective 1A: Update Monthly Meeting Structure
  o Activity: Restructure for more fun and productivity
  o Activity: Shorten business section of meeting
  o Activity: Make time for socializing
  o Activity: Change start time

• Objective 1B: Make Educational Program More Focused on “Train-the-Trainer” (How to Educate the Public)
  o Activity: Create a Requirements Sheet for Guest Speakers (evidence-based info, practical tips and learning objectives, how do you use info to assist the public? time set aside for Q&A, etc.)

• Objective 1C: Consider a More Convenient & Available Meeting Location
  o Activity: Form meeting room search committee
  o Activity: Identify a new location, if deemed necessary
  o Activity: Announce & transition to new location, if deemed necessary

• Expected Outcome: Increased monthly meeting attendance and everyone stays for the entire meeting
  o Data Source: Sign-In Sheets
Goal 2: Mentor Program Development (Feb – Oct 2018)

Team Leader: Amy Haun

- **Objective 2A: Finalize Mentor Program Design & Tools, Based on Pilot Experience**
  - **Activity:** Write up clear, written goals for Program (if it is successful, what will happen?)
  - **Activity:** Design a decision matrix for interns (based on your schedule, your goals, what you like to do, etc.) to better choose core project involvement
  - **Activity:** Create mentor/mentee tip sheets (FAQs, how to get hours, who’s invited to monthly meetings, etc.)
  - **Activity:** Develop and deliver training for mentors
  - **Activity:** Program & training materials finalized

- **Objective 2B: Expand Mentor Program Activities**
  - **Activity:** Conduct mentor/mentee group meetings
  - **Activity:** Set up field trips for fun and team building

- **Expected Outcome:** More interns feel prepared to serve.
  - **Data Source:** [Pre and Post Mentoring Quick Surveys]

Goal 3: Improve Camaraderie & Teamwork (Feb – Dec 2018)

Team Leader(s): Viren Lalka + Rosanne Smith

- **Objective 3A: Increase Social & Learning Opportunities Through Field Trips**
  - **Activity:** Appoint field trip coordinating team & leader(s)
  - **Activity:** Schedule approximately 4 field trips per year

- **Expected Outcome:** Increased hours spent on core projects
  - **Data Source:** [Sign-In Sheets/RSVPs]

Goal 4: Tap the Unrealized Potential of Our Core Projects (Feb – Dec 2018)

Team Leaders: Barbara Bunting + TBD

- **Objective 4A: Increase Member Engagement in Core Projects**
  - **Activity:** Establish a standard format for announcing volunteer opportunities to interns for all core leaders (common scheduling & communications software?)
  - **Activity:** Finalize core projects quick reference sheet (Ron Pearman)
  - **Activity:** Provide concrete guidelines for reporting volunteer hours, CEUs, & mileage
- Activity: Broaden engagement with core project “host” organizations (to increase knowledge of existing opportunities and empower volunteers to assist)
- Activity: Increase depth of empowerment and volunteer ownership of expanded tasks at core projects
- Activity: Expand core projects into new communities

**Objective 4B: Focus Core Project Impact Reporting**
- Activity: Review Search for Excellence application and report progress quarterly
- Activity: Submit a Search for Excellence application

**Expected Outcome:** Increased hours spent on core projects
- Data Source: [Participation Hours and Sign-In Sheets]

**Goal 5: Modernize Digital Communications (Feb – Nov 2019)**
**Team Leaders:** Christine Jessel Grider + Tobi Johnson + TBD

- **Objective 5A: Update KCEMG Website for Better Usability**
  - Activity: Form working committee to upgrade website
  - Activity: Upgrade web platform
  - Activity: User test any new/proposed changes before finalizing

- **Objective 5B: Optimize Core Project Communications**
  - Activity: Focus regular core project updates with progress reports and highlighted “mission moments”
  - Activity: Review current core project digital communications and identify best practices (what do they do that works best to engage volunteers?)
  - Activity: Share best practices with other core project leaders

- **Objective 5C: Upgrade KCEMG Newsletter for Better Readability**
  - Activity: Reformat Newsletter to Embed in Email (versus downloadable PDF)
  - Activity: Refresh newsletter content and timing (change to 2x per month, highlight mission-based achievements, use MailChimp or other low-cost software to deliver)
  - Activity: Track Communications Effectiveness (open rates, click through rates, unsubscribed, etc.) and adjust as needed
  - Activity: Post newsletter archives on new KECMG website

- **Expected Outcome:** Increased social media and website traffic
  - Data Source: [Google Analytics & social media data]
Goal 6: Boost External Outreach-Marketing Activities (Jan-Dec 2019)
Team Leader(s): TBD

- **Objective 6A: Market the Program to the Public as Both a Resource & a Volunteer Opportunity**
  - **Activity:** Assemble a central calendar for all outreach activities (including Ask a Master Gardener, etc.)
  - **Activity:** Expand intern recruitment methods to increase diversity of volunteer corps (age, race, geography, neighborhood, etc.)
  - **Activity:** Create a resource/press kit with ready-made tools to use in outreach (ideas, talking points, presentation slides, fliers, brochures, tablecloth, reporting form, etc.)
  - **Activity:** Develop criteria for accepting requests for KCEMG speakers, booth tables, volunteer helpers, etc. and assigning them to volunteer team members
  - **Activity:** Include an online request form on KCEMG website and set up plan to monitor incoming email

- **Objective 6B: Prepare for & Expand Outreach Through Outreach to Diverse Potential Partners**
  - **Activity:** Use volunteer leaders to develop strong, encouraging relationships with communities not currently involved
  - **Activity:** Train team on effective partnership development strategies (Tobi Johnson)
  - **Activity:** Focus more outreach on reaching existing community groups with a gardening and/or environment focus
  - **Activity:** Create process for partners who express interest and for requests for special event participation (e.g., event booths)

- **Objective 6C: Track Outreach & Partnership Development**
  - **Activity:** Create system and form for reporting outreach activities
  - **Activity:** Review reports and report progress to membership

- **Expected Outcome:** Increased booth participation at events around the area and increased diversity of volunteer corps
  - **Data Source:** Event Reports, Intern Application Data/Zip Codes (anonymous)
Steps To Implement the 2018-19 Strategic Plan

• Present at February KCEMG Meeting and get commitment
• Propose change to By-Laws to membership include Executive Committee voting rights for Class Representative (announce at February meeting; vote at March meeting; go into effect at April meeting, if passed)
• Use to guide and focus all executive committee activity
• Update on our progress at monthly meetings
• Maintain focus on plan goals and objectives in all communications
• Consistently reinforce member roles and responsibilities to our shared mission

Notes:
Goal 1: Update Monthly KCEMG Meetings  
(Feb – Jun 2018) Team Leader: Ron Pearman

Goal 2: Mentor Program Development  
(Feb – Oct 2018) Team Leader: Amy Haun

Goal 3: Improve Camaraderie & Teamwork  
(Feb – Dec 2018) Team Leader(s): TBD

Goal 4: Tap the Full Potential of Our Core Projects  
(Feb – Dec 2018) Team Leaders: Barbara Bunting + TBD

Goal 5: Modernize Digital Communications  
(Feb – Nov 2019) Team Leaders: Christine Jessel Grider + Tobi Johnson + TBD

Goal 6: Boost External Outreach-Marketing Activities  
(Jan-Dec 2019) Team Leader(s): TBD
Graphic Planning Murals

SPOT Matrix

### 2018 KCEMG SPOT MATRIX

#### STRENGTHS
- Gardening Expertise/Expertise
- Enthusiasm to Help Others
- Strong Leaders/Committed
- UT Ag Support/Resources
- Speakers Bureau/Calendar
- Existing Partner Network
- Core Projects - Diverse
- Newsletter/Facebook Page
- Educational Enrichment Programs
- National Reputation
- Extensive Reference Info
- Robust Vol. Network - Dedicated, multiple Cohorts, Active
- East TN Geography

#### OPPORTUNITIES
- Leadership Development
- Training
- Strategic Plan
- Expand MG Testing
- Restructure Meetings
- Improve Website
- Mentor Program
- Initiatives
- Core Projects
- Newsletter

#### PROBLEMS
- Website Design - Not Modern/User Friendly
- Business Meeting - Low Attendance
- Lack of Public Awareness/Customer Communications from Core Projects Base
- Not Enough Landscape Design Ed.
- Mission - Not focused on providing research-based info to community more about individual MG needs
- Newsletter Format - Not User-Friendly
- Member Info/Data Not Shared
- Mentor Program Needs "Tweaking"
- Interns Don't Feel Prepared
- Don't All Become Involved Actively

#### THREATS
- Volunteer Sustainability
- Hours Not Completed/Certification
- DIY World - People Can Look It Up
- Raising Awareness in "Noisy," Busy World
- Global Warming - changing climate, pests, diseases
- Web Usability - Keeping up with Tech
- Lack of Reach to All Communities - Both NCS
- Resistance to New Ideas - a ut
- Potential loss of UT Resources - eg. meeting place
- Lack of Connection to Other
- Gardening Orgs Tensions Between Extension Staff/AG
Graphic Game Plan