Master Gardeners may enjoy several classes of membership status to fit their situation including Active, Sustainer, or Lifetime membership, as described below. In addition, a member may take a leave of absence if needed. Members who have not accumulated the required hours may be placed in exception status. If membership is dropped, the reinstatement policy is also listed below.

**ACTIVE STATUS**
Membership shall be comprised of individuals who have successfully completed the Arkansas Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Training Program. In addition, members must fulfill the annual volunteer service and re-certification requirements. The title "Master Gardener" is valid only when the volunteer is participating in the Arkansas Master Gardener program and may not be used in relation to any commercial venture. When individuals cease active participation, their designation as a Master Gardener becomes void. Members who fail to complete re-certification requirements or pay membership dues by the January 1st deadline may be dropped from the active membership roll.

**SUSTAINER STATUS**
A Master Gardener who has been a member in good standing for a minimum of seven years may apply to be a Master Gardener Sustainer. Applicants must complete a Request for Sustainer Status form and submit it to the county agent and/or master Gardener executive committee within a month of the end of the county’s "Master Gardener" year.

A Sustainer will be accorded all privileges of an active Master Gardener without the requirement of annual work and learning hours. MG Sustainers are strongly encouraged to continue to report any volunteer hours they accrue within each calendar year. A Sustainer may not hold office, or have any voting rights; however they may be active on a committee if they choose. Time spent as Sustainer will not count towards the 10, 15 year pins or for Advanced Master Gardener status. Sustainers may attend county, regional and state MG events, but programs with limited registrations will give priority to active MG members, and allow Sustainers in as space is available.

All applicable fees as set by the county for active Master Gardeners will be required of sustainers. This includes any annual dues, registration fees, etc. If you meet all of the requirements as stated for the Sustainer, and submit a written request to the county agent and/or executive committee, you will remain a Sustainer of said county until you choose to no longer pay county fees. A Master Gardener with sustainer status can revert back to active status by applying within a month of the end of the county’s MG year.

**LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP**
Master Gardeners who have remained active for 15 years will receive lifetime membership status at the annual MG state meeting. Master Gardener years accrue by the calendar; as an example, for a MG trained at any time during 2000, lifetime membership eligibility would be in 2015. Lifetime membership entitles a MG to all of the benefits of an active member but work and learning hours are no longer required. However, Lifetime Members who wish to continue working on projects are encouraged to do so. Lifetime Members are also encouraged to report hours, since county record keeping includes all volunteer hours. Hours/years of service will continue to accrue to 20 year status. If a county MG program requires dues, they will be waived for a Lifetime member. Lifetime Members will receive a pin denoting new status at the annual MG state meeting, and will also be recognized on a plaque at the state office.

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
Occasionally circumstances may arise, such as illness, family emergency, job or other unique circumstance, and a Master Gardener in good standing may need to apply for a leave of absence. The Leave of Absence form will need to be submitted to the county extension office, and be reviewed by the county agent and/or the MG executive committee. This form may be filled out by the MG or someone cognizant of their circumstances. Leave of absence status will be good for one MG year, and will be reviewed annually. Someone from within the county organization should check with these persons annually.

While on leave, the Master Gardener will not be responsible for any work or learning hours, but may retain the option to participate in events as conditions permit. MGs on leave of absence will not be allowed voting rights, but will remain in county roster. If these members wish to register for MG events that have limited space, priority will be given to active MGs and those on leave will be accepted as space allows. Time spent on leave of absence will not accrue towards active years of MG service, and therefore will not count for 5, 10, or 15 year pins. Payment of dues will be optional based on county needs.

**REINSTATEMENT**
Members wishing to return to BCMG will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Returning members will be asked to address the board regarding their reinstatement to the organization. A reinstatement recommendation will be issued by the board and forwarded to the county agent after the board meeting.

The following will apply to past members requesting reinstatement after a year of non-membership and who left in good standing: The past member will be reinstated when he pays his membership dues.

The following will apply to past members requesting reinstatement after more than a year of non-membership and who left "owing" hours: The past member must pay membership dues, make up his hours, and attend one day of the first available MG training.

The following will apply to past members requesting reinstatement after more than a year of non-membership and who left in good standing: The past member must pay membership dues and attend one day of the first available MG training.

Failure to comply with any of these requirements will result in the past member being dropped from the BCMG membership.