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## Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association

### Poster Design Contest

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Poster Design Contest is to select the design for the Fair poster, T-shirts, and other products, as well as CGCF marketing and promotions materials. The theme of the design must be in line with MOFGA's mission and the general guidelines for participating in the Fair.

#### CGCF Poster Design Contest Guidelines

1. The CGCF limits contest eligibility to residents of the State of Maine and members (including non Maine residents) of MOFGA.
2. There are two distinct rounds of the Poster Design Contest.
  - a. The first round of the Poster Design Contest is virtual. Artists must take a photo of their artwork and submit the photo electronically using the online entry form. Design submissions must be submitted by the deadline indicated on the online entry form. This year's deadline is Sunday, July 12, 2026.
    - i. Electronic submissions will go to the first round of voting and be voted on by the Fair Planning Team.
    - ii. If you do not have access to the tools necessary to submit your artwork electronically, please contact the Fair Office at 207-568-6041 or [commonground@mofga.org](mailto:commonground@mofga.org) by June 1, 2026 to discuss alternatives.
  - b. The 20 designs that received the highest number of votes will move on to the second round, which is the final round. The Fair Office will contact the artists by July 31 and ask that they send in the physical version of the artwork to the Fair Office to be reviewed and discussed in person during the August Fair meeting. If we do not receive the physical copy of the artwork by Tuesday, August 18, then we will unfortunately not be able to include the artwork in the in-person process, and it will not be eligible for selection as the Poster design.
3. The CGCF limits each artist to two submissions per year.
4. The online entry form must be submitted along with the photo of the artwork.
5. To ensure your artwork is not duplicated or copied during the online voting process, we will add a watermark over the photo. You may also submit your artwork with an unidentifiable watermark on it already if you would prefer.
6. The Fair Office handles and hangs the artwork submissions for display in the second round of the contest. If you have concerns about the handling of your artwork, include the appropriate protective layer(s) and hangers for your submission(s). We take great care with all physical artwork.
7. The CGCF office has an established type-style and particular information that will appear on the finished poster, merchandise and marketing materials. The winning design will be incorporated into the appropriate



layout and accompanied by the necessary Fair copy and information.

8. Submissions must be of professional quality and must be the original work of the entrant. Any other work, including but not limited to work copied from magazines, artwork by another artist, photos not taken by the artist, or work that incorporates elements that are not the original work of the Artist will not be considered original.

9. CGCF staff retains the right to approve the final design. When a submission is preliminarily selected as the annual winner, the artist may be asked to make some adjustments to better meet the needs of all the mediums to which the design is applied. Once agreement between the artist and the CGCF on such changes is reached, the final selection will be confirmed. If agreement cannot be reached, the CGCF reserves the right to select another design as the annual winner.

10. The winning artist agrees to be present at the Fair for poster signing. Usually Saturday and Sunday for an hour or so, but we are willing to work out an appropriate schedule.

11. The artist will assign to CGCF perpetual and exclusive rights to the use of the selected design in all forms and formats. The CGCF may reproduce in any fashion, including multimedia and electronic imaging, all or any portion of the design, and distribute for profit any reproductions of the design on Fair clothing, merchandise and goods, including, but not limited to posters, note cards, postcards, t- shirts, sweatshirts, night shirts, bags, and hats. The artist warrants the right to convey all of these rights to CGCF and agrees to indemnify CGCF against any claims arising out of the artist's breach of this provision or any other provision of this agreement, including reasonable attorney fees.

12. The winning artist will receive: \$2,500.00 to be paid after January 1 of the coming year; a press release about the selected design/artist; a write-up in MOFGA's newspaper, *The Maine Organic Farmer & Gardener*; and a one-year subscription to the MOFGA newspaper. In the event that CGCF incurs any costs as a result of the violation of this contract, the CGCF will have the right to set off those costs against the payment of the prize money

13. The selection team may choose to retain a submission for one year for future consideration, during which the artist will receive a \$100.00 payment and be in agreement that MOFGA shall retain the exclusive right to use the submission for the duration of the holding period.

14. The top 20 artists who are asked to mail in their artwork have two options for getting back their submission(s). Artists may: 1.) send the appropriate packaging material and pre-paid postage to the MOFGA Office, and the CGCF will return the work by mail; or 2.) schedule a time with the Fair office to come to the office and pick up submissions between the dates indicated on the application. Artwork not picked up within 30 days of notice becomes the property of MOFGA. Artists wishing to have their submission mailed back must provide adequate, reusable packing material so that the submission can be sent safely. If the artist does not send the appropriate packing material and pre-paid postage, or does not pick up her/his submission(s) by the deadline, the submission(s) become(s) the property of MOFGA.



## General Design Guidelines

While we do not want to discourage creativity in any way, we do want artists to be aware that the team selecting the design disqualifies many absolutely outstanding submissions simply because they do not meet our technical guidelines.

For example, an important consideration of the selection team is how well the design will reproduce on our t-shirts with the printing process and inks used for MOFGA's Fair T-shirts. Most t-shirts printed these days are printed with plastic-based inks, but MOFGA's shirts are printed using more environmentally sound water based inks. However, water-based inks require a larger screen mesh than the plastic-based inks. This makes reproducing precise or very fine line alignments on cotton difficult.

The selection team considers how the design will look on a poster, a t-shirt, and other Fair promotional materials and merchandise. Many designs look terrific up close, but lose their definition when viewed from a distance, which is something we are looking for in a shirt or poster design.

Here are further parameters and suggestions for your entry:

- **Use color, but be careful with blocks of color.** We are looking for designs that use color, but do so without large blocks of solid color because of the difficulty in printing such blocks of color on shirts.
- **Avoid watercolors.** Soft gradations of color, such as what is seen in watercolor-work, are exceedingly difficult to reproduce in the T-shirt screen-printing process. Screen-printing as a technique is a stenciling process that relies on modulating the density of a spatter pattern of fairly large flecks of color to simulate gradations of color. The spatter flecks make watercolor reproduction onto a T-shirt inexact.
- **Don't use too much white.** The Fair T-shirts are printed on colored fabric; they are not printed on white. Thus, whenever white or pale tints of color are used in original artwork, white ink must be printed on the shirt. All of the subtleties of pale color seen in original artwork will not be reproducible on Fair shirts.
- **Do not use crosshatching as shading.** Very, very fine pen lines, spaced closely together in a crosshatching technique, are not cleanly reproducible on cloth. Unlike paper, t-shirt fabric is textured. The fineness of detail achievable is therefore limited in comparison to what can be achieved on the smooth surface of paper.
- **Stay away from large geometric borders.** Frames or borders using large geometric shapes, which must be precisely controlled during printing, will often become skewed or distorted on fabric. T-shirt fabric is not dimensionally stable like paper, therefore during the printing and handling process the material will



shift and large geometric shapes become distorted.

- **Dimensions should be roughly the same.** Entries definitely do not have to be exact squares, but your submission should be pretty close in height and width dimensions. Panoramic artwork does not fit well on our shirts. Poster size is approximately 15.5" x 23". The reproduced design is generally 12 X 13 or so.

- **Photographs will not be accepted.**

You may review winning entries from prior years at [www.mofga.org](http://www.mofga.org) on the Poster page in the Fair section.

**The deadline to submit your artwork using the online submission form for the 2027 Common Ground Country Fair Poster Design Contest is Sunday, July 12, 2026.**