



# Georgia Master Gardener

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## Administrative Manual



THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION**

Colleges of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences & Family and Consumer Sciences

October 2008

## **University of Georgia Master Gardener Program Administrative Manual for Extension Staff**

Thank you for your invaluable work with the Georgia Master Gardener Program. This program would not be successful without the guidance of County Extension professionals like you who are committed to bringing this excellent resource to the public. Your leadership and enthusiasm in training and working with volunteers to help extend the reach of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service are exemplified by the growth of our state program and its national reputation as a model of excellence.



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**Est. 1979**

The University of Georgia  
College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Cooperative Extension

## **Mission Statement**

To assist the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Cooperative Extension by training Master Gardeners to provide unbiased horticultural information through volunteer community service and educational gardening projects using applied research and the resources of the University of Georgia.

### *Goals of the Georgia State Master Gardener Program Office*

- To assist County Extension Agents in their support of local Georgia Master Gardener Programs
- To provide guidelines and educational materials for use in the training, management and utilization of Master Gardener Volunteers
- To promote horticultural education through the development of community outreach projects
- To encourage appreciation and conservation of the environment
- To educate the public in responsible gardening practices

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## Acronyms and Terms Used in this Manual

**Active Master Gardener** A Master Gardener who has completed the yearly 25 hour volunteer service requirement in the prior reporting period

**Advanced Master Gardener** recognition for a Master Gardener who has completed Advanced Master Gardener training

**CAES** College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences

**CE** Cooperative Extension

**CEA** County Extension Agent may be Agriculture and Natural Sciences, 4H, or Family and Consumer Sciences

**CEC** County Extension Coordinator

**CEO** County Extension Office

**CMG** (*Certified Master Gardener*) A volunteer who has successfully completed the core training program and the initial 50 hour volunteer service requirement

**Emeritus Master Gardener** Master Gardener who has been active several years but is no longer able to volunteer his/her services.

**CMGA** County Master Gardener Association

**CMGC** County Master Gardener Coordinator A County Extension Agent or program assistant is responsible for the overall administration of a Master Gardener Program in one or a group of counties

**DED** District Extension Director

**County MGP** Refers to county or regional MG activities

**EPS** Extension Program Specialist

**GMG** Georgia Master Gardener

**GMGA** Georgia Master Gardener Association A volunteer organization at the state level composed of Master Gardeners

**Georgia MGP** (*Georgia MG Program*) refers to state wide MG program

**Honorary Master Gardener** An honorary title recognizing a Georgia citizen who exemplifies the best goals and objectives of the Georgia Master Gardener Program. Presented by the CEA after approval from the State Master Gardener Program Office.

**Inactive Master Gardener** A Master Gardener who has not completed the yearly 25 hour volunteer service requirement.

**Junior Master Gardener**<sup>sm</sup> A youth Master Gardener program trademarked by the Texas Extension Service.

**Lifetime Master Gardener Service** A Master Gardener who has completed 10 years of active volunteer service in Georgia. 25 hours of volunteer service is required to maintain active MG status.

**MGP** Master Gardener Program

**MGI** (*Master Gardener Intern*) A trainee who may or may not have completed the core training program but has fulfilled the initial 50 hour volunteer service requirement.

**MGTC** (*Master Gardener Training Coordinator*) A County Extension Agent is responsible for the overall training of a Master Gardener Program in one or a group of counties

**PA** Program Assistant

**PDC** Program Development Coordinator

**POW** Plan of Work

**SMGPC** State Master Gardener Program Coordinator

**SMGPO** State Master Gardener Program Office

# 1 History, Introduction and Purpose

## History

The Georgia Master Gardener Program was established in Georgia in 1979. Since that time it has endeavored to provide the highest standards of training for volunteer service while supporting UGA Cooperative Extension in its mission through non-formal, non-credit programs. The University of Georgia Master Gardener Program is an educational program designed to provide information to address gardening and volunteer community needs of Georgia citizens.

The program utilizes trained certified volunteers to respond to requests for information and problem-solving help from non-commercial clientele. After completing the required training MGs must contribute 50 hours of volunteer time the first year and 25 hours yearly thereafter to complement, enhance and support the educational efforts of Cooperative Extension Programs.

The main goal of MG efforts is educational. MGs do not provide free gardening labor or consultant services. MG activities are selected based on community needs and should be conducted in close partnership with County Extension activities. Master Gardeners are encouraged to take an active role in improving community and environmental quality, as well as promoting sustainable gardening practices. Model programs achieve this through using learn-by-doing methods and active community involvement.

This Administrative Manual provides guidelines to: a) insure the educational and administrative integrity for all Georgia Master Gardener activities, b) provide policies and implement procedures relevant to MG volunteer management

and c) support County Extension staff.

## Important historical dates:

*1973*- The Master Gardener Program was initiated by Washington State University Extension  
*1979*- First Georgia Master Gardener training class was held in Atlanta

## Purpose

The Georgia Master Gardener Program is primarily a county-based volunteer educational program with the main goal of addressing community non-commercial, gardening issues and needs. County Extension staff are responsible for the selection, training, certification and support of MG volunteers.

There are many ways the Georgia Master Gardener Program may be beneficial to a county. An urban county may require assistance with telephone calls and emails at the County Extension Office, conduct garden club presentations and plant clinics, and write articles for newsletters or local newspapers. In a more rural county MGs may be asked to assist with school gardens, natural science projects, nature trails, or mentor 4-H presentations and projects.

Whether urban or rural, each county can use Master Gardener volunteers to address its unique community needs relative to responsible and sustainable gardening practices such as: safe use of tools and chemicals, environmental stewardship, appropriate landscaping, and proper selection of plants.

The purpose of the Master Gardener Program is to broaden the outreach of Cooperative

Extension allowing it to serve more citizens within each community. Educational partnership opportunities with schools, libraries, senior citizen centers, historic centers, and parks exist in every community. Leaders of successful programs and projects identify community partners and build on shared goals.

**Please see page vi for a list of acronyms used in this manual.**

The Georgia Master Gardener Program was initiated to train volunteers in horticultural principles. These volunteers assist Cooperative Extension in providing up-to-date horticultural information to the community. MG Volunteers help develop and facilitate adult and youth educational programs related to gardening. Responsibility for the Master Gardener program in each county is within the scope of the County Extension Coordinator and may be assigned to a County Extension Agent, Extension Program Specialist or Program Assistant.

## **Introduction**

This manual is intended solely for Georgia Cooperative Extension Agents in managing MG activities. Any deviation from the guidelines should be discussed with the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator. Those counties who want to conduct training but are unable to meet established criteria will need to discuss such requests with the ANR Program Development Coordinator(PDC) and the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

This manual is designed for use during the planning, training, and management of all Georgia Master Gardener activities. Additional resources and further information can be found on the State Master Gardener website.

This edition and subsequent revisions will reflect administrative changes requested by the Associate Dean for Extension and the State MG Program Coordinator. Periodic updates will be posted on the MG web site:

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/departments/hort/extension/mastergardener/index.html>



# 2 Program Management

## 1. Responsibilities

### a. State MG Program Coordinator (SMGPC) Responsibilities

This UGA CAES Extension position is responsible for coordinating and implementing standards used by all Georgia MG training programs, as well as production of The Georgia Master Gardener Handbook, training modules and any MG training materials produced by UGA specialists. The SMGPC is responsible for assisting county staff as they interpret policies and procedures established in this Administrative Manual. The coordinator is the linkage between UGA county and state staff and Master Gardeners.

### b. County Extension Agents/ Staff Responsibilities:

County Extension staff members are responsible for day-to-day MG operations. Volunteer management is a critical component of the total Master Gardener program. When an agent or MG Coordinator fails to provide adequate time for volunteer management the return on training is reduced and volunteer retention is low. In summary, CEA/staff responsibilities are:

- Accurate record keeping of volunteer hours and achievements for annual reports to state office
- Appropriate utilization of MGs in educational community projects
- Evaluation/Management/Supervision of MG volunteers
- Recruitment and selection of MG Interns
- Clear definition of expectations/responsibilities of MG volunteers.
- Public and private recognition of MG impact and accomplishment

### c. MG Volunteer responsibilities:

- Accept realistic assignments suited to personal interests, talents and skills.
- Act in a professional manner as a representative of UGA CAES Extension
- Participate in appropriate orientation, training and evaluation sessions
- Exercise personal integrity
- Uphold the policies and follow the rules and procedures of UGA CAES Extension MG Program
- Follow through with completion of assignments, communicate about problems and successes
- Identify needs for training and participate as a team member of UGA CAES Extension
- File appropriate activity and summary reports

## 2. Recruitment

UGA Cooperative Extension programs must comply with all UGA non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies. Master Gardener volunteer recruitment efforts should aim for broad community involvement encouraging representation of majority and minority populations.

## 3. Screening and Selection

The determining factors in the selection of a volunteer should include the candidate's willingness to assist Cooperative Extension outreach programs, previous volunteer experience, desire to participate in community projects, and availability of time. Screening and selection of volunteer candidates should include personal interviews.

## 4. Certification

To become a certified MG in Georgia, interns must successfully complete the Master Gardener Training Program administered by the UGA Cooperative Extension and fulfill a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service within the first year. Payment of dues or membership to any Master Gardener organization does not confer active MG status.

## 5. Active Status

To maintain active status as a Master Gardener a minimum of 25 hours of volunteer service per year is required. The submission of the individual Annual Summary of MG Activities report and CEA confirmation will verify completion of yearly requirements to maintain active status. MG membership (not required) in any MG organization does not substitute the above requirement for active MG status.

## 6. Lifetime Master Gardener Recognition

Lifetime MG recognition is awarded to Certified Master Gardeners who have remained active for 10 years. Lifetime Badges and Certificates may be ordered by contacting the State Master Gardener Coordinator's Office. There is no charge for a Lifetime Certificate, Lifetime Badge, or replacement Lifetime Badges. **Georgia Master Gardeners who have received Lifetime recognition are still obligated to report 25 hours of service annually to remain in an active status.**

## 7. Master Gardener Title

The Georgia Master Gardener title is intended to identify well-trained volunteers who have completed the required training and internship. MGs are discouraged from using their titles and/or positions for commercial publicity or private business. Participating in a commercial activity, associating with commercial products, and giving implied Master Gardener, UGA or Cooperative Extension endorsements to any product or place of business is in violation of program policy.



## 8. Logo and Name

The Georgia Master Gardener logo is trademarked and the property of the University of Georgia CAES. In addition to the above logo, UGA CAES also uses the appellation “Georgia Master Gardener” and “Reaching Out” in connection with the Georgia Master Gardener Program. The use of the Georgia Master Gardener logo on letterhead, web sites or banners should include the “trademarked” symbol ®.

## 9. Badge

The MG Badge is only to be worn by an active Master Gardener. The MG Badge is the identification symbol for a well-trained volunteer. Badges may be ordered at no charge when handbooks are ordered. Replacements may be ordered for a nominal charge from the State Master Gardener Coordinator's office. Master Gardener badge replacement orders will only be accepted from Cooperative Extension Offices or UGA /CAES facilities. Master Gardeners should not use their name badge to give implied endorsements to any product or place of business.

## 10. Handbook

The Georgia Master Gardener Handbook is the official reference text produced by the University of Georgia and developed for MG Training. The cost of the MG Handbook is included in the

training fees and is purchased through the State Master Gardener Program Office. Sale to the public is available only through the State MG Program Coordinator's Office. Proceeds from the sale of The Georgia Master Gardener Handbook are used to operate the program.

## 11. Master Gardener Training

The primary reason that many volunteers enter the Georgia Master Gardener Program is to learn more about gardening. The program's excellent reputation attracts people from a variety of experience levels and their expectations are high. In keeping with the University of Georgia's high educational standards, Master Gardener training should be a well-organized professional effort. More information on training Master Gardeners is available in section 3 of this manual.

## 12. Advanced MG Training

### Purpose

Advanced Master Gardener Training is designed to provide active Master Gardeners with in-depth training on specific subjects to assist Cooperative Extension in its mission and goals. All training sessions are assigned to a specific subject area: Sustainable Gardens and Landscapes, Water Quality and Management, Youth Gardening, Diagnostics and Technology or Urban Forestry.

The State MG Program Coordinator's office continually strives to meet its goal of training volunteers to assist the UGA CAES Extension in community outreach. To meet this goal, periodic reassessment and restructuring of existing training programs may be necessary.

### Structure

The Advanced Training program is set up to meet the needs of area programs with county Cooperative Extension Master Gardener programs hosting training sessions to meet local interests and needs. All proposed training sessions must be pre-approved by the State MG Program Coordinator. Training sessions must meet established criteria and include a pre and post test. A list of approved training criteria is available from the State MG

Program office or the Georgia Master Gardener web site. All training should strive to give a more in-depth understanding of the subject than is provided in the initial Master Gardener training yet keep in mind the constraints of the 6-hour training session format and the participant's interests and abilities.

### Silver Star Recognition

The Silver Star level recognition provides MGs with an opportunity to seek further training in a variety of different subjects. Upon successful completion of 4 different Advanced Training sessions plus one (R-)Required training session, participants will receive a recognition certificate and Silver Star. This is a generalist level and recognizes those volunteers who have completed general training in a variety of subjects.

### Silver Star Requirements:

Master Gardeners must have initially completed the MG Training and 50 hour volunteer work requirement, and have proof of active status on file at the Extension Office where their hours are reported.

MGs must successfully complete 5 elective training sessions from Category List. Session duration is approximately 6 to 7 hours of class time.

After November 1, 2005 requirements include the completion of 1 of the following required training sessions: Communications, Creative Teaching Techniques, or Leadership (counts as one of the 5 sessions). This includes those with Master Gardeners with incomplete status, i.e. Master Gardeners who have not completed 5 Advanced Training Courses before

### Gold Star Recognition

The Gold Level recognition is intended for those Master Gardeners seeking more in-depth training in a specific subject area. All training sessions are assigned to a specific subject

area: Sustainable Gardens and Landscapes, Water Quality and Management, Youth Gardening, Diagnostics and Technology or Urban Forestry.

This level will focus on training in a specialty subject area. For this level only two training sessions taken previously will count as electives toward the required number of training sessions. MGs who want to attain Gold level must complete all other required sessions. Master Gardeners do not need to have earned the Silver Star to in order to begin the Gold Star program.

### **Gold Star Requirements:**

MGs must have initially completed the MG Training and 50 hour volunteer work requirement, have current active status and County Extension Office written approval.

Must select one of the following specific subject areas:

- **Sustainable Garden and Landscape-SGL**
- **Water Quality and Management-WQM**
- **Youth Gardening-YG**
- **Diagnostics & Technology-DT**
- **Urban Forestry and Ecology-UFE**

Six Total training sessions are required (3 in specialty subject area, 2 electives, and 1 required training session = Communications, Creative Teaching Techniques or Leadership).

Master Gardeners must complete a volunteer project related to a specialty subject area and a project package (part of the Gold Star Application) must be submitted to the CEA with copy to State Office. Project approval from County Extension Office is required before and after project completion. The Master Gardener must also agree to be a resource for the chosen specialty subject area. Application form is available on the Master Gardener web site.

## **13. Continuing Education**

MGs are encouraged to expand/update their horticultural knowledge through professional development opportunities such as advanced

training, workshops, classes, and seminars. Although the printed Georgia Master Gardener Logbook provides space for personal record keeping of continued education, attendance does not qualify as volunteer service.

## **14. Volunteer Service**

The general mission of the Master Gardener Program in Georgia is to assist Cooperative Extension in providing information through volunteer service and educational projects. The volunteer service requirements should reflect the mission and goals of Cooperative Extension. As a Georgia Master Gardener, individuals are part of the volunteer staff of Cooperative Extension.

The primary service obligation of each Master Gardener is to the Extension Office with which he or she signed the “Volunteer Service Agreement.” However, there may be occasions for working on projects with other counties. Volunteer service should be credited wherever it occurs as long as it falls under the guidelines of Georgia MG Volunteer Service.

The Georgia Master Gardener Program policy is that any CAES and Extension-sponsored events should count toward the 25 hours of service required for Master Gardeners to remain active each year. Volunteer service at other events may count at the local Agent/MG Coordinator’s discretion if the service is educational in nature (i.e. teaching, leading activities). Service at fund raising events should directly benefit CAES, Cooperative Extension or CE-approved Master Gardener Program activities in order to be counted as volunteer service toward the annual requirement.

## **15. Guidelines for MG Volunteer Service**

### **a. Service that Qualifies:**

#### **i. Educational Project Examples**

- **Children’s Programs:** for ages 0 to 18 at 4-H clubs, libraries, schools, gardens
- **Civic & Garden Club Presentations:** speaking engagements, lectures, demonstrations

- Community & Demonstration Gardens: plan/maintain historic projects, conduct educational tours
- Horticultural Shows: judge or conduct vegetable, flower, science fairs
- Exhibits, prepare/present horticultural/ environmental topics, slide show presentations
- Extension Office: answer phone questions perform general office duties, assist walk-in clients
- Habitat for Humanity: teach skills in gardening, landscaping, composting
- Home Garden Visits: educate homeowners per site visits or phone consultations
- Newsletters: write/research/edit for homeowner, Master Gardeners
- Newspaper & Magazine Articles, write/research/edit for the public
- Plant Clinics & Fairs: organize/participate/answer questions
- Research & Writing, assist/conduct projects for fact sheets, brochures, power point presentations
- Teaching Adult Classes: for ages 18+
- TV & Radio Programs, provide information on horticultural/environmental topics

## ii. Administrative Project Examples

- Time served on Extension Advisory Board, Extension Leadership System (ELS) team or MG advisory groups,
- Time served as an officer or committee member for a MG Association or group (phone contacts, attending board or committee meetings, writing letters)
- Time served in county or regional MG programs maintaining mailing lists, databases, web pages, newsletters, writing grants, preparing for/ attending board or committee meetings
- Special projects approved by CEA

## b. Service that does not qualify:

- Volunteer service performed on behalf of another organization.
- Attendance at local organization or GMGA meetings unless assisting or facilitating in some capacity
- Attendance at training, tours or continuing education classes as a participant and not as an instructor or facilitator.

## 16. Record Keeping

All Master Gardeners should maintain a written record of volunteer activities and provide the County Master Gardener Coordinator with an annual activity report at the end of each calendar year. Hours should be recorded in the state provided Georgia Master Gardener Logbook utilizing project code numbers to facilitate end of year reporting. Volunteer annual summary report is proof of active status. Logbooks are available for download and local printing from the Georgia Master Gardener web site.

CMGCs should keep the following on file for active volunteers: Copy of Volunteer Agreement, emergency contacts, yearly Individual Annual Summary of MG Activity Reports, and correspondence relating to awards.

MG volunteer records are to be kept in a secure location accessible to the staff responsible for directly supervising the volunteers. In accordance with the Georgia Open Records Laws, these are public records and proper requests for access must be responded to and access may be granted. All open records requests must be directed to the Office of the Associate Dean for Extension where they will be forwarded to Open Records Manager for UGA. Volunteers have the right to review the contents of his/her own file.

## 17. Annual Reports

**Before January 20th**, each participating county in the Georgia Master Gardener Program is required to submit the County Annual Summary of MG Activities report to the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator (SMGPC) using the form found in the Appendix of this manual or online. All volunteer hours should be included, even if the total yearly requirement has not been achieved.

Any Active MG residing in a nonparticipating county should turn in the Annual MG Summary Report to his/her CEA and should send a copy to the State MG Program Office. The individual Annual Summary report of Master Gardener activities, reported to the Extension Office is proof to both the MG and CEA of active MG status.

## 18. Commercial Recommendations

Questions concerning commercial production of crops and/or pest control for commercial producers should be referred to the CEA. Active MGs may make noncommercial cultural and pesticide recommendations provided they are consistent with published Georgia Cooperative Extension recommendations. Extension Faculty or staff must approve written materials prepared by MGs prior to release for publications.

## 19. Payments and Gratuities

Gratuitous payments for any activity on behalf of UGA Cooperative Extension are strictly prohibited. Contributions may be made directly to county or state MG organizations or to a County Extension Account.

## 20. Financial Management

The Georgia Master Gardener Program is administered by the University of Georgia through the county Cooperative Extension office. The University of Georgia is a public tax supported institution of higher learning. All monies received by UGA in support of local Georgia MG Programs are considered public funds and are to be handled according to UGA policies. The Associate Dean for Extension has delegated County Cooperative Extension financial management responsibility through the District Directors to the County Extension Coordinators.

## 21. Out of State Transfer Policy

MGs transferring to Georgia must show proof of Master Gardener status from a previous state (i.e. Master Gardener Certificate, completed Logbook or letter from a County Extension Agent indicating

fulfillment of the required hours of volunteer work). Transfer MGs should purchase the current Georgia MG Handbook and Badge. These should be ordered through the State Master Gardener Program Office.

In addition, as determined by the CEA, transferring MGs should audit 4-6 MG Program Training classes and may be required to take and pass the midterm and final exams (open book tests). Upon completion of audited courses and 25 hours of volunteer service, a transfer MG will become certified as a Georgia Master Gardener and should be presented with a Georgia MG Certificate. Every year thereafter, 25 hours of volunteer service is required to remain active.

## 22. State Tort and General Liability

The State Tort Claims policy protects the State, University of Georgia, and the University System of Georgia Board of Regents against liability for torts (wrongful acts) committed by their employees while acting within the course and scope of their official duties of employment. The limits of liability are statutorily set at \$1,000,000 per person and \$3,000,000 per occurrence.

General liability is provided for the University of Georgia through the General Liability Agreement. The General Liability policy provides coverage for those employees of the State, University of Georgia, and the University System of Georgia Board of Regents against personal liability for damages arising out of the performance of their job duties. The limits of liability are \$1,000,000 per person and \$3,000,000 per occurrence.

Volunteers (whether or not receiving compensation) may have liability coverage under the General Liability, State Tort Claims Act, and Auto Liability policy while participating in a structured volunteer program organized, controlled, and directed by the University for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the University of Georgia.

MG Volunteers should report immediately any accident or incident that occurs during MGP activities to Extension staff who will then advise the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

### 23. Dispute Resolutions

a. Any conflict or issue brought by or related to a MG Volunteer should be addressed first by the County Extension Agent with responsibility for the Master Gardener Program in that county. The CEA should take the necessary steps to resolve the conflict. The CEA shall inform the SMGPC about the matter and ultimate resolution.

b. If resolution at the local (CEA) level is not possible, the County Extension Agent must contact the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator for inclusion in the resolution process. The SMGPC is charged with issuing a recommendation which is to be followed by the CEA and MG Volunteer. The State Master Gardener Program Coordinator shall inform the District Extension Director (DED) about the issue and recommended resolution.

If the State Master Gardener Program Coordinator's recommendation is not accepted by:

i. MG Volunteer- the SMGPC will provide the MG Volunteer with all possible options included within the Master Gardener Program policies and procedures as well as addressing his/her grievance with the District Director and/or the Associate Dean of Extension who shall decide on the matter and inform the SMGPC of the ultimate resolution.

ii. CEA- the SMGPC will contact the District Director who shall decide on the matter and inform the Associate Dean of Extension and State Master Gardener Program Coordinator of the ultimate resolution.

c. If a decision cannot be made by the District Director or if any party does not agree with the proposed solution), the matter will be submitted to the Associate Dean of Extension who shall decide

on the matter and inform the involved parties.

Every effort should be made to achieve prompt and effective problem resolution at the lowest level possible. If the complaint involves another person, the MG is encouraged to first deal directly with the person involved.

### 24. Dismissal, Termination or Non-renewal

Grounds for dismissal of a Master Gardener Volunteer may include but are not limited to:

- being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing a volunteer assignment
- theft of property; misuse of funds, equipment, or materials
- illegal, violent, or unsafe acts
- inappropriate use of the MG Title or Badge
- harrasment, abuse, or mistreatment of clients or coworkers

According to the Volunteer Agreement Form that all MG volunteers must sign, it states that both UGA and the volunteer have the right to end the volunteer relationship at any time for any reason, and without advance notice. Except in cases of egregious actions by the volunteer, the MG Coordinator should always notify the SMGPC and their District Extension Director before terminating a volunteer.

### 25. MG Associations

#### a. Purpose

County program participants may elect to form a Master Gardener association. The State Master Gardener Program Coordinator recognizes the benefits Master Gardener associations offer for their members and Cooperative Extension, but the formation of an association without a clear understanding of its roles, responsibilities, and relationship to the Georgia Master Gardener program can lead to confusion and reduce the quality and

effectiveness of the consumer horticultural and Cooperative Extension programs.

A county Master Gardener association is a professional association whose membership comes from the volunteer staff of UGA CAES Cooperative Extension. Whether or not an individual chooses to join an association does not impact their status as a member of the volunteer staff of Cooperative Extension. All Master Gardeners work under the supervision of the county Master Gardener Coordinator or Extension Agent when performing volunteer duties and are expected to follow the guidelines and policies of the Georgia Master Gardener program. Care must be taken to preserve the integrity of the program and the relationship between Cooperative Extension and the Master Gardener organization. Once the MG Intern has successfully completed the training and fulfilled the initial 50 hours of volunteer work, he or she is officially a Georgia Master Gardener.

Master Gardener groups and local Cooperative Extension Programs are strongly encouraged to create a document that can be used to define roles and responsibilities in a Master Gardener Association - Cooperative Extension Program relationship.

#### **b. Association roles**

A county Master Gardener association should direct its focus on enhancing the ability of its members to become more effective volunteers rather than on educational transfer directly to the gardening public or management of the Master Gardener program. The selection, training, utilization, and evaluation of MGs remain the responsibility of the local Extension agent and are not appropriate roles for the Master Gardener association to undertake.

Possible roles for a county Master Gardener association include:

- \* Raising issues of concern for program

improvement

- \* Providing leadership opportunities for its members
- \* Facilitating communication between association members (newsletter, etc.)
- \* Fund raising to support the association, consumer horticulture, and Georgia MG programs
- \* Co-sponsoring events with Extension and the Georgia Master Gardener program
- \* Organizing field trips
- \* Providing recognition for association members

These roles and activities are not the exclusive responsibility/rights of a Master Gardener association. Extension agents should continue to conduct events, meetings, field trips, send newsletters, and provide volunteer recognition to its MG staff. Sponsorship (association, Extension, or both) of events should be clearly recognizable to program participants. Extension's educational programs are made available to members and nonmembers of a Master Gardener association.

#### **c. Organization structure**

Organization structure can be tailored to suit local needs. An association can elect officers and adopt a set of bylaws. The Extension agent can assist with the initial organization of an association and can serve as an educational advisor to the group after they are organized. The agent should not be an association officer or perform the day to day activities of the association.

Recruiting membership and collecting dues for an association is the responsibility of the association. The members of an association are responsible for all expenses incurred in order to conduct association activities.

#### **d. Funds**

Funds received or raised by the MG program and the Master Gardener association should be kept separate. Training material fees collected from participants in the MG program are public sector funds and should be dispersed through a Cooperative Extension account. Dues collected or



funds raised by an association are private sector funds and should be managed by the association officers. An agent should not serve as the treasurer of a Master Gardener association or be authorized to withdraw funds from an association bank account. The Extension agent can present requests for financial assistance for a project to the association. If the funding is approved by the association, funds would be transferred from the association account to the Extension account.

An association can collect dues from individuals who choose to join the association. Payment of association dues cannot be a requirement for participating in the Georgia Master Gardener program.

It is imperative that groups set and use a budget to steer any fundraising activities. Projects and program needs should drive the budget. For fundraising projects that are jointly sponsored by the local Extension office and the local MG Association, there should be a written agreement beforehand stating how funds will be collected and distributed.

#### **e. Possible organizational structure for Master Gardener associations**

##### **i. County**

County Master Gardener organizations provide opportunities for MGs to share experiences, select projects, and maximize volunteer's interaction with the Extension Office and fellow MGs. The primary purpose of any local organizations for Master Gardeners is to work in collaboration with County Extension to achieve common goals. Local organizational structures may range from an informal group that meets occasionally for networking and training to a group with elected officers that meets on a regular basis and has a budget for projects.

**ii. Area and Regional** -Area and regional organizations may provide networking and other training opportunities for Master Gardeners. These are most advantageous for Master Gardeners in

counties that do not have enough MGs to form a local group or association to meet continuing education or other needs. It is important for Extension Agents to maintain an active relationship with an area or regional group.

**iii. State wide Georgia Master Gardener Association (GMGA)**- GMGA was formed in 1989 as an organization to provide continuing education, communication, and social interaction for its member volunteers. GMGA is an independent 501(c)3 organization serving Master Gardeners. All certified Georgia Master Gardeners and Interns are eligible for membership in the association. Honorary membership is given to CEAs and others who work with MGs in Georgia. Friend of the Master Gardeners is a category of membership with GMGA intended for spouses and friends who have an interest in the furtherance and continuation of the Master Gardener Program. Honorary and Friend of Master Gardener are nonvoting memberships without office holding privileges.

**f. Bylaws** A Master Gardener organization may wish to consider adopting a set of basic bylaws. Bylaws are rules governing the internal affairs of an organization and set up a fundamental framework for how the group operates. Sample bylaws are readily available from a variety of sources including reference books and internet sources.

Basic bylaws generally include but are not limited to:

- Name
- Purpose
- Membership
- Meetings
- Officers
- Committees
- Agenda
- Amendments

## **26. Location and Contact Information**

The State Master Gardener Program Coordinator's office is located at the UGA Griffin Campus.

Address correspondence to:

**Georgia Master Gardener Program**  
**1109 Experiment Street**  
**Cowart Building UGA Griffin Campus**  
**1109 Experiment Street**  
**Griffin, GA 302231731**  
**Phone: 7702287243**  
**Fax: 7704124764**  
**[www.gamastergardener.org](http://www.gamastergardener.org)**

# 3 Starting a Program and Training Master Gardeners

## 1. Assessing the Need for a Master Gardener Program

The following are suggested steps for a County Extension Agent to follow in assessing the need for a Master Gardener Program.

- a. Determine the county's need for help in meeting community demands
- b. Assess degree of interest and availability of the potential MG candidates.
- c. Explore potential collaborative efforts with adjacent counties.
- d. Consult with District Program Development Coordinator and SMGPC for support and approval.
- e. List existing and potential community projects requiring MG assistance.
- f. Determine demands on CEA time and how Master Gardener Program would fit with POW goals.
- g. Consult with staff, advisory boards, local garden clubs and other community organizations.

## 2. Program Planning

The District Extension Director (DED) or the Program Development Coordinators (PDC) will determine the number of Master Gardener training programs to be conducted each year for each of their districts.

## 3. Support

The following criteria should be met to receive full support of UGA Specialists:

- a. The Master Gardener Training Coordinator should have a minimum of 2 years Cooperative Extension work experience.
  - b. There should be a minimum of 25 participants per Master Gardener Training Program.
- Counties are encouraged to combine efforts with

neighboring counties to meet minimum numbers and distribute the workload.

c. A plan of educational gardening projects should be proposed for the future utilization of Master Gardener Volunteers.

## 4. Master Gardener Training Coordinator (MGTC)

The MGTC is a County Extension Agent who has at least 2 years of experience with Cooperative Extension. Exceptions may be granted for other qualified personnel with State Master Gardener Program Coordinator approval. The Master Gardener Training Coordinator should obtain approval from the District Extension Director or Program Development Coordinator and SMGPC to conduct the training program. The MG Training Coordinator will develop a plan of how to best utilize MGs for appropriate projects in participating counties. The MGTC will be responsible for organizing the curriculum, inputting of schedules into the online training database, arranging for specialists or other qualified instructors, arranging for class facilities, registration, ordering program materials, and any other tasks involved in conducting a quality training program.

## 5. Recruitment, Selection and Screening

The CEA should define the criteria to be used in screening and selecting candidates for the program according to the guidelines set forth within the Georgia MG Program Administrative Manual. The screening process may include review of application, as well as CEA approved interviews by the staff and/or certified MGs. The CEA is responsible for the final selection of candidates. While there are no standard

criteria for the selection of volunteer candidates, the applicant must be willing to comply with all policies and procedures found in the MG Administrative Manual. The selection and recruitment process of new applicant volunteers must assure that a diversified group of community representatives know about the MG programs and its opportunities.

Any applicant from a nonparticipating county should be notified that volunteer service is expected to be performed with the training county.

All adults (age 18 or older) interested in participating in MG programs must complete an application available at their local county extension offices. Participants under age 18 must have parental permission and agent's approval to participate.

## **6. MG Volunteer Agreement (formerly MOA)**

The Master Gardener candidate and the CEA both sign the "MG Volunteer Agreement" at the time of the volunteer's acceptance to the MG Program. This document defines MG responsibilities and expectations should be kept on file at the County Extension Office. In this written agreement the MG pledges to support the county Extension educational programs and abide by program rules. This document is an essential element in Master Gardener volunteer management.

## **7. Training Schedule**

The initial training provides a basic, general and integrated horticultural course. A final version of the training schedule should be submitted to the SMGPC one month before the first class of the MG Training Program using the online training scheduler. MGTCs should use the curriculum list in this chapter as a guide in setting the training schedule.

Master Gardener Training Coordinators must register in the system before creating a schedule

using the online training scheduler. Log into the Online Training Database on the web at:

<http://www.ciids.org/mgtraining/>

This program feature allows CAES and Extension Administration to evaluate specialist usage and program participation by district and provides training history for use in future program planning.

## **8. Badge**

The MGTC should submit an electronic list containing only the names of MG Interns to the State MG Program Office. Correct spelling is essential. Temporary name tags should be used during training and internship volunteering. Official MG Badges should be awarded by the CEA to MG Interns only after successful completion of both training and the required 50 hours of volunteer service. Cost of initial badge is included with the handbook fee. Replacement badges are ordered through the SMGP office at a nominal cost.

## **9. Certificate**

The CEA is responsible for ordering the MG Certificates from the State MG Program Office. The CEA is also responsible for the individual lettering of all certificates. The MG Certificates are awarded by the CEA to MG Interns only after successful completion of both training and the required 50 hours of volunteer service.

## **10. Ready To Use Forms**

There are ready to use forms available in the Appendix of this Georgia Master Gardener Program Administrative Manual and under the Agents section at the MG Web page.

## **11. MG Training Program Requirements**

### **a. Class Time**

The MG Training Program includes a minimum of 40 hours of class time with 34 hours of required core curriculum and 6 hours of electives. The training program uses the Georgia Master Gardener Handbook as a reference textbook. The MG Interns are encouraged to attend all sessions.

It is highly desirable for program quality and consistency that 20% of core curriculum subjects be taught by UGA Extension Specialists.

### **b. Participants**

The MG Training Program should have at least 25 participants in order to receive support from UGA Specialists. The MGTC may accept applicants from nonparticipating counties if arrangements have been made with the applicant's home county CEA for completion of volunteer hours.

### **c. Exams**

Each speaker for MG Training Program classes should provide to the MGTC 5 to 10 test questions representing the material covered. It is the responsibility of the MGTC to request these questions from each speaker. The Midterm Examination will consist of 50 questions and will be prepared by the MGTC. The Final Examination will consist of 100 questions representing all subjects taught and will be prepared by the MGTC. Anyone absent from more than 20% of class time without reasonable excuse and approval from the CEA or MGTC is not eligible to take the Final Examination. Both exams will require 70% mastery of the material presented. Retake of exams is at the discretion of the CEA.

### **d. Access**

University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service is committed to providing access for people with disabilities and will provide reasonable accommodations if notified in advance.

## **12. Fees**

The purpose of the MG Training Program fees is to cover expenses for all class materials/supplies, classroom facilities, etc. Currently, program participant payments are between \$100.00 and \$150.00. Any fees above \$200.00 will require State MG Program Office approval. The amount remaining after payment for standard MG materials should cover the other expenses incurred (i.e. room rent, speaker fees, certificate frames, photocopies).

a. MG Handbook orders should be made at least 3 weeks (21 days) prior to the first class and sent to the State MG Program Office. The MGTC should make payment in the form of one check to cover training program expenses for all participants. The check should be made payable to UGA CAES MASTER GARDENER in a total amount that reflects \$60.00 per participant. No refunds are available. If extra badges are needed, please remit these funds as a separate check.

b. GMGA membership dues collection is optional and should be made directly to GMGA along with name and address list. Contact the SMGPC office for contact information for the GMGA membership chair. Only dues paid members receive the Scoop and are listed in the GMGA membership directory.

## **13. Background Investigation**

Some MG programs may require a mandatory background investigation to ensure the safety of clients and MG volunteers. Programs involving volunteer contact with minor children such as 4-H, Junior Master Gardener<sub>sm</sub> and the School Master Gardener Program have such requirements to ensure the safety of these youths as well as other MG volunteers. For more information see Georgia 4-H Policy Guidelines for Leaders Working with Youth <http://www.georgia4h.org/public/more/guidebook/policyforadultsworkingwithyouth.html>.

## **14. Established Master Gardener Programs**

a. During program planning, agents should inform the District Extension Director and Program Development Coordinator of plans to conduct MG Training the following year. Indicate training location, number of participants, counties participating, and person coordinating the training (MGTC).

b. Submit a plan of intended project use of MGs in that county or region with a copy of all information to the SMGPC.

## 15. MG Core Curriculum

### Core

#### Hours Required Classes

1	Introduction to Cooperative Extension and the Master Gardener Program
1	Basic Botany
2	Plant Physiology
2	Soil and Plant Nutrition
1	Basic Entomology
1	Basic Pathology
2	Weed Identification and Control
2	IPM
2	Vegetable and Herb Gardening
1	Insects of Vegetables
1	Diseases of Vegetables
2	Annuals & Perennials: Herbaceous Ornamentals
2	Selecting Woody Ornamentals
2	Trees
2	Site Analysis, Planting and Maintenance of Ornamentals
1	Insects of Ornamentals
1	Diseases of Ornamentals
1	Troubleshooting Ornamental Plant Problems
1	Developing a Water-Wise Landscape
2	Turf Selection and Maintenance
1	Insects of Turf
1	Diseases of Turf
1	Composting, Grasscycling, and Mulching
1	Leadership, Communications, and Basic Office Procedures

**Total: 34**

#### Elective Classes (*minimum 6 hours – select based on local needs*)

2	Fruit Gardening
2	Indoor Plants
2	Landscape Design Principles
2	Plant Propagation
2	Structural and Household Pests
2	Living and Gardening with Wildlife
2	Plants and People
2	Water Gardening
2	Gardening with Children, Junior Master Gardeners and 4-H
2	Wildflower and Butterfly Gardening

\* Tours may supplement but not replace the required 40 hours of classroom instruction.

## **16. MG Training Schedule Time line**

### **90 Days Prior to 1st Class**

DED/PDC approval  
 Secure classroom location  
 Plan, prepare, and organize training schedule / Login and enter online  
 Contact speakers  
 Advertise training  
 Send out applications

### **60 Days Prior to 1st Class**

Review and finalize schedule/Update online training schedule  
 Send letter of intent to State MG Program Office  
 Send confirmation letter to speakers

### **30 Days Prior to 1st Class**

Send training schedule to State MG Program Office  
 Review applications/Select candidates  
 Send acceptance or rejection notification  
 Send reminder letter/class schedule to speakers  
 Collect all registration fees

### **21 Days Prior to 1st Class**

Order handbooks  
 Invite GMGA representative to attend 1st class

### **14 Days Prior to 1st Class**

Contact speakers for final exam questions and A/V needs  
 Order slide sets, power point presentations, and videos from Athens A/V Library

### **1st Class**

Make MG Intern badge list name corrections  
 Send badge list to State MG Program Office within one week  
 Introduce MG Organizations representative

### **Midway**

Midterm Exam  
 Evaluations of speakers/classes  
 Return A/V materials from first section of classes  
 Invite GMGA representative to attend last class

### **Last Class**

Final Exam  
 Compile evaluations of speakers/classes  
 Advise interns of county date and time schedules for orientation  
 Return A/V materials  
 Assign projects and committees  
 Give out MG Logbooks  
 Hold graduation reception  
 Introduce GMGA representative  
 end press release to local newspapers

### **Completion of 50 Hours**

Certification and Badge Presentation

# 4 Resources and Forms

## **Program Management Sample Letters and Forms**

1. Letter of Intent
2. Combined Training Outline
3. Master Gardener Volunteer Application
4. Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement
5. Master Gardener Volunteer General Job Description
6. Instructor Letter
7. Acceptance Letter
8. Regret Letter
9. Exam Question Set Up
10. Annual Summary Letter
11. Annual Summary Form
12. Proclamation Request Letter
13. Sample County Proclamation

## **Resources Online**

<http://www.gamastergardener.org> section entitled “For Agents”

Logbooks, Sample Bylaws, Individual Annual Summary Forms, Gold Star Application and additional resources (to be added periodically)



(SAMPLE)

**Letter of Intent**

State Master Gardener Program Coordinator  
UGA-CAES-Griffin Campus  
Department of Horticulture  
1109 Experiment Street  
Griffin, Georgia 30223-1797

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

\_\_\_\_\_ County would like to conduct a Master Gardener Training Program beginning \_\_\_\_\_ . We expect to have \_\_\_\_\_ participants from the following counties: \_\_\_\_\_ . We will/will not require specialist support. We plan to use the new Master Gardener volunteers to reach citizens of our counties in the following ways:

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, CEA  
County Extension Agent

cc: District Extension Director  
Program Development Coordinator

## **Training Program Planning Outline**

### **Combined Master Gardener Program**

- 1) Program Information
  - Review Last Year's Programs & General Information
  - Select Training Coordinator
  - Select Training Dates
  - Select Training Location
  - Review Guidelines
  - Set Budget
  - List Participant Numbers
  - Current MG Group Role/Participation
  - Assign tasks
  - Set Important Deadlines: Applications, selections, paperwork, money, etc.
- 2) Recruiting Candidates
  - Advertising - Local media, programs
- 3) Selecting Candidates
  - Committee Evaluation/Interviews
  - Desired Skills
  - Community Representation
  - Evaluation Scale
  - Notification
- 4) Setting Schedule
  - Select Elective Classes
  - Contact Instructors
- 5) Other
  - AV Requirements
  - Refreshments
  - Materials
  - Exams

## Master Gardener Volunteer Application

Name (PLEASE PRINT)

Address

City

Zip Code

Home Phone

Business Phone

E-mail

As a \_\_\_\_\_ County resident, I wish to become a Master Gardener Volunteer and would like to be accepted into the Master Gardener Training Program beginning \_\_\_\_\_, 200 \_\_\_\_ . I understand that if accepted, I will agree to donate fifty (50) hours of volunteer time (25 to be served in the County Extension Office) to \_\_\_\_\_ County Extension during the 200 \_\_\_\_ calendar year. I will not use my Master Gardener status to promote a commercial venture.

Signature

**PLEASE RATE THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ACCORDING TO YOUR PREFERENCE ON A SCALE OF 1-5 (1=Least Interested, 5=Most Interested)**

### TEACHING

Small Groups (1-15 persons)

Large Groups (16 + persons)

Children

Senior Citizens

Persons with Disabilities

General Educational Workshops

Garden Clubs & Civic Groups

### OFFICE ASSISTANCE

Phone Calls

Walk-in Clients

Designing/Writing Brochures

Writing Articles for Newsletter

Do you have any expertise in any of the following:    Writing,    Photography,    Teaching,    Public Speaking,    Computers,    Other: Specify

**Cooperative Extension continually strives to increase the quality of its community outreach programs. Master Gardeners have participated in a variety of school, civic, and homeowner programs for \_\_\_\_\_ years.**

**Outline a project that you might like to do in your community. It could be a county-wide project or focused on a local neighborhood. You will not be required to do the project you outline; however, your project may be adopted to be used by the Master Gardener volunteer program.**

- (1) Describe the project and include what the goals would be.**
  
- (2) Describe location/site, if applicable (examples: school, park, etc.)**
  
- (3) Estimate how many other Master Gardener volunteers you would need for this project. List what their responsibilities would be.**
  
- (4) Estimate number of hours needed:            Weekly,            Monthly,            Yearly**

**What would be the best times for you to do your volunteer hours?**

<b>Morning</b>	<b>Afternoon</b>	<b>Evening</b>				
M	T	W	T	F	S	S

**How did you learn about the Master Gardener program? (Friend, newspaper, radio, etc.)**

## The University of Georgia Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for agreeing to volunteer your services to the University of Georgia (UGA) through the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program. Please affirm your acceptance of the terms of this agreement, stated below, with your signature.

1. I agree to serve as a volunteer with UGA and the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program.
2. I agree that my participation in the activities outlined in the attached Description of Volunteer Duties (which is part of this agreement) is not in exchange for any consideration (e.g., pay, benefits, the promise of future employment, academic credit). I acknowledge that, in exchange for my service as a volunteer, I have neither been promised any consideration nor do I expect to receive any consideration.
3. I agree that, as a volunteer, I will not be acting as a UGA employee. I understand and agree that UGA and I both have the right to end my volunteer relationship with UGA at any time, for any reason, and without advance notice.
4. I understand that as a volunteer, I will not be entitled to any employee benefits. I understand that UGA will not provide me with accident or medical insurance, and is therefore not responsible for any accident or medical expenses that I incur in the course of volunteering. I also understand that I am not covered by workers' compensation laws in connection with my volunteer affiliation.
5. I understand that my participation as a volunteer may involve certain risks which have been explained to me, including but not limited to \_\_\_\_\_ . I voluntarily accept these risks.
6. I agree to abide by all applicable rules and regulations of UGA and any of the department or units where I engage in volunteer activities. I also agree not to disclose any confidential information concerning patients, research subjects, unpublished research data, and other confidential information of which I may learn in the course of my volunteer service. I acknowledge and agree that any intellectual property I may create in the course of my activities at UGA shall be the property of UGA.
7. I understand that upon completion of the classroom training I will be expected to donate 50 hours of public volunteer service to UGA CAES Cooperative Extension during the 12 months following the training program. I will provide a record of this service at the end of the year. I also understand that in order to maintain active status as a Master Gardener Volunteer, I must volunteer 25 hours annually.
8. I will not use my Master Gardener status to promote any commercial activity or private business. I understand that as a Georgia Master Gardener Volunteer I am a representative of The University of Georgia and as such, discrimination of any kind is not acceptable and could result in immediate loss of certification privileges. I agree that any non-commercial pesticide or cultural recommendations given will be in accordance with published University of Georgia Cooperative Extension recommendations.

Volunteer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\*Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(If the volunteer is a minor)

Witness's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness's Printed Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Master Gardener Volunteer General Job Description

The Georgia Master Gardener Program is primarily a county-based volunteer educational program designed to develop a program delivery system and necessary teaching resources to assist Cooperative Extension with the main goal of addressing community non-commercial, gardening issues and needs.

Volunteer's responsibilities:

- \* Participate actively in training sessions and keep up-to-date on the latest horticulture information.
- \* Answer consumer questions on horticulture related information for both phone consultations and personal contacts.
- \* Provide reliable, unbiased information in accordance with published Cooperative Extension resources.
- \* Promote awareness of Cooperative Extension.
- \* Maintain records of volunteer service.
- \* Teach basic horticultural classes to appropriate community groups

Assists with any or all of the following options:

- \* Soil Testing Clinics
- \* Plant Diagnostic Clinics
- \* Other \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer's Qualifications:

- \* Basic knowledge of gardening
- \* Enthusiasm
- \* Interest in helping people
- \* Ability to communicate
- \* Knowledge of community resources

Training and/or Resources to be Provided:

- \* Master Gardener training sessions
- \* Master Gardener reference manuals available for use in office
- \* Horticulture library in office
- \* Consultations with extension staff
- \* Periodic organizational/ educational meetings

Time Estimate:

- \* Master Gardener training 40 hours. First year mandatory - following years optional with individual sessions up to the discretion of the participants.
- \* Volunteer Service- 50 hours (about 4-5 hours per month) minimum during the first year after training. The minimum service requirement is 25 hours each subsequent year
- \* Periodic organizational/ educational meetings about 1-2 hours per month.

Benefits:

- \* Participate in training programs in all aspects of basic horticulture.
- \* Learn new skills and sharpen old ones.
- \* Meet and work with other individuals interested in horticulture.
- \* Receive basic program materials at minimal cost.

(SAMPLE)

**Instructor Letter**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the \_\_\_\_\_ County Master Gardener Training Program.

We have you scheduled for the following: Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Please review this information and make sure it is correct. If there are any discrepancies, please notify us immediately. Phone: ( ) - Fax ( ) - E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

1. All sessions are scheduled to meet in \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ LocationPhone ( ) - \_\_\_\_\_
2. All sessions begin at \_\_\_\_\_ and end at \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Please arrive no later than \_\_\_\_\_ to facilitate equipment setup, arrange material handouts, and guarantee that the program starts on time.
4. Please review your slide presentation script or notes prior to your lecture, and make sure it complements the contents of the appropriate chapter(s) in the Georgia Master Gardener Handbook.
5. Let me know two weeks in advance what equipment you will need for your presentations. We have an LCD projector, overhead, and slide projector available.
6. Allow approximately ten minutes at the end of each session to highlight key areas and questions likely to appear on the exam.
7. If you are planning to distribute handouts, we have \_\_\_\_\_ participants registered for this session. Please bring a few extras. Also any hands-on teaching aids that you might bring are appreciated.
8. Please send 5-10 multiple choice questions taken from your lecture to me by \_\_\_\_\_.

Again, thank you for your participation in our training program. Our Master Gardener volunteers provide valuable services to Cooperative Extension and Georgia communities through education and training programs.

Sincerely,

Training Coordinator

(SAMPLE)

## Acceptance Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

Congratulations! You have been accepted into the 20\_\_ Master Gardener Training Program. I look forward to meeting you at \_\_\_\_\_ am. on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ for an informal orientation.

Classes will start at \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_. Plan to arrive a few minutes early that day to sign in at the registration table and pick up your name badge and handbook. Also, be sure to bring a notebook and pencil for note taking. If you wish to tape record the lectures, you may bring your cassette recorder.

At this time I would like to request that you do two tasks right away so I can finalize your application process.

1. Please sign and return the enclosed Volunteer Agreement
2. Print on a separate slip of paper the exact spelling of your name as you wish it to appear on your Master Gardener Badge.

You may mail or hand deliver these items to the address above, but I must receive them no later than \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Extension Agent  
20\_\_ Training Coordinator

Encl



(SAMPLE)

## Regret Letter

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

Thank you for applying for the \_\_\_\_\_ County Master Gardener Program. Unfortunately, we are not able to accept you into the Master Gardener Training Program this year.

As the program becomes more popular, we often have more applicants than we can accommodate. Our applicant selections are based on a number of factors, including availability to attend classes and perform volunteer service, communication skills, and basic garden knowledge. We hope you will consider applying again when the next class is offered. If you need information on gardening or other subjects, please call my office for assistance or other resources.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Extension Agent

20\_\_ Training Coordinator

(SAMPLE)

## Exam Question Set Up

- MASTER GARDENER FINAL EXAM -

Name:

Date:                      County:

CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER:

1. Which of the following are “BEST” suited for growth under power lines?
  - A. Pin oak, willow oak, water oak
  - B. Maple, sycamore, and sweet gum
  - C. Crape myrtle, redbud and dogwood
  - D. None of the above
2. The most common problem county agents see with landscape plants that are brought in for diagnosis is:
  - A. Insect problems
  - B. Lack of fertilizer
  - C. Not enough water
  - D. Improper planting technique and poorly drained soil
3. The best time to severely prune or renewal prune a plant is:
  - A. In the fall, just after dormancy
  - B. Just prior to spring growth
  - C. Plants should only be thinned and never severely pruned
  - D. In early summer after temperatures have warmed
4. The best technique for removing heavy branches from trees involves:
  - A. Making an upward cut next to the branch collar
  - B. A three-cut sequence to remove the weight of the branch prior to cutting at the branch collar
  - C. Supporting the branch with a rope or ladder prior to cutting
  - D. All of the above
5. This signal word indicates a pesticide that is highly toxic.
  - A. Warning
  - B. Caution
  - C. Danger
  - D. Toxicity

(SAMPLE)

**Annual Report Letter**

\_\_\_\_\_ County Extension  
\_\_\_\_\_ Street  
\_\_\_\_\_, Georgia 30  
( ) \_\_\_\_ -

December 1, 20\_\_\_\_

Dear Master Gardener,

Happy holidays! I would like to thank you for your service to the \_\_\_\_\_. Another year is ending and it is time again for you to summarize your volunteer activities for the past year. If this is your first year as a Georgia Master Gardener, I hope it has been an enjoyable one. You are not required to have completed your 50 hours until one calendar year after your training ends, however, I would like to include your hours in our annual report.

Your contribution to the county and statewide Annual Report of Master Gardener Activities is important. It helps to confirm that Master Gardeners are a valued part of our Cooperative Extension outreach programs. I have enclosed an annual summary form for your convenience. Please return it to my office by December 31<sup>st</sup>.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Extension Agent

Encl

## County Annual Summary Of Master Gardener Activities

### Georgia Master Gardener Program

\_\_\_\_\_ County Master Gardener Report

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of New Master Gardeners (completed training this year)

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of Active Master Gardeners returning

1. Total # of volunteer hours this year \_\_\_\_\_, x (\$17.19 per hour) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
2. Total # of in-person contacts \_\_\_\_\_
3. Total # of telephone contacts \_\_\_\_\_
4. Total # of miles traveled \_\_\_\_\_ x (\$0.445 per mile) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_
5. Please indicate how many of each activity: (How many times your MGs conducted a children's program, worked in a demonstration garden, etc.)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Children's Programs (project code 1)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Civic or Garden Club Presentations (project code 2)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Community or Demonstration Gardens (project code 3)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Conducted or Judged Flower Shows (project code 4)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Exhibits (project code 5)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Extension Office (project code 6)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Habitat for Humanity (project code 7)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Home Garden Visits (project code 8)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletters (project code 9)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Newspaper or Magazine Articles (project code 10)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Plant Clinics or Fairs (project code 11)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Research and Writing (project code 12)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Teaching Adult Classes (project code 13)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ TV & Radio Programs (project code 14)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Advisory Committees (project code 15)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ GMGA Committees (project code 16)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Local MG Program Administration (project code 17)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Other (describe in Special Project Reports) (project code 18)
6. Special Project Reports. Attach a separate sheet

Please use another sheet to report a brief summary of the Master Gardener Program in your county including any outstanding or unique projects in which Master Gardeners were involved.

Mail to:

Georgia State Master Gardener Program Office  
Cowart Building UGA-CAES-Griffin Campus  
1109 Experiment Street  
Griffin, GA 30223-1731  
Phone (770) 229-3368  
Fax (770) 412-4764  
E-mail: [Masterg@uga.edu](mailto:Masterg@uga.edu)

\*The hourly value of volunteer time is updated yearly by Independent Sector <http://www.independentsector.org> and is based on the average hourly wage for nonagricultural workers, as published in The Economic Report of the President (2006 Edition) increased by 12% to estimate fringe benefits.

(SAMPLE)

**Proclamation Request Letter**

\_\_\_\_\_ County Extension  
\_\_\_\_\_ Street  
\_\_\_\_\_, Georgia 30  
( ) -

January 10, 20\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Commissioner  
P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, Georgia 3\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_ County Extension would appreciate your support of our Master Gardener volunteers by proclaiming the third Saturday in March as “Master Gardener Day” for \_\_\_\_\_ County.

Since \_\_\_\_, over \_\_\_\_\_ County residents have gone through the training program offered by Cooperative Extension. These volunteers provide a valuable service to our office by helping us to educate county residents on safe and effective gardening practices, as well as natural resources protection and conservation. With their support, we are able to assist the citizens of our county through plant clinics, classes, school programs, phone hotlines, demonstration gardens, and other outreach programs. The \_\_\_\_ hours given in 20\_\_ represent a savings of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the county if the work were to be performed by paid staff. Because of serious cutbacks to Extension, our volunteers make continued educational outreach possible here in our county and across the state.

If granted, the proclamation can be mailed to the above address. If you need any further information, please call. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Extension Agent

(SAMPLE)

## County Master Gardener Day Proclamation

### “Master Gardener Appreciation Day”

WHEREAS, The Master Gardener Program is a national volunteer horticultural educational training program sponsored by Cooperative Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the counties of the cooperating states; and

WHEREAS, The Master Gardener Program provides avid gardeners with intensive education in research-based horticultural principles and pest control practices; and

WHEREAS, New Master Gardeners must initially provide at least 50 hours of volunteer service through their County Extension Offices, working on community and school garden projects, conducting garden clinics, and answering questions; and

WHEREAS, \_\_\_\_\_ County Master Gardeners in 20\_\_ volunteered \_\_\_\_ hours representing \$ \_ in labor, traveled \_\_\_\_\_ miles, answered \_\_\_\_\_ telephone calls, provided technical information/service to \_\_\_\_\_ citizens; and


WHEREAS, On Saturday, March \_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, Master Gardeners throughout Georgia and \_\_\_\_\_ County will celebrate Master Gardener Day by providing horticultural education, plant and soil testing clinics, and lectures in shopping malls and gardening centers; and

WHEREAS, In the spirit of volunteerism, Master Gardeners have provided and continue to provide valuable services to Georgia communities through education and training programs.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of \_\_\_\_\_ County that Saturday, March \_\_, 20\_\_\_\_, is hereby proclaimed as

“Master Gardener Appreciation Day”





The University of Georgia and Ft. Valley State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and counties of the state cooperating. The Cooperative Extension Service, the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences offers educational programs, assistance and materials to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, age, gender or disability.  
An Equal Opportunity Employer/Affirmative Action Organization Committed to a Diverse Work Force

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**Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work,  
Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, The University of  
Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental  
Sciences and the U.S. Department of Agriculture  
cooperating.  
J. Scott Angle, Dean and Director**