

# Extension Master Gardeners<sup>sm</sup> Certification Agreement

This document seeks to clarify expectations of Master Gardeners<sup>sm</sup> (MGs) and is essential in order to be covered by NC State University liability protection plan. Upon completion of the core training and passing the final exam, each participant (referred to as a Master Gardener Intern) in the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners<sup>sm</sup> program begins a 40 hour internship of volunteer service and learning. Upon completion of the volunteer service, participants become certified as a Master Gardeners<sup>sm</sup>. Certification is valid for one year (expires on December 31 of the year issued).

- \* Volunteers will perform their duties as representatives of NC State University, will follow university policies, and work under the supervision of an NC State University employee.
- \* Volunteers will perform assigned duties without financial compensation or workman's compensation coverage. Payment should not be requested for speaking engagements or other activities.
- \* Volunteers are expected to work with other volunteers, paid staff and clientele in a professional manner.
- \* Volunteers are to provide unbiased, research based information consistent with NC State University recommendations.
- \* No recommendations or endorsements should be made of a particular product or place of business. Volunteers should not use their title or position for commercial or private business.
- \* Both chemical and cultural recommendations should be given clientele so they can make an informed decision concerning pest management.
- \* Chemical pesticide recommendations are restricted to only those in the N. C. Agricultural Chemicals Manual, recent Extension publications, or pesticide labeling. It is illegal to use or to recommend the use of a pesticide that is inconsistent with the pesticide labeling (label on the product, attached material and any additional printed material provided by the chemical company). Clients should be encouraged to read the pesticide labeling instead of providing application or dilution rates.
- \* Volunteers should not answer questions outside their area of expertise or training. This normally would include not answering questions concerning household pests, commercial horticulture, hazardous tree evaluation, medical or legal questions, and/or determining if a questionable plant or mushroom is edible.
- \* Printed materials (news articles, news releases, newsletters, leaflets) prepared by a volunteer must be reviewed and approved by the Extension agent and/or the appropriate subject matter Extension specialist or State EMG coordinator.

- \* Requests for information by newspaper reporters should be referred to the Extension agent.
- \* Possible poisoning cases should be referred to the Carolina's Poison Center (1-800-848-6946).
- \* Volunteers should not make copies of copyrighted material for distribution without written permission of the copyright owner.
- \* Volunteers do not have the authority to sign contracts on behalf of Cooperative Extension or the EMG program.
- \* No portion of the MG training manual (copyrighted) may be reproduced or used in developing non Extension materials or programs. When developing Extension materials, the North Carolina Master Gardener<sup>sm</sup> training manual should be cited as the source of the information.
- \* Presenting oneself as a MG in an unauthorized role and attempting to implement management/policy decisions that are inconsistent or in direct violation of EMG program policies are considered serious policy violations. Displays of discriminatory behavior (race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, handicap, sexual orientation), sexual harassment, alcohol and/or drug use, or possession of a dangerous weapon while on the job are grounds for immediate dismissal.
- \* The Master Gardener<sup>sm</sup> name tag is the property of NC State University. It should be worn only when doing volunteer work for the Cooperative Extension Service. The name tags should not be altered --- except to reflect volunteer awards.

**Recertification**

Volunteers that wish to continue in the program (after completion of their first year/40 hours) may be extended an invitation to become recertified by signing a Recertification Agreement. Volunteers that do not renew their commitment will be referred to as an Alumnus of the Extension Master Gardener<sup>sm</sup> program. Individuals not renewing their certification (or those dismissed from or who fail to complete the program) should not refer to themselves as a Master Gardener<sup>sm</sup>, Master Gardener Volunteers<sup>sm</sup>, Master Gardener Trainee, Master Gardener Intern, or Master Gardener Extension Volunteers<sup>sm</sup> or any similar title that could be perceived as being a representative of Cooperative Extension or NC State University.

Individuals may keep their manual for personal use. No portion of the MG training manual (copyrighted) may be reproduced or used in developing non Extension materials or programs. The MG name tag should no longer be used in a public setting. MG certificates should not be displayed outside of the individual's home.

I have read and agree to abide by the above policies regarding my service as an Extension Master Gardener<sup>sm</sup> volunteer.

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Master Gardener<sup>sm</sup> Trainee

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County Extension Agent

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Date

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Date