

Washington State University Extension
Master Gardener Program

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Statewide Guidelines and Procedures

WORKING DRAFT

FOREWORD

Welcome to the Washington State University Extension Master Gardener Program, founders of the nationally and internationally acclaimed Master Gardener movement! Serving the residents of Washington since 1973, Washington State University Extension Master Gardener volunteers are a cadre of over 3000 university-trained volunteers who provide “the face of Washington State University” across our state. WSU Extension Master Gardeners volunteer through the WSU Extension office in their county, providing research-based information about gardening and horticulture topics.

This manual is intended to provide general answers for WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers. Specific program requirements vary slightly by county. Your local WSU Extension educator or program coordinator may have additional guidelines or policies for you.

Volunteers are valued partners whose service is vital to the educational mission of Washington State University. Please let me be the first to offer a heartfelt “Thank You!” for your interest, your participation, and your financial support.

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Chapter 1: ABOUT WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

What is Washington State University Extension?

Washington State University (WSU) Extension brings the university to people in their own communities. It “extends” the knowledge of the land-grant university, which in this state is Washington State University, beyond the borders of the campus to the people of the state.

Mission Statement, Vision, and Purpose of WSU Extension

Mission Statement: “Washington State University Extension engages people, organizations, and communities to advance economic well-being and quality of life by connecting them to the knowledge base of the university and by fostering inquiry, learning, and the application of research.

Washington State University Extension is the world-class outreach and engagement enterprise of the university serving the people of Washington and the global society in which we live. Our close relationships within communities allow us to deliver personalized education that challenges and inspires individuals to achieve their highest goals. We create, interpret, and deliver knowledge to society that improves the health and well-being of individuals and the environment, fuels our state’s economy, and enhances and enriches our communities.

Washington State University Extension is important to the state because...

...we work in partnership with communities to identify issues that the university’s research and knowledge bases can address. Application of new knowledge and technologies contributes to the economic and cultural vitality of the state.

...as part of Washington State University, we provide unbiased, research-based information that gives people the knowledge to improve their health and livelihoods.

...we deliver educational programs that are adapted to critical needs in the community. As a result, outcomes are long-lasting and have deep impact on the health and well-being of all citizens and the environments in which they live.

...our presence in every county enables community members to come to WSU directly with their issues. The assistance that they receive helps them improve their lives.

...our strong local partnerships allow us to leverage human and capital resources in order to affect action on critical issues.

WSU Extension Funding Sources Include: Washington State through Washington State University;

- County government as determined by county commissioners and council members (portion of salary of WSU faculty, office support staff and facilities, operating supplies and equipment, and some salaries for support staff);
- The United States Department of Agriculture through the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (USDA-CSREES);
- Grants and contracts from both the public and the private sectors;
- Some Master Gardener organizations (foundations, associations, etc);
- Fees for service;
- Donor gifts and bequests.

Chapter 2: ABOUT THE WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

The purpose of the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program is to provide public education in gardening and environmental stewardship based on researched-based information from WSU Extension and other university systems. Volunteers are trained by WSU faculty and staff to be community educators about issues of importance in their local communities such as enhancing natural resources and environmental stewardship, sustaining vibrant communities, and improving health and wellness of Washington residents.

The WSU Extension faculty in King and Pierce counties began training volunteers to serve as WSU Extension Master Gardeners in January of 1973. Little did they realize they would launch an entire “Master Gardener Movement” which would spread across the nation and overseas, making it a historic, sociological “grassroots” movement with widespread impact. It is considered a premier program within Washington State University, being the only uniquely WSU program with such widespread adoption and impact.

WSU Extension Master Gardener Program: Volunteer Community Educators – cultivating plants, people and communities since 1973.

Organizational Structure

Guidance for the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program is provided by the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program Leader in close cooperation with the Master Gardener Leadership Advisory Council. The WSU County Extension office supervises the Master Gardener volunteers at the local level.

Volunteers in some counties have formed Master Gardener (MG) organizations called Foundations or Associations to work in partnership with WSU Extension to support the WSU Master Gardener Program. While the ultimate responsibility for the WSU Master Gardener Program rests with the WSU Extension faculty and staff in each county, these support organizations are vital team players, providing much needed financial and delegated managerial support. For more information about MG organizations that partner with the Extension Master Gardener Program, see page ____.

Relationship to Other WSU Extension Programs

WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers participate in a wide variety of other WSU Extension programs such as 4-H, Food Sense, Watershed Stewards, and many others. In addition, WSU Extension MGs may partner with various federal, state, city, county and local organizations to provide educational programs.

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Official logo

(NEED CONTENT HERE)

State Trademark

In addition to the above logo, WSU also owns the appellation “WSU Master Gardener.” The use of the WSU Extension Master Gardener Logo or appellation on letterhead, web sites or banners should include the “trademarked” symbol (™).

Important Qualities of the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program

Emphasizing Quality. The goal of our training is to produce quality volunteers through quality training and support. It is not to produce a given quantity of volunteers. The Master Gardener title was derived from Germany's "gartenmeisters," who were highly respected horticulturists in their communities. That is the legacy to which WSU Extension and Master Gardeners must aspire.

Having a Clear Purpose. The mission of the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program is education. Volunteers are trained to be community educators. When considering a new project, Master Gardener program staff and volunteers must ask: Is there a strong educational component to this project?

Serving Diverse Audiences. Our communities represent a diversified population. The land-grant university system was built on the principles that all people should have access to education and that land-grant university "should serve the needs of the common person." Master Gardeners must continue that tradition, by having diversity represented in the volunteers and staff who offer the programs and that the programs are available to and serve all residents.

Addressing Critical Issues. As a public good supported by taxpayers, "Master Gardening" must be relevant to the larger issues facing society – protecting environmental quality, preventing crime, ending hunger, building strong neighborhoods, and growing healthy children. Lacking this relevance, the Master Gardener program will be viewed as little more than a glorified garden club, and not worthy of support.

Publicizing Success. WSU Extension and Master Gardener volunteers must let residents of Washington State, decision makers, businesses, and, last but not least, the university community know about the positive value of the work they do. Each local program must look for ways to illustrate the relevance of their work to the goals of funding decision-makers.

Chapter 3: WSU MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM GUIDELINES

WSU Extension trains **volunteers** knowledgeable about gardening, horticulture, landscape, and plant science to work as community educators. WSU Master Gardener volunteers receive training in environmentally sound gardening, landscape and pest management topics, and how to extend that knowledge to others more effectively.

WSU Extension faculty and staff work closely with and support Master Gardener volunteers. The Extension Educator and/or Program Coordinator are available for help and advice. Fellow certified WSU Master Gardeners are also a very important source of knowledge, direction, and support.

Volunteers in some counties have formed Master Gardener (MG) organizations called Foundations or Associations to work in partnership with WSU Extension to support the WSU Master Gardener Program. While the ultimate responsibility for the WSU Master Gardener Program rests with the WSU Extension faculty and staff in each county, these support organizations are vital team players, providing much needed financial and delegated managerial support. (See chapter ____, page ____.)

Criteria for Enrollment in the WSU Master Gardener Volunteer Program.

Successful applicants to the WSU Master Gardener Program must:

- Have a strong volunteer ethic and experience in gardening;
- Commit to attend the WSU Master Gardener Basic Training course and complete all assignments and exams;
- Agree to donate the number of volunteer hours required by the county WSU Master Gardener program after completing the Basic Training program;
- Be available to perform volunteer work at times needed by the local program;

Becoming a Certified WSU Master Gardener

The three stages required for becoming a certified WSU Master Gardener are the application and enrollment process, completion of basic training, and completion of the volunteer internship.

I. The Application and Enrollment Process

Step 1: Complete the WSU Extension Volunteer Application Form and a county WSU Master Gardener Program Enrollment Form.

Step 2: Complete a Criminal History Disclosure Form in accordance with Child/Adult Abuse Information Act RCW 43.43.830 through 43.43.845. **All volunteers for any WSU Extension program are screened in this fashion.** Volunteers will be asked to provide their correct name, date of birth, and driver's license number so that staff can access the online services of the Washington State Patrol. Your information is kept confidential and in a secure location.

Step 3. If a potential candidate, you will be contacted with further instructions. Local program staff will also contact the references you provided to verify your qualifications related to the volunteer role.

Step 4. Review and sign the WSU Extension Pest Management Recommendation Agreement. (Some counties may do this after the training is completed.)

II. WSU Master Gardener Basic Training

Volunteers must apply and be fully enrolled in their county WSU Master Gardener Program prior to the start of the WSU Master Gardener Basic Training course. The WSU Master Gardener Basic Training consists of a minimum of 50 hours of instructions. Program staff in some counties may require additional classes.

Volunteers must attend **all** training sessions. The training sessions are intensive and expose the volunteer to a great deal of information during each class. The program is intended to familiarize volunteers with reference material resources available from Washington State University. **You are not expected to memorize the information. It is more important to learn research skills and where to find information than to memorize large amounts of information.**

The WSU Master Gardener Basic Training course consists of a balanced, integrated, practical course in home horticulture. This includes an introduction to plant science; soils and soil amendments; insect, disease, and weed management; sustainable garden management; integrated pest management (IPM); pesticide safety; and plant problem diagnosis. These topics are applied to specific plant systems such as lawns and turf, landscape trees and shrubs, perennials, vegetables, and fruits. A combination of lecture, problem-solving, hands-on, field trips, and experiential learning methods is used during the training sessions. The exact teaching format may vary by county depending on the available resources and instructors.

Open book quizzes on each day's topics will be given at the end of each session. These are to be completed and returned before the beginning of the next class. The questions are primarily multiple-choice along with referencing where you found the answers in the study manual or WSU publications. A score of 80% or better on each quiz is the minimum passing score.

In many counties, mentors, who are experienced Master Gardeners, will be on hand to help with your training and answer your questions. Your mentor will assist you throughout training and as you start your Master Gardener volunteer experience. This "mentor option" may not be available in all counties.

III. Volunteer Internship

After completing the WSU Master Gardener Basic Training course, volunteers complete a volunteer internship for a county-specific number of volunteer hours within a prescribed timeframe. The statewide minimum volunteer internship is 40 hours to be completed within a year after completing WSU Master Gardener Basic Training. Most of that time will be spent in educational outreach activities such as staffing plant clinics, working in a demo garden, teaching, or giving presentations and demonstrations. The county Extension Educator or the local program coordinator must approve volunteer projects done by WSU Master Gardeners.

Certification

Upon completion of the Basic Training and Volunteer Internship, volunteers will become a certified or "veteran" WSU Master Gardener. They will receive a WSU Master Gardener name badge to wear with pride and a graduation certificate.

Retaining Certification

Active Master Gardener volunteers will be asked each year to make a commitment for continued participation in the program by:

- Returning a county reapplication or update form
- Acquiring Continuing Education (CE) credits (This requirement currently does not apply statewide).
- Volunteering a minimum of 25 hours of approved community service. (County requirements vary)

Local WSU Master Gardener Program Coordinators and/or Directors determine the number of hours of volunteer service and Continuing Education required for continued certification. The suggested minimum for Continuing Education is 10 hours per year.

Withdrawal or Leave of Absence

To cease active participation or withdraw from the program, volunteers must notify the program coordinator in writing. After withdrawal, volunteers may not represent themselves as WSU Master Gardeners or wear their name badge. Veteran WSU Master Gardeners with emeritus or alumni status (see page ___) may represent themselves as WSU Master Gardener emeritus or alumni. All are encouraged to wear Master Gardener logo-wear.

Certified WSU Master Gardeners may submit a written request for a leave of absence for a period of no longer than one year. After that period volunteers who wish to return to the program should follow the recertification guidelines shown in the following section.

Recertification Guidelines for returning after a leave of absence.

To maintain program quality, WSU Master Gardeners must be trained in both current and regionally relevant home horticulture information. For this reason, automatic recertification is not offered.

Recertification may be pursued by Master Gardener volunteers who:

- Are transferring from one county to another within Washington State,
- Are transferring from another state into the WSU Master Gardener Program, or
- Have been inactive for more than one year.

Steps to Recertification

1. Contact your local WSU Extension office and follow the application and enrollment process described earlier.
2. Determination of your status is made by the local program staff. Several options may follow:
 - They may require the volunteer to re-enroll in the program and complete the basic training course. The volunteer will need to pay all relevant training fees and fulfill the standard requirements for certification or
 - They can admit the volunteer to the WSU Master Gardener program if they:
 - Verify that they successfully completed the WSU Master Gardener Basic Training course and left the program in good standing,
 - Complete an orientation session with the WSU Extension Educator and/or the program coordinator,
 - Read, understand, and sign the current “WSU Master Gardener Pest Management Recommendation Agreement,” and
 - Complete all the WSU Master Gardener Basic Training exams and receive a passing grade.

The local program coordinator specifies the timeline for completion.

Training Fees

A county-specific training fee is due prior to the first class unless other arrangements are made. A portion of the fee may be refunded upon completion of your internship period (this option may vary by county).

No successful applicants desiring to volunteer as WSU Master Gardeners will be excluded from WSU Master Gardener Basic Training because they cannot afford the training fees. Persons of limited financial means can be fully or partially exempted from these course fees. The WSU Extension faculty or staff member supervising the local program will make the determination of financial need.

All costs for refreshments, coffee, tea, or lunches shall be the responsibility of each participant.

Some counties allow individuals who wish to audit the WSU Master Gardener Basic Training course without making a volunteer commitment by paying the full cost training materials and other local fees. Only a limited number of audits can be accepted in any one training session .

The other cost to you as a WSU Master Gardener is your volunteer time and talents once the initial training session is completed.

Volunteer Title and Designations

The correct title for volunteers from this program is “Washington State University Master Gardeners of (XYZ) County.” The “WSU” abbreviation may be used.

The title of “WSU Master Gardener” is to be used only and exclusively by volunteers who have been trained in the WSU Master Gardener program and who are performing unpaid educational and public service as an active Master Gardener.

Trade-related professionals who audit the training course DO NOT receive the title of “WSU Master Gardener.”

Trainee, Intern, Veteran, Emeritus, and Alumni designations.

Specific Master Gardener designations change as volunteers move through the program. A Trainee refers to people who are attending the basic training course for the first time. Once a person successfully completes training and starts initial service internship, he or she will be called an Intern. Volunteers who have completed county-specific service internship, have earned the title of Certified or Veteran Master Gardener.

The titles “emeritus” and “alumni” have applications parallel to their use within educational institutions in general. The title of “emeritus” applies to veteran WSU Master Gardener volunteers who are no longer able to fully meet the volunteer service requirement for annual recertification but who meet the qualification guidelines shown below. They must be able to donate at least an hour of volunteer service per year to retain liability coverage and emeritus status. Emeritus status can only be granted by the local WSU Master Gardener Program staff in consultation with any local Master Gardener organization.

General guidelines for Emeritus status include: 1) a minimum of 500 hours volunteer service or 2) 10 years of volunteer service or 3) exemplary service to the WSU Master Gardener Program. Other county-specific privileges may also be available.

The title of “alumna” (female) or “alumnus” (male) applies to veteran WSU Master Gardener volunteers who are no longer participants in the WSU Master Gardener program. Unlike emeritus Master Gardeners, they have no annual service requirement and are not covered under WSU liability insurance.

Chapter 4: PERSONNEL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Use of Master Gardener Title

WSU Master Gardeners are should not display their Master Gardener credentials (title or name badge) to advertise a place of business, to be used in advertisements as Master Gardeners or to give endorsement of any product or place of business.

When serving at Master Gardener functions volunteers may not wear apparel imprinted with nursery or garden center logos, lawn and garden service, or other gardening business related logos.

Volunteers may list their WSU Master Gardener training and experience as qualifications when applying for a job. However, once employed and while working for pay, you may not display credentials or give the appearance of being a WSU Master Gardener at your place of business.

Affirmative Action Policy

WSU Extension programs and policies are consistent with federal and state laws, regulations, and applicable Executive Orders regarding civil rights, equal opportunity, and Affirmative Action. Washington State University prohibits discrimination on the basis of race; sex; religion; age; color; creed; national or ethnic origin; physical, mental, or sensory disability; marital status; sexual orientation; and status as a Vietnam-era or disabled veteran. Concerns or evidence of non-compliance may be reported to your local WSU Extension office or the Washington State University Center for Human Rights on the WSU Pullman Campus, (509) 335-8288. Because WSU Extension receives both federal and state funds, WSU Master Gardener volunteers are required to participate in the collection of contact information to verify lawful compliance with Affirmative Action laws.

Code of Conduct

The WSU Master Gardener program is an educational and community service program designed by WSU Extension to provide unbiased, researched-based information to the gardening public. These conduct standards were designed to maintain a high-quality program that effectively serves the community and provides a positive volunteer experience.

As a WSU Master Gardener volunteer, I will:

- Represent Washington State University Extension with dignity and pride.
- Respect all persons with whom I interact as a WSU Master Gardener (fellow volunteers, Extension or county personnel, and the general public).
- Conduct myself in a courteous, respectful manner refraining from profanity, harassment, disruptive behavior or abuse of any kind (physical or verbal).
- Provide a positive role model when working with youth.
- Respect and follow WSU, county, and program Policies and Guidelines.
- Comply with Equal Employment Opportunity and nondiscrimination laws.
- Avoid illegal or inappropriate use of alcohol and other drugs.
- Participate as a team member within the WSU Master Gardener Program.
- Accept the responsibility to promote and support other WSU Master Gardeners in order to develop an effective county and state program.

Termination of Volunteer Services

Just as not everyone is a leader, not every volunteer relates with the public, colleagues or supervisors in an appropriate or acceptable manner. You are a representative of WSU Extension and as such you have agreed to abide by its policies and expectations. If your behavior is not acceptable or in the best interest of WSU Extension, the volunteer program or program clientele, you may be reprimanded or asked to leave the program.

Every attempt will be made to correct disqualifying behavior including retraining, reassignment and placement on leave of absence status. If a volunteer's actions continue to disqualify him or her from active program participation, the volunteer will be removed from the program after being contacted personally and receiving written notice outlining reason for removal and the date of removal from the program.

Dress Code

As a WSU volunteer, you should dress in an appropriate and professional manner. Remember, you are a representative of Washington State University Extension. **Always wear your name badge when acting as a WSU volunteer.**

Clothes should be neat, clean, and suitable for the activity or location. What you wear when working in the plant clinics or teaching will probably be different from your gardening clothes for working outdoors. You should be well groomed and attend to personal hygiene at all times.

Pest Management Recommendations

MGs are limited to making recommendations for home-and-garden pest management, and limited to products previously approved through the WSU pesticide approval process. Volunteers are not allowed to directly provide pesticide information to the public on behalf of WSU unless they are certified MGs.

WSU Master Gardeners can provide information only on home lawn and garden problems. All commercial questions, such as commercial crop production, nursery management, public landscape maintenance and pesticide liability questions must be referred to a local WSU Extension Educator.

When asked for pest management recommendations, WSU Master Gardeners are expected to offer several strategies that allow the client to choose between chemical and non-chemical (e.g., cultural, mechanical, and biological) options. For recommendations that include the use of chemicals (insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides, including organic products) WSU Master Gardeners must follow published recommendations in current WSU publications and other WSU approved materials for non-commercial home and garden use.

Following these recommendations guidelines is essential for compliance with WSU liability coverage.

WSU will assume liability for the pest management recommendations of Master Gardeners only if they follow published WSU approved recommendations for home and garden use. Non-chemical pest management recommendations can be made from specifically approved non-WSU publications. A list of non-WSU approved references is updated each year.

Always use tact and give constructive advice when giving pest management recommendations. If you encounter opinions or procedures with which you disagree, begin your advice by saying, "this will be

more effective, give better results, etc.” without being insulting to the person, or place of business receiving your suggestions. Best results come from guiding people in their decisions.

Questions You Shouldn't Answer

Food preservation and safety, should be referred to the appropriate Extension staff or specifically trained volunteers. The following lists some specific areas you should not deal with:

Commercial questions. If the inquiry applies to any commercial or business situation (nurseries, growers, spray services, landscapers), refer these questions to a local Extension Educator.

Legal questions. If the situation is one in which someone seeks a legal opinion, such as a case in which an expert witness may be needed, WSU Master Gardeners cannot handle these questions. An appropriate response may be, “We are volunteer WSU-trained Master Gardeners; we give general home horticulture information. For your questions, you may wish to consult a qualified attorney.”

Product or service endorsements. Master Gardeners do not endorse any particular product, business, or service. There may be occasions when a product is mentioned by brand-name (Orthene, for instance, is seldom referred to by its chemical name, acephate.) Master Gardeners may also mention a product by its chemical name, such as glyphosate, and then mention products from several companies—Roundup, Kleenup—to clarify your recommendation. This does not imply endorsement.

Liability Coverage for Volunteers

WSU volunteers are unpaid agents of Washington State University. WSU, as a state agency, self-insures its general liability exposure. State statute provides that the state may provide a defense for any agent of WSU, including a volunteer, against whom claims are filed. However, individuals are **only** eligible for defense **if** they are acting **within the scope of their WSU duties and in good faith**.

To be acting in the official capacity of a WSU volunteer, you must be:

- **Currently enrolled in the WSU Master Gardener program,**
- **Acting in good faith and in accordance with WSU Master Gardener guidelines, and**
- **Engaged in activities which are planned, approved, and carried out through WSU Extension.**

You are responsible for your own personal injury claims, except when reimbursement may be provided through the WSU volunteer program and the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I). L&I coverage includes hospital, physician's care, prescriptions, ambulance, and other associated costs. Rehabilitation, loss of limb, or loss of income are not covered.

Foundations, Associations, and other Master Gardener organizations are valued partners and support groups for WSU Extension programs. However, they are legally independent of WSU Extension. Therefore activities sponsored exclusively by separate volunteer organizations (i.e. without the review and approval of local WSU Extension staff) are not covered by Washington State University's liability insurance.

WSU Master Gardener volunteers are not covered under the WSU insurance policy when participating in unapproved activities or activities sponsored by organizations without a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with WSU Extension. Support organizations without this MOA should make their own risk management arrangements, including the purchase of liability insurance.

Reimbursement for Expenses, Acceptance of Gifts

When giving a presentation for other groups it is permissible to accept honoraria, unsolicited reimbursement or gifts to your local Master Gardener Program. Volunteers may ask for reimbursement of travel costs or supplies if the supplies are used in projects that the audience takes with them. However, it is inappropriate to seek speaking engagements for personal pay while participating in an authorized WSU Extension function and using the title of WSU Master Gardener.

WSU Master Gardeners may teach community education classes for which a fee is charged when this fee covers actual class expenses.

Gifts to the WSU Master Gardener program may be received through the WSU Foundation and directed to the WSU Master Gardener Development Fund.

When a volunteer ceases active participation in the WSU Master Gardener Program, the volunteer may not accept compensation for teaching or giving presentations using the title of WSU Master Gardener. Former WSU Master Gardener volunteers may charge for their services or accept reimbursements as long as they do not use the title of WSU Master Gardener.

The Volunteer "Paycheck"

WSU Extension depends on volunteers to help extend its resources and information to the public. As you know, volunteers are not paid with money but in ways that are special for each person. We hope that the gratitude of your fellow paid workers in the extension office and state staff will help you feel that your unique contributions and commitment to the program are appreciated. Certainly, the number of citizens who come to you for advice will indicate that you and your knowledge are valued and needed.

While performing your duties as a WSU Master Gardener volunteer you will probably begin to notice some of the pay that volunteers traditionally enjoy. You are, after all, a special WSU Master Gardener Volunteer with horticulture and communication skills that qualify you to do interesting and challenging work. Your sense of accomplishment and pride in a job well done while helping others are assets that only you can collect.

Chapter 5: THE MASTER GARDENER ORGANIZATION / WSU EXTENSION CONNECTION

The Role of Local Master Gardener Organization

Volunteers in some counties have formed Master Gardener (MG) organizations called Foundations or Associations to work in partnership with WSU Extension to support the WSU Master Gardener Program. MG organizations may be formal (incorporated with the State of Washington) or informal (unincorporated). While the ultimate responsibility for the WSU Master Gardener Program rests with the WSU Extension faculty and staff in each county, these support organizations are vital team players, providing much needed financial and delegated managerial support.

The specific role and responsibility of each MG organization to the local WSU Master Gardener Program is described in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between that organization and WSU Extension in each county. This guiding document is essential for the clear leadership of WSU Master Gardener volunteers and for compliance with state ethics laws.

Master Gardener volunteers in many counties have chosen to become members of the local MG organization. Duties and responsibilities as a member of a non-profit organization are different from the duties of Extension volunteers. Volunteers should ask for clear information about these differing roles when they enroll as an Extension volunteer or join a Master Gardener organization. While this wearing of “two hats” may seem confusing, most of us are comfortable with multiple titles. For example, a person may be an employee, a spouse, a parent, and a volunteer concurrently. In the same way, volunteers can choose to be “WSU Master Gardener Volunteers of their County” and concurrently members of the “Master Gardener Organization of their County.” WSU Extension and the local MG organizations that have developed and maintained a partnership have played an important role in the history and continued development of the WSU Master Gardener Program in this state.

Note: Membership in a Master Gardener organization is NOT required for program participations. Volunteers who feel they have been pressured into joining a Master Gardener organization should contact their county program coordinator or the State Master Gardener Program Leader.

Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State (MGFWS)

The flagship Master Gardener organization in Washington is the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State. WSU Master Gardener volunteers are encouraged to visit their web site, <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/mgfws>, for a more complete view of the organization and related resources.

Mission Statement of the MGFWS

“The mission of the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State is to help WSU Master Gardener programs ‘grow’ better communities through financial support, communication, education, and advocacy.”

The Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State interacts with WSU Extension through an active MOA as it provides support to the WSU Master Gardener Program.

The Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State participates in fund-raising and resource acquisition to support the WSU Master Gardener Program and assists other Master Gardener organizations.

Resources for MG Organizations

Information relevant to the establishment and maintenance of a non-profit Master Gardener organization can be accessed through the MGFWS web site. Questions may be posted to mgfws@lyris.cahe.wsu.edu. To reach the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State, e-mail them at mfgws@wsu.edu.

Memorandum of Agreement

WSU Extension and the Master Gardener organizations work closely on many aspects of the program.

To strengthen that relationship and to comply with state ethics laws, each Master Gardener organization works with the local WSU Extension office to complete a Memorandum of Agreement.

This document defines the major responsibilities between the two groups. Responsibility for completion of the document rests with the WSU Extension County Director and the Board of Directors of county MG organizations. Sample template and instructions are available online at the WSU Master Gardener web site, <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu>.

WSU Master Gardener volunteers are encouraged to review a copy of the MOA pertinent to their program. A copy can be obtained from the county WSU Extension office or the local MG organization.

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Chapter 6: THE EXTENSION/VOLUNTEER PARTNERSHIP

Partnership of the Master Gardener Program

WSU Extension programs are based on a philosophy of partnership. Responsibility for the WSU Extension Master Gardener program in a specific location rests with the county Extension faculty. All program staff, volunteers, and Master Gardener organizations, however, work together to share vision, ideas and responsibility for program success. Leadership roles and decision-making are shared with Master Gardener organizations (see page 14), along prescribed guidelines outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between WSU Extension and each Master Gardener organization. This structured yet dynamic partnership allows Extension staff and volunteers to work together in planning and implementing programs.

Master Gardener volunteers are valued program partners and considered unpaid agents of Washington State University. They represent an outstanding example of land-grant university outreach as they serve their local community, their county, and the state.

Each partner should know that the program is strengthened with the cooperation and support of the other partners. Active communication between partners is essential. For the partnership to work, there must also be a balance of trust, credibility, truth, and accountability.

Benefits of an Extension/Volunteer Partnership

Master Gardener volunteers benefit by:

- Receiving help in reaching personal goals.
- Increasing leadership, organizational, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.
- Participating in training and learning opportunities.
- Having the satisfaction of helping others.
- Receiving encouragement and recognition.
- Developing and increasing self-confidence.
- Developing lasting friendships.
- Acquiring information usable in other situations.
- Sharing interests with others.
- Increasing public relations skills.
- Becoming more effective in work and home.
- Making useful contacts through networking.
- Preparing for new employment or volunteer opportunities.

Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers

Master Gardener volunteers have the right to:

- Be treated as a co-worker and not just free help.
- Have a suitable and worthwhile assignment.
- Know as much as possible about the organization (policy, people, and programs)
- Receive quality orientation and training.
- Receive guidance, support, and direction.
- Have proper working conditions.
- Have a part in planning and to be heard.
- Be recognized and receive expressions of appreciation.

- Be trusted and respected by faculty and co-workers.
- Be valued as a person capable of unique contributions.
- Receive out-of-pocket reimbursements whenever possible.

Master Gardener volunteers have the responsibility to:

- Accept realistic assignments suited to personal interests, talents, and skills.
- Dress and act in a professional manner as a representative of Washington State University Extension.
- Participate in appropriate orientation, training, and evaluation sessions.
- Respect confidences and exercise personal integrity.
- Uphold the policies and follow the rules and procedures.
- State their limitations.
- Follow through and complete assignments once assumed and communicate about both problems and successes.
- Acknowledge the need for training and participate fully.
- Work as a team member.
- Follow the reasonable directions of the WSU Extension employees responsible for the program.

WSU Extension faculty and staff benefit by:

- Acquiring fresh new ideas through collaboration.
- Gaining satisfaction from reaching more people through volunteer efforts by providing more programs for the public.
- Experiencing an enhanced professional role.
- Increasing understanding of the community and clientele.
- Developing lasting friendships.
- Providing stronger, more effective programs.
- Achieving greater influence in the community.
- Utilizing the many talents and expertise that volunteers bring to the program.

Rights and Responsibilities of WSU Extension Faculty and Staff

WSU Extension faculty and staff have the right to:

- Recruit and dismiss volunteers.
- Expect that the volunteer will complete all assignments accepted.
- Clearly define expectations and responsibilities of volunteers.
- Know the limitations and expectations of volunteers.
- Experience an enhanced professional role through the contribution of volunteers.
- Be kept informed by volunteers.
- Expect quality performance.

WSU Extension faculty and staff have the responsibility to:

- Explain and maintain set standards, provide support, and give continuity to the program.
- Offer a well-planned program of orientation, training, supervision, and evaluation.
- Expand information and services through volunteers.
- Place volunteers in suitable roles, with clear job descriptions, and within reasonable time frames.
- Communicate clearly and provide constructive feedback.

- Treat volunteers as co-workers with acceptance, trust, and respect.
- Provide information and keep volunteers up-to-date.
- Provide opportunities for a volunteer's personal growth.
- Interact constructively and regularly with the leadership of local Master Gardener organizations.

DRAFT

Chapter 7: VOLUNTEER SERVICE HOURS & EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES
(This needs t be rewritten if MGLAC wants it included. So many of these vary with each county.)

Volunteer Service Hours

The Extension Educator or program coordinator, in conjunction with the local Master Gardener organization if one exists, determines service opportunities. Projects must involve public contact and have an educational focus. The Extension agent or program coordinator determines what qualifies as “public contact hours.”

How Do I Report My Program Service Hours?

Use the Master Gardener Volunteer Time Sheet, supplied by your local WSU Extension office to report your hours on the schedule prescribed by your program coordinator.

Educational Outreach Opportunities

Plant Clinics

Plant Clinics are a service we offer where a baffled gardener with plant or insect questions can come in or call and talk to a live Master Gardener volunteer. You try to help them figure out what the problem or pests is and give recommendations based on WSU references. Other questions may be on culture, how to grow, prune, take care of, or maintain their plants. For answers to these questions you can use clinic references and your own or another Master Gardener’s experience, as long as it doesn’t conflict with WSU unbiased, research-based information.

Youth Gardening Opportunities

WSU Master Gardeners may have opportunities to teach gardening to children in classrooms, in demonstration gardens, in 4-H groups, home school groups, etc. The WSU Master Gardeners working with youth must have completed a Criminal History Disclosure Form.

Demonstration Gardens

The number of demonstration gardens and related chores varies by county. These gardens are to be part of the educational outreach in each county.

Garden Writers

Volunteers are encouraged to write gardening articles on timely and regional topics.

Fair Exhibits

Most counties have an educational exhibit in conjunction with the county fair. Staffing the exhibits during the fair, acting as the scheduling coordinator, or creating the educational display prior to the opening of the fair can usually earn volunteer hours. The smaller fairs can also use help with judging or being the superintendent or coordinator for the gardening exhibits.

Community Events and Assorted Celebrations

From time to time, WSU Master Gardener volunteers are asked to participate in community events. These may include safety fairs, spotlight on educational organizations, community information and referral events, festivals, farmers market, and home and garden shows, etc. Volunteers may be asked to coordinate and staff an educational display, a hands-on activity, or provide a plant clinic session. Special events give the program good exposure to new gardener clients and offer a chance to promote the services of WSU Extension.

Fund Raising Opportunities

Seeking both in-kind or cash donations and bequests, grant writing, plant sales, and auctions are examples of fund raising to support the WSU master Gardener Program. Volunteers are encouraged to learn about donation options and participate in fundraising events. They should also inform donors of giving options through the WSU Master Gardener Development Fund. Contact the WSU Master Gardener office for assistance (1-877-WSU-MG4U)

Program Support Opportunities

Volunteer Leaders

Project Managers/Coordinators are positions crucial to our program. If you are interested in a volunteer management position contact the local Extension Educator or program coordinator. To continue our quality program we need your leadership and participation.

Mentors

Mentors provide assistance to trainees during training and as they start their volunteer outreach. Mentors share program knowledge and give support that enables new volunteers to have a sense of belonging to the program. Your program coordinator has details about how to become a mentor.

Office Assistance

The local WSU Extension office typically has opportunities for volunteers. This may include WSU Master Gardener related assistance or working as a volunteer receptionist for when the regular staff is not available. Responsibilities may include answering the phone and directing inquiries, filing, computer data processing, inventorying, or other general office duties. A WSU Master Gardener office assistant may be keeping the Plant Clinic files and bulletins up-to-date, creating or revising educational materials or recording volunteer service hours, etc. The smooth functioning of our program depends on having a group of volunteers willing to help with this "behind-the-scenes" work.

Other Support Roles

Volunteers with experience in leadership, public relations, fundraising, computer science, public speaking, writing, graphic design, photography, carpentry, woodworking, etc. are invited to share their skills to support the Master Gardener program and its activities. Additional help is needed to plan and coordinate training sessions, garden tours, school events, etc. Your program coordinator will help you find a productive place to utilize your skills.

Appendix 1: Position Description

Title WSU Master Gardener Volunteer

Purpose To provide public education in gardening and environmental stewardship based on researched-based information from WSU Extension and other universities to address such critical issues as enhancing natural resources and environmental stewardship, sustaining vibrant communities, and improving health and wellness of residents of Washington.

Nature & Scope WSU Master Gardener volunteers make it possible for Extension faculty and staff to reach more people with horticulture programs and home gardening information than would be possible without them.

Trained and certified WSU Master Gardener Volunteers provide educational programs, free advice and answers to questions on home gardening and landscape maintenance, pest management, composting, and related topics. This is accomplished through various formal and informal activities, including plant clinics, telephone or personal contacts, demonstrations, classes, written material, school programs, demonstration gardens, public meeting, tours, etc.

Requirements Be able to participate fully in the training program provided for WSU Master Gardener volunteers.
Be willing and able to return a county-specific number of public educational service hours within a predetermined timeframe.
Be willing to follow the WSU Master Gardener policies and procedure, including record keeping requirements and responding to reasonable requests for volunteer service.
Be willing to abide by WSU Extension's Pest Management Recommendation Agreement, giving clients a range of possible options, including cultural, mechanical, biological, and chemical controls.
Be able to communicate effectively with the public by telephone, personal contact, group contact, or through written language.
Have knowledge of and experience or skills in basic gardening or other horticulture related areas.
Be able to work with adults and/or youth, and be willing to share home gardening information with others.

Supervision The Extension staff in charge of the county WSU Master Gardener Program oversees and coordinates the activities of Master Gardener volunteers. In some locations, Master Gardener organizations with an official relationships with WSU Extension assist county staff in program administration.