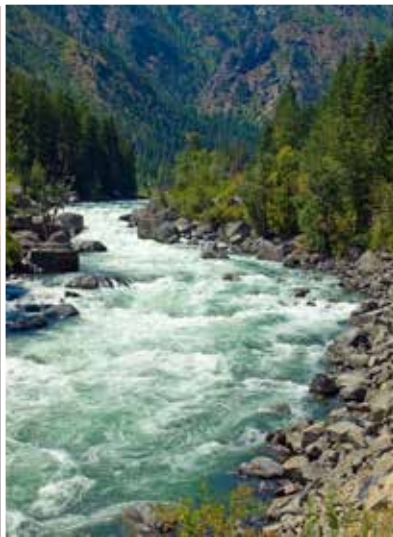
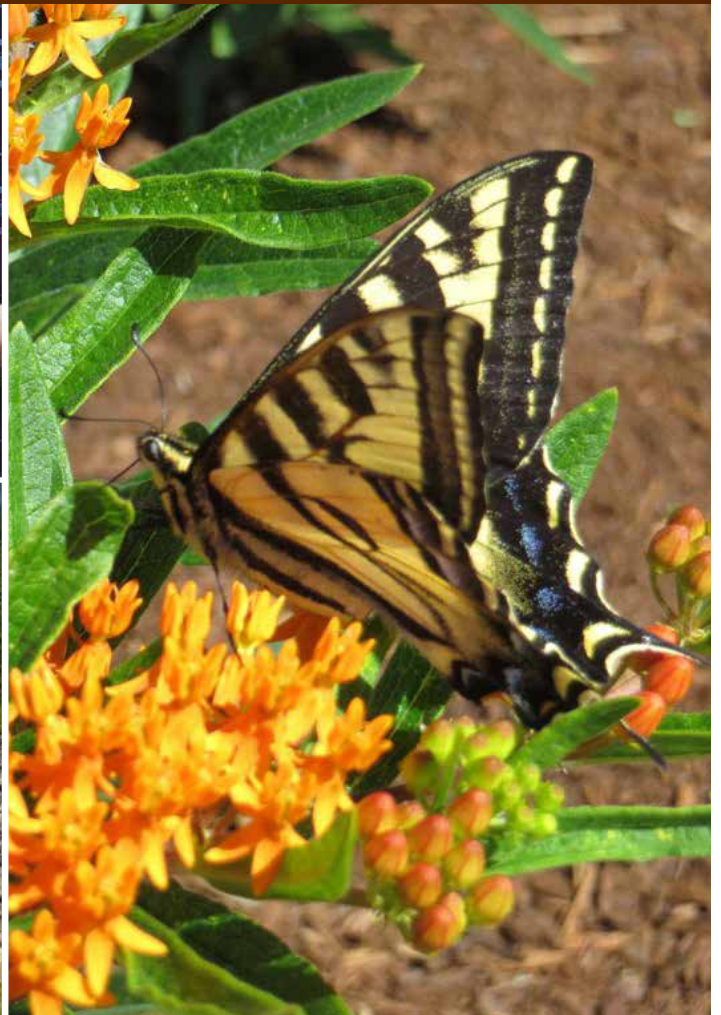


WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Master Gardener Program Handbook



*Statewide Policies and Procedures for
Program Coordinators and Volunteer Leaders*



Master Gardener Program

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

2020 Revision

FOREWORD

The Washington State University Master Gardener Program is a nationally and internationally acclaimed volunteer program that is modeled throughout the United States and in other countries around the world. WSU is proud to have been the founder of this highly respected program in 1973 that is paramount to the land-grant university mission throughout the United States. Washington State University Extension Master Gardener Program engages university-trained volunteers to empower and sustain diverse communities with relevant, unbiased, and research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education.

This handbook contains formal state-wide policies for WSU Extension faculty, staff, and volunteers. In addition, you will find information about the WSU Master Gardener Program's vision, mission, and values. A short description of WSU Extension and the structure it provides for the WSU Master Gardener Program is also included.

WSU Master Gardener volunteers are the face and voice of WSU Extension in communities across Washington State. WSU faculty and staff value the time, effort, and knowledge they so readily give to help WSU Extension serve its land-grant mission. We recognize we would not have the ability to reach as many residents without WSU Master Gardener volunteers. I am honored and privileged to work with the dedicated volunteers, staff, and faculty who are part of this exemplary program.



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CHAPTER 1: Washington State University Extension

WSU Extension

Extension is for Everyone! With 39 county offices and one tribal office across the state, WSU Extension is the front door to the University. Extension builds the capacity of individuals, organizations, businesses, and communities, empowering them to find solutions for local issues and to improve their quality of life. Extension collaborates with communities to create a culture of life-long learning and is recognized for its accessible, learner-centered, relevant, high-quality, unbiased educational programs.

The mission of WSU Extension is to engage people, organizations, and communities to advance knowledge, economic well-being, and quality of life by fostering inquiry, learning, and the application of research.

Extension's close relationships within communities allow us to deliver personalized education that challenges and inspires individuals to achieve their highest goals. As part of WSU, we:

- Work in partnership with communities to identify issues that university research and knowledge bases can address.
- Provide unbiased, research-based information that gives people the knowledge to improve their health and livelihoods.
- Deliver educational programs that are adapted to the critical needs in the community.
- Enable community members to come to WSU directly with their issues.
- Leverage human and capital resources through partnerships in order to act on critical issues.

Organizational Structure

Statewide Leadership

Leadership for the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program is provided by a team of WSU faculty and staff. The statewide WSU Master Gardener Program Leader is responsible for developing and leading the team and for providing overall direction to local program coordinators and volunteers from a statewide perspective.

Local County Leadership

Local county program coordinators are responsible for leading and managing county-specific WSU Master Gardener programs. In general, WSU Extension offices supervise and support Master Gardener volunteers in various ways, depending on available resources. In some cases, the Statewide Program Leader supervises local program coordinators. One or more of the following may provide leadership for local WSU Master Gardener programs:

- County Extension Director—overall leadership for the office, in addition to maintaining a strong relationship with county government, budget development, civil rights, a county advisory system, and supervision of support staff and program staff;

- County Extension Faculty—leadership for educational program(s) and supervision of the county staff and volunteers related to each program;
- Local Program Coordinator—coordination and management of a specific program and its volunteers. The title “program coordinator” is used to mean anyone who coordinates a local Master Gardener (MG) program. All faculty, staff, or volunteers charged with program leadership may be referred to as program coordinators.

Local County Advisory Committees

Master Gardener program coordinators should implement program advisory teams/committees comprised of a cross section of WSU Master Gardener Program volunteers who represent a variety of programs and projects and who have skill sets in organizational planning, program development and evaluation to support strategic planning, decision making, and program and project selection. The purpose of an advisory team is to assist the local program coordinator in determining and prioritizing the current needs of internal and external stakeholders as they relate to the WSU Master Gardener Program vision and mission, and to align educational needs with fund development opportunities and with foundation support.

Supporting Organizations

Volunteers in some counties have formed organizations called foundations or associations to work in partnership with the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program. For more information about Master Gardener organizations that partner with the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program, refer to Chapter 6: Master Gardener Foundations.

Funding Sources

- Washington State University;
- County government, as determined by county commissioners and council members;
- The United States Department of Agriculture through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA-NIFA);
- Grants and contracts from both the public and private sectors;
- Fees for service; and
- Donor gifts and bequests.

CHAPTER 2: Washington State University Extension Master Gardener Program

Brief History, Volunteering, and Guiding Statements

The Master Gardener title was derived from Germany’s “gartenmeisters,” who were highly respected horticulturists in their communities. That is the legacy to which the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program aspires. The WSU Master Gardener Program started in 1973 when WSU Extension faculty in King and Pierce Counties saw an unmet need in the communities they were serving. To that end, faculty began training volunteers to become WSU Extension Master Gardeners. Little did they realize they would launch an entire “Master Gardener Movement” that would spread across the nation and overseas.

Volunteers: Why Do People Volunteer? How Do We Engage and Empower Volunteers?

As a program coordinator or as a WSU Master Gardener volunteer leader, it is important to understand why people volunteer in order to engage and empower volunteers to do mission- and vision-achieving work. Generally speaking, there are three levels of motivation for volunteerism.

1. Personal Drive: I volunteer because I’m going to get something I want out of it.
2. Relational Drive: I volunteer because my friend asked me to.
3. Belief Drive: I volunteer because I believe in the cause or the mission of the organization.

In the WSU Master Gardener Program, people volunteer because they want to learn more about home horticulture, they desire to participate with a group of people who have similar interests, and, ultimately, because they want to give back to their community on a topic they are passionate about.

Reasons for volunteering are directly linked to levels of commitment. For example, a volunteer just starting in the program is probably taking the training for self-serving reasons out of a personal drive to learn more about gardening. A certified volunteer who has been with the program for several years and routinely gives up personal time is doing so out of a belief in the mission or the cause. Volunteer commitment is a continuum and is relative to the reasons a person volunteers. Generally, a person volunteering for self-serving reasons is at a low level of commitment to the program; a person who volunteers for relational reasons is at a mid-level of commitment, and a person who volunteers because of a belief in the mission is at a high level of commitment.

Program coordinators and WSU Master Gardener Program volunteers have a responsibility to help people move through the continuum of commitment. To help them move through the continuum we must first meet their needs. We must maximize volunteer satisfaction, because satisfied volunteers are committed volunteers. When a person commits to an organization, they are engaged in the mission and go above and beyond the call of duty. Organizations with engaged and empowered volunteers are successful organizations.

That said, we must make expectations clear, trust volunteers to meet or exceed expectations, define goals, provide volunteers with tools they need to be successful, ensure all volunteers understand policies and procedures, communicate regularly, and, most importantly, give and receive feedback.

Volunteers begin our program with a passion to learn more; as program leaders, we need to channel that passion toward commitment by helping volunteers become competent and confident educators who empower and sustain diverse communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education.

Our Guiding Statements: Slogan, Vision, Mission, Values

Our Slogan or Tagline

The WSU Extension Master Gardener Program slogan is “Volunteer Community Educators—cultivating plants, people, and communities since 1973.”

Our Strategic Vision

Highly recognized, diverse, and fully supported, WSU Master Gardener volunteers are the go-to resource for communities seeking research-based, unbiased, innovative solutions for their ever-changing horticulture and environmental stewardship needs.

Our Mission

Engaging university-trained volunteers to empower and sustain diverse communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education.

Our Values

- We value personal and professional **research** and **discovery** because it encourages us to stay current about horticulture and environmental stewardship to meet the unique educational needs of our communities.
- We foster and benefit from an atmosphere of **diversity** and **inclusivity** because our differences inspire creative thinking and innovative solutions.
- We act with **integrity** because trust, truthfulness, and respect create a healthy and positive culture.
- We are committed to **stewardship** and **sustainability**, serving as ethical and responsible agents of our natural resources, human resources, and University resources.
- We **collaborate** because together we **empower** healthy and resilient communities.
- We are a **dynamic** and **responsive** program where **knowledge** inspires change.

Our Program Priorities

WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers represent WSU Extension and the land-grant heritage it serves. As such, WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers address critical issues by meeting the diverse educational needs of Washington residents that align with our program vision, mission, and values. Faculty, staff, and volunteers should understand and be able to tell a compelling and impactful story about how educational offerings provided by the WSU Master Gardener Program meet local needs and address the following program priorities.



- **Horticulture Skills:** The Master Gardener Program teaches research-based horticulture principles and practices for the development of healthy landscapes and to protect our natural resources.



- **Clean Water:** The Master Gardener Volunteer Program promotes integrated pest management to minimize polluted runoff.



- **Water Conservation:** The Master Gardener Volunteer Program promotes water-wise gardening and landscaping practices to conserve water.



- **Wildfire Preparedness:** The Master Gardener volunteer program teaches Fire-wise landscaping principles to reduce the risk of loss due to wildfire.



- **Local Food:** The Master Gardener Volunteer Program promotes the use of sustainable techniques for growing local food to improve individual and community health and wellness.



- **Pollinators:** The Master Gardener Volunteer Program teaches ways to help native bees and other pollinators thrive in home and community landscapes.



- **Climate Change:** The Master Gardener Volunteer Program teaches ways to create resilient landscapes that are adapted to our changing climate.



- **Plant Biodiversity:** The Master Gardener Volunteer Program promotes stewardship of diverse ecosystems through invasive species management, native species conservation, and restoration in landscapes.



- **Soil Health:** The Master Gardener Program encourages the building of healthy soils to prevent depletion and ensure the long-term viability of local food security and natural resources.



- **Nearby Nature:** The Master Gardener Volunteer Program seeks to increase access to plants, green spaces, and public landscapes to benefit the health and well-being of all members of our communities.

CHAPTER 3: Master Gardener Application, Training, Certification, and Recertification

Application, Selection, Acceptance, and Enrollment

Becoming a Certified WSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer

Washington State residents must apply to and be accepted into a local county WSU Extension Master Gardener program. There are three steps to certification: (1) training; (2) internship; and (3) certification. To remain certified, volunteers must meet the state minimum and county minimum service and continuing education and background screening requirements. Automatic recertification is not granted. Each volunteer must reapply to the program each year. Application, selection, training, and recertification requirements are described below.

Successful Applicants

Successful applicants to the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program must:

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Have a strong volunteer ethic and interest in gardening. Gardening experience is desirable but not required.
- Commit to participate in the WSU Extension Master Gardener Online Basic Training course and to complete the final exam with a minimum score of 80% and all quizzes with an overall average score of at least 80%.
- Commit to participate in the local WSU Extension Master Gardener Program in-class training at a level that is acceptable to the local program coordinator.
- Be available to perform volunteer work as needed by the local WSU Extension Master Gardener Program.
- Agree to donate a state minimum of 40 hours in the first year plus additional volunteer hours that may be required by the local WSU Extension Master Gardener program coordinator.
- Agree to earn a state minimum of ten hours of continuing education (CE) each year plus additional CE that may be required by the local WSU Extension Master Gardener program coordinator.
- Agree to document volunteer hours each month.
- Agree to sign a Pest Management Recommendation Agreement.
- Agree to complete a Child Protection and Vulnerable Adult Training.
- Commit to attending all in-class training sessions required by the local WSU Master Gardener program coordinator.
- Commit to completing all online modules and quizzes with an average score of 80%. The final exam must be completed with at least an 80%.

All potential WSU Master Gardener volunteers must complete an application (online or on paper) and complete an initial criminal background check and subsequent checks every two years. The most up-to-date application and criminal background check can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website.

Application

All WSU Extension volunteers must complete the required applications. Application instructions and forms can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website.

WSU County Extension offices must:

- Publicize the program, training, and application;
- Disclose the background check requirement;
- Provide a general time frame for when training is offered;
- Provide general costs and fees associated with training; and
- Provide an application deadline with a process to apply.

Selection and Acceptance

Program coordinators are responsible for selecting potential volunteers. The selection and acceptance process should, at a minimum, include:

- Interviews of potential volunteers (approved interview questions are on our website) to ascertain whether the candidate is a good fit.
- Completion of at least two reference checks.
- Successful completion of the background check. Background checks that require further review will be routed directly to the WSU Extension Volunteer Development Specialist.
- Correspondence regarding acceptance or non-acceptance into the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program.
- Correspondence regarding how to enroll in both the online and face-to-face portions of training and information on the first day of in-class training (for example, time and location). A sample welcome packet can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program Coordinator website.

Basic Training

WSU Extension Master Gardener Basic Training consists of online and face-to-face training. All volunteers across Washington complete the same online training modules, interactive assignments, quizzes, and final exam. Face-to-face trainings teach volunteers about how to practice what was learned in the online modules through hands-on, interactive, experiential education and how to apply what was learned to specific county projects and programs. Face-to-face session formats vary by county and are dependent upon available resources, instructors, and critical needs. In-class training should supplement and align with the online modules and seek to meet specific county needs and statewide program priorities. A complete and detailed course syllabus should be provided. A sample syllabus and welcome packet can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website on the program coordinator page. Online training modules cover topics such as:

- Botany;
- Soils and plant nutrition;
- Plant pathology and plant problem diagnosis;
- Integrated pest management;
- Pesticide safety;
- Lawns;
- Entomology; and
- Sustainable landscaping.

Internship

Upon acceptance into the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program and after the first in-class training session, trainees may begin serving their internship. Internships are meant to help new volunteers apply what they are learning online and in-class to real-world situations. During an internship, volunteers must work alongside a certified WSU Master Gardener volunteer. County program coordinators can structure internships in a way that works best for meeting the needs of volunteers. However, all counties must meet a minimum statewide requirement of at least 40 hours within the first year of initiating training. Special items of note:

- Continuing education hours do not count toward the internship requirement.
- Intern volunteers must not provide Pest Management Recommendations. Only Certified WSU Extension volunteers have the authority to make pest management recommendations in accordance with WSU Policies and Procedures.
- County program coordinator or county faculty must preapprove all volunteer projects. Unapproved projects will not count toward volunteer hours.
- County program coordinators have the authority to require volunteers to serve a minimum number of hours in specific categories (for example, 15 hours of the 40 hour internship must be served in Answer/Plant Clinic).

Certification

Upon successful completion of basic training and upon successful completion of the volunteer internship, the title of Certified WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer is granted. Hold a recognition event to recognize volunteers who have earned certification. At a minimum, provide a certificate of completion and a name badge for each new certified volunteer. You may also wish to provide an approved spirit marked apron or vest. See the WSU Master Gardener Program website for specific approved items.

Retaining Certification

Automatic recertification in the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program does not carry forward from year to year. Volunteers must reapply to the program each year. Program coordinators must prepare and send either hard copy or electronic reapplication forms. At a minimum, forms must include the county-specific reapplication form, Pest Management Recommendation Agreement, and Foundation Membership.

The following minimum requirements must be met by each volunteer every year to retain certification:

- Volunteer 25 hours of approved community education or service.
- Earn ten hours of continuing education credits.
- Document monthly volunteer hours according to WSU procedures.
- Have an up-to-date background screening completed in accordance with WSU Extension policies for volunteers.

County coordinators may also have additional requirements volunteers must meet to retain certification.

Continuing Education/ Advanced Education

Volunteers must earn at least ten hours of continuing education per year to be considered for reapplication. County coordinators have the option of allowing up to ten hours of excess CE to be carried over to meet the following year's CE requirement, but CE must be reported when earned. Program coordinators must preapprove continuing education and may limit certain categories of continuing education. Continuing education does not count toward a volunteer's internship; nor does it count toward the annual service hour requirement. The purpose of continuing education is to improve volunteers' knowledge and skill base for performing work as community educators in horticulture and environmental stewardship.

What Qualifies for Continuing Education?

- Horticultural courses given by WSU, including retaking basic Master Gardener training.
- Webinars, field trips, and workshops sponsored by Extension.
- Classes offered by accredited institutions, including community colleges, technical colleges, and universities.
- Washington State Department of Agriculture approved pesticide classes.
- Classes taught by professional associations such as Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association, Washington Association of Landscape Professionals, International Society of Arboriculture, etc.
- Time spent doing research preparing a Master Gardeners presentation which is then delivered to the community (limit of four times the length of the presentation).
- Time spent doing research for a newspaper or Master Gardener newsletter article which is then published (limit of four hours).
- Other activities, including training on how programs are planned, delivered, or evaluated; presentation skills; meeting facilitation; etc. may qualify. Contact your program coordinator for preapproval before listing them on your report.

What Does Not Qualify for Continuing Education?

- Trips and tours not preapproved by the program coordinator.
- Garden craft or photography classes.
- Personal research or reading not related to a Master Gardener project.
- Travel time to and from events.
- Anything outside the State of Washington, unless preapproved by the State Master Gardener Program Leader.

CHAPTER 4: Master Gardener Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures

Civil Rights, Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct

Discrimination in all its forms, including discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual misconduct (including sexual assault and other sexual violence), destroys mutual respect and a trusting environment, can bring substantial personal harm to individuals, and violates individual rights. Such behaviors are prohibited and are not tolerated at Washington State University. This policy expresses WSU's commitment to maintain an environment free of all forms of discrimination.

There will be no discrimination on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin, families with children, sex, marital status, sexual orientation (including gender identity), age, genetic history, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, in compliance with (a) Presidential Executive Order 11246, as amended, including the Equal Opportunity Clause contained therein; (b) Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, as amended, and the Affirmative Action Clauses contained therein; (c) the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended; and (d) applicable nondiscrimination laws of the state of Washington.

Concerns and evidence of discrimination in all its forms may be reported to the local WSU Extension office. To do so, the complaint should be addressed to the county director. Upon receipt of a complaint, the county director shall act promptly to mediate, conciliate, or otherwise achieve informal resolution.

WSU Extension will take specific action to reach out in positive ways to persons who are underrepresented in Extension programs and activities, and to increase diversity in employment. This policy will be demonstrated to persons and implemented in communities through all reasonable efforts.

WSU Extension will not participate in any public meeting, nor provide services, nor use facilities of organizations in which persons are excluded because of their race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.

Nondiscrimination Communication Statements

The WSU nondiscrimination policy will be communicated to the public through all appropriate WSU Extension public information channels, in mediums that reach persons hearing or sight-impaired, when necessary to ensure total understanding.

All WSU Extension material must include the nondiscrimination statement. This statement must be included on all printed and web-based material. Use the following statement to meet public notification efforts:

WSU Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension Office.

For long term publications such as Extension bulletins and newsletters where space is not extremely limited use:

WSU Extension programs and policies are consistent with federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, sex, religion, age, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, physical, mental or sensory disability, marital status, sexual orientation or status as a Vietnam-era or disabled veteran. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office.

Where space is limited or materials are used on a short-term basis, such as letters and news releases, or as a signature line on emails, use:

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

The nondiscrimination poster "And Justice for All" must be prominently displayed in all offices permanently used by WSU Extension in serving the public. The poster must also be displayed at all venues used by WSU Extension employees and volunteers.

Serving All Audiences

WSU Extension, as a land-grant institution, shall seek to serve the needs of all audiences. Balanced participation, or parity, occurs when the ethnicity, race, gender, age, religion, and economic characteristics of participants across our portfolio of programs are representative of the county population. A successful Extension program has balanced participation. Documentation of gender and ethnic groups participating in Extension programs is required. Documentation shall include demographics information of the participants attending WSU Extension Master Gardener programs and WSU Extension Master Gardener program volunteers. These data portray how balanced Master Gardener program participation is. Tools for collecting demographic information can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website.

Reasonable Accommodation

All WSU Extension sponsored events, including those cosponsored with a Master Gardener Foundation, must be accessible in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (section 504). All WSU units and event organizers should be familiar with and conform events to these guidelines.

All WSU Extension Master Gardener materials publicizing public or volunteer events, including any event that is cosponsored with a Master Gardener Foundation, must include the following reasonable accommodation language.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication or program information, or reasonable accommodations need to contact (name of contact) at (address, telephone, email) at least (set a specific number of days, weeks) prior to the event.

Or

Reasonable accommodations will be made for persons with disabilities and special needs who contact (name of contact) at (address, telephone, email) at least (set a specific number of days, weeks) prior to the event.

Separation of Church and State

The first amendment of the United States Constitution requires governmental neutrality with regard to religion. Government is restricted to secular purposes and must neither advance nor inhibit religion. Further, Washington State law mandates that all institutions supported by state funds be free of sectarian control or influence.

WSU Extension and its programs are obligated to uphold this principle. Extension events may be held in sectarian facilities provided attendance is open to persons of all beliefs.

Record Keeping

Records must be maintained for a variety of purposes related to civil rights compliance. Work with the county director in your office to ensure compliance. A County Civil Rights Checklist and Filing Guide indicate the type of documents county offices must keep. Tools to collect volunteer and clientele demographic information can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website. An office filing cabinet will be designated as the civil rights file. Electronic records are also acceptable.

More information on civil rights and affirmative action can be found on the WSU Extension website: "Extension is for Everyone."

Lobbying Activities and WSU Extension Volunteers

Activities Permitted

WSU volunteers, when representing WSU, are permitted to provide factual information to public officials or answer questions from the public if it is in their area of training or when it is a core component of that volunteer program.

Activities Not Permitted

WSU volunteers, when representing WSU, are not permitted to promote, or encourage others to promote, state funding proposals that are not official budget requests of Washington State University; or lobby for or against legislation, unless authorized by the University to represent these issues, including voter initiatives, referendums, and other ballot measures.

These restrictions apply to telephone calls, electronic mail, letters, in-person conversations, and other forms of communication with legislators and the public.

Activities Forbidden

WSU volunteers, when representing WSU, are forbidden from using University time or resources to engage in partisan political activity. State law forbids volunteers who are representing WSU from campaigning for or against a ballot measure, except to comment on direct impacts to University programs.

In many cases, it is not legal for state employees or WSU volunteers, as representatives of WSU, to encourage other people and constituencies to contact legislators.

Answering Questions

WSU Master Gardener volunteers are limited to giving advice to home gardeners only. Questions concerning commercial crop and nursery production, municipal parks and trees, homeowner/condo association landscape issues, pesticide regulations, wetlands or waterways, livestock and pasture, legal opinions, pet or human health, and food safety/preservation topics must be referred to the appropriate WSU Extension educator.

For clients with questions about insect and plant identification or plant problem diagnosis that Master Gardeners cannot answer either because they are not permitted to (e.g., commercial, municipal) or because they have exhausted local resources, including staff, the client should be referred to the WSU Plant & Insect Diagnostic Laboratories in Pullman or Puyallup.

For health issues, including a sense of being bitten by something, clients should be referred to their personal medical advisers or to their County Health District. If they have an actual sample of an arthropod, they should be referred to staff or to the WSU Diagnostic Laboratories.

Any questions pertaining to wetlands and waterways (Riparian Zones) should be referred to the client's local planning authority or their County Conservation District. Clients may also be provided with the link to the WSU Shore Stewards program.

Food Safety and Preservation

Master Gardeners are limited to advising home gardeners about growing and harvesting plants, but not about their use after harvest. This includes the use of plants as dyes, herbal remedies, or lotions; preservation of garden produce; and advising on edibility of collected (i.e., foraged) or harvested plants. The potential for individual reactions to herbal medicines and lotions or the potential for food illness from misunderstanding food preservation instructions necessitate such limitations. However, Master Gardeners may share with home gardeners simple recipes and preparation instructions, and nutritional information about commonly cultivated fruits and vegetables from reliable sources provided that such information does not include instructions or information about food preservation or any other food safety issue. If in doubt, consult the Master Gardener coordinator.

Mushrooms and Foraging

It is our strict policy never to identify mushrooms or other plants for edibility and safety. Instead, we note the ways that mushrooms either cause problems for or assist gardeners. Clients may be referred to their local mycological society for mushroom questions, and they may be advised that something is potentially poisonous or dangerous, but a client should never be advised that something is “safe.” If in doubt, consult staff.

Legal Opinions

Volunteers are not authorized to provide legal opinions. When asked about a legal opinion or decision, one suggested response is, “As WSU volunteers, we give general gardening advice. We cannot provide legal advice.” Another suggested response regarding pesticides and their use is, “Washington State Department of Agriculture is the legal authority in Washington for pesticides. We cannot provide legal advice.”

Pest Management Recommendations

When asked for pest management recommendations, WSU Extension Master Gardeners are required to provide an integrated pest management approach which includes information about cultural, mechanical, biological, and chemical methods. Pesticide recommendations must be made from home and garden sections of relevant current WSU publications or other WSU-approved materials. Only certified WSU Master Gardener volunteers are permitted to provide pesticide recommendations and may only do so in accordance with the Pesticide Recommendation Agreement. WSU Master Gardener interns shall work in mentorship with a certified WSU Master Gardener or qualified faculty or staff to learn how to make pesticide recommendations. The most up-to-date approved resources can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website.

WSU will provide defense and indemnification for WSU Master Gardener volunteer pest management recommendations only if all WSU policies and procedures are followed. Compliance with policies is essential for WSU liability coverage.

Plant Problem Diagnosis

When diagnosing plant problems, volunteers should use language such as, “The problem seems to be caused by...” or, “It appears that a cause of this problem may be...” Supporting documents or publications may be included. Avoid making definitive statements such as, “This is clearly herbicide damage,” or, “I’m sure this was caused by a chemical spray.”

Product or Service Endorsement

WSU Master Gardeners shall not endorse any particular product, business, or service. WSU Master Gardeners should mention a product by its chemical name and then include products from several companies to clarify the recommendation. For example, if recommending an insecticidal soap, say “Insecticidal soaps are registered to control this pest. They are found in products such as Natural Guard or Safer Insecticidal Soap, as well as other

products.” Or, if recommending an herbicide, for example, “Glyphosate is labeled for this weed. It can be found in products such as Roundup or Kleenup, as well as other products.” Make clear to not endorse any particular product.

Outreach and Extension Related to Marijuana

Although marijuana use and possession is legal under certain circumstances in Washington State, federal law still considers the growing and possession of marijuana illegal. This means that personnel must refrain from being in possession of the plant for plant diagnostic purposes and shall avoid consulting visits to grow sites and other educational efforts that directly support the cultivation and management of cannabis. This includes insect and disease diagnosis. Doing so could place our federal funds for Extension at risk as well as expose our personnel to federal prosecution.

Until both federal and state laws concur on the cultivation of marijuana within Washington, WSU cannot provide diagnostic services, recommendations, or other information regarding the production, management, or processing of marijuana. At this time, WSU personnel, including student interns, will not engage in any outreach or Extension activity that supports marijuana cultivation, should refrain from being in possession of marijuana for diagnostic purposes, and should not visit sites for the purpose of providing any information or assistance regarding the cultivation of marijuana plants.

Code of Conduct

As a WSU Extension Master Gardener, volunteers will:

- Represent WSU Extension with dignity and pride.
- Respect all persons with whom they interact as a WSU Extension Master Gardener (fellow volunteers, Extension and other county personnel, and the general public).
- Conduct themselves in a courteous, respectful manner and refrain from profanity, harassment, disruptive behavior, or abuse of any kind.
- 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.
- Not consume alcohol, use marijuana, tobacco (including vapor products), or illegal substances while representing WSU Extension.
- Participate as team members within the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program.

WSU Master Gardener volunteers are representatives of WSU Extension and should dress in an appropriate and professional manner. This includes always wearing one’s name badge when serving as a WSU volunteer.

Clothes should be suitable for the activity or location. Office-casual is appropriate for speaking engagements, indoor plant clinics, and schools. Gardening work clothes are appropriate for demonstration gardens and some outdoor events.

Pet Policies *Policy on Non-WSU Facilities*

In situations where animals are allowed on the premises or at events, WSU Master Gardeners should respectfully consider the perspectives of others. Members of the public or fellow WSU Master Gardener volunteers may have allergies to, or may not feel comfortable around, certain animals. In situations where animals are allowed, please use good judgment and check with the event coordinator if you have questions regarding bringing an animal to an event.

Policy on WSU-Owned Facilities

Section WAC 504-36-020 of the Washington Administrative Code governs the control of animals and pets on property owned or controlled by Washington State University. Essentially, animals are not permitted in university buildings. They are not permitted on university property unless under immediate control of their keeper. Keeper includes an owner, handler, trainer, or any person responsible for the control of an animal. “Under control” means the restraint of an animal by means of a leash or other device that physically keeps the animal in the keeper’s immediate proximity. An animal which is otherwise securely confined while in or upon any motor vehicle, including a trailer, is deemed to be under control.

Insurance Coverage and Exclusions

County Extension offices are unique in that they are responsible to two entities. As part of the WSU system, they are accountable to the rules and regulations of the University. Additionally, county Extension offices represent a partnership with local government. In all cases, these offices are housed within buildings owned and operated or leased by county government, and county employees often work in the Extension office. Therefore, it is necessary and prudent to honor the rules and regulations established by the respective county to ensure the safety of their employees. As a working principle, when county governments have requirements that exceed those mandated by WSU, county regulations supersede those from WSU.

Liability, Defense, and Indemnification

WSU and its officers, employees, agents, and volunteers, while acting in good faith within the scope of their official WSU duties (see below), are covered by the State of Washington Self-Insurance Program and the Tort Claims Act (RCW 4.92.060 et seq.). State statute provides that the state may provide a defense and indemnification for any agent of WSU, including a volunteer, against whom claims are filed. Defense and indemnification at WSU is subject to approval by the WSU Board of Regents. The requirements for acting in the official capacity of a WSU volunteer (and, therefore, being covered by WSU liability insurance) are:

- Current enrollment in the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program;
- Compliance with WSU Extension Master Gardener guidelines, WSU policies, and the law;
- Engagement in activities that are planned, approved, and carried out through WSU Extension; and
- Reporting of dates and times of WSU Extension volunteer activities on a monthly basis.

Defense and indemnification are available to volunteers acting within the scope of their duties.

Defense and indemnification are not available to volunteers in the following situations:

- Committing an act with the willful intention of causing injury or harm or committing an act reckless or malicious in nature;
- Committing an act in willful violation of the law or of WSU regulations and policy; or
- Committing an act while under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance; or
- Committing an act that falls outside the scope of approved WSU Extension volunteer duties.

Safety

Every employee and volunteer has a responsibility to follow safety rules and procedures to avoid accidents and to help identify and correct hazardous conditions. WSU volunteer programs, including the Master Gardeners, account for a significant amount of reported injuries for the University. The largest share of these injuries are related to: (1) Slips, trips, and falls; (2) improper lifting; and (3) cuts, abrasions, and other types of wounds.

To achieve the necessary level of safety, WSU Master Gardener volunteers need to be familiar with procedures and equipment associated with the activity they are leading or participating in and the potential hazards of the activity. More specifically, volunteers must be capable of identifying those activities that have the potential to cause accidents, injuries, or disease exposures.

Once a volunteer has identified accident or injury risks, they must be capable of establishing written or verbal instructions, training, demonstrations, modification of activities, or use of personal protective equipment (i.e., gloves, eye protection, helmets)—that will prevent or eliminate the identified risks and the likelihood of injuries.

If an injury occurs, the volunteer must be prepared to provide an appropriate emergency response to the type and extent of injury. This includes determining the severity of the injury, implementing the proper emergency response, informing the member’s emergency contact about the injury, and immediately reporting the injury to program staff or the county director.

Instructional videos on appropriate safety considerations will be made available on the Master Gardener website. These will include modules on (1) slips, trips, and falls; (2) proper lifting; and (3) proper ladder use.

All volunteers must be aware of their surroundings. Regardless of the location, team leaders must provide an orientation on the activity and safe use of all equipment. They must also point out the location of the first aid kit, post the physical address of the site in case an emergency response is needed, and make sure all volunteers are aware of these. If a demonstration garden is located on city, county, or WSU property, a team leader should contact that agency to see if safety committee representation is recommended.

First aid kits must be inventoried on a regular basis, stocked based on WSU recommendations, and inspected to make sure no products have expired.

Pesticides for demonstration gardens must be handled, applied, and stored following all label directions and in accordance with WSU pesticide policies.

Workers Compensation Coverage for Injury

Volunteers currently enrolled in the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program, while acting in good faith within the scope of their official WSU duties, are covered under the WSU workers' compensation coverage through the Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) for injuries/illness resulting from their volunteer activities pursuant to RCW 51.36. Timely entry of volunteer hours into the volunteer database is imperative. L&I coverage may include hospital, physician's care, prescriptions, ambulance, and other associated costs. Loss of income is not covered.

When a workplace accident occurs among WSU employees, volunteers, or visitors, supervisors are responsible for reporting, evaluating, and, when necessary, investigating the incident. Reporting and investigating all accidents is required by state regulations and is an integral part of WSU's accident prevention program. Investigations are conducted to identify factors contributing to the accident and methods for correcting and eliminating these contributing factors.

Report all workplace injuries to your supervisor immediately, and seek medical treatment if needed. Timing is everything: WSU policy requires that all (major and minor) injuries be reported within twenty-four hours. Prompt reporting eliminates delays in benefits to individuals. For injuries that occur over the weekend or after regular business hours (Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm), reports should be submitted the next regular business day after the accident. Major incidents resulting in serious injury (e.g., fracture or amputation), inpatient hospitalization, or death are to be reported immediately.

In the event of an accident, the supervisor completes:

- The WSU Online Incident Report.
 - o ***And If...***
 - The volunteer receives medical treatment; or
 - The volunteer is unable to work the next full or subsequent shift(s) as a result of the injury or illness; or
 - Events and conditions involving a near miss or minor accident indicate that most likely injury or illness would have been serious.
 - o The supervisor completes the Supervisor's Accident Investigation Report.

When visiting a healthcare provider, be sure to indicate you were injured on the job and thus this could be a workers' compensation claim.

The most up-to-date information on completing an injury/illness report can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website.

Independent Activities Not Covered

Although foundations, associations, and other Master Gardener organizations are valued partners and support groups for WSU Extension programs, they are legally independent of WSU Extension. Therefore, WSU is not responsible for their activities, except for those activities approved by, and for the benefit of, the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program.

Thus, when an individual is involved in an activity exclusively sponsored by a non-WSU organization (that is, without the review and approval of authorized WSU Extension staff or not carried out through Extension), they are not covered by WSU liability or WSU workers' compensation insurance.

WSU Master Gardener Branding—Use of Logos

Importance of Branding

"Branding is about much more than logos, colors, and typefaces. The WSU brand consists of the feelings, memories, and expectations that come to mind when people hear or read the word 'Washington State University.' We want our audiences to associate those words with a mental picture of a dynamic, engaged, and forward-looking organization dedicated to making the world a better place" (brand.wsu.edu).

The same is true for all of the programs offered by WSU and is particularly true for the flagship WSU Master Gardener Program. Branding links the WSU Master Gardener Program to WSU, creates a consistent impression across the entire organization, enhances credibility and validity of information, helps guide random or rogue directions, and makes every contributor responsible for building a shared reputation.

Official Logos

Official logos must be used on all official communication from the WSU Master Gardener Program, centrally and from county offices. Official logos are approved by WSU and can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website. No other representations may be used for the organization or its units.

Examples of official communication include:

- Letters
- Brochures
- Posters
- Flyers
- Correspondence
- Tablecloths
- Or any other material or product that represents the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program

Spirit Marks

Spirit marks can be used in conjunction with official logos on official communications, but use is not required. They cannot be used as stand-alone elements on official communications. However, they can be used as stand-alone elements to represent a WSU Extension volunteer on apparel such as hats, shirts, and other unofficial paraphernalia to show a relationship to the official WSU Master Gardener Program and convey individual credibility. Spirit marks have a very limited independent or specific use. Examples of spirit marks and usage of spirit marks can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website.

WSU Master Gardener Titles

The correct title for a volunteer in this program is “Washington State University Extension Master Gardener.” The title “Washington State University [County Name] Master Gardener” may also be used. This title is to be used only for volunteers who are certified in the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program and who are performing unpaid educational and public service as an active WSU Master Gardener. Specific WSU Master Gardener titles change as volunteers move through the program.

- A WSU Master Gardener Trainee is someone who has applied to and has been accepted to the WSU Master Gardener training program to become a WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer. Trainees work through online training and attend in-class trainings.
- A WSU Master Gardener Intern is a trainee who successfully completes training and starts volunteering.
- A Certified WSU Master Gardener has completed all requirements for certification by WSU Extension, as outlined in this handbook.
- A WSU Emeritus Master Gardener is no longer able to fully meet the volunteer service requirement for annual recertification but continues to donate at least one hour of volunteer service per year to retain liability coverage. Emeritus WSU Master Gardeners are required to stay current with their program by submitting a reapplication each year and by participating in required special trainings such as “Put the Child First.” They are also required to attend five hours of CE each year to maintain emeritus status. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the WSU Master Gardener program coordinator in that county. Additional county-specific requirements may apply. Emeritus status can only be granted by local WSU Extension Master Gardener program coordinators. General guidelines for emeritus status include: (1) a minimum of 500 hours of volunteer service; (2) ten years of volunteer service; or (3) exemplary service to the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program. Other county-specific stipulations may also be required. Once emeritus status is granted, a volunteer may not return to being a Certified WSU Master Gardener.

Use of Master Gardener Titles

WSU Extension Master Gardeners should wear their name badges whenever they are engaged in WSU Master Gardener activities. They should not wear or use the Master Gardener title to endorse a product or place of business.

Volunteers may list their WSU Extension Master Gardener training and experience as qualifications when applying for a job. However, they may not give the appearance of being a WSU Extension Master Gardener at their place of employment.

Likewise, when volunteering in WSU Master Gardener activities, volunteers may not wear apparel imprinted with nursery or garden center logos, or with lawn and garden service or other gardening business-related trademarks.

Use of Copyrighted Material

Text, tables, illustrations, photos, graphics, video, and audio segments from the works of others, regardless of the source except for federal entities, are protected by copyright and may not be reproduced by employees, including volunteers, of Washington State University Extension without explicit written permission from the copyright owner or entity. Production of materials that contain copyrighted materials, except for brief sections of text treated as a quotation, must have written permission to protect Washington State University against copyright infringement claims.

Ideas or information from other sources may be used without obtaining permission, provided that the information is expressed in your own words and images (graphics, tables, charts, photos, etc.). When you use information previously produced by others, professional and moral ethics dictate that you give credit by citing the original source.

Questions about copyright should be directed to your local program coordinator, county faculty, or statewide program leader. More information can be found on the program website.

Memoranda of Agreement and Contracts

When WSU Extension works with an external organization (nonprofit or otherwise), a written agreement is needed if goods and services are exchanged, which would include the use of land, facilities, meeting space, office equipment, etc., by either party. Regardless of the purpose of the contract, volunteers are not authorized to sign on behalf of WSU. Generally, there are four circumstances that will require a formal written agreement if Master Gardeners undertake an activity.

Use of WSU or State Property

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between WSU Extension and another organization (including nonprofits), such as an MOA between an Extension office and a county Master Gardener foundation is required. This is initiated by WSU Extension when WSU Extension will be providing use of meeting space, office equipment, storage space, or other goods and services in return for financial and other support from the nonprofit or other organization. The MOA is necessary when using state resources on a regular basis or if there is an exchange of services that needs to be recorded in some manner.

Long-term Facility or Land Use

An MOA between entities for long-term land or facility use, such as between two or more entities for (1) using land for a demonstration garden or (2) a greenhouse for growing plants, is required. These documents define who is responsible for providing services, utilities, payments, liability, etc., and provide assurance for accessing the land or facility.

Short-Term Events

Facility Use Agreement for short term events, such as between two or more entities for a one-day tour, a one-time event, or a multi-day conference.

Short-Term Land Use

Right of Access for land use that is short term. This form is to be used when accessing someone's private property for a specific, short-term, or one-time purpose. An example would be an agreement for accessing someone's property for a plant identification tour.

Photo Release

All photographers taking photographs intended for use in any WSU publication of a marketing or a public relations nature (newsletters, websites, brochures, view books, promotional items, or other such material) must obtain a signed release form from anyone who is visibly recognizable in the photograph. Pictures of crowd scenes taken in a public location where no single person is the dominant feature are exempt.

Releases also must be obtained for photographs posted on the Internet. These rules do not affect photographs taken of news events (for journalistic use), but photos originally taken for news purposes require a release for reuse in marketing materials.

The Photo Release form can be found on the WSU Master Gardener Program website. It is also required as a part of the paperwork all WSU Master Gardener volunteers complete. If you have a form on file for a WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer, there is no need to have it signed again. The photo release is not photo specific; it is person specific and applies to any photo in which the person is recognizable.

Supporting Volunteer Success

It is important to communicate with volunteers clearly and regularly about policies, procedures, and behavior expectations. Most volunteers want to do what is expected of them and will meet expectations when they are clearly and regularly communicated with.

Occasionally, conflicts will arise between volunteers or between program coordinators and a volunteer. Generally, the conflict arises out of miscommunication. It is important to address the potential miscommunication before it leads to problems or problem behaviors in the program.

WSU Extension coordinators have access to a Volunteer Behavior Improvement process to support volunteer engagement and development. Program coordinators are expected to follow this process.

Here are some tips to help with what might be a difficult conversation.

Prepare for the conversation by making sure to know the following:

- How to define the problem behavior;
- How the behavior affects other volunteers;
- How the behavior affects or could potentially affect the WSU Master Gardener Program or WSU Extension;
- How the behavior affects you; and
- What you want for yourself, the volunteer, and the program.

Address the volunteer:

- Arrange a time to discuss the problem behavior with the volunteer in private.
- Clearly explain the problem behavior.
- Ask if there are causes for the behavior, such as a misunderstanding of expectations or experiencing undue stress that affects how they interact with others.
- Engage in mutual problem solving. Describe what you intend to accomplish, what you want for the volunteer, and what you want for the program. Learn from the volunteer what they want to accomplish. Essentially, find mutual purpose and mutual strategies for achieving what you both want.
- Agree on the plan to help the volunteer be successful. Document the date(s) of meeting(s) and the agreement reached between you and the volunteer.
- Follow-up to see if behavior has improved.
- ✓ If it has, thank the volunteer for improvement.
- ✓ If it hasn't, consider termination procedures.

Terminating a Volunteer's Service

On rare occasions, it will be necessary to ask a volunteer to leave the WSU Master Gardener Program. Releasing a volunteer is never a pleasant situation, but if addressing a volunteer's problem behavior does not result in a positive change, then terminating a volunteer's services may be warranted. Consult the WSU Master Gardener Program Statewide Leader and Extension Volunteer Development Specialist prior to pursuing terminating actions.

Receiving Payment

WSU Master Gardener volunteers may NOT receive personal payment for services provided; it is permissible to accept payment to one's local program. All WSU Extension offices have a Master Gardener development account which are specifically set up for this purpose. WSU Master Gardener volunteers may seek reimbursement for expenses incurred. For example, volunteers may seek reimbursement for travel costs or for supplies procured to teach a class.

WSU Extension Master Gardeners may charge a fee for a student to take a class, but only if the fee covers actual class expenses or is applied to the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program.

When volunteers cease active participation (annual recertification) in the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program, they may not accept compensation for teaching or giving presentations using the title of WSU Extension Master Gardener.

Volunteer Transfers from Another County or State

Certified WSU Master Gardener volunteers who change residence from one county to another and want to continue in the WSU Master Gardener Program may be asked by the local program coordinator to do one or more of the following:

- Obtain a letter of reference from the WSU Master Gardener Program coordinator in the previous county of residence.
- Attend an orientation session to understand local program policies, activities, commitments, etc.
- Attend certain or all classes, depending on how different the climate and conditions in the new location are from the previous place of residence.
- If the transferring volunteer has been inactive in their other program for more than one year, the reapplication policy applies.

Master Gardeners transferring from another state are required to enroll in the WSU online training and complete all in-class training requirements to become a WSU Master Gardener volunteer.

Volunteer Hours

WSU Master Gardener Program volunteers empower and sustain diverse communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education that helps to protect our natural resources and which addresses issues of importance across our state. There are a variety of projects and programs in each county that are approved for WSU Master Gardener volunteers to participate in that fulfill certification requirements. Faculty and staff may limit the number of hours served in certain categories that count for certification.

Recording Volunteer Hours

Volunteers are required to record volunteer hours worked in accordance with WSU policies. WSU considers volunteers to be unpaid employees of the University, performing assigned and authorized duties for WSU without pay. Washington State stipulates that volunteers must be covered by workers' compensation insurance. This insurance covers medical expenses but does not cover wage loss. In order to provide workers' compensation insurance, WSU must provide an accurate accounting of the time volunteers are engaged in volunteer activities for the University. It is not appropriate to estimate hours. Actual hours must be reported for each volunteer, monthly.

Activity Categories

In an attempt to measure impact of the WSU Master Gardener Program, volunteers log hours served under specific categories in an online system. Some examples of activities and projects are:

- **Answer/Plant Clinics:** Sites where WSU Master Gardener volunteers provide the public information about horticulture, gardening practices to help solve plant and landscape problems, and sustainable landscape practices. Contact with the public may be face-to-face, by telephone, or email.
- **Demonstration Gardens:** These Gardens are where WSU Master Gardener volunteers teach about plant selection, landscape maintenance, and sustainable gardening practices. Demonstration gardens are outdoor classrooms where WSU Master Gardener volunteers teach classes, hold workshop and demonstrations, or host field days.
 - o Volunteers also prepare educational materials, including fact sheets, plant lists, and plant and garden labels and signs;
 - o Crop yields should be weighed and donated to food banks or other community food programs.
- **Community Gardens:** Community Gardens are spaces where community members can rent a plot to grow crops for personal use or for donation to food banks or other community food program. WSU Master Gardeners may teach, demonstrate, support development, or administer a new or existing community garden. Maintenance of community gardens when no educational component is involved may not be counted as volunteer hours for WSU Master Gardener certification or recertification. WSU Master Gardeners may maintain a minimal bed to use for demonstration of sustainable gardening techniques or practices. Any produce from this bed will be distributed according to the rules developed for the garden. WSU Master Gardeners may not maintain any communal or individual plots. Any physical labor performed is done so as a private citizen, and WSU's liability insurance will not apply.
 - o All participants in community garden efforts must recognize that WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers are educators and advocates for sustainable gardening in their communities. In this spirit, WSU Master Gardener volunteers may assist community partners by:
 - Leading community partners through a step-by-step process to develop a community garden;
 - Helping to assess the suitability of a property for a community garden;
 - Helping to design the garden, including layout of beds and common areas;
 - Providing assistance in acquiring funding and grants, including in-kind donations based on the value of volunteer hours;
 - Arranging for or leading workshops and seminars in the garden; and
 - Giving one-on-one or small group instruction on activities such as preparing soil, planting, cultivation, harvest, pest management, etc.

- **Youth Education:** WSU Master Gardener volunteers teach horticulture and environmental stewardship education to youth. Common activities where WSU Master Gardeners engage youth include school gardens, community gardens, junior master gardener programs, classroom activities and lessons, and age-appropriate curriculum development.
- **Other Activities:** WSU Master Gardener programs offer a variety of horticulture and environmental stewardship education. Examples include horticulture therapy programs for gardeners with limited physical or mental abilities, native plant identification and use, reduction of invasive species, creating presentations, delivering workshops unrelated to a community garden or demonstration garden, writing articles (if approved by program coordinator), compost education, etc.
- **Program Support:** The WSU Master Gardener Program requires much administrative support in planning, implementing, and delivering projects and activities. Volunteers may give time to activities that are approved by the program coordinator that do not result in education but support the WSU Master Gardener Program. Examples include administrative work; office clean-up; fundraising; project, activity, or event planning; and support for Master Gardener Foundation or Associations. Local program coordinators may limit the number of program support hours that qualify for certification or recertification purposes.
 - o Volunteers who join local Master Gardener Foundations or Associations may be required to donate volunteer hours to that organization to help raise money to support the WSU Master Gardener Program. The WSU Extension educator or local program coordinator has the authority to determine and specify how many of these hours may qualify toward certification or recertification hours.
- **Continuing Education (CE):** Volunteers must earn at least ten hours of continuing education per year to be considered for reapplication. County coordinators have the option of allowing up to ten hours of excess CE to be carried over to meet the following year's CE requirement, but CE must be reported when earned. Program coordinators must preapprove continuing education and may limit certain categories of continuing education. Continuing education does not count toward a volunteer's internship.

The purpose of continuing education is to improve volunteers' knowledge and skill base for performing work as community educators in horticulture and environmental stewardship.

What qualifies for continuing education?

- o Horticultural courses given by WSU, including retaking basic Master Gardener training.
- o Webinars, field trips, and workshops sponsored by Extension.
- o Classes offered by accredited institutions: community colleges, technical colleges, universities.
- o WA State Department of Agriculture approved pesticide classes.

- o Classes taught by professional associations, such as Washington State Nursery and Landscape Association, Washington Association of Landscape Professionals, International Society of Arboriculture, etc.
- o Time spent doing research preparing a Master Gardener presentation which is then delivered to the community (limit of four times the length of the presentation).
- o Time spent doing research for a newspaper or Master Gardener newsletter article which is then published (limit of four hours).
- o Other activities, including training on how programs are planned, delivered, or evaluated; presentation skills; meeting facilitation; etc., may qualify. Contact your program coordinator for preapproval before listing them on your report.

What does not qualify for continuing education?

- o Trips and tours not preapproved by the program coordinator.
- o Garden craft or photography classes.
- o Personal research or reading not related to a WSU Master Gardener project.
- o Travel time to and from events.
- o Anything outside the state of Washington unless preapproved by the State WSU Master Gardener Program Leader.

Withdrawal or Leave of Absence

Withdrawal

To cease active participation or to withdraw from the WSU Master Gardener Program, volunteers must notify the program coordinator in writing. In the event a volunteer does not provide notice of withdrawal, but ceases to participate, program coordinators shall attempt to receive notification from the volunteer in writing. Void of communication, program coordinator shall document attempts made. After withdrawal, volunteers may NOT represent themselves as a WSU Master Gardener or use the phrase master gardener to represent themselves.

Leave of Absence

Active volunteers may request a one-year leave of absence from serving the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program without a need to retake training. Leaves of absence shall be granted by the program coordinator in alignment with annual volunteer reapplication. A volunteer may only be granted a single one-year leave during his or her tenure as a WSU Master Gardener volunteer. A volunteer absent from the program for more than a year must reapply and is subject to all fees, training, and internship requirements.

Chapter 5: Fundraising by Master Gardeners for Program Support

Revenue, WSU Accounts, Associations, and Foundations

Generating revenue for local and statewide WSU Master Gardener programs can be done in a variety of ways. However, there are specific rules and laws that govern how funds can be deposited and disbursed. This chapter explains what WSU Master Gardener program coordinators, volunteers and foundation representatives need to know to ensure federal and state regulations are followed.

Examples of How to Generate Revenue

- Plant Sales, raffles, or auctions;
- Fees for service such as classes, workshops, and tours;
- Sales of books, publications, and program-related products, such as compost bins at events;
- Gifts and donations to the state or local program; and
- Gifts and donations to WSU, state, or local foundations.

If your county chooses to deposit funds in a WSU account, the first three bulleted examples above require a workshop, service center, or a 17A development account. The fourth bulleted example requires a 17A development account. Please contact your WSU county director or unit administrative manager for assistance or clarification on which account to use. Gifts to an association or foundation are discussed below.

Rules and Regulations Related to Fundraising

WSU Master Gardeners may raise money for program support, and that money may be handled through WSU Foundation accounts or through separate Master Gardener Foundations or Associations.

1. The WSU Foundation is an agent of WSU that promotes, accepts, and manages all private gifts and private grants made to WSU. Overseen by a board of trustees and through services provided by the University, the foundation manages all gifts in accordance with the donor's wishes, within applicable state laws. Every county with a WSU Master Gardener Program has an account at the WSU Foundation called the [Name of County] Master Gardener Development Fund. These were set up by WSU in the mid-1990s as a means to accept private donations. WSU Master Gardeners may raise money and deposit funds or tax-exempt gifts into their county's Master Gardener 17A development account. No association or local foundation is necessary to administer these accounts. The county director, in collaboration with the program coordinator, is responsible for the oversight of these funds. Donation/gift checks must be made out to the WSU Foundation and marked for support of the local county Extension Master Gardener Program. The WSU Foundation also manages the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State (MGFWS) Endowment Fund, established by the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State in support of its mission to provide advanced education to WSU Master Gardeners.

For more information, contact the WSU CAHNRS/Extension Office of Alumni and Friends.

2. **Master Gardener associations** are established to financially support the WSU Master Gardener Program either within a county or statewide. These associations are independent organizations (not part of WSU) that operate under memoranda of agreement (MOA) with Washington State University. Fundraising activities of these associations may include receipt of cash or in-kind donations. Often the donor assumes that these donations are tax-exempt. However, an association must meet specific legal requirements in order to accept tax-exempt gifts. The following is a summary of the different categories of current Master Gardener associations in Washington State. Each has restrictions as to how—or if—it can receive tax-exempt donations.
 - a. **Nonprofit Corporation.** This simply means that an association is registered with the Secretary of State as a nonprofit. However, this does NOT allow the association to solicit or receive tax-exempt donations unless one of the following conditions (see items b or c) also exists. If the association accepts tax-exempt donations in a manner other than those listed below (see items b or c), then the association most likely violates federal laws or regulations.
 - b. **Dependent Chapters of the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State.** MGFWS Dependent Chapters are unincorporated county associations who do not have independent 501(c)(3) legal status and therefore do not have authority to accept tax deductible donations. Dependent chapters accept donations using the tax-exempt status of the MGFWS. Counties seeking dependent status must apply, be accepted, and agree to abide by all rules and regulations set forth by the MGFWS and other relative cognizant authorities. Soliciting and accepting tax deductible donations under the sponsorship of the MGFWS is only permitted if the MGFWS' operating and reporting requirements are followed. Contact the MGFWS president for further information.
 - c. **Independent 501(c)(3) Charitable Organization/Foundation.** Any Master Gardener association or foundation that is incorporated as a Washington nonprofit organization and has been designated by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization or foundation can receive tax-exempt gifts and deposit these funds into an account held by the association. Checks must be made payable to the association and not to WSU.

Receiving Gift Donations to Master Gardener Associations

A donation check must be made out to the proper entity: it should NOT be made out to WSU, WSU Extension, WSU [county name] County Extension, or any other component of WSU. Checks should be made out to the WSU Foundation only if funds are to be deposited within a WSU Foundation account in the county.

If a Master Gardener association cannot receive a tax-exempt gift because it is not a registered 501(c)(3) organization or a MGFWS Dependent Chapter, the association should immediately inform the donor that their gift is not tax deductible. It is further recommended that the association print this on any receipt issued to a donor. In this case, if the donor wishes to make a tax-deductible donation, the donation must be made through the WSU Foundation or through the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State (for charter/dependent chapters). All donations should be followed by issuance of a receipt.

Donations must be deposited appropriately. Funds should NEVER be deposited into an account held by an individual or organization other than the county Master Gardener association (assuming that the organization is a registered nonprofit corporation), the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State, or the WSU Foundation.

A county Master Gardener association may not accept donations unless the association is a registered Washington nonprofit corporation. And, if the gift is to be tax deductible, the gift must be deposited into an account held by a registered 501(c)(3) organization. This can be a county Master Gardener association—if it is appropriately registered as a 501(c)(3)—the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State (if the local chapter is a charter/dependent chapter of the MGFWS), or the WSU Foundation.

The manner in which donations are solicited is regulated by The Charitable Solicitations Act (RCW 19.09), The Consumer Protection Act (19.86), etc. Associations may want to seek occasional legal advice to ensure compliance.

Master Gardener associations interested in becoming a nonprofit corporation are encouraged to become familiar with the Washington Nonprofit Corporation Act (RCW 24.03) and to seek legal advice from an attorney. The Washington Nonprofit Handbook: How to Form and Maintain a Nonprofit Corporation in Washington State is a useful reference for both new and established nonprofit corporations. A free PDF of the handbook is available for downloading from the Secretary of State website.

CHAPTER 6: Master Gardener Foundations

Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State

WSU recognizes the Master Gardener Foundation of Washington State as a partner in the delivery of research-based horticultural programs to individuals, communities, and horticultural professionals with the purpose of promoting human well-being, enhancing our environment, and encouraging community stewardship. The Foundation works in cooperation with WSU Extension Master Gardener Program leadership to provide volunteer-based unifying leadership to, and communication among, county and regional WSU Master Gardener programs, foundations, and affiliates to share best practices and to support the Annual State Advanced Education Conference.

Local Master Gardener Foundations and Associations

Master Gardener Foundations or Associations have been formed in some counties to work in partnership with local WSU Extension Master Gardener programs. Foundations or Associations must be one of the following:

1. Be formally incorporated and recognized by the state of Washington and by the IRS as an independent 501(c)(3) organization; or
2. Be unincorporated and recognized by the MGFWS as a dependent chapter of the MGFWS.

In support of statewide advanced education and best practice sharing, local, registered 501(c)(3) associations or foundations are encouraged to become chartered chapters of the MGFWS.

Ultimate responsibility and authority for the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program lies with WSU Extension faculty and staff and with the WSU Master Gardener Program volunteers who have been entrusted to carry out program goals in each county. Master Gardener Foundations and the WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers who serve their local Associations/Foundations provide much-needed financial support and are vital team players in WSU Extension Master Gardener Program improvement.

The specific roles and responsibilities that each local Master Gardener Foundation or Association has with the WSU Extension Master Gardener Program are described in an MOA between that organization and WSU Extension in each county. WSU Extension faculty and staff manage the MOA process. This guiding document is essential for the clear leadership of WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers and compliance with state ethics laws. Membership in a Master Gardener Foundation or Association is not required for WSU Master Gardener Program participation.

APPENDIX A

WSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Position Description

Title: WSU Master Gardener Volunteer.

Purpose: To provide research-based public education in gardening and environmental stewardship for the protection of Washington's natural resources and to address critical issues facing Washington residents. WSU Extension Master Gardeners empower and sustain diverse communities with relevant, unbiased, research-based horticulture and environmental stewardship education.

Nature and 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 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 formal and informal activities, including plant clinics, telephone, email, and personal contacts, demonstrations, classes, written and online material, school programs, demonstration gardens, public meetings, tours, etc.

Requirements:

- Be able to participate fully in the training program provided for WSU Master Gardener volunteers, which requires computer access and basic computer, internet, and email skills.
- 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 procedures, including online record-keeping requirements, and respond to reasonable requests for volunteer services.
- 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, email, 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 youth and be willing to share home gardening information with others.

Supervision: The local Extension staff in charge of a county's WSU Master Gardener Program oversees and coordinates the activities of Master Gardener volunteers.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

