



Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program Policy

Effective February 1, 2013

Requirements for Training and Certification, Volunteer Activities, Documentation, and Use of the Master Gardener Title



The Master Gardener Program, administered by the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension in Cochise County, is a partnership between Cooperative Extension and volunteers enrolled in the program. Cooperative Extension trains, certifies, and supervises Master Gardener volunteers who help Cooperative Extension provide information that is endorsed by the University of Arizona on home horticulture to the public.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Upon acceptance into the Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Training Program, volunteers are designated as Associate Master Gardeners. In order to become certified, an Associate Master Gardener must:

1. Complete the Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Training Course. Attendance is mandatory and no more than 3 absences will be excused (make-ups are required for excused absences).
2. Complete the final exam.
3. Complete the harassment prevention training.
4. Complete and document 50 hours of approved volunteer service by June 30th of the year following the completion of training (i.e. a little over 1 year after training).
5. When a volunteer will be working with a member of a vulnerable population (minors, elderly over age 65, or individuals with disabilities) or will have significant financial responsibilities, the volunteer must have a satisfactory outcome from the criminal background check.
6. Maintain signed, current copies of the Memorandum of Agreement and Multimedia Release Authorization on file at the Cooperative Extension office.
7. Maintain current Designated Campus Colleague status by confirming acceptance as requested in the annual notification you will receive via your University of Arizona email address. Confirmation of acceptance should be completed annually by June 30th.

Note: Master Gardeners from other counties/states must complete the Cochise County Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Training course before becoming active Master Gardeners in Cochise County.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

To remain certified, Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners must:

- Submit documentation of completion of 25 hours of approved volunteer service and 12 hours of approved continuing education hours per fiscal year. The fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th.
- Maintain signed, current copies of the Memorandum of Agreement and Multimedia Release Authorization on file at the Cooperative Extension office.

In order for activities to count toward approved volunteer service, the Associate or Certified Master Gardener must be identified as a Master Gardener by wearing a Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Badge. If applicable, promotion of the event should include reference to the contribution made by Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners.

The following activities count toward approved volunteer service:

- A. Performing free educational activity that provides information on non-commercial horticulture and gardening to the public when you are represented as a UA Cooperative Extension Master Gardener.
- B. Answering home gardening and pest management phone calls and helping visitors at the Cooperative Extension Office or Satellite Offices.
- C. Conducting unpaid horticulture presentations, demonstrations, tours, plant clinics, staffing exhibits, helping with seminars, etc., when you are represented as a UA Cooperative Extension Master Gardener.
- D. Demonstration gardens. Creation and maintenance of sanctioned educational gardens used for teaching about plant selection and maintenance and sustainable gardening practices may be counted as volunteer hours.
- E. Making unpaid radio and TV appearances.
- F. Writing unpaid articles for a newspaper or newsletter and preparing publications. Any article developed must be approved by a Cooperative Extension agent prior to submission. Anyone publishing an article without permission should not refer to themselves as a Master Gardener and will not receive credit for service hours. The byline must include "University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Master Gardener."
- G. Spending time organizing, researching, planning, and preparing for a talk, plant clinic, educational exhibit, seminar, or other Master Gardener project or event.
- H. Preparing art work, posters, fliers, or displays that benefit the Master Gardener Program or the Cooperative Extension.
- I. Spending time on committees or as a coordinator for any Master Gardener purpose.
- J. Working with other groups as an educator or organizer of a horticultural event.
- K. Participation in Cochise County Master Gardener Association (CCMGA) monthly meeting (maximum of 1 hour per meeting).
- L. Organizing reference materials and performing clerical or administrative work for the Master Gardener Program or Cooperative Extension.
- M. Picking up and delivering supplies for a talk, clinic, exhibit, seminar, or other Master Gardener functions.
- N. Working on research projects and reports for the purpose of developing and disseminating information on non-commercial horticulture or pest control topics under the supervision of a Cooperative Extension agent.
- O. Traveling to and from a volunteer activity.

Notes: 1) Hours beyond the minimum requirement may not be carried over to the next year.

2) Materials (e.g. presentations, photographs, etc.) that are created on "volunteer time" shall be made available for use by other Master Gardeners.

OTHER APPROVED VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

When the Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program began, Master Gardeners primarily answered telephone requests for horticultural information. They also staffed plant clinics and information booths. Those opportunities are still vital to Cooperative Extension.

In recent years, however, creative Master Gardener and Cooperative Extension agents have recognized that talents which citizens bring to the Master Gardener Program can be utilized in a variety of horticultural activities.

The activities described above are by no means a complete list. Please consult the Cochise County Cooperative Extension Agent if you have any questions or are in doubt about a project being eligible to fulfill your volunteer requirement.

Exceptions to the above rules for volunteer hours may be granted by the Cooperative Extension Agent or their designee.

ACTIVITIES THAT DO NOT COUNT TOWARDS VOLUNTEER HOURS OF SERVICE

The following activities do not count as volunteer hours:

- Physical labor for a community garden, home gardener, or community group cannot be counted unless it is being done to teach others. However, installation, maintenance and support of sanctioned educational gardens may be counted as volunteer hours. Contact the Cochise County Cooperative Extension Agent to find out if a project is eligible. Keep in mind that we are educators, not a free source of labor for other agencies or community groups.
- Volunteer service performed on behalf of another organization.
- Attendance at continuing education projects.
- Any activity for which you charge a fee.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

As representatives of the UA Cooperative Extension, Master Gardeners are expected to keep abreast of current local horticulture issues and current UA recommendations, and in general are encouraged to continue to increase their knowledge of home gardening. No hours are required of Associate Master Gardeners. The requirement for Master Gardeners of 12 hours of continuing education per fiscal year can be achieved by attending such things as:

- Monthly CCMGA Speaker Session.
- Local garden seminars.
- Horticulture courses given by UA, including re-taking of some MG basic training sessions.
- Webinars, field trips, and workshops sponsored by Extension.
- Classes offered by accredited institutions: community colleges, technical colleges, and universities.
- Classes offered by professional associations.
- Arizona Department of Agriculture approved pesticide classes.
- Master Gardener conference workshops.
- Time spent doing research preparing a MG presentation that is then delivered to the community (research-time limit of 4 times the length of the presentation).
- Time spent doing research for a newspaper or MG newsletter article that is then published (limit of 4 hours).
- Other activities, including training on presentation skills, meeting facilitation, or how programs are planned, delivered, or evaluated, etc. may qualify. These must be pre-approved for continuing education credit.

What does not qualify?

- Travel time is not counted toward continuing education hours.
- Personal trips and tours not pre-approved.
- Personal research or reading not related to a specific MG project.

REPORTING HOURS

Record of volunteer service and continuing education must be submitted on the official reporting form (either electronically or manually). Documentation must be legible and contain a sufficient description for each activity. Manual submission: submit one copy to the Cochise County Cooperative Extension Office monthly, if possible, and retain one copy for personal records. Both volunteer and continuing education hours must be reported by June 30th for fiscal year reports and by December 31st for annual reports.

EXCEPTIONS

Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners who have substantially, but not completely, fulfilled the volunteer &/or continuing education requirement may submit a written request to the Cooperative Extension Agent in charge to be allowed to donate the remaining service during the following year in addition to that year's requirements during the next year.

Master Gardeners who do not meet these criteria due to illness, family emergency, or other reasons may submit a written request to the Extension Agent in charge in order to be classified as temporarily inactive. Temporarily inactive Master Gardeners will be required to complete only the current year's requirements during the next year.

Any Master Gardener who resigns or has been "inactive" may submit a request to rejoin the program to the Extension Agent in charge. The request should include plans for completing 25 volunteer and 12 continuing education hours within 12 months.

USE OF THE MASTER GARDENER TITLE

As a Master Gardener you are representing the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. Your Associate or Certified Master Gardener name badge must be worn when you are engaged in Master Gardener activities.

You may not charge for services you provide as a Master Gardener except to request reimbursement for personal expenses such as travel and duplication of handouts, etc. If you are charging for a service, you may not do so as an official representative of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program.

Master Gardener credentials may be proudly displayed, except when the use of such implies endorsement by the University of Arizona or Cooperative Extension for monetary gains.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER DESIGNATIONS

The table below further defines the Master Gardener designations, active and in- active status and privileges.

| MG Designation | Criteria | MG Status | CCMGA Voting Status |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|----------------------------|
| Associate Master Gardener | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attending training class or working on first 50 volunteer hours. | Active | Non-voting member |
| Certified Master Gardener | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed MG training course & first 50 volunteer hours. Signed Memorandum of Agreement on file. Completed 25 volunteer hours and 12 continuing education hours each fiscal year (subsequent to 50 volunteer hours the first year). If unable to meet the volunteer or continuing education criteria, have approved Waiver or Leave of Absence on file. | Active | Voting member |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One fiscal year with less than 25 volunteer and 12 continuing education hours or have not completed 50 volunteer hours within one fiscal year of class completion and no approved Waiver, Extension, or Leave of Absence on file. | Inactive | Non-voting member |
| | <p><u>MG Reinstatement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To return from inactive status, must submit written request, with plan for completing first 50 hours or 25 volunteer and 12 continuing education hours within 12 months. If no hours submitted within first six months, will be moved back to inactive status. | Inactive | Non-voting member |
| Master Gardener Emeritus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 consecutive years or more with an active status. No volunteer or continuing education hours required to maintain active status. | Active | Voting member |
| Honorary Master Gardener | <p>The title may be bestowed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to someone who has not completed the Master Gardener training, but who has made significant "above and beyond" contributions to the Cooperative Extension Master Gardener program in Cochise County. by the Cooperative Extension Agent. The plan to bestow the title will be discussed with the CCMGA Executive Board and Membership Committee in advance. <p>Honoree is not entitled to Master Gardener nametag and may not present himself/herself as a Master Gardener.</p> | N/A | No voting rights |

Note: Fiscal year = July 1st to June 30th

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