



Christian County Master Gardeners Across the Garden Gate



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A New Year, My Job, A New Volunteer Time Record Sheet, The Same Course

The Missouri Master Gardener Program is facilitated through local University of Missouri Extension Offices. In most cases, the local agriculture specialist functions as the Local MG Coordinator, in Christian County that is Gordon Carriker (me). In many cases, the MGs form a “club” (the Christian County Master Gardeners) and proceed to do many good things for the local community in the form of volunteer service. That service might include answering horticultural questions, helping with local community garden beautifications projects, speaking to community organizations on horticultural topics, maintaining existing community gardens as “demonstration” projects gardens, as well as increasing their own horticultural knowledge.

As the local Master Gardener Coordinator for the Christian County MGs, my role is basically two-fold: facilitate the success of the CCMGs

and report that success to the Missouri State MG Coordinator, Mary Kroening. My primary responsibilities as facilitator involve coordinating the local MG training and helping the CCMG Executive Board when needed. Another responsibility I have is to make sure the CCMGs operate in accordance with the State MG by-laws as well as Christian County Extension Council Policies and Procedures. This latter responsibility is necessary because the CCMGs operate under the umbrella of University of Missouri Extension and the Christian County Extension Council. Now that the CCMGs have been up and running for a year, it is clear to me that my job as facilitator is most personally rewarding. My role as reporter, on the other hand, is both rewarding as well as tedious. I get to brag on all of your

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MEET AND GREET CHRIS HARSTICK: A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

An email conversation between Chris Harstick and Barbara Self follows.

Barbara: Besides Master Gardeners, what are your interests?

Chris: I love to dance. Pat and I belong to three dance clubs in Springfield. I volunteer at St. John's, sing with Mid America Singers, love to play bridge and nickel-dime poker, and cook weird dishes like lamb vindaloo and Sauerbraten.

Barbara: The major part of your life has been spent where?

Chris: I spent 50 years in St. Louis.

Barbara: What attracted you to this area?

Chris: The beautiful land, great people, and a much slower pace than Houston, Texas.

Barbara: Tell us about your family.

Chris: Pat and I were widow and widower when we married 12 years ago. We have a total of six children and 15 and 1/2 grandchildren. Pat is from Jacksonville, Florida, and I am from St. Louis, but we met and married in Houston. We have a large and

wonderful family which keeps us pretty busy.

Barbara: Contrast the joys and sorrows of gardening in Missouri and Texas.

Chris: Texas was great for hot peppers, citrus trees, and herbs. We had a rosemary TREE in our yard. I love the four seasons we have in Missouri and all the different things we grow here. The trees in Missouri are also beautiful and different than those in Houston.

Barbara: You are responsible for the Hotline, for the Speaker's Bureau, on the Fundraising Committee, and self-appointed historian. What accounts for your dedication to Master Gardeners?

Chris: We have a great bunch of people, all doing what I love. I really want the CCMG to prosper and grow. We can do so much for the community while we enjoy ourselves "digging" in the dirt."

Barbara: What is the most interesting/funny/outrageous question you have been asked on the Hotline?

Chris: A lady asked how to get rid of little flying bugs in her kitchen. They were fruit flies, and I told her to throw out the old fruit in her fruit bowl. How's that for a gardening

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question?

Barbara: From what career did you retire?

Chris: I spent 37 years as a research chemist.

Barbara: Sum up your concerns about our Earth and how Master Gardener training can help you teach responsible stewardship.

Chris: I do worry about all kinds of pollution, most of which I can do little about, but if we can teach people to be responsible with lawn and garden chemicals, I believe we will make a contribution.

Barbara Self 743-4914
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BURYING FLOWERS?

Knowing I had an article to turn in for the newsletter reminded me of the pressure of having a term paper due. Being much older and a little bit wiser, I decided not to wait until the night before to “write my report.” But what do you write about gardening in the winter?

That question makes me think back. Once while I was setting out some bedding plants, I got a phone call. I yelled for one of the kids to take a message. I found out later that upon being asked what I was doing, the little darling replied, “Oh, she’s busy burying flowers.”

I have improved my technique since then. My first breakthrough came when I planted miniature pumpkin seeds. They lived and turned into dozens of little pumpkins. From then on, I was hooked.

I joined Master Gardeners because I enjoy my garden, but I realize how little I do know. I enjoy learning from other members and our speakers. I also enjoy associating with people who “speak the same language.” Let’s Keep Growing Together... the new seed catalogs are on the way!

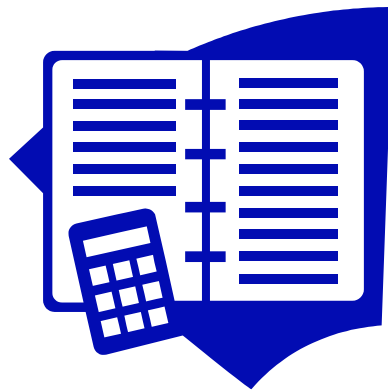
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successes, but also have to fulfill my responsibilities to the State MG Coordinator by adding up all your volunteer hours and contacts and reporting them as close to January 1 of the following year as possible.

Your help in keeping track of your volunteer hours and the number of contacts you make is much appreciated, although I'm sure many of you see it as a chore. However, in these fiscally challenging times, with State and Local governments tightening their budgetary belts, these numbers are useful to argue that the MGs make an impact and, like the MU Extension program as a whole, should be supported statewide as well as locally.



I want to spend a little time on the Volunteer Record Sheet and how to use it correctly. This past year very few "# of Contacts" were reported. If you speak to someone about Master Gardeners, answer even the simplest horticulture question, or are approached at one of the gardens and mention MGs, that counts as a contact...please report it. Now for time reporting... please remember to report to the nearest 1/2 hour and do not include your travel time. On the back of your record

sheet, there is a rule of thumb, "Does this activity contribute to the goals and mission of the local Extension program?" If you answer "Yes" then count the time.

"Administration" time will usually be reported only by the local Extension Board members and project coordinators and team leaders. "Monthly Meetings" usually last about 1 and 1/2 hours when there is a speaker; a little more on this later. Include time spent on "Demonstration Gardens/Projects" which the

CCMGs have adopted as a group regardless of whether it was time spent weeding, planting, placing labels, preparing labels; remember to report any contacts. "Other Public Education" should be looked at as an "output" activity such as speaking to groups. "Fairs/Shows" includes manning exhibits at such things as the Christian County Fair. "Fundraising" is self explanatory. Helping prepare or writing an article for the newsletter (Across the Garden Gate), or any other print media or giving an interview for any media should be recorded as "Newsletter/News Releases" time. "Hotline" is self explanatory, but remember to record contacts here as well as the record sheets at the Hotline office. "Continuing Education" should be considered an "input" activity where you are increasing your

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horticulture knowledge...so if the speaker at the monthly meeting is providing horticultural information, that portion of the monthly meeting time should be recorded here not under "Monthly Meeting". "Other" is a sort of catchall category where you can record time on non-group projects/gardens, advice to individuals/neighbors, etc.

I know that many of you who reported hours for 2005 did not report all of your hours. I hope that was not because the reporting form was confusing. I realize that volunteering is a state of mind and keeping track of your time may be new to many of you. A tip, for those of you who carry a day-minder or small calendar with you... write down your time and number of contacts on it that day...that's how I keep track of my Extension time and it seems to work pretty well. If you need more time sheets, I'll try to make sure there are some available at every monthly meeting, and I'll make one available on the website:

<http://extension.missouri.edu/christian/ccmastergardener>

I want to congratulate the CCMGs for shining in 2005. You topped the state in volunteer hours per MG reporting. You should be very proud of that as well as your many accomplishments in your first year. For

2006, stay the course and have a great gardening year.

Gordon Carriker 581-3558
carriker@missouri.edu

SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE?

Garden gate Magazine has a helpful column called "Reader Tips." Really simple and economical ideas are submitted. Examples: Use Clorox Wipes to disinfect pruners between cuts-or-Cap an old, cracked hose at one end, poke holes in it and you end up with a perfectly good soaker hose.

Proposal: The ideas selected for publication garner \$25. How about it, CCMGs? We could do this en masse and donate our loot to the CCMG bank account. Start thinking. I'll start collecting February 16th.

Barbara Self 743-4914
danbarbaraself@juno.com



UPCOMING EVENTS

Annie's Project. Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27, March 6 and 13. Six-part business course for farm women. Sky-line High School Vo Ag Building. Contact Wesley Tucker, (417) 745-6767.

Garden Center Basic Training. Workshop for employees of businesses that retail fertilizer and pesticides. Three four-hour classes Jan. 19, Feb. 16, and March 7. Contact Polk County Extension (417) 326-4916.

Missouri Woodland Steward Short Course. Five sessions on principles and practices of forest and wildlife management. Feb. 7, 9, 21, 28 from 7-9 P.M. in Williams Ag Building, Neosho. Concludes with field trip March 4, 8-noon. Limited to 50 people, \$10 per person. Contact Skip Morelia, 732-6485.

26th Annual Missouri Small Fruit and Vegetable Conference. Feb. 20-21-22. Clarion Hotel, Springfield. For conference fee only, registration is \$45 per farm or family. Contact Patrick Byers or Pam Myers (417) 547-7500.

Beekeepers Association of the Ozarks. Jan 31 and Feb. 7. Beginning beekeeping class. 6:30-8:30 P.M., Library Center, Springfield.

Water Festival. Water Festival with James River Basin Partnership. Feb. 15, 16 and Feb. 23, 24. Contact Kathy Workman, (417) 581-3558.

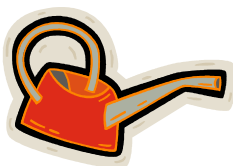
Travel. Master Gardener Trip to Scotland. July 21-30. Contact Mary Kroening@Kroening,@missouri.edu. (573) 882-9633 –or– Nancy Luechtefeld, Coronet Travel, (314) 721-1170 nancy@coronetravel.com

“Get Your Kicks on Route 66.” Sept. 15-17. State Master Gardener Conference. Clarion Hotel, Springfield.

Springfield Lawn and Garden Show. Ozark Empire Fairgrounds, E*Plex, \$4, Over 100 Exhibitors, Feb 17, 18, 19, 10A.M.-8P.M. except Sunday when closes at 5P.M..

“Some Enchanted Spring” Wichita Garden Show. March 1-5, Downtown Wichita, Kansas. Rated one of the top ten shows in the country.

Christian County Master Gardeners Monthly Meeting. Feb.16, Community Room of the Empire Bank, Nixa. Annual Dues deadline. \$5 per person.



An Important Notice of Change ANNUAL DUES

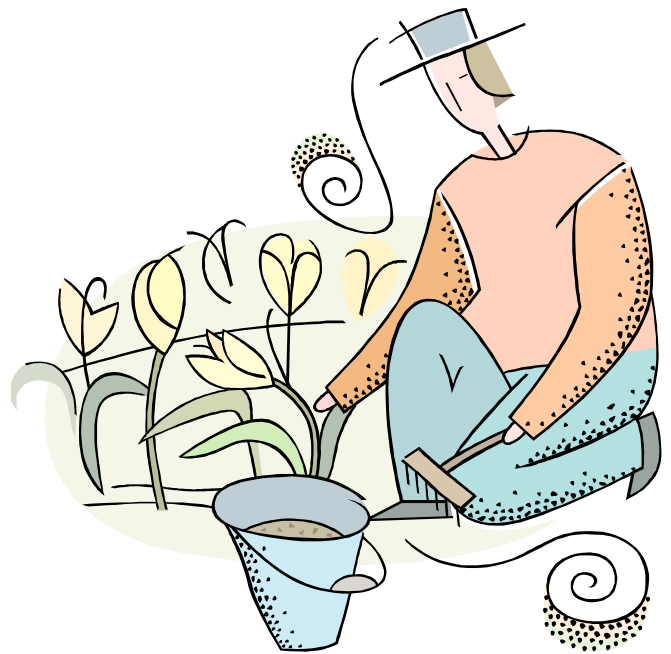
At the January 19, 2006, planning meeting of the Christian County Master Gardeners, it was decided by the members attending that in our second year of existence, we would initiate an annual fee of \$5 per member per year. February 16 has been designated as the due date this year; however, the date would be the first scheduled meeting in January thereafter.

This fee would entitle active members to receive the newsletter and other announcements by helping to defray some of the cost of preparation and postage.

We've made such strides in our organizational year. The enthusiasm and dedication still drive our success as a group. With growth comes change and new responsibility. Please attend our meeting on February 16 prepared to pay your \$5, or if you are unable to join us, send your money before February 16 to Treasurer Judy Evans, 617 N. Brown, Springfield, Missouri 65802.

Please use the attached form.

First name: Last name:
Phone:
Street Address:
City and Zip:
Email:
When did you become a Master
Gardener:



Chameleon Flower: How Hydrangeas Change Color

Hydrangeas can change from pink to blue or vice versa. The key to changing the color lies in the PH (degree of acidity) of the soil they grow in. To create colors you like, test your soil and amend it at the end of the growing season. Be patient; it can take a year for the flowers to change.

As the soil's PH reaches the neutral range of 7 and higher, flowers turn from blue to lavender, mauve, and finally pink. If you want pink flowers, add hydrated lime to the soil at the rate of one tablespoon per plant. For blue color, dissolve one pound of aluminum sulfate in five gallons of water and apply one gallon per plant in August. Repeat until frost.

Merry Lowrance 724-0090

HOTLINE IS HAPPENING

Chris Harstick, Hotline Coordinator, reports that the Christian County Master Gardener Hotline will commence again on Tuesday, February 21, with hours 8:30-noon, Monday through Friday. The ending date will be confirmed at a later time, but tentatively is set for the last week in September.

Chris plans to hold a training session in the near future. Usually one to two people are scheduled for each morning to man the phone at the Christian County Extension Office located at 105 North 2nd Street in Ozark. A comprehensive library and set of files are available to the CCMGs to aid in answering questions.

NOW THE IMPORTANT PART. Chris needs willing volunteers to sign up for the Hotline. Veteran Hotliners will assure you that the experience is not as scary as it sounds, you learn as you teach, and you talk with people who share your interests.

Barbara Self 743-4914
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THANK YOU

Dear Christian County Master Gardeners,

Thanks so much for the nice gift card to Harter House. I can't say I've ever shopped there before, but Danielle and I will enjoy the treats I'll buy.

Again, thanks so much. I hope everyone had a great holiday.

Sincerely,
Gordon

GARDENING TIPS FOR LATE WINTER

Who says there's not much to do?

- Check on stored bulbs to make sure they are not rotting or drying out.
- Start enjoying an early spring by forcing forsythia, pussy willow and ornamental quinces. Wrap cuttings in paper towels and store in the basement for 3-4 days. Then bring upstairs to your favorite room.
- Start that journal or almanac now.
- If poinsettias are dropping their leaves, it means the plant is going into its natural resting period.
- Sow pansy seeds indoors if you haven't already.
- To clean heavily encrusted pots, scrub with steel wool after they have soaked overnight in 1 c. white vinegar and 1 c. bleach to 1 c. water.
- Sow seeds of celery, onion, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts indoors.
- Do a "rag doll" germination test on last year's seed. Roll 10-20 seeds in a damp paper towel. Keep them moist and in a warm location. Germination of good seeds will occur within a week. If not, order more seeds. Seeds having a short storage life of 1-2 years are sweet corn, onions, okra, and bean.
- Compost those shriveling, rotting vegetables in storage.
- Prune deciduous trees and shrubs unless it is very cold.

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- Wood ashes which have been stored in sealed, fireproof containers can be scattered around lilacs, baby's breath, asters, lilies, and roses in the spring, but NOT acid loving plants. Excess ashes can be composted.
- Avoid damage to evergreen plants like hollies, azaleas, and boxwoods by supplying water if soil is dry.
- **LAST BUT VERY IMPORTANT.** Did you consider your garden, planting and harvesting, when setting your yearly vacation?

Barbara Self 743-4914
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AND WHO IS NUMBER ONE? LOOKS LIKE WE ARE!

The average number of Master Gardener volunteer hours in the state is 47. Drum roll, please. Christian County Master Gardeners averaged a whopping 94.5 hours for each of the 28 members who turned in hours.

Notifications has come from Mary Kroening, State Master Gardener Coordinator, that our numbers will be hard to beat, even though some counties have yet to submit their report. Our total of 2,645 hours are impressive for a novice organization.

Other interesting figures:

608 new Master Gardeners were trained.

92,695 volunteer hours from 64 counties (so far).

194 average number of contacts per Master Gardener

1,937 average contact per county

Other averages per county:

205-answer service hours

536-city beautification hours

40-hours spent with youth

128-teaching and short courses hours

69-fairs/booths/shows hours

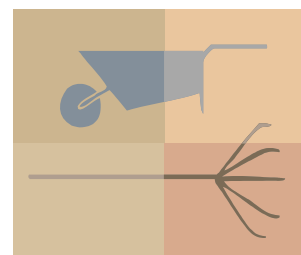
406-continuing education hours

98-hours spent with the elderly

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My whole life had been spent waiting for an epiphany, a manifestation of God's presence, the kind of transcendent, magical experience that lets you see your place in the big picture. And that is what I had with my first compost heap.

-Bette Midler



WEB WATCH
burtond@missouri.edu

David Burton is the Civic Communication specialist for the University of Missouri Extension, operating out of the Springfield office. Stay informed of the myriad of activities sponsored by the extension in our Southwest Missouri area with weekly updates. What a vast education on so many relevant topics!

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