# Table of Contents

**Welcome** 
Page 3  
**Mission** 
Page 3  
**Historical Perspective** 
Page 3  
**Organizational Structure** 
Page 4  
**Your Training** 
Page 4  
**Benefits for Master Gardeners** 
Page 5  
Networking with other Master Gardeners  
Continuing Education  
State Conference  
Educational Programs  
**Available Resources** 
Page 5  
Resources for Master Gardeners  
Access to Extension  
**Expectations & Responsibilities** 
Page 6  
Master Gardener Policies  
Use of Title  
Answering Questions  
Master Gardener Certification  
**Volunteer Service Policies** 
Page 6  
Some Policies Regarding Volunteer Service  
Serving Your Community  
**Volunteer Service Opportunities** 
Page 8  
Hort line  
Demonstration Gardens  
Speakers Bureau  
Garden Classes  
Informational Booths  
Gardening with special audiences  
Home gardening research  
Developing Educational Resources  
**Reporting Volunteer Hours** 
Page 8  
**Handouts**  
Policies and Procedures for the Missouri Master Gardener Program  
St Charles County Master Gardener Bylaws  
Class Schedule  
Learning Objectives  
Reporting Example  
Application for Master Gardener Training  
Master Gardener Exchange of Services Agreement & Volunteer Contracts
Welcome to the Missouri Master Gardener program. In this program, you receive classroom training to become a Master Gardener volunteer in partnership with University of Missouri Extension. The next few pages introduce the program’s background and purpose, how it fits into the University’s efforts, what it means to be a Master Gardener, and what responsibilities and benefits you will have as a Master Gardener.

Simply put, the mission of the Missouri Master Gardener program is: “Helping Others Learn to Grow.” As part of the University’s outreach efforts, Master Gardeners help communicate information about the resources and applied research of the University of Missouri and Lincoln University. Through horticultural education, Master Gardeners are helping other people and their communities to improve the quality of life, enhance the economy, and protect the environment.

**Historical Perspective**

The Master Gardener program began in the early 1970’s, when the state of Washington sought to respond to the many gardening questions that resulted from the rapidly increasing level of interest in home gardening. The idea was to train knowledgeable gardener volunteers to help University Extension staff deliver home gardening information to the public. The idea worked. From the first group of Seattle area Master Gardeners in 1972, the program has spread nation-wide. All 50 states and several Canadian provinces now have Master Gardener programs.

The Missouri Master Gardener program began in St. Louis in 1983. The program was offered jointly by the University of Missouri and the Missouri Botanical Garden. This unique partnership continues today. St. Louis Master Gardeners are vital to staffing the Kemper Center for Home Gardening at the Missouri Botanical Garden in addition to serving outreach functions outside the garden gates. Other metropolitan areas of the state soon followed suit, with Master Gardener programs in Kansas City and Springfield beginning a couple of years later. These additional programs were wholly sponsored by University of Missouri Extension and the local county extension centers. Since then, there has been a steady increase in both numbers and locations where Master Gardener training is offered. By 1994, 400 Master Gardener volunteers were serving 12 communities in the state. Currently, over 2,500 active Master Gardeners serve as University of Missouri Extension volunteers in 110 counties around the state.

The St. Charles County Master Gardener Program began in 1997. It has established itself as an organization that provides horticultural information and training that is based on University of Missouri research to the gardening public. This information is specific to the St. Charles climate, soils and plants. Additionally, Master Gardeners organize and participate in gardening projects that enhance the beauty of St. Charles County and provide benefits to its citizens.

The County Center design has its roots in the land-grant university concept developed during the 1860s. The Morrill Act of 1862 provided for states to be given grants of public lands. The states were expected to sell those lands and use the proceeds to “promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life.” The state of Missouri designated the already-established University of Missouri in Columbia as its land-grant university.

Early on, universities found that the delivery of information directly to farmers and other workers would not fit the traditional classroom model. Alternative delivery methods, such as various farmers’ institutes, short courses, reading programs, and summer sessions were developed to reach this audience.

Continuing the push to reach more people on their home territory, the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 established the Cooperative Extension Service as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This act allowed land-grant universities and county commissions to form offices that develop educational programs to meet local needs. The counties are responsible for maintaining programs and managing funds at the local level.

Today, Extension enjoys a unique three-way partnership between the USDA, land-grant universities and county government.
Organizational Structure

The Missouri Master Gardener Association, Inc. was organized to serve and advance members and Master Gardener chapters throughout the state.

The Purpose of the association is to:

1. Serve as a sounding board for needed resources in the Master Gardener program and communities around the state.
2. Assure equitable distribution of state Master Gardener resources.
3. Expand the Master Gardener program throughout the state.
4. Strengthen state Master Gardener education and training.
5. Raise awareness of the Master Gardener program throughout the state.

Your Training

Once you begin the core course training program, you are considered a Master Gardener Trainee. Upon successful completion of the classroom training, you will receive a certificate of course completion and become a Master Gardener Intern.

Your internship consists of fulfilling your original volunteer service hour commitment, which is approximately equal to the number of hours of classroom training you have received. Most interns find this volunteer component very rewarding, and sometimes even more educational than time spent in the classroom. Typically, you have one growing season to complete your Master Gardener Internship. After that time you will become a certified Missouri Master Gardener.

Each year you renew your Certification by staying current in annual educational and volunteer service requirements set by the local Master Gardener program. The state minimum requirements are 20 hours of volunteer service and six hours of approved educational updates.

Some local Master Gardener programs also have Master Gardener Mentors and Advanced Master Gardeners. Mentors are experienced active Master Gardeners who are paired with Master Gardener Trainees and Interns to help guide newcomers toward a successful volunteer experience. Advanced Master Gardeners are those who have completed specialized training beyond the core course. Examples of such training blocks are Master Composter, Urban Integrated Pest Management, and Plant Pest Diagnostics.

Open Book Quizzes (homework assignments) – 70% overall score required for certification. Homework assignments are available online and must be completed individually by the start of the following attended class.

Absences – No more than 3 classes. Homework assignments must be completed even if you do not attend the class. Missed classes must be made up by attendance at the next Level 1 class session or by other approved methods.

At the end of your training you will be asked to complete a post-training evaluation in order to allow for improvements in future training and for you to subjectively evaluate your level of skills on the information presented.
Benefits for Master Gardeners

Networking with Master Gardeners
Attendance at meetings and working with other Master Gardeners on projects provides a wealth of learning opportunities and the ability to expand your gardening knowledge.

Continuing Education
Classes taught by Master Gardeners and others allow you to acquire additional gardening skills to deepen an area of interest or to broaden your knowledge on numerous gardening topics.

Educational Programs
Expert speakers are invited to speak at Master Gardener meetings on horticultural topics that provide you with the information needed to provide answers to the public as well as providing opportunities for personal growth.

State Conference
Each fall you will have the opportunity to participate in the annual State Master Gardener Conference. This two-day event is held in different locations around the state to enable participants to see a variety of gardens, and to involve local experts in class presentations. In addition to the annual statewide conference, many areas of the state offer monthly or quarterly update sessions.

Resources for Master Gardeners
As a Master Gardener you have direct access to University Extension horticultural specialists and the resources of the University. State and regional specialists, some of them trained master gardener instructors, will teach some of your classes. They will help you locate resources needed to conduct Master Gardener programs and assist in answering those difficult-to-solve questions from homeowners.

To address the typical homeowner questions, your first line of assistance are the numerous MU guide sheets that can be accessed online. Guide sheets can be accessed through the following MU Extension site:

http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/

In addition to the MU Extension web resources you will also find many other university based resources that provide sound, verifiable information. Keep in mind that as you access information from the internet that you check the source. With so much information available on the internet it is critical to know that the source is credible and reliable.

Sometimes diagnostic work will be required. Master Gardeners have access to the Plant Disease Clinic, Insect Identification Laboratory, Weed Identification, and Soils Testing Laboratory. Many of these services have a fee. Consult your local extension specialist for information on fees and how to use the services.

Access to Extension
From the county Extension office or a personal computer linked to the Internet, you can access the Missouri Master Gardener home page at: http://mg.missouri.edu
Expectations & Responsibilities

Master Gardener Policies
The current document *Missouri Master Gardener Program Policies and Procedures* is included in the core text material for Level 1 training class. Some of the polices have further described and expanded upon in the following paragraphs.

Use of Title
The designation “Master Gardener” is to be used only and exclusively in the Master Gardener program in which the trained and certified Master Gardeners conduct educational programming and answer gardening questions under the auspices of University Extension. This means you may only identify yourself as a Master Gardener when doing unpaid public service work.

The term Master Gardener may not be used to advertise your places of business, nor be listed on advertisements for businesses. However, successful completion of Master Gardener training can be listed as a credential. The Master Gardener program is a University of Missouri public service program aimed at providing unbiased, research-based horticultural information and education. It is improper and inappropriate to appear as a Master Gardener at a commercial activity, having association with commercial products, or to give implied University endorsement of any product or place of business.

Master Gardener Certification
Certification as a Master Gardener is restrictive in that it is valid only when the individual is participating in one or more programs sponsored or endorsed by University Extension for the coming year. Those not continuing in the program will not be recertified and should not represent themselves as Master Gardeners.

Volunteer Service Policies
The decision of what counts as volunteer service within the Master Gardener program is left up to the discretion of local Master Gardener programs. But in general: the activity should be educational, the Master Gardener conducting the program must be acting as a representative of University Extension, and the program should not result in individual financial gain for the volunteer. However, as a Master Gardener, you may be reimbursed for mileage or other legitimate costs. If honoraria or speaker’s fees are collected for a Master Gardener program, they should revert to the local Master Gardener group.

Some Policies Relating to MG Volunteers

1. If Master Gardeners are also garden center employees, and if they are being paid by their employer to conduct a plant clinic, the (paid) time spent conducting the clinic does not qualify as volunteer service. If, on the other hand, they are not being paid by the garden center for the time they put in, and if they are identified as Master Gardeners rather than employees of the garden center, the time spent at the clinic would qualify as Master Gardener volunteer time.

2. Volunteer service may be done in a dual capacity. Master Gardeners who are members of garden clubs or other civic groups may do projects which count as volunteer activity both for Extension and the other agency, provided they are identified as Master Gardeners while conducting the project. The project must be approved by the local Master Gardener coordinator.

3. Individual consultations with friends and neighbors can also be counted as volunteer time. However, there may be limits from local coordinators on the amount of volunteer time which can be counted in this manner.
Serving Your Community

As a Master Gardener, you will have an opportunity to provide a valuable service to community residents by answering consumer calls. Remember:

1. You are a University of Missouri Extension representative. When on the telephone or in person always conduct yourself in a businesslike manner. Be friendly, but to the point. Be sure to identify yourself as a University Extension Master Gardener.

2. Smile when you talk; you’ll sound friendlier and more pleasant.

3. Don’t guess at answers. Use your reference notebook and approved resource books. Quote only from reliable, approved sources. In making recommendations which include the use of chemicals, Master Gardeners should follow published recommendations and labels.

4. Your own experiences are great IF they fit in with approved techniques and cause no safety problems. Avoid saying, “I do it this way even though the books don’t recommend it.” Remember you are representing University of Missouri Extension.

5. Be firm on your stand for approved methods. Many people call to confirm what they have done is correct. If what they have done is not an approved practice, suggest how they might avoid the problem in the future or remedy the current situation.

6. Admit it when you do not know the answer. Tell the client what you will do to find the answer. Ask for the client’s name and telephone number and the best time to call back. Specify a time frame to obtain the information, and then follow up on your commitment.

7. Ask others when you need assistance. Other Master Gardeners may know the answer from their experience.

8. Study your *Grounds for Gardening* notebook. Organize it so you can find guide sheets and other references quickly while on the phone or speaking with a client.

9. Keep accurate records. Fill out an appropriate phone report each time you are on duty. If you get the client’s name and phone number, you can always call back if you later find additional information. The person’s name, phone number and address may also be needed for impact data collection.

10. Treat each question seriously.

11. If a client seems rude, don’t take it personally. Be as positive and helpful as you can.

12. Avoid saying, “You can’t do that,” or “You have to ...” The client does not have to do anything. Your job is to give out recommended procedures and probable results or outcomes.

Volunteer Service Opportunities

You will be able to participate in a number of different Master Gardener projects:

Hort Line – Provide answers to St Charles county residents on questions they have related to all garden topics.

Demonstration gardens - Theme gardens of perennials, native plants, butterfly, bulb gardens, civic beautification projects, and school and home demonstration gardens all fit this category. Including plant labels and signs to describe the techniques involved will make projects more fun and educational for the public.

Speakers’ bureau – Garden clubs, church groups, civic groups, and schools are always looking for program speakers. Many local Master Gardener programs have organized speakers’ bureaus to keep up with the requests for speakers.
Garden classes - Whether offered through the Extension Center, public school continuing education programs, public library information centers, or park and recreation leisure education classes, home gardening topics are in demand.

Gardening with special audiences - Work with senior citizens, school children, or disabled persons. These projects involve more than just your physical labor. Work at the individual’s level and speed to develop understanding, friendships and pride in accomplishment.

Informational booths, Plant clinics - Fairs, farmers’ markets, garden and home shows, and garden centers attract a lot of people interested in learning more about gardening. Homeowners may be asked to bring plant samples in for diagnosis.

Educational Resources - If speaking in front of a group is too intimidating, perhaps you have the skills to develop resources to complement gardening programs. Slide sets and garden videos are helpful audiovisual aids for garden classes. Pressed and labeled collections of tree and shrub leaves, weeds, and insect and disease problems are helpful resources to have at the Extension Center or to use at plant clinics. Writing news columns or editing the local Master Gardening newsletter may be another outlet for your creativity.

**Reporting Volunteer Hours**

Reporting your volunteer activities is one of your responsibilities. A state-wide web based reporting system has been developed to report volunteer hours. Local coordinators will provide further guidance to use of the web based reporting system.

Volunteer reports are important components in assessing the value of the program, its local and statewide effect and importance for the funding agencies. Since the Master Gardener program is part of University Extension, funds are received from all three partners in Cooperative Outreach and Extension: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the University of Missouri and Lincoln University systems, and local county governments. Each of these partners wants to know the money they provide is making an impact.

Your individual Master Gardener time sheet may seem insignificant to you, but when the efforts of some 2,000 Master Gardeners statewide are totaled, we find more than one million dollars-worth of service reported annually!

The federal government requires us to keep track of client ethnicity to prove discrimination is not practiced in delivering our programs. A volunteer’s responsibility to maintain program standards is the same as that of a paid employee.