

## Master Gardener Activity Guidelines

Thank you for your willingness to teach effective horticultural practices to Maryland citizens. Your educational work supports the education mission of the University of Maryland Extension. Organizations ask for Master Gardeners because they know they get impartial, objective, science-based information. Use your speaking/ presentation opportunity to help clients make informed decisions that grow new solutions in their communities.

As a representative of the University of Maryland please notify the Harford County Extension Office of the activity for insurance purposes. A clip board located in the MG Office is used to record when MG volunteers are off site serving in the community.

Show respect for your audience in the way you dress. Always wear your MG name badge and identify yourself as a certified volunteer with the University of Maryland. During your presentation tell about your work as a Master Gardener and encourage them to consider being a part of the program. Please gather contact information on interested students.

Open your presentation with an explanation of how the Master Gardeners are certified by the University of Maryland and Extension serving as trained volunteer educators. On our website you can find the opening PowerPoint slides for download. Use the opportunity to publicize what MG's do! Provide literature on our upcoming Educational Classes. Inform your audience on how to find a Master Gardener Plant Clinic at local libraries and farmer's markets. Always distribute information about our new location and Agricultural Center. Be a spokesmen for the free services provided to county residents.

The University has guidelines on accepting gifts as a volunteer educator. "You cannot use the title of the University of Maryland Extension Master Gardener for financial gain. You cannot keep money or gifts you receive as a donation, payment, or gratuity for services performed as a Master Gardener. Such monies and gifts should be turned in to the County MG Coordinator." Honorarium checks can be made payable to HCEAC and may be sent to the MG treasurer via the Extension Office. Our address: University of Maryland Extension, Harford County Agricultural Center, Suite 600, 3525 Conowingo Road, Street, MD 21154.

Expenses may occur for your MG activity. You do not have to use your own money. The MG Coordinator can charge purchases on your behalf. Ask the MG Coordinator how to proceed with purchases. All purchases must be tax exempt. For other treasury guidelines refer to the *General Treasury Expenses* form on our website. All expenses must have prior approval by the MG Chairperson. Amounts exceeding \$100 must be pre-approved by MG Coordinator.

When serving as the MG leader of any event or activity it is your responsibility to have the *MG Event Packet* on site for recording information. Event Packets are available at our Harford County website <https://extension.umd.edu/harford-county> and at the Extension Office in the MG desk marked *MG Event Packets*.

Extension is funded by county, state and federal monies. Therefore we are required to provide an annual report of all Master Gardener activities to these three agencies. This process helps secure funding for our future programs. If you are the coordinator of the MG activity you are required to submit the *Summary Report Form*, found inside the *MG Event Packet*, to the Extension Office. In addition, leaders of a MG event, should add the demographic contacts into the MG Online Tracking System (OTS) <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/mg> .

To avoid double reporting, only the main organizer of the activity will enter the contacts in the OTS. In addition if you are serving as an MG speaker please collect evaluation forms from some or all of the audience.

Your volunteer service is an extension of the University of Maryland and therefore requires discretion when discussing current issues. Please review the *UME Master Gardener Policies and Guidelines* online at the state website or on our Harford County site. Here are a few:

- Identify yourself as a UME Master Gardener Volunteer or UME Master Gardener Intern when participating in events sanctioned by the University of Maryland. Always wear your name badge. Remember that the public has respect for you and confidence in your abilities because of your association with the University of Maryland. They expect impartial, objective information. Your job is to help clients make informed decisions.
- Do not attempt to answer questions outside of the home horticulture area (e.g. food preservation, nutrition, commercial production). Be prepared to refer clients to appropriate resources, UME professionals or other agencies and organizations.
- If you're unsure of the answer to a client question you can take down the pertinent information, research the question, talk to other Master Gardeners or Extension professionals, and then call the client back with an answer, or refer the client to the appropriate Extension professional.
- Do not endorse brand name products, recommend a particular company or criticize the work of a lawn care, pest management or other horticulture-related company. Do not become involved in disputes between individuals (e.g. "my neighbor sprayed my rose bushes with something") or between an individual and a company (e.g. "do you think I should sue my lawn care service"?)
- Many volunteers make a big difference in people's lives when working in the therapeutic horticulture arena. Volunteers should always work under the supervision of a health care professional and closely adhere to the facility's institutional policies and guidelines.
- While serving as a UME Master Gardener Volunteer you will use and disseminate only UME recommendations and information or science-based information from other land-grant universities. Practices that are not science-based should not be mentioned.
- Classroom outlines, articles for media, MG newsletters, web content, and other materials developed by volunteers must be reviewed and approved by an Extension professional prior to distribution or release.
- All educational materials purchased with program funds or developed for training or projects, or use by Master Gardeners (e.g. slides, photography, PowerPoint Presentations, tools, insect and herbarium mounts, and books) are the property of UME.

Thank you for committing your time to help citizens find solutions in their community. Enter the hours using the MG online tracking system <http://www.agnr.umd.edu/mg> .Enter the time for all your planning, preparation and travel time under the code number of your event. We appreciate the work to which you are generously committed.

*The University of Maryland, College of Agriculture and Natural Resources programs are open to all and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry or national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, or gender identity and expression.*

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