Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Manual

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Welcome to the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program!

An Extension Master Gardener is first and foremost a volunteer who wants to share his or her own knowledge of horticulture with others. In 1977, the first class of 75 volunteers in Minnesota met at the University for the first core course educational program. Since then, thousands of people have become educated and volunteered as Extension Master Gardeners in their communities, connecting citizens with research-based information and best practices in gardening. Today, there are Extension Master Gardener programs across the United States and Canada. Over 100,000 volunteers contribute millions of hours annually to teaching people to garden and to live healthier lives while learning the importance of environmental stewardship.

Please take time to read this Volunteer Manual carefully. It will help you understand the breadth of the Extension Master Gardener program, the role it plays in Extension and what you can expect as a volunteer. This manual is also designed to answer common questions of volunteers, new and experienced. Feel free to contact your local county program coordinator/leader or the state staff with additional questions.

Thank you for being a part of the Extension Master Gardener program. Volunteers like you play an important role in their communities by giving their time and knowledge to help improve people’s lives. All our best in your journey as an Extension Master Gardener!

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CHAPTER 1
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Our Mission: Make a difference by connecting community needs and University resources to address critical issues in Minnesota.

The Land-Grant University System and Extension
Source: About Extension www.extension.umn.edu/about/

Land-grant institutions have three missions: teaching, research, and outreach. Extension is the outreach unit that brings applied research and knowledge to the public. Every state has an Extension organization, each associated with its land-grant university [see Appendix A-1 Map of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities]. The national Extension system was created when federal, state and county governments were funded to “extend” scientific knowledge and expertise to the public. Extension is organized on the federal level as part of the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The following are important United State congressional acts that established our land-grant university system and Extension:

- 1862 – The Morrill Act provided land and created colleges and universities in each state to provide classical, scientific, agricultural and engineering education.
- 1887 – The Hatch Act expanded the educational mandate of the land grant institutions to include research.
- 1890 – A second Morrill Act authorized appropriations that established similar institutions in racially segregated states.
- 1914 – The Smith-Lever Act established Cooperative Extension to provide education services and outreach from the land-grant institutions to all citizens of the states.
- 1994 – Land-grant status was extended to 29 Native American tribal colleges. In Minnesota, these include Leech Lake Tribal College, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, and White Earth Tribal and Community College. Today, there are 32 tribal colleges with land-grant status.

The University of Minnesota is our state’s land-grant institution and one of the oldest in the nation. The Extension division was created as a part of the University by the state legislature in 1909. The bill was introduced by Joseph Hackney, a St. Paul dairy farmer.

Federal, State and County Partnerships
Extension addresses critical public issues through our mission and “extends” research-based information and informal education to citizens across the state. Extension is a partnership between the University and state, federal, and county governments. County extension offices are located in all 87 Minnesota counties. The Minnesota Extension Law was enacted in 1953 to coordinate the work of the federal, state and county government and University of Minnesota Extension to maintain county extension work.

www.mncounties.org/Affiliated_Organizations/extension/extension%20laws.pdf
Under this state law, county extension committees, comprised of nine members including six citizens, were established in each Minnesota county. County extension committees determine priority needs in the county including Extension programs, staffing and budget. Extension Master Gardener volunteers interested in serving on their county extension committee should contact the regional extension director or the county commissioner representing the individual's county district.

The Extension Education Model: Research, Education and Value

Excerpt from the University of Minnesota Extension Strategic Plan 2011

The Extension Education Model describes the three interdependent components of Extension work: Research, Education and Value. Extension contributes to and draws upon the research base of the University to develop and deliver effective research-based educational programming such that behavior is influenced to impact social, economic and environmental conditions, while enriching the University research base through this model. Extension operates this model within a global context as well as within the context of funding and expectations of our key stakeholders (federal, state and University administrators). Each of these components is critical to the Extension organization’s accountability and sustainability. Value in this context refers to the outcomes that result in direct or indirect fiscal allocations to the University and Extension.

- **Research** is the comparative advantage that sets the University of Minnesota apart from other educational organizations. Extension personnel contribute to the University’s research base through various forms of research—empirical, basic, translational, applied, and exploratory, to name a few. Extension research includes work that involves people, products, practices and communities using interventional and engaged processes to primarily benefit public good. In addition, Extension personnel work collaboratively with University non-Extension faculty to draw from their results for use in educational curriculum.

- **Education** is Extension’s primary goal. Effective education brings about knowledge gain and positive behavior change that ultimately impact social indicators such as a safe and clean environment; economic sustainability; strong and vibrant communities; and/or a better quality of life. Extension education is unique in that it is based in University research/scholarship on complex issues. As such, the focus of Extension education is aligned with the research foci of the University. As an active, two-way process, Extension education/learning requires strong relational networks of engaged audiences. While Extension uses a relational and engaged process in many of its educational programs, it is the actual education that creates Extension’s comparative advantage.
• **Value** – Successful Extension work provides societal value through education. This value, while hopefully experienced by audiences, must be realized by Extension’s authorizers and result in financial benefit to the organization. Extension focuses on outputs, outcomes and impacts as indicators that measure areas of societal value such as a safe and clean environment; economic sustainability; strong and vibrant communities; and/or a better quality of life. The value of the Extension organization and its work is measured in the investment of support and funding by key stakeholders. Extension education also creates value within the context of the Extension Education Model by enriching the University’s research base.

**Extension Program Areas**

There are four centers, or program areas, within the Extension organization in Minnesota.

www.extension.umn.edu/about/facts/

1. Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
2. Youth Development
3. Community Vitality
4. Family Development

**Equal Opportunity Statement (EEO)**

The University of Minnesota and Extension have a strong and firm commitment to equal program and employment opportunity for all people. As a part of Extension, the Master Gardener program shares that commitment and is articulated in the EEO statement:

*University of Minnesota Extension shall provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identification or gender expression.*
CHAPTER 2
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Program Background

Nationally, the University of Minnesota Extension is part of the much larger cooperative extension system established by the Smith-Lever Act in 1914 to provide education services and outreach from the land-grant institutions to all citizens of the states. Extension is organized on the federal level within the USDA/National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The national Extension Master Gardener program is active in all 50 states and over 100,000 people participate as volunteers contributing millions of hours annually to teaching and outreach in horticulture.

The University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer program was started in 1977 and modeled after the Washington State University (WSU) Master Gardener program. Extension held its first core course training on the St. Paul University campus in 1977. Like WSU, the goal was to provide trained and enthusiastic volunteers willing to help Extension faculty meet an enormous increase in requests for home (consumer) horticulture information especially in urban areas and regions where hobby farms and vacation homes were expanding. Volunteers were trained and then assisted county extension educators in answering consumer horticulture questions and in conducting education on horticulture and environmental topics. Citizens have come to depend on Extension and Master Gardeners for non-biased, research-based information and assistance to learn best practices and solve home landscape problems. The Master Gardener program is one of the most recognized and visible Extension programs in the state and country.

In January 2014, a partnership between the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum was formed. This collaboration provides synergy and growth potential, especially in the areas of volunteer management and home horticulture education. Under the new administrative structure, Arboretum systems infrastructure is being used to perform many of the support and administrative functions of the Extension Master Gardener Program, enabling Extension Master Gardener leadership and faculty to concentrate on developing, managing, delivering and evaluating innovative and effective research-based educational programs. In addition, the grounds of the Arboretum serve as a living laboratory for learning for many of the educational programs.

A local Extension Master Gardener program may be county-based, multi-county based, or defined by some other geographic area. Regardless of how their local program is organized, all volunteers are University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners and ultimately accountable to the state office and to University of Minnesota Extension. Local, county-supported Extension Master Gardener programs are also accountable to the local county extension committee and board of commissioners.
The Extension Master Gardener Program Mission and Core Value Statement

**Mission:**
The mission of the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program is to support Extension by providing volunteers trained in horticulture to educate the public with research-based information on the best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship. The Extension Master Gardener program will provide an environment for a volunteer that is friendly and supportive, so his or her training, experience, and enthusiasm will produce maximum benefits to communities.

**Core Value Statement:**
University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners teach research-based horticulture information.

**Using Research-based Information**
Providing research-based information is at the core of Extension’s work, purpose and mission. As Extension volunteers and representatives of the University, Master Gardeners are expected to uphold this value even when the information is new or different from a volunteer’s personal experience or opinion.

Volunteers are provided with core course education, resources and other information founded on the research of University experts to help them and the public they assist make informed choices. Volunteers work with gardeners of differing philosophies. While it is important to respect individual beliefs, volunteers are expected to make recommendations based on scientifically defensible information from the University of Minnesota or another reputable source. This is especially true in the case of pest control and use of fertilizers where the label is the law. Questions concerning commercial production and commercial pest control must be referred by volunteers to an extension educator or state extension specialist. While information from University of Minnesota Extension is always the first choice as a resource, information from other state extension and academic sources may be used.

*Internet resources:* The internet gives Master Gardeners access to more information than ever; however, volunteers must reference websites that are (1) from reputable sources based on responsible research and preferably academic; and (2) appropriate to our climate, conditions and cold hardiness zones.

**Standards of Behavior and University Board of Regents Code of Conduct**
Extension Master Gardener volunteers are representatives of the University of Minnesota and their local county Extension program, and serve at the discretion of the University. Just as it is a privilege for Extension to work with volunteers who offer their time and talents, it is a privilege - not a right – to be an Extension volunteer. Participants understand and accept responsibility for their actions, words and deeds when volunteering on behalf of the University.

Volunteers are expected to review and abide by the Standards of Behavior and the University of Minnesota Board of Regents Code of Conduct: [www.compliance.umn.edu/ComplianceCodeConduct.htm](http://www.compliance.umn.edu/ComplianceCodeConduct.htm).
These important policies:

1. Are designed to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants (audiences, staff, other professionals, volunteers, etc.).
2. Enforce the expectation that Extension volunteers are representatives of the University of Minnesota and thus must conduct themselves accordingly.
3. Promote a positive, enjoyable experience for all Extension staff and volunteers.

Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Standards of Behavior:

1. Uphold volunteerism as an effective way to meet the horticultural education needs of Minnesota citizens.
2. Accept supervision and support from extension staff while involved in the program.
3. Represent their local county program and the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program with dignity and pride by being positive spokespersons and mentors for others.
4. Conduct themselves in a courteous, civil and respectful manner, refraining from profanity and behavior that physically, verbally, or emotionally abuses, threatens or harms any Extension program participant.
5. Abstain from use or the influence of alcoholic beverages or other controlled substances when interacting with the public as an Extension Master Gardener volunteer.
6. Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws and the policies of University of Minnesota Extension.
7. Perform duties in a responsible, professional and timely manner.
8. Dress professionally and wear the Extension Master Gardener nametag whenever serving as a volunteer.
9. Report immediately any threats to the volunteer’s emotional or physical well-being to the county or state extension staff coordinating the Extension Master Gardener program.
10. Be responsible and accountable for personal actions.
11. Promote and support Extension Master Gardener activities and their volunteer peers in order to develop an effective county and state program.
12. When applicable, operate machinery, vehicles, or other equipment in a safe and responsible manner.

When a volunteer fails to follow the Standards of Behavior or Board of Regents Code of Conduct:

Failure to follow the Standard of Behavior and/or Regents Code of Conduct can result in termination from the program and loss of all privileges associated with the status of a University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer. Should an issue arise, the volunteer will be placed on Temporary Leave, and the local coordinator/leader will inform and work in concert with the state director and/or program manager to resolve the issue and/or determine what, if any, disciplinary steps need to be taken. While attempts may be made to correct disqualifying behavior, resolution may lead to reinstatement, reassignment of volunteer duties, reinstatement with limitations, or termination from the program. The volunteer may also be terminated immediately. The state director must authorize any termination from the program.

University of Minnesota Board of Regents Policy Regarding Safety of Minors

University of Minnesota is establishing policies and procedures and requiring training and screening of staff and volunteers who interact with youth audiences. Specific details of the policies and guidelines will be introduced in 2015.
**Netiquette**

Standards of behavior apply as well to interaction on the internet. Inappropriate communication or misuse of the internet as a volunteer can lead to a volunteer being unsubscribed or restricted from using Extension Master Gardener internet-based tools and programs. The term “netiquette” refers to *etiquette displayed while using the internet*. As more web-based tools and programs are used to communicate and share information electronically, it is important that volunteers follow good netiquette standards. Read “Netiquette for the Internet, Email, Social Media and Listservs” found in Appendix A-5.

**Public Benefit of the Extension Master Gardener Program**

As a public organization, Extension and the Master Gardener program have a responsibility to undertake projects and activities that deliver public benefit or value. Public value has been defined as the value of a program to those who do not directly benefit from the program. For example, if you teach 20 homeowners to build raingardens and they do so, the amount of runoff in local waterways is reduced. The public benefit is cleaner water for the general public. When planning Master Gardener projects for your local program, be intentional about selecting projects that provide public benefit. More and more, stakeholders request public benefit from programs they fund. A 2007 study identified public benefit that can result from the Master Gardener program. Review the outcomes in Appendix A-3. Do your local projects have public benefit?

**Program Funding**

The University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program is supported from a combination of public funds, program-generated revenue and gifts. Support comes from the federal, state and county levels, as well as from program-generated funds and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding source(s):</th>
<th>What the funding source(s) support:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota Extension through federal and state funds</td>
<td>Master Gardener state office leadership team; state extension educators and faculty positions supportive of Extension Master Gardener volunteers; operational expenses for the above positions including IT, communications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and the state office leadership team through core course fees; ProHort class fees; continuing education class fees; saleable items; conference fees; grants; donations.</td>
<td>Operational expenses for state leadership team including the production of educational materials for volunteers; volunteer continuing education classes, conferences, events; volunteer recognition; program promotion and marketing; Arboretum Yard and Garden Desk activities; core course support; Annual Seed Trials; support for selected educational programming activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Extension: funds from the county administration; funds vary based on county Extension budget allocation.</td>
<td>Local extension educator; coordinator staff positions; county extension support staff positions; county extension office operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Master Gardener Program: local program-generated fees through classes; horticulture events; saleable items, gifts, grants; donations.</td>
<td>Local Master Gardener educational events, classes, etc.; local volunteer operations; local Extension Master Gardener revenue share toward local extension staff position and/or operations.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Extension Master Gardener Staff and Support

The Master Gardener program is staffed by a number of state-level positions and receives support from extension educators and faculty.

State Staff

- State director – administers and leads the statewide program; responsible for overseeing development and delivery of education and program operations; represents program on a national level.
- State program manager – responsible for development of program policies and structures. Oversees local program management, including interfacing with administrators, county coordinators and local volunteer leaders. Reports to the state director.
- Education manager – provides leadership and management for Horticulture learning experiences; coordinates, reviews and updates content for the Master Gardener core course; reports to the state director.
- Extension educator – provides technology expertise to the development of education experiences; reports to the state director.
- State volunteer coordinator – organizes and coordinates systems, policies and data; reports to the state director.
- State office location: Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, 3675 Arboretum Drive, Chaska, MN 55318 USA; mgweb@umn.edu

Extension Educators and Faculty

- Extension educators with statewide responsibility for consumer and commercial horticulture in Minnesota. Each educator dedicates time to teach volunteers and serve as a resource.
- Select horticulture department faculty having Extension assignments teach and provide some expertise to support the program and volunteers. (See Appendix A-6 “Directory – Extension Horticulture Staff, Educators and Services”.)

Regional Extension Offices and Staff

- Regional extension directors oversee operations at regional extension offices. While not part of the Extension Master Gardener program staff, regional directors are the primary staff who administer relations with county extension committees and county boards of commissioners and work with the state office staff to ensure programming is being supported.
- Local Extension Master Gardener programs may receive limited support and assistance from regional extension offices.
- Regional offices may also serve as sites for organized Extension Master Gardener continuing education events.
Local/County Staff

There are several staffing arrangements that support local Extension Master Gardener programs based on the county or multi-county financial and in-kind support defined through a memorandum of agreement with the University. There is significant difference in the level of management and support for a local Master Gardener group depending on the level of funding and type of staffing:

- **Local extension educator** - Broader educational responsibilities, typically in agriculture or horticulture, with some responsibility for coordinating the local Extension Master Gardener program.
- **County program coordinator** – Responsible for overseeing program and volunteer management of Master Gardeners.
- **County support staff** – Office staff with some responsibility to provide assistance to the local Extension Master Gardener volunteers.
- **Local volunteer leader** – Willingly serves as the state office contact and assumes overall responsibility for coordination as part of the volunteer hour requirement.

The Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Board

The purpose of the Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Board (SAB) is to provide advice and constructive input to the state office in order that the state director and staff may develop programming strategies and governing policies that are in the best interests of the program and its volunteers, and reflect standards set forth by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents. Each member of the SAB serves as an ambassador of the Extension Master Gardener Program by promoting its mission in word and deed as a volunteer and with particular attention toward communicating this mission to local, county, regional and state officials in order to assure the continuance and effectiveness of the program throughout the state. The policies and procedures of the SAB are listed in Appendix A-2. For additional information: www.extension.umn.edu/garden/master-gardener/volunteers/advisory-board/bylaws/
CHAPTER 3
PROGRAM GUIDELINES, POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES

Minimum Age Requirement
The minimum age of 18 years is required to participate in the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program.

Intern Application and Selection Process
The application and selection process of an individual to become an Extension Master Gardener intern is made at the local county level. Individuals are selected based on the need for volunteers in the local program and the individual’s successful completion of the application and selection process.

The process requires an individual to:
1. Complete the written application and submit it to the local county program.
2. Participate in an interview to help determine the individual’s fit within the program and how the program aligns with his or her interests in volunteering.
3. Successfully clear the volunteer background check as required by the University of Minnesota.
4. Register for the core course.

Completed application materials are confidential and are held on file in the local Extension office or by state staff. Generally, volunteers participate in the program in their county of residence. In cases where a volunteer participates in a county program different from his or her county of residence, he or she uses the county of participation for all reporting and identification purposes when acting in the capacity as an Extension Master Gardener volunteer.

The Extension Master Gardener Internship
Following acceptance into the program, an individual begins a year-long internship to becoming certified as a Extension Master Gardener. Interns are required to have an active email account and be able to access the internet and the online class site. The internship includes [1] education and [2] volunteering. The for-fee core course is conducted online and in-person and serves as the educational component. The online core course is available to interns and active volunteers throughout the year. Active volunteers may attend lectures and access the core course free of charge as continuing education.
The second part of the internship is volunteering. Interns are required to contribute a minimum of 50 hours volunteering by end of the calendar year as part of their local Extension Master Gardener group. Local programs may choose to match interns with an experienced Master Gardener mentor to support the intern and help connect him or her with fellow volunteers during the internship year.

If an individual does NOT complete his or her internship (core course plus 50-hour volunteer commitment), he or she is required to pay an additional fee of $300 and is not considered an Extension Master Gardener. An exception may be made by a local county coordinator/leader for an individual experiencing personal hardship.

Certification and Re-certification

Following successful completion of the internship, the volunteer becomes a certified University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener and is considered “active status” [see “Volunteer Status”]. The volunteer receives a certificate and official name badge. Active certification is valid for one calendar year. Annual re-certification of active status requires the volunteer to complete and report a minimum of 25 hours of volunteer service by the end of the calendar year (Dec. 31). The volunteer must also complete and report a minimum of 5 hours of continuing education during that year. A local Extension Master Gardener program may require additional continuing education hours.

Using the title “University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener”

The generic title “master gardener” is sometimes adopted by people who are not certified but choose to advertise themselves as such. Realistically, there is not much that can be done by the state office or Extension to prevent this. Therefore, it is important to differentiate between the generic “master gardener” title and the title of “Extension Master Gardener” or, more specifically, “University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener.” The latter are the official national and state titles, respectively. Only individuals who volunteer as certified Extension Master Gardeners and interns teaching research-based horticultural education may use these titles and identify themselves as such when doing nonprofit public service work in Extension-sponsored programs. Volunteers are advised to neither advertise their places of business nor use their title in business advertisements for their employer. The Extension Master Gardener program is an Extension public service program providing unbiased, research-based information. Appearing as a commercial activity, receiving personal financial gain or giving implied Extension endorsement of any product or place of business is improper. An individual may list his or her Extension Master Gardener education and volunteer service experience on a resume.
Volunteer Status

Extension Master Gardener volunteer status classifications are explained below and used to recognize milestones in a volunteer’s history as well as an individual’s volunteer capacity.

1. **(A*) An Intern:**
   a. Is a volunteer-in-training and is working toward completing his or her internship of core course education and minimum 50 volunteer hours.
   b. May volunteer under the guidance of active volunteers during his or her internship.
   c. May need to complete his or her internship before being eligible for leadership positions in the local county program.
   d. Is not eligible to serve on the State Advisory Board.
   e. Has access to all program and Extension resources, staff, websites, listservs, education, events, etc.

2. **(A) An Active Volunteer:**
   a. Has successfully completed his or her internship.
   b. Annually fulfills and reports a minimum of 25 volunteer hours and the required continuing education hours by December 31.
   c. Is eligible for volunteer activities in the local county program and offered by the state office.
   d. May serve in local county leadership capacity.
   e. May apply to and serve on the State Advisory Board.
   f. Has access to all program and Extension resources, staff, websites, listservs, education, events, etc.

3. **(TI) A Temporary Inactive Volunteer:**
   a. Has not reported the minimum required volunteer hours for the previous calendar year.
   b. Must fulfill and report the minimum 25 volunteer hours within the next calendar year or he/she will become [PI] Permanently Inactive [see below] and give up certification.
   c. Years in TI status do not count toward years of service awards.
   d. Is eligible for volunteer activities in the local county program and offered by the state office.
   e. May serve in local county leadership capacity.
   f. May apply to and serve on the State Advisory Board.
   g. Has access to all program and Extension resources, staff, websites, listservs, education, events, etc.
4. Emeritus

(E) Emeritus is a semi-active status that recognizes a volunteer who has made a significant contribution to the program but now chooses to permanently limit his or her active participation without leaving the program. Emeritus status may be adopted at any time providing the volunteer meets the qualifications. Volunteers must inform their local county program leader or the state office of this change. Emeritus status cannot revert to Active status without special approval from the state director.

An Extension Master Gardener Emeritus:

a. Is considered in good standing with the program and continues as such though in a different volunteer capacity.

b. Has accrued 10 or more years as an active Extension Master Gardener and/or reported 1,000 or more volunteer hours as confirmed by the state database.

c. Assumes the title of “Extension Master Gardener Emeritus” and remains a member of the program.

d. May continue to volunteer as he or she is able but is not required to report volunteer hours or meet a minimum annual volunteer hour requirement.

e. Is no longer eligible for awards recognizing hours volunteered or years of service.

f. May attend meetings, continuing education classes and conferences.

g. Has equal access to all program and Extension resources, staff, websites, Listservs, education, events, etc.

5. Leave of Absence

(LA) Leave of Absence is a sabbatical-like status and is designed for active volunteers in good standing to take a voluntary 12-month leave from the program for personal reasons. LA status may be requested by the volunteer at any time of the year. The request should be directed to the local coordinator. It is the volunteer’s responsibility to stay in contact with his or her local county coordinator/leader about his or her intentions to return to active status after 12 months. Leave of Absence should not be confused with the (TL) Temporary Leave status which involves an alleged volunteer disciplinary issue [see below]. LA status cannot be granted two consecutive years without the special approval of the state director.

A volunteer who adopts LA status:

a. Has been and continues to be considered in good standing with the program.

b. Remains an Extension Master Gardener and a member of the program.

c. Does not volunteer or report volunteer hours.

d. May accrue/report continuing education hours during the 12-month sabbatical.

e. Continues to accrue years of service in the program but not hours.

f. May attend meetings, continuing education classes and conferences as he/she is able.

g. Has equal access to all program and Extension resources, staff, websites, Listservs, education, events, etc.
6. **Temporary Leave Status**

(TL) **Temporary Leave status** is used infrequently to address a situation where it is in the best interest of the volunteer and the program that a volunteer be temporarily removed from the program. The TL status is determined by the local county leader and the state director. Resolution of the situation in question will determine conditions associated with reinstatement if it is granted. In situations that have very serious and/or legal implications, the TL status will be implemented immediately. This removes the Extension Master Gardener volunteer from the program until the matter is resolved.

7. **Permanently Inactive Status**

(PI) **Permanently Inactive status** is defined as an individual who has voluntarily or involuntarily left the Extension Master Gardener program. He/she is no longer volunteering on behalf of the program and may not present himself/herself as a University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener.

**Communications and Statewide Volunteer Opportunities**

With more than 100,000 volunteers in Minnesota and nationwide, communication is important. Technology has provided various tools for keeping volunteers informed and in touch with the program and each other while creating a supportive and helpful volunteer network.

**Websites, Listservs and Social Media**

- **Extension Master Gardener state website** – [www.mg.umn.edu](http://www.mg.umn.edu)
  The site hosts and contains links to all important program resources, reporting and sign-ups.

- **Master Gardener News** – The electronic newsletter, including education offerings, volunteer information and opportunities, announcements, events and deadlines, is sent from the state office to volunteers on a regular basis.

- **MGSTATE listserv** – Used by the state staff to send state and program announcements directly to Master Gardeners. Subscription is required. Master Gardeners cannot post to this listserv.

- **MASTGAR listserv** – Used by volunteers to share horticulture knowledge with each other to help find answers to horticulture questions. Images can be posted up to a certain size. Subscription is optional. Note: All volunteers who are subscribed to receive MASTGAR through the database can post to the listserv by addressing the email to: MASTGAR@lists.umn.edu.

- **MGCC listserv** – Used by the state staff to send program updates to county program coordinators, county support staff and local volunteer leaders who coordinate and serve as contacts for the local programs.

Many local county groups have their own blogs, Twitter handles, Facebook pages, and email listservs for communication and program promotion.
Types of Volunteer Opportunities

Extension Master Gardener volunteers receive information about a wide variety of volunteer opportunities right in their own communities. Just a few of the many kinds of volunteer activities are listed below:

- teaching classes and workshops
- answering phone inquiries concerning home horticulture
- assisting with county Horticulture Days
- teaching and demonstrating horticulture techniques in community and school gardens
- teaching youth and judging horticulture projects
- participating in media interviews and writing articles on horticulture topics
- speaking to schools and youth groups on gardening topics
- holding plant clinics at garden centers and farmers markets
- representing the program at county and state fair exhibits
- teaching horticulture in hospitals, nursing homes, and retirement centers

The state office of the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program provides a number of statewide volunteer opportunities. These opportunities are open to any volunteer from Minnesota regardless of their home county.

- MN State Fair – Extension Master Gardeners may volunteer to answer fairgoers’ gardening questions in the Master Gardener booth and/or make a presentation on a favorite gardening topic at The Dirt Stage in the Horticulture building. Volunteers receive free admission to the Fair for the day. Sign-up is online on the state Extension Master Gardener website in the “For Volunteers” section. Announcements are included in the Master Gardener News electronic newsletter and distributed through the MGSTATE listserv.

- eXtension Ask An Expert/Ask A Master Gardener Online Q&A – eXtension is the online presence for the national Cooperative Extension System. Volunteers throughout Minnesota may answer consumer questions on this web-based resource about gardens, lawns and landscapes. Training is offered online and is required for participants. Questions are emailed directly to participants. No sign-up is required. Interested volunteers should contact the state office at 612-625-9864 or mgweb@umn.edu.

- Arboretum Yard and Garden Desk and Phone Line – Volunteers may answer questions at the MN Landscape Arboretum Yard and Garden Desk on weekends or off the Arboretum Yard and Garden Phone Line throughout the year. Sign-up is online on the state Extension Master Gardener website.

- College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences (CFANS) Research and Outreach Centers (ROCs) – Extension Master Gardeners may volunteer to assist faculty in research at a number of locations, including Morris, St. Paul, Lamberton, Grand Rapids, Rosemount, Waseca, and the MN Landscape Arboretum. Interested volunteers should contact the state office at 612-625-9864 or mgweb@umn.edu. For more about ROCs: www.cfans.umn.edu/research/roc-centers.
State Volunteer Recognition

The Extension Master Gardener state office recognizes the dedicated work of volunteers with certificates and pins for milestone hours (1,000, 2,000, 3,000, etc.) and years of service starting with 10 years (15, 20, 25, 30, etc.). These awards are determined by the hours reported online by volunteers at the end of the calendar year (see “Volunteer Service and Continuing Education Hours”). Recognition awards are sent to the local county coordinator/leader for presentation to individuals. Local Master Gardener programs may host additional recognition events and present additional awards to volunteers.

Answering Horticulture Questions

Answering home landscape and gardening questions is a primary role of Extension Master Gardeners. Equally important is delivering other forms of horticulture education whether through classes, written articles, hands-on projects, etc. Core course materials provide a wealth of information to draw upon in doing Extension Master Gardener work. More Extension resources to support volunteers are available online through the Extension web sites. New - and even experienced - volunteers can sometimes feel overwhelmed with the wide array of questions asked of them and the enormous amount of information available. Extension Master Gardeners should remember that they are not expected to know the answer to every question, but rather know how and where to research a topic to locate sound, research-based information.

The consumer and environmental horticulture resources available to support Master Gardener work are quite significant. The state staff, and extension horticulture educators and faculty are available to assist volunteers (see Appendix A-6 "Directory – Extension Horticulture Staff and Faculty, and University Services"). Selected educators and faculty in other content departments are also available to support volunteers and, of course, the state Master Gardener staff is available as well. Other Extension Master Gardeners provide a network of support through the MASTGAR listserv and other communication networks.

When seeking information or answers to horticulture questions:

1. Search materials from your core course training or Extension resources.
2. Search online information on the Extension’s Garden website (www.extension.umn.edu/garden/), the national Cooperative Extension online database containing thousands of gardening FAQs, or other states’ Extension websites.
3. Search horticulture resources in your local program reference library if available.
4. Seek assistance from other Master Gardeners through MASTGAR.
5. Seek assistance from local Extension educators if staff are available in the county office.
6. Seek assistance from regional or faculty staff when you’ve exhausted all other sources.
It’s OK to say “I don’t know, but I’ll find out.” Collect the person’s contact information, do more research, and contact them with possible solutions and resources. Extension Master Gardeners are not expected to know everything, but should research University information to determine the best answer or answers, and then follow through by getting back to the person.

**Volunteer and Continuing Education Hours**

It is amazing to see the cumulative extent of Extension Master Gardener volunteer work! Records of volunteer and continuing education hours (CE) are important for documenting volunteer status and recognizing milestones in a volunteer’s history. Data collected from online reporting is also used to generate reports about volunteer work. These reports go to federal, state and county stakeholders and help illustrate the value of the program.

*Reporting volunteer and CE hours online:* The state website features an online tool for reporting volunteer and CE hours. Volunteers use this tool to enter their hours by selecting from the core areas and specific volunteer activities listed. Activities not listed can be added by the volunteer but require approval by the local county coordinator/leader. The reporting year is January 1 through December 31. Volunteers report their hours online on an ongoing basis throughout the year; however, all hours MUST be reported online by December 31. Once the database rolls over to the new year, volunteer and CE hours from the previous year cannot be entered and, unfortunately, will not become part of a volunteer’s records, apply toward milestone hours awards, or be included in the state or federal reports about the program.

*Volunteers with limited or no internet access:* As the Extension Master Gardener program has evolved, email and internet access has become a requirement of all new interns. However, some volunteers still do not have a computer and/or internet access. It is the volunteer’s responsibility to work with his or her local Extension Master Gardener program to receive assistance in reporting hours.

*Definition of “continuing education”:* Volunteers may choose continuing education that interests them. However, they should select continuing education that will (1) expand their knowledge in topics related to horticulture, and (2) help them in their volunteering efforts. Continuing education should be taught or sponsored by extension specialists, University faculty, recognized industry and government experts, or others approved by local county coordinators/leaders or the state office. The Extension Master Gardener program offers state- and nationally-sponsored online education as well. Many local programs offer monthly meeting presentations that qualify as continuing education. Volunteers may direct questions about continuing education to their local county coordinator/leader. Active volunteers may attend lectures and access the core course free of charge as continuing education.
**Reporting contacts:** The goal of asking volunteers to report contacts is to gain an accurate picture of the effectiveness of the program. Volunteers report the number of people they interact with as an Extension Master Gardener, NOT the number of questions they answer. When several volunteers interact with an individual at an event such as the MN State Fair, only one contact should be reported for all. While each volunteer reports his or her own volunteer hours for the event, the contact number should be reported only once.

Examples:

1. A local Horticulture Day draws a total of 320 people. This is the number of people this program event reaches. Although people attend various classes taught by several volunteers throughout the day, only the total number of people attending the event is reported. The local county coordinator/leader or a designated volunteer reports the 320 people online when he/she reports volunteer hours for the event.

2. Two volunteers answer questions at a plant clinic. During the day, 40 people bring plant samples and questions and both volunteers work together to help each of the 40 people. The plant clinic is the service that reached 40 people. One volunteer may report all 40 contacts or each volunteer may report 20 contacts. In the end, only the number of people who attended the clinic should be reported, in this case 40.

3. Three volunteers team up to teach a community education class on vegetable gardening. Twenty-four people attend the class. Only 24 total people should be reported. This can be done by one of the volunteers reporting 24 contacts, or each may report one-third or eight people.

**Media – TV, radio, newspaper and magazine articles:** When volunteering in the media, report the number of articles/broadcasts produced for a given media outlet. Then report the circulation or audience of that media outlet.

Example:

1. A volunteer writes a monthly gardening column for a local newspaper. The circulation of the paper is 15,000, so report this one time as twelve articles with a circulation of 15,000.

2. A volunteer hosts a weekly one-hour radio show for eight weeks during the summer on a local station. The station has a listening audience of 45,000, so in this situation, report eight one-hour radio shows on a station with an audience of 45,000.

**Diversity:** There are numerous ways to define diversity and diverse groups of people. The University of Minnesota designates a number of diverse groups in its equal opportunity and employment statement. These are mandated by law or policy. For reporting purposes, volunteers report diversity by entering the number of contacts they reach by defined race/ethnicity. Volunteers may use their best judgment in determining the racial diversity of program participants.
Volunteer Transferring Between States and Counties

Transferring to Minnesota from another state

Transfers from neighboring states: Active Extension Master Gardeners from Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin, who move to Minnesota and decide they would like to be a part of the Minnesota program must:

- Apply to and be accepted into their new local program including successfully clearing the volunteer background check required by the University of Minnesota.
- Request that a letter from their original local program be sent to the coordinator or leader of the new local county program. The letter should include the following:
  - Confirmation that the individual has been an active volunteer in good standing to-date.
  - The year the individual completed the internship.
  - Total years in the former program.
  - Any additional information about the individual’s volunteer history such as special certifications, leadership positions, etc.
- Purchase the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener materials.

Volunteer transfers from the five-state area are not required to take the Minnesota core course, but are welcome to review the information.

Transfers from other states: Active Extension Master Gardeners from other states who move to Minnesota and decide they would like to be a part of the Minnesota program must:

- Apply and be accepted into their new local program including successfully clearing the volunteer background check required by the University of Minnesota.
- Request that a letter from their original local program be sent to the coordinator or leader of the new local county program. The letter should include the following:
  - Confirmation that the individual has been an active volunteer in good standing to-date.
  - The year the individual completed the internship.
  - Total years in the former program.
  - Any additional information about the individual’s volunteer history such as special certifications, leadership positions, etc.
- Purchase the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener materials.
- Complete the Core Course Quiz Series online and pass with at least 80%.

Once an individual completes the above requirements, he or she may assume the title, benefits and responsibilities of an active University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener.
Transfer between Minnesota Counties: Active, emeritus or temporarily inactive Extension Master Gardeners who move to a new Minnesota county and would like to be a part of the program in their new location must:

- Apply and be accepted into their new local program and pass a required volunteer background check if one is not already completed.
- Request that a letter from their original local program be sent to the coordinator or leader of the new local county program. The letter should include the following:
  - Confirmation that the individual has been an active Master Gardener in good standing to-date.
  - The year the individual completed his or her internship.
  - Total years in the former program.
  - Any additional information about the individual’s volunteer history such as special certifications, leadership positions, etc.

Minnesotans training in other states: It is preferred that individuals take the core course training from the University of Minnesota. However, individuals accepted into a Minnesota local county program may fulfill the education requirement of their internship by taking the core course in the states of Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin. They must purchase the Minnesota core course materials and complete the volunteer portion of their internship in their local county program.

Volunteering in two states: Some volunteers live part of the year in another state and participate at some level in that state’s Extension Master Gardener program. The following addresses some common situations.

- A volunteer who is active in two state programs: Volunteers may belong to more than one state program; however, they must fulfill all volunteer and education requirements in both state programs in the applicable state. Volunteer hours in one state cannot be counted toward the volunteer hours in the other state without special approval from one or both state directors.

- A University of Minnesota volunteer who does not belong to a second state program, but volunteers for that program: A Master Gardener who belongs to the Minnesota program may volunteer in some capacity in another state. However, these hours cannot count toward required hours in Minnesota without special approval from the state director.

- Depending on the topic and possible application toward volunteer activity, continuing education hours earned in states other than Minnesota may fulfill requirements in both states with permission from the local county coordinator/leader or the state director.

Returning to the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program: People who have been out of the Minnesota program for three years or less may return to the program by doing the following:

- Apply and be accepted into their new local program including successfully clearing the volunteer background check required by the University of Minnesota.
- Purchase the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener materials.
- Complete the Core Course Quiz Series online and pass with at least 80%.
Once an individual completes the above requirements, he or she may assume the title, benefits and responsibilities of an active University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener.

To facilitate all volunteer reinstatements and transfers, coordinators and local contacts complete a form detailing the requirements (application, letter confirming good standing, background check, continuing education requirements, fees, etc.). Local leaders submit the completed form to the state office. Contact the state office at 612-625-9864 or mgweb@umn.edu to request a form.

**Using the University of Minnesota Extension Branding and Logo**

The University of Minnesota logo serves as the primary identity for all Extension programs including the Master Gardener program. Only the most current logo can be used. Various designs and formats of the official University of Minnesota Extension logo are downloadable on the Extension website at: www.extension.umn.edu/about/brand/. In some specific cases (such as wearable items), the name Extension Master Gardener Program and county identity may be incorporated under the University of Minnesota Extension logo.

**Required Statements for Extension Program Materials**

As part of University of Minnesota Extension, local Extension Master Gardener program staff and volunteers are committed to the University of Minnesota equal opportunity policy. The Extension Master Gardener program is expected to make every effort to ensure that access to both becoming a volunteer and to events and activities is provided to all people including historically under-represented audiences.

Extension’s required statement below must appear one time in a visible location (title page, cover, credits page, etc.) on all materials produced by and for Extension Master Gardener events and programs:

*University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this material is available in alternative formats upon request. Direct requests to 612-624-1222.*

*If appropriate, Extension Master Gardener programs should also add the Recycled Materials statement to their printed materials:*

*Printed on recycled and recyclable paper with at least 10 percent post-consumer waste material.*

Include the Product Disclaimer statement (below) if product brand names are used in the text or visible in photos of a publication.
The information given in this publication is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by University of Minnesota Extension is implied.

Media Release

Images, video, film or other media used for Extension programs requires a signed media release to be on file. The release should list all identifiable individuals (including other Extension employees) who are principal players in the media and include a description of how the signer’s image will be used. Also use the release when private property is recognizable. A media release form is located on the Extension Master Gardener website in the Program Coordinator section. Signed media release forms must be held on file at the appropriate local program office or the state office. Here are additional Extension guidelines regarding releases:

- Individuals under the age of 18 need the signature of a parent or guardian. The names and addresses for minors should be obtained and releases sent to parents/guardians before the photos are taken; otherwise, obtain signatures before the images are used in Extension materials.
- Individuals who are identifiable in a group should sign releases whenever possible. This includes individuals visible in the foreground of large groups being photographed or videotaped in a public place (outside on the sidewalk or street) or in a public building (a big meeting).
- If you are photographing personal or private property (a garden, house, place of business, a commercial building, etc.), ask the owner to sign the release. If you are shooting images of public property, there is no need to obtain written consent from staff or administrators.

Some examples:

1. A photo of a plant sale on a public street may require a release from people in the crowd if they are recognizable, but does not require a release from the owners of the businesses in the background.
2. A photo of a mother and child in a garden center requires one release from the mother for herself and the child, and another from the store owner or manager.

Copyright

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (title 17, U. S. Code) to the authors of “original works of authorship.” It gives us the right to say how Extension materials are used by others. It gives us legal recourse if they are used in ways we did not intend or do not endorse. It discourages copying in lieu of purchasing which helps recover production costs and produce income to fund future materials.
Likewise, many publications and resources that volunteers may want to use to create teaching materials such as presentations, articles and handouts, may have a copyright. Copyright can pertain to written material, photographs, website content and music whether in hard copy or found online.

Before using materials in creating a document, check if your references have a copyright. If so, get permission from the author(s) prior to using them. Check with your local coordinator or the state office to get more details about copyright requirements from the university and acquiring copyright permission. It is always important to acknowledge authors, photographers, and musicians when quoting them or using their work in your finished materials. For more about the University’s copyright policies including guidelines, laws, public domain and fair use: www.copyright.umn.edu/home.htm.

**Liability and Accident Coverage as a Volunteer**

*Liability coverage*: The University of Minnesota Legal Defense and Indemnification of Employees Policy www.regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/policies/LegalDefense.pdf extends to individuals who are certified as Extension Master Gardeners (listed in the database, reporting hours on the state database and in good standing in the program). Liability coverage requires that the person bringing a liable charge prove neglect on the part of the Extension Master Gardener volunteer (and thus, the University) caused harm to the individual. This differs from accident insurance that would generally cover cost of a medical expense due to an accidental injury. Liability coverage is provided only while the volunteer is carrying out authorized Extension Master Gardener responsibilities for University of Minnesota Extension sponsored activities. The volunteer must also be working within the scope and specified duties as per the Extension Master Gardener volunteer job description. Personal vehicles including aircraft are excluded.

*Accident insurance*: There is no blanket accident insurance coverage for University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners. Local county programs are advised to take out accident insurance for volunteers annually. American Income Life Insurance Company handles such coverage at reasonable rates. This company is familiar nationally with Extension volunteer program coverage.

*Use of facilities*: Contracts for use of facilities (ex: a technical college) by local county programs for events must be signed and processed by the University of Minnesota Office of Risk Management. Local county coordinators/leaders should contact the state office for assistance.
Volunteer Reimbursements for Program Expenses

The Extension Master Gardener program is a volunteer program and thus participants receive no money for what they do. If individuals collect stipends for something they do, they are no longer considered volunteers and thus are not covered for liability purposes for those activities. Extension Master Gardeners may submit and be reimbursed by their local county programs and the state office, as appropriate, for actual out-of-pocket expenses supporting Master Gardener activities. A fee or donation can be paid to the Extension Master Gardener program in exchange for the services of an volunteer; however, no individual may personally receive financial gain as an volunteer.

Volunteering with Similar Organizations

Extension Master Gardeners are expected and educated to fulfill needs of communities through Extension programs. However, there are many horticulture associations, clubs and societies that can be educational and enriching for volunteers. Extension Master Gardeners may volunteer for these other organizations and count these as volunteer hours providing the following criteria are met: 1) the individual is clearly identified and volunteering primarily as an Extension Master Gardener; 2) the activity is educational and nonprofit. Volunteer questions about whether an activity may be counted toward Extension Master Gardener hours should be directed to the local county coordinator/leader or state office.
CHAPTER 4
FUNDRAISING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Fundraising by Extension Master Gardeners

While the success of the Master Gardener program depends on the work of volunteers, it is becoming increasingly necessary for state and local programs to generate funds from private sector donations and fundraising. Local county programs need to generate and manage financial resources to supplement group activities, support local projects and meet program needs. Most often revenues are generated through fees for services (class fees, event admission for horticulture days, garden tours) and sales of products (plants, calendars). Because the Extension Master Gardener program is not a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization, programs are prohibited from conducting fundraisers using games of chance (raffles, bingo, etc.).

Financial Stewardship

University of Minnesota policies and procedures provide the basis for Extension Master Gardener program financial stewardship guidelines. As a public program of University of Minnesota Extension, it is important that money raised to support a local county Extension Master Gardener program is handled with the greatest stewardship. Procedures for handling local county funds should be transparent and follow sound financial management practices as outlined in state Extension Master Gardener Financial Management Guidelines: www.extension.umn.edu/garden/master-gardener/coordinators/finances/

The guidelines document standard best practices and cover four broad areas of financial management: taking in money, holding money, dispersing money, and accounting for money. All local county programs are required to implement and follow these best practices. In some cases, local Extension Master Gardener programs may implement additional guidelines.

Tax Deductible Donations

The University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program is not an independent 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. Therefore, it does not qualify to receive donations as tax deductible charitable gifts. For the purpose of receiving such gifts, the Minnesota 4-H Foundation, a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization, can serve as a fiscal agent for local programs. Once established, a local program can accept tax deductible gifts and grants. For instructions on how to set up a 4-H Foundation account: www.extension.umn.edu/garden/master-gardener/coordinators/finances/new-account-form.pdf.
Use of University Sales Tax Exemption

Although part of the University community, local county Extension Master Gardener programs are not typically eligible to use the University tax-exempt status to avoid having to pay sales tax on purchases for the program. Volunteers who make purchases directly cannot use the University’s exemption even if they are reimbursed by the University. Effective in 2014, counties are now exempt from sales tax on most purchases, thus purchases made by a county Extension office for use by a county Extension Master Gardener program should be tax exempt.

In order to use the University of Minnesota’s sales tax exempt status when purchasing items, University staff must pay directly for the items using a University purchasing card or a University check at the time of purchase or on an invoice. (Note: the state Extension Master Gardener office does not have the capacity to place orders and process invoices on behalf of many local county programs.)
EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER STATE ADVISORY BOARD
Operating Policies and Procedures

Mission Statement:
The Mission of the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program is to support Extension by providing horticulturally trained volunteers to educate the public with research based information on the best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship.

The Extension Master Gardener Program will provide an environment for volunteers that is friendly and supportive so their training, experience and enthusiasm will produce maximum benefits to their communities.

Purpose:
The purpose of the Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Board is to provide consensual advice and constructive input to the state Extension Master Gardener office in order that the state office staff can formulate programming strategies and governing policies for the Extension Master Gardener Program. Policies should conform to those of the University of Minnesota Extension.

Each member of the Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Board shall act as an ambassador of the Extension Master Gardener Program by promoting its mission whenever possible. Particular attention should be directed toward communicating this mission to local, county, district, and state officials in order to assure the continuance and effectiveness of the Extension Master Gardener Program throughout the entire state.

Membership:
The Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Board shall be comprised of the following members:

  a. Elected: 14 voting members will be elected by the board from candidates who are active Extension Master Gardener volunteers. Six (6) members shall be elected from the Central Extension Region, and two (2) each from the Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest Extension regions.

  b. Appointed: Up to 4 (four) voting members may be appointed by the Extension Master Gardener director. These may include an Extension educator, a program coordinator, or a regional director.

  c. Ex-officio: The Extension Master Gardener director and the state office staff shall serve as non-voting members of the board.

Application for Elected Membership:
Qualifying volunteers who wish to be considered for election to the State Advisory Board must submit a written application, including a history of their Extension Master Gardener volunteer work, why they want to serve on the board, and their vision for the Extension Master Gardener program. Only individuals will be
considered for membership. Couples, co-members or alternates will not be considered. Each application must also include a letter of recommendation from the coordinator or person responsible for the Extension Master Gardener program in which the applicant is an active member. This may be a county staff member, a regional staff member, or a local volunteer leader or president/chair.

Applications for elected membership are to be solicited in a manner to ensure all qualified Extension Master Gardeners have an opportunity to respond.

Applications and recommendations should be sent to the Board Vice-Chair by a designated deadline to be eligible.

**Terms of Assignment (Elected members):**

Members shall serve for a three (3) year term, unless specifically elected for a shorter duration.

Members shall not be elected for consecutive terms.

Members shall be elected in a consistent manner that ensures appropriate board continuity, striving to replace and co-terminate board terms on a three year cycle.

Members who miss two consecutive meetings (except in the event of inclement weather) may be removed from the Board.

Inclement Weather:

*If an Advisory Board meeting will be cancelled due to inclement weather, the decision to do so will be made by 3:00pm of the day prior to the meeting. Notification will be made in a manner consistent with other internal board communications.*

**Credit Hours:**

Time spent at regular and special meetings will count toward Master Gardener volunteer hours. Time spent exclusive of board meetings, on assigned projects/special assignments/research, etc. will also count toward volunteer hours.

**Meetings:**

The Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Board will hold regular meetings a minimum of four (4) times annually, one of which will be designated the annual meeting.

Dates of regular meetings will be determined by the Board.

Additional special meetings may be called by the Advisory Board Chairperson as deemed necessary and appropriate.

The Board will strive to provide opportunities for members to participate via remote meeting technologies that provide synchronous communications with the designated meeting location. Members participating via this method will be considered present for purposes of conducting board business.

A quorum defined as 51% of the current Board membership is necessary for conducting Board business.

A simple majority will constitute a majority to pass a motion, unless otherwise specified.
Officers

The elected membership of the State Advisory Board will nominate and elect for the offices of Advisory Board Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary.

Advisory Board Chairperson:

The Advisory Board Chairperson will be elected annually at the annual meeting. The candidate must have completed the first year of his/her term in order to be eligible for election.

Term of assignment will be for one (1) year, not to exceed two (2) consecutive terms.

Duties/Responsibilities:

1. To announce to all board members the time, date, and location of all regular and special meetings.
2. Prepare and distribute [after consultation with Extension Master Gardener director] the program agenda including date/time and location.
3. Preside at all regular and special meetings of the State Advisory Board.
4. Be a contact spokesperson for the Extension Master Gardener Program of the University of Minnesota Extension.
5. Appoint subcommittees/teams as necessary and maintain board functions and responsibilities.
6. Check all details ahead of scheduled/special meetings (agenda items, projects, facilities, etc.).
7. Prepare and follow scheduled order of business.
8. Relay to the appropriate subcommittees/teams related and pertinent information as received through the state office.
9. Review minutes of meetings before publication.

Advisory Board Vice-Chairperson:

The Advisory Board Vice-Chairperson will be elected at the annual meeting.

Term of assignment will be for one (1) year, not to exceed two (2) consecutive terms.

The Advisory Board Vice-Chairperson does not automatically succeed the Advisory Board Chairperson.

Duties/Responsibilities:

1. Assume the duties/responsibilities of the Advisory Board Chairperson in his/her absence.
2. Oversee the board member application and election process.
   a. Coordinate communications and solicitation for applicants.
   b. Answer volunteer and Extension staff questions concerning the application process and board member duties, and explain what should be included in the application.
   c. Receive applications and letters of recommendation.
d. Distribute copies of all applications and recommendations to members prior to the board meeting for voting on new members.

e. Lead discussion on board applications and oversee the voting process at the first board meeting of the year.

f. Write and send letters of acceptance or regret to all who applied and notify those who wrote recommendations of the outcome.

g. Copy the state office on all correspondence to prospective applicants/members.

**Advisory Board Secretary:**
The Advisory Board Secretary will be elected at the annual meeting.

Term of assignment will be for one (1) year, not to exceed two (2) consecutive terms.

**Duties/Responsibilities:**

1. Record all activities of the scheduled/special meetings of the State Advisory Board.

2. Share draft minutes with state Extension Master Gardener program staff and the Advisory Board Chairperson for review and edit.

3. Distribute edited meeting minutes to all board members or arrange for them to be posted on the Extension Master Gardener website.

4. Other duties/responsibilities as deemed necessary and appropriate.

**Sub-Committee/Teams**

Subcommittees/teams must be overseen by or led by Extension Master Gardeners or staff of the University of Minnesota, but need not be members of the Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Board and shall:

1. Assume assignment and initiate follow-through to a termination point.

2. Report, periodically, to the Board at scheduled/special meetings, if requested.

3. On completion of assignment, initiate a detailed after-action report for submission to the Advisory Board Chairperson and the state director.

**Changes of Policies and Procedures:**

**Amendment:**

These Operating Policies and Procedures or any portion thereof may be amended by a vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those members present at any meeting of the Board provided that notice of such proposed change shall be provided each member of the Board at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

**Waiver:**

These Operating Policies and Procedures or any portion thereof may be waived for the purpose of proposing special action by a three-quarters (3/4) vote of those voting members present at any meeting of the Board.

As adopted: September 21, 2012
Amended September 26, 2014
Regions for University of Minnesota Extension and Extension Master Gardener State Advisory Board Representation (2014-2015)

Northwest
228 Volunteers – 10%
2 positions

Northeast
309 Volunteers – 13%
2 positions

Central
1,305 Volunteers – 57%
6 positions

Southwest
135 Volunteers – 6%
2 positions

Southeast
325 Volunteers – 14%
2 positions
OVERVIEW: PUBLIC BENEFIT SURVEY

(Excerpt from Public Benefit Stakeholder Valuation of Minnesota Master Gardener Program by Bartholomay, T. and Moen, D., 2007)

In a time of limited public finances and scrutiny of public dollars, documenting the number of people reached by Extension Master Gardeners is not enough. Beyond personal benefits gained by Master Gardeners and the individuals they educate, what is the public benefit of their work?

In 2007, University of Minnesota Extension studied the “public value” or “public benefits” of the Extension Master Gardener program. Stakeholder groups including county commissioners and Extension committee members, university staff, and Master Gardeners generated data about the public benefits delivered by Master Gardeners through their volunteer work. University of Minnesota Extension evaluator, Tom Bartholomay, created a modified Delphi Technique research approach to conduct the study.

Initially, stakeholders generated 134 attributes of public benefit of the Extension Master Gardener program. Those were consolidated into 42 distinct attributes. All stakeholder groups rated the public value of each attribute as well as Extension Master Gardener volunteers’ position and ability to deliver the attribute. In the end, eight attributes were identified as having much or very much public value by all stakeholder groups and a perception that Extension Master Gardeners have the position and ability to deliver them. The eight ranged from environmental and health-related benefits to attributes that increase community capacity and access to resources.

The results of this study help to [1] focus the direction of the program and [2] communicate about the program to the stakeholder groups listed below.

For Extension Master Gardener volunteers:

• To help volunteers articulate the public value of the program.
• To increase the focus of volunteers on projects with public value.
• To encourage intentionality within program planning.
• To shift volunteer focus away from what “feels good” and toward “outcome/impact.”

For Extension stakeholders:

• To provoke deeper thinking among Extension stakeholders about the program.
• To help Extension stakeholders focus the concept of program.
• To provide Extension stakeholders with a framework for reflective self-assessment.
For county stakeholders:

- To help counties articulate Extension Master Gardener public value for decision-makers.
- To offer a common framework for counties for conceptualizing and discussing the Extension Master Gardener program.
- To move discussions with counties beyond the “gardener club” perception of the Extension Master Gardener program.
- To provide counties with a framework to educate stakeholders about the program.
- To help counties conceptualize program-relevant needs of the community being served.

**Eight Final Priority Public Benefit Attributes**

This study confirms and identifies key areas where Extension Master Gardener programs can make significant public impact. While each local program is unique, paying attention to public benefits of Master Gardener work will ensure the program delivers public value. In the end, eight attributes of public benefit rated having much or very much public value by all stakeholder groups:

1. Master Gardener programs improve the natural environment through public education that leads to reduced yard waste, water runoff, pollution, and demands on waste management and landfill systems.

2. Master Gardener programs reduce the spread of hazardous plants, diseases, and insects through public education and consorted collaborative strategies.

3. Master Gardener programs increase the effectiveness of community public service organizations (such as Habitat for Humanity and farmers markets) by partnering with these organizations to broaden and strengthen their capacity around horticulture solutions.

4. Master Gardener programs increase the safety and health of Minnesotans through public education about appropriate use of pesticides.

5. Master Gardener programs increase the social, emotional, and cognitive abilities of children and youth by engaging them in horticulture through Junior Master Gardener programs, collaboration with schools, and other youth programs.

6. Master Gardener programs provide Minnesota’s vulnerable populations (such as children, elderly, and people with disabilities) with increased access to meaningful, multi-skill, community-focused activities.

7. Master Gardener programs increase Minnesotans’ access to University of Minnesota Extension Services through broad and continuous public presence and referrals of public to other Extension services.

8. Master Gardener programs increase Minnesotans’ access to tax supported University of Minnesota research-based information.
**Variations between Stakeholder Groups**

*County stakeholders:* Five of the eight final attributes valued by all stakeholder groups were among the top 10 valued attributes for county decision-makers. Beyond the attributes valued by all stakeholder groups, most notable was the presence of economic-related attributes and the group’s emphasis on environmental attributes.

*Master Gardener stakeholders:* Although Master Gardeners were perceived to value more attributes than other stakeholder groups, only two of the eight final attributes valued by all stakeholder groups were among the top 10 valued attributes for Master Gardeners. Beyond the attributes valued by all stakeholder groups, most notable was the presence of attributes related to the economic benefits of the Master Gardener Program and the group’s emphasis on environmental attributes.

*Extension stakeholders:* Five of the eight final attributes valued by all stakeholder groups were among the top 10 valued attributes for Extension staff. Beyond the attributes valued by all stakeholder groups, most notable were the presence of horticulture-related attributes and the lack of economic-related attributes related to economic benefits of the Master Gardener program.

For additional information: David Moen, State Manager, 612-301-3747. Email: moenx010@umn.edu
POSITION DESCRIPTION:
EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

Purpose: To provide public education with research-based information from University of Minnesota Extension, or appropriate Cooperative Extension institutions, on best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship.

Nature and Scope: University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteers expand the ability of Extension faculty and staff to provide public value and meet the needs of Minnesota citizens in the areas of consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship.

Trained Extension Master Gardener interns and certified Master Gardener volunteers provide educational programs, interpret Extension recommendations for consumers, and give advice and answers to questions on a broad range of gardening and landscape topics (including plant culture, plant pathology, entomology, soils, environmentally sound best practices, etc.). This is accomplished through formal and informal activities that include plant clinics, telephone, classes, written materials, demonstration gardens, public meetings, etc. Extension Master Gardeners may provide educational programs to adult or youth audiences through Extension partnerships with schools, institutions, or other organizations (e.g., Conservation Districts, city parks departments, etc.). Master Gardener volunteers may also serve in program leadership roles at local, regional and state levels as assigned or as elected according to program by-laws.

Requirements:
- Must participate fully in and complete core course training; fulfill annual continuing education requirement predetermined by county Extension master gardener program [minimum 5 hrs. annually to remain a certified Master Gardener].
- Annually complete a county-specific number of public education volunteer service hours within a predetermined timeframe (minimum 50 hrs. intern year/25 hrs. each year after to remain a certified Master Gardener.)
- Follow University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener policies and procedures, including responsibility for reporting and responding to reasonable requests for volunteer service.
- Follow University of Minnesota Board of Regents and Master Gardener codes of conduct.
- Follow policies and procedures established by the county/local Master Gardener program.
- Follow University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener policies pertaining to use of research-based information and making recommendations, especially related to use of pesticides and other pest control measures.
- Be able to communicate effectively with the public by phone, personal contact, group presentation and/or through written language.
- Exhibit an interest in or have knowledge of gardening or other horticulture-related area.
- Be able to work with adults and/or youth and be willing to share horticulture knowledge with others.
Supervision: Based on the Extension staffing arrangement, the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer is supervised by and accountable to county, regional or state Extension staff in charge of the county program.

Benefits:

• Gain knowledge and skills in horticulture science and gardening; continue to stimulate a love of gardening.
• Experience personal satisfaction from helping others and contributing public benefit to the community.
• Receive encouragement and recognition.
• Increase leadership, organizational, decision-making and problem-solving skills.
• Gain experience and skills transferable to new employment and volunteer opportunities.
• Establish friendships with fellow garden enthusiasts and develop useful contacts through networking.
NETIQUETTE: ETIQUETTE FOR THE INTERNET, EMAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA AND LISTSERVS

Purpose of Technology:
1. To share horticultural knowledge
2. To build community
3. To support each other as volunteers and gardeners

Technical Problems:
• For questions about personal computer equipment, Internet access/speed, and personal software, contact your computer support staff, Internet provider, or software company help desk.
• For all other questions, email: mgweb@umn.edu
• If you have concerns about content on the listserv, contact the state office at 612-625-9864 or mgweb@umn.edu.

Content:
1. Show respect for fellow volunteers. Any Extension Master Gardener who makes derogatory or inappropriate comments regarding race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or does not show respect for others on the listserv, is subject to immediate removal from the listserv and disciplinary action at the discretion of the state program director in accordance with Master Gardener Program policies.
2. Agree to disagree. If you disagree with what someone has said online, put all your communication skills into practice as you express that disagreement online.
3. Ranting online is unacceptable. It is the equivalent of having a tantrum, something most of us would not do face to face.
4. Do not type in all capital letters. It is hard to read completely capitalized messages, and IT IS CONSIDERED SHOUTING online. If you need to emphasize a word or two, use asterisks, or underline or italicize the words.
5. Do not put confidential, personal or legally sensitive information in email messages, on social media, etc., when you are representing University of Minnesota Extension as a Master Gardener.
6. Avoid sarcastic, teasing or joking comments. Readers do not always know that you are kidding, and your comments could be misconstrued. If you are not sure how your ideas and comments will be taken, ask someone to read them before sending.
7. Do not SPAM, send chain letters or spread hoaxes. Never pass along warnings about internet viruses or any other threat without first checking with the supposed source. When in doubt, throw it out.
**Write Well Online:**

1. Use proper grammar and punctuation, and spell correctly. Poorly written e-mails are a bad reflection on you. Pay attention to style, spelling, grammar, syntax and all the other rules of written communication. It will make a difference how your message is perceived.

2. Explain things completely.

3. Read your message before you send it. Check it before you click the send button.

4. Be concise. Keep your email brief and to the point. Make sure it clearly expresses your thoughts and ideas. Delete the irrelevant portions of the original message; just leave the portion that you are replying to. Put your reply at the top of the message, so the recipient doesn’t have to scroll to the bottom to find it.

5. Fill in the subject line. Many people who receive dozens of emails a day appreciate seeing something in the subject line because it helps them prioritize the e-mail and find it after it’s been filed. Keep the characters in the subject line short. If you do not fill in the subject line, many people will think that your message is either a virus or spam.

6. Sign your email. Email addresses are not always comprised of people’s names. The receiver may not be familiar with your email address and thus may choose not to respond.

[Adapted from “Email Netiquette” by Matthew Riedel, Rutgers University.]
DIRECTORY: EXTENSION HORTICULTURE STAFF, EXTENSION FACULTY AND UNIVERSITY SERVICES

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Resources — Good Places to Start
The following are several important websites that you will want to become familiar with and bookmark on your computer. All of them provide extensive information and links to sites on the Internet. Enjoy exploring these websites and use them as resources for your Master Gardener work.

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener website:
www.mg.umn.edu

University of Minnesota Extension Garden website:
www.extension.umn.edu/garden

University of Minnesota Department of Horticultural Science:
www.horticulture.umn.edu

University of Minnesota Center for Urban Ecology and Sustainability (CUES):
www.entomology.umn.edu/cues/

University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum:
www.arboretum.umn.edu/

eXtension Gardens & Landscapes:
www.extension.org/horticulture

National Extension Master Gardener blog:
blogs.extension.org/mastergardener/
University of Minnesota Plant Disease Clinic
Tel: (612) 625-1275; Email: pdc@umn.edu
The Plant Disease Clinic accepts plant samples from gardeners or professional growers for a fee and will identify the disease organism in 7-14 days. Submission forms and directions are available at: pdc.umn.edu

University of Minnesota Soil Testing Laboratory
Tel: 612-625-3101; Email: soiltest@umn.edu
The Soil Test Lab accepts samples from gardeners or professional growers for a fee, and offers tests for soluble salts, lead, phosphorous, potassium, pH, organic matter, and texture class. Instructions on collecting and submitting a soil sample are available at: soiltest.cfans.umn.edu/

Insect Sample Identification
Contact: Jeff Hahn, Extension Professor, U of MN Department of Entomology, 236 Hodson Hall, 1980 Folwell Ave, St. Paul, MN 55108. Tel: 612-624-4977; Email: hahnx002@umn.edu
Identification of digital images is available at no charge. Identification of actual insect samples requires a $5 processing fee. Samples are only accepted from Extension Master Gardeners or Extension staff. Contact Jeff directly for information required for each sample.
**Extension Educators and Faculty**

Below is a contact list of University of Minnesota Extension educators and faculty for use by Extension Master Gardeners. After exhausting all other resources, volunteers may email or call educators with difficult questions. The following information is specifically for use by volunteers, not for public distribution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Areas of expertise</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email/Twitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam Bauer</td>
<td>Turfgrass, weed management <a href="http://www.turf.umn.edu">www.turf.umn.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Grabowski</td>
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<td>651-319-2551</td>
<td><a href="mailto:magrabow@umn.edu">magrabow@umn.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Hahn</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Julie Weisenhorn</td>
<td>Consumer horticulture, sustainable residential landscape design <a href="http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/landscaping/">www.extension.umn.edu/garden/landscaping/</a></td>
<td>612-625-1925</td>
<td><a href="mailto:weise019@umn.edu">weise019@umn.edu</a>, Twitter: @jweisenhorn</td>
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<tr>
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