Master Gardener Coordinator’s Guide
OBJECTIVE
For use by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach staff when developing and coordinating a county- or area-based Master Gardener program. This guide will help you answer the questions:

- What is the Iowa Master Gardener program?
- How is the Iowa Master Gardener training conducted?
- What can Master Gardener volunteers do?
- What are effective ways to organize and manage MG volunteers?
- What resources are available to support the Master Gardener program?

Learn more about the Iowa Master Gardener program

Visit the Iowa Master Gardener website at www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener
Contact the Iowa State University Extension Master Gardener Staff:
  State Coordinator: Susan DeBlieck, 515-294-6764, deblieck@iastate.edu
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ABOUT THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Focus on education and volunteers

The Iowa Master Gardener organization is an educational and volunteer service program of the Iowa State University (ISU) College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and ISU Extension and Outreach. Through the Iowa Master Gardener program, interested volunteers receive training in horticulture and environmental topics of special value to the home gardener.

In exchange for this training, Iowa Master Gardeners share their time and knowledge on approved projects within their communities. Through the leadership, instruction, and hands-on assistance provided by Master Gardeners, the broad resources of Iowa State University are extended to benefit Iowans at the local level and enhance the quality of life in Iowa communities.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is a partnership including Iowa State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local Extension districts. This partnership cooperates with local governments and citizens to extend information from the university to citizens throughout Iowa.

History of the Master Gardener program

The Master Gardener program began as a response to public demand for horticultural information from local extension offices in the state of Washington in 1972. The pilot program provided interested individuals with specialized home garden horticulture training in exchange for volunteer assistance to extension service personnel in providing individualized information to clients.

The successful program in Washington provided a pattern, and now, all states, the District of Columbia, and four Canadian provinces have organized Master Gardener programs. It is estimated that there are nearly 100,000 active participants in the Master Gardener program nationwide.

The Iowa Master Gardener program was first offered in Scott County (Davenport) in 1979 with 17 trainees. More than 14,000 Iowans in nearly all of Iowa’s 99 counties have been trained as Master Gardeners. In a typical year, training is held in approximately 24 locations around the state. The Master Gardener program also has been used as a model for several other volunteer training programs, including the Master Woodlot Managers, Master Composters and Master Conservationists.

History of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is part of the Cooperative Extension Service. Congress established this national program in 1914 to distribute information developed by land grant universities and research stations to citizens. For more details on the history of Iowa State Extension and Outreach go to http://www.extension.iastate.edu/dubuque/page/extension-service-historical-perspective. For more information on the history of Iowa State University go to www.public.iastate.edu/~isu150/history/time.html
What is the Master Gardener product?

Extension and Outreach’s product is information. The long-term credibility of that information depends on everyone who represents ISU Extension and Outreach. The confidence that clientele have that the information they receive is reliable and credible is the foundation upon which the Extension Service is built. As Extension volunteers, Master Gardeners are expected to uphold university research-based findings even when the information is new or different from the volunteer’s personal experience or opinion. If using the Internet as an information source, volunteers must reference only websites that are reputable based on responsible research that preferably is academic, and appropriate to Iowa’s climate, conditions, and cold hardiness zones.

How is the program administered?

The state Master Gardener program is administered and coordinated by ISU Extension and Outreach faculty and staff. They develop and provide curriculum and program materials, and also oversee the technical details related to course delivery. At the local level, the ISU Extension and Outreach office administers the Master Gardener program. Local staff members coordinate training and provide support to Master Gardener volunteer education and service projects.

State staff responsibilities

- Susan DeBlieck, state coordinator is responsible for supporting coordinators and statewide communications. She coordinates the Master Gardener training and works with ISU faculty and Extension staff to set objectives and prepare the training materials.
- The State Master Gardener Advisory Committee advises the state coordinator on policies for the program and assists with planning state and regional conferences. The group’s objectives are to develop programming strategies and governing policies that are in the best interests of the Iowa Master Gardener program and its volunteers. Each member of the advisory committee serves as an ambassador of the Iowa 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. This group meets at least twice per year. Membership consists of five Master Gardeners and five county coordinators representing five geographic regions of the state. In addition, an Extension & Outreach regional director and members of the state Master Gardener staff serve on the committee. For more details on the committee, including minutes from past meetings, see the State Advisory Committee website page.

Where to find Master Gardener Coordinator materials & information:

- Website: Iowa Master Gardeners
- Facebook: Iowa Master Gardeners
- Twitter: mgardener_IA
Local responsibilities

Local Master Gardener programs require effort and commitment. Extension staff will need to be involved in coordinating and hosting the training, collecting requests for help, providing guidance and support to volunteers, and verifying service hours and activities. Introducing the Master Gardener program may create more demand for horticultural information resulting in a self-perpetuating effect of increased demand. Local programs may encompass one or more counties. A local coordinator is expected to:

- Offer the Master Gardener Training,
- Verify Master Gardener service hours, and
- Support Master Gardener volunteer projects.

The local coordinator may be an extension education director, an extension agriculture or horticulture field specialist, a locally paid program assistant, or a Master Gardener volunteer. Master Gardeners and interns may fulfill service hours by helping the coordinator.

For more information about handling finances related to the Master Gardener program see Working with Master Gardener Finances.

A local advisory committee may be established to discuss program activities and needs, plan recruitment of future Master Gardener trainees, and develop community volunteer activities. See Appendix A for an example of the structure of a local Master Gardener advisory committee. Master Gardeners in some parts of the state have organized into groups that meet on a regular basis to work on projects and plan educational programs for their own benefit and to help the public learn about horticulture.

Annual schedule for coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Verify Master Gardener hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Horticulture In-Service meeting for coordinators in Ames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Search for Excellence Award submissions due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>Start of core course training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>MG Training class-on-campus offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>MG Training sessions conclude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Volunteer service and continuing education hours are due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Program Funding

Funds for the Iowa Master Gardener Program come from core training fees, continuing education webinar fees, conference registration fees, and sales of Master Gardener promotional items such as shirts. While ISU Extension and Outreach indirectly supports the Master Gardener program through staff salaries, no direct line item budget exists for Iowa Master Gardener program operational expenses in the overall ISU Extension and Outreach budget.
The Master Gardener management team seeks external grants for specific programs that involve Master Gardeners. Similarly, many local Master Gardener programs apply for and obtain grants for specific projects. In addition, fund-raising events such as plant sales and class fees help support local Master Gardener groups.

The table below outlines various Master Gardener funding sources and where those funds are used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source:</th>
<th>What the Funding Source Supports:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iowa State University Extension &amp; Outreach and Department of Horticulture</td>
<td>Master Gardener state coordinator and program assistant positions; state extension faculty positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through Federal and state funds</td>
<td>that support the Master Gardener program; operational expenses (facilities) for the above positions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Extension Master Gardener office through core course fees; ProHort class</td>
<td>Operational expenses for the state Master Gardener office and staff including production of educational materials for volunteers; volunteer continuing education classes, conferences, events; volunteer recognition; program promotion and marketing; newsletters; telephone, printing, postage and materials handling fees; IT support for the core course and webinars; some state coordinator and program assistant travel costs; support for selected educational programming activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fees; continuing education class fees; sale of promotional items; conference fees;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grants; donations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County Extension funds based on county extension budget allocation</td>
<td>Local extension staff and Master Gardener coordinator positions; county extension support staff positions; county extension office operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Master Gardener Program: local program generated fees through classes;</td>
<td>Local Master Gardener educational events, classes, etc.; local Master Gardener operations; possibly local Master Gardener revenue share toward local extension staff position and/or operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>horticulture events; sales, gifts, grants; donations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who can become a Master Gardener?**

All adults (18 years of age or older) with an interest in gardening are eligible to apply for Iowa Master Gardener training. A potential Master Gardener must demonstrate interest in gardening, enthusiasm for acquiring and sharing knowledge, and sincere commitment to volunteerism and community betterment. Applicants who do not intend to volunteer should be directed to apply as a ProHort student rather than as a Master Gardener trainee.
Volunteer Categories

**Master Gardener Trainee**
- Someone who has been accepted into the Master Gardener Training course and completed the background check.

**Master Gardener Intern**
- Volunteer-in-training who has successfully completed the Master Gardener Training: local sessions, class on campus, and has passed the final class assessment with a score of 70/100 or higher
- May need to complete internship (40 volunteer hours) before taking on leadership roles in county
- Has access to all program & Extension resources, staff, website, education, events, etc.

**Active Master Gardener**
- Successfully completed initial internship of 40 volunteer hours
- Annually fulfills and reports on-line a minimum of 20 volunteer service and 10 continuing education hours
- Signs the annual volunteer agreement
- Is eligible for volunteer activities
- Has access to all program & Extension resources, staff, website, education, events, etc.

**Inactive Master Gardener**
- Has not reported the minimum required volunteer and/or continuing education hours during the past calendar year
  - If the length of the inactive status is two years or less, may reactivate by completing a minimum of 24 hours of service and 12 hours of continuing education. If the length of inactive status is longer than two years, additional continuing education may be required to reactivate.
- Years in inactive status do not count toward years of Master Gardener service awards
- Has access to all program & Extension resources, staff, website, education, events, etc.

**Lifetime Master Gardener**
- Considered in good standing with the program at the time of such designation
- Has accrued 10 or more years and 1500 or more volunteer hours as an active Master Gardener
- May continue to volunteer and report hours as able, but is not required to report volunteer hours or meet minimum hours requirements
- Has access to all program & Extension resources, staff, website, education, events, etc.

**Honorary Master Gardener**
- Someone who has contributed significantly to the local or statewide Iowa Master Gardener program, but who is not an active Master Gardener and may not have taken the Master Gardener core course
MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

What are the Master Gardener service requirements?

Trainees receive approximately 40 hours of research-based classroom training. When training is completed, trainees begin a one-year Master Gardener internship. During this period, interns must complete a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service on approved Master Gardener projects within their communities. Following the completion of this volunteer service commitment, the intern is recognized as an Iowa Master Gardener. Many counties celebrate with a ceremony to recognize new Master Gardeners. To remain active in the program, individuals must complete a minimum of 10 hours of continuing education and 20 hours of volunteer service annually after their first year of internship.

How does a Master Gardener Intern become a Master Gardener?

A Master Gardener Intern must complete at least 40 hours of approved volunteer service by the end of the calendar year following completion of the core course training in order to become a Master Gardener. For example, a trainee who begins training in August 2019 and finishes the classes in November 2019 must complete a 40-hour internship by December 31, 2020.

Volunteer hours are to be logged in the online Volunteer Reporting System. Hours can be logged by the intern as soon as they begin the Master Gardener Training.

What if they don’t finish the Master Gardener Internship on time?

ISU Extension and Outreach county Master Gardener coordinators can work with Master Gardener interns to support them in completing the 40 hour volunteer service. In addition, Master Gardener interns will also have to log 12 continuing education hours.

If the 40 hour volunteer internship is not completed within 3 years, the Master Gardener intern will need to:
1. Log 40 volunteer hours and 12 continuing education hours within 12 months
2. Submit fee to the ISU Extension and Outreach county office to process the background check
3. Pass the pre/post assessment with 70 points out of 100 or higher
4. Attend nearby continuing education opportunities which can include the Master Gardener Training sessions.

Maintaining active Master Gardener status

Following successful completion of the internship, the volunteer becomes an Iowa Master Gardener and is considered active. Count coordinators place a request on the Materials Order Form for the new Master Gardener certificate, name badge and lapel pin. Active status is valid for one calendar year.

Recertification of active status as a Master Gardener requires the volunteer to sign an annual volunteer agreement and to complete and report volunteer service and continuing education hours by the end of the calendar year. The annual volunteer agreement is shared online on the Volunteer Reporting System (VRS) in the beginning of the year. County staff may use the paper copy of the annual agreement to track who plans on being an active Master Gardener each year. County staff use this
information to renew background checks of Master Gardeners and report to the Extension county council about the number of volunteers that need to be covered in the liability policy.

The volunteer must complete and report a minimum of 10 hours of continuing education and 20 hours of volunteer service during the calendar year. Hours need to be logged on the Volunteer Reporting System by December 31st of each year. Local Master Gardener programs may require additional service or education hours.

How is volunteer service defined?

Master Gardener volunteer service is:
- Unpaid
- Volunteer service
- With an emphasis on gardening
- In public spaces

The opportunities for Master Gardener involvement are as varied as the individuals who are trained. In addition to traditional Extension-sponsored functions (garden classes, fairs, and answering phone calls at the Extension office), other activities may be community-based or school-related, such as information booths at farmers’ markets, school enrichment programs, and library programs.

Ultimately, what counts as volunteer time is a local decision made by the Extension county coordinator. However, Master Gardener activities should include an educational component, as opposed to activities that are just labor or community beautification. Sharing local guidelines with trainees is one way to clarify expectations and ensure consistency in recordkeeping. Some examples of volunteer service projects are provided in Appendix G.

What counts as continuing education?

Continuing education is expected to advance the Master Gardener’s knowledge and understanding of horticulture. It must be factual, accurate, and provided by a source generally recognized as research based. Most training opportunities offered by educational institutions, public gardens, and education-focused gardening organizations meet this requirement. Sessions offered by entertainers and sales people are less likely to do so. Listening to radio programs, watching television programs, and reading books do not count as continuing education.

Ultimately, which activities count as continuing education is a local decision made by the Extension county coordinator or local advisory committee. Sharing local guidelines with trainees and with active Master Gardeners will help clarify expectations and ensure consistency in recordkeeping. Some examples of continuing education opportunities are given in Appendix I.

Volunteer Reporting System

The Iowa Master Gardener program features an online Volunteer Reporting System (VRS). Master Gardener interns and volunteers use this tool to enter their volunteer hours, continuing education hours, and contacts made while volunteering. How-to videos about the VRS are available here.

The reporting year follows the calendar year; volunteer and continuing education hours are due by December 31st of each
 Volunteers may report their hours throughout the year on an ongoing basis. Late submissions are not included in state or federal reports about the MG program. The MG county coordinator needs to verify the hours in the VRS to mark that yes, these are verified volunteer and continuing education hours.

Records of Master Gardener volunteer and continuing education hours are important for documenting volunteer status, recognizing milestones in a volunteer’s history, and are an important part of Extension’s annual reports to federal and state funding agencies. Data collected from online reporting is used to generate reports about MG impact and help illustrate the value of the program.

New Master Gardener trainees are entered into the VRS automatically when they register. If a volunteer does not have a computer or internet access, it is their responsibility to work with the local county Master Gardener coordinator to receive in-person assistance in reporting hours.

Background Checks

Because they are volunteers on behalf of Extension and Outreach, all Master Gardener volunteers need to pass the background check by September 2016. Volunteers that are considered high risk need to be re-screened every 3 years.

Learn more here: http://www.iacuc.info/background-screening

Search for Excellence Award

Each spring, the Master Gardener Advisory Committee seeks submissions for Search for Excellence (SFE) Awards. The SFE Awards recognize group projects that have had a community impact. Categories of group projects include: Youth Programs, Demonstration Gardens, Workshop or Presentation, Community Service, Innovative Project, Special Needs Audience (Senior, Disabled or Horticultural Therapy), and Research (applied scientific methodology).

Through the Search for Excellence recognition program, Master Gardeners can demonstrate their outstanding contributions to their communities, providing significant learning and impact in the local area. All SFE applications must show that significant learning took place, with the focus on educating the general public rather than individual Master Gardeners. All SFE winning projects must be a team effort. Usually the awards are presented to individual county groups, but cooperation across county lines is encouraged as well.

SFE Award submissions are made by the Master Gardeners to the Advisory Committee by March 15th. For more information and to see the guidelines and application, visit our website: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/search-excellence-award
When can the Master Gardener title be used?

The title “Iowa Master Gardener” is to be used only and exclusively in the ISU Extension and Outreach Master Gardener Program. Iowa Master Gardeners are expected to identify themselves as Master Gardeners only when doing unpaid public service work for ISU Extension and Outreach-sponsored programs. Master Gardeners should not advertise or promote their places of business while volunteering as a Master Gardener nor solicit business because of their training as a Master Gardener. Appearing at a commercial activity, having association with commercial products, or giving implied university endorsement of any product or business is improper. ISU Extension and Outreach, of which the Master Gardener Program is a part, must be viewed as a source of unbiased, research-based information. However, an individual may list his or her Master Gardener education and volunteer service experience on a resume.

When performing Master Gardener activities, Iowa Master Gardeners are agents of Iowa State University. When it is necessary to make recommendations that include the use of pesticides, Master Gardeners must follow ISU and label recommendations. Master Gardeners are expected to give ISU-sanctioned recommendations and not rely merely on their own personal experience, that of others, or common garden folklore.

Experienced Master Gardeners may receive invitations to give educational presentations to various groups and organizations. Any payments or honoraria received can be accepted if offered at the discretion of the group or organization sponsoring the presentation. However, Master Gardeners should not seek payment for such activities. Many Master Gardeners contribute the honorarium money back to their local program to purchase reference materials or to support other local horticulture programs. It is appropriate for Master Gardeners to seek reimbursement from program sponsors for the cost of travel or materials needed to conduct the class.

How do Master Gardeners transfer into the Iowa program?

Transferring to Iowa from another state
Active Master Gardeners trained in other states are welcome to become active volunteers in Iowa. Active Extension Master Gardeners who move to Iowa and decide they would like to be a part of the Iowa program must:

1. **Intent:** Contact the local county ISU Extension and Outreach staff to communicate their interest.
2. **Share:** Forward an e-mail to the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach county staff from your previous Master Gardener program coordinator. The e-mail should include the following:
   - Confirm that the individual has been an active Master Gardener in good standing to-date
   - The year the individual completed training and internship
   - Total years in the former program
   - Any additional information about the individual’s volunteer history such as special certifications or leadership positions
3. **Background Check:** Submit payment to the ISU Extension and Outreach county office to complete the volunteer background check and order an Iowa Master Gardener name badge.
4. **Assessment:** Complete the 100 question Iowa Master Gardener open-book assessment with a passing score of 70/100.
5. **Optional:** Purchase the *Resource Guide for Iowa Master Gardeners* (MG 15) from the Iowa State University Extension Store.

Once an individual completes the above requirements, they may then assume the title, benefits and responsibilities of an active Iowa Master Gardener.

**Transferring between Iowa counties**

An active Master Gardener in good standing may transfer to another county in Iowa. The process to do so is as follows:

1. **Intent:** Contact the local county ISU Extension and Outreach staff to communicate their interest.

2. **Share:** Forward an e-mail to the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach county staff from your previous Master Gardener program coordinator. The e-mail should include the following:
   - Confirm that the individual has been an active Master Gardener in good standing to-date
   - The year the individual completed training and internship
   - Total years in the former program
   - Any additional information about the individual’s volunteer history such as special certifications or leadership positions

3. **Background Check:** Submit payment to the ISU Extension and Outreach county office to complete or renew the volunteer background check and order an Iowa Master Gardener name badge.

4. **Optional:** Purchase the *Resource Guide for Iowa Master Gardeners* (MG 15) from the Iowa State University Extension Store.

5. Current county coordinator: Contact state coordinator to request to update volunteer record in the Volunteer Reporting System to the new county.

**Iowans training in other states**

Some Master Gardeners live part of the year in another state and participate at some level in that state’s Master Gardener program. The following addresses some common situations.

- Volunteers active in two states: Master Gardener Volunteers may belong to more than one state program. However, they must fulfill all volunteer and education requirements in both state programs. Volunteer hours in one state cannot be counted toward the volunteer hours in the other state without special approval from one or both state coordinators.
- An Iowa Master Gardener volunteer who does not belong to a second state program, but volunteers for that program: A Master Gardener who belongs to the Iowa program may volunteer in some capacity in another state. However, these hours do not count toward required hours in Iowa without special approval from the state coordinator and local coordinator.
- Depending on the topic and possible application toward Master Gardener volunteer activity, continuing education hours earned in states other than Iowa may fulfill requirements in both states with permission from the local county coordinator or the state coordinator.

**Reinstating Master Gardeners who have been inactive**

Former Iowa Master Gardeners who have been inactive or out of the program for two years or fewer may return to the program by completing a minimum of 24 hours of service and 12 hours of continuing education during the first calendar year of reactivation.

If the length of inactive status is between two and seven years, additional continuing education may be required to reactivate. In addition, the following criteria must be met:

1. **Intent:** Contact the local county ISU Extension and Outreach staff to communicate their interest.

2. **Background Check:** Submit payment to the ISU Extension and Outreach county office to
complete or renew the volunteer background check and order an Iowa Master Gardener name badge.

3. **Assessment:** Complete the 100 question Iowa Master Gardener open-book assessment with a passing score of 70/100.

4. **Optional:** Purchase the *Resource Guide for Iowa Master Gardeners* (MG 15) from the Iowa State University Extension Store.

Once an individual completes the above requirements, they may assume the title, benefits and responsibilities of an active Iowa Master Gardener.

If inactive status is longer than seven years the inactive Master Gardener volunteer should pay to take the Master Gardener Training again in addition to the above criteria.

**What rights and responsibilities do Iowa Master Gardeners have?**

Master Gardener volunteers have the right to:

Have rewarding, suitable assignments with clear expectations and support;
- Be provided with orientation, training, support, supervision, and evaluation;
- Be kept informed and be listened to by ISU Extension and Outreach staff;
- Be trusted and respected by ISU Extension and Outreach staff and other volunteers;
- Be recognized appropriately for their efforts;
- Be treated as a co-worker; &
- Be valued as a person capable of unique contributions.

Master Gardener volunteers also have the responsibility to:
- Accept assignments suited to their personal interests and skills;
- Participate in orientation and training programs;
- Learn about ISU Extension and Outreach policies, programs, and staff;
- Uphold all the policies of ISU Extension and Outreach;
- Act in a professional manner, which includes respecting confidences;
- Be accountable to and supportive of ISU Extension and Outreach when involved in extension work;
- Complete assignments once assumed;
- Participate in staff and program evaluations; &
- Be willing to use and teach new ideas,

**Dealing with Problem Volunteers**

Master Gardener volunteers are expected to follow the same personnel rules as Iowa State University Extension and Outreach employees. Immediate suspension or removal as a volunteer will result from: arrest or conviction for child abuse or neglect, sexual abuse, violent crimes, other serious criminal offenses, violation of the *Standards of Behavior*, or performance of an act that violates Iowa State University, ISU Extension and Outreach, or county ISU Extension and Outreach policy.

The Iowa Master Gardener program does not tolerate discriminatory behavior, sexual harassment, or alcohol or drug use while volunteering. Volunteers whose actions indicate they are poor representatives of the university may be asked to leave the program. See Appendix L for Standards of Behavior.

Should an issue arise, the volunteer will be placed on temporary leave, and the local Master Gardener coordinator will inform and work in concert with the state MG coordinator to resolve the issue and 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 MG state coordinator must authorize any termination from the program.
Please see the ISOTURE document (found here: https://my.extension.iastate.edu/4-h-volunteer-development) from ISU Extension and Outreach 4H for additional guidance about the:

- Appeal Procedure for Volunteer Applicants (page 34)
- Removal and Appeal Process for Active Volunteers (page 36)
- Immediate Suspension or Removal (page 38)
- Suggested Process When Investigating a Charge of Inappropriate Conduct (page 39)

EXTENSION NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The following nondiscrimination statement (also known as the justice statement) is required on all publications created by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach staff.

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT - FULL VERSION

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or status as a U.S. veteran. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies may be directed to the Diversity Officer, 2150 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, Ames, Iowa 50011, 515-294-1482, extdiversity@iastate.edu. All other inquiries may be directed to 800-262-3804.

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 model release form, accessible by Extension staff, is located at http://www.extension.iastate.edu/forstaff/forms. Signed media release forms must be held on file at the appropriate local extension program office. As part of their application process Master Gardener trainees are asked to sign a blanket media release. Here are additional guidelines regarding release forms:

- 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).
- When 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.
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 storeowner or manager.

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Plagiarism is a separate issue from copyright infringement, but the two may overlap. Plagiarism is copying someone else’s work and passing it off as your own. Copyright infringement means the illegal use of a work. If a photo or article is in the public domain, it is not copyrighted, but using it without attribution certainly is plagiarism. For more explanation on plagiarism vs. copyright infringement, consult http://www.extension.org/pages/62309/plagiarism-vs-copyright-infringement#.VW9D7KY7shp.

LIABILITY AND ACCIDENT COVERAGE AS A VOLUNTEER

As an agency of the State of Iowa, Iowa State University is self-insured for liability. Claims against the State of Iowa are handled according to provisions in the Iowa Tort Claims Act (Iowa Code, Chapter 669), which also sets forth the procedures by which tort claims may be filed.

In general, Iowa State University does not purchase commercial liability insurance. The majority of liability issues for the university are covered under Chapter 669 of the Code of Iowa. However, unique circumstances may warrant the purchase of commercial liability insurance.

POLICY STATEMENT

Claims Against the State
Under Chapter 669, claims may be filed against the State on account of wrongful death, personal injury or property damage (including reasonable attorney fees) incurred by reason of the negligence of the University or its employees while acting within the scope of employment. The State will defend, indemnify, and hold the University or its employees harmless against any and all tort claims under the U.S. Constitution, statutes or rules of the United States and/or any other state, but will not cover willful
or wanton acts, omissions, or malfeasance in office. The above provisions apply to all employees of Iowa State University including faculty, staff, and graduate assistants on appointment, or any other individual full- or part-time, including students, volunteers, and agents acting in a temporary or permanent capacity on behalf of the institution.

COMMERCIAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

The University may purchase liability insurance or participate in self-insured liability pooling or other arrangements for professional liability, motor vehicle liability, or other liabilities if required by statute, contract, or special circumstance. Purchases must be made through the Office of Risk Management.
TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Working with Master Gardener finances

The Iowa Master Gardener program is a branch of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. As such, local Master Gardener groups are closely tied to the mission and goals of ISU Extension and Outreach. Local Master Gardeners function as an arm of the local extension office and report to the local Extension Council.

As part of the local extension office, Master Gardener groups are subject to the policies and procedures of ISU Extension and Outreach. Money is handled through the Extension office according to University accounting and audit policies (similar to other Extension programs). The Master Gardener board or steering committee is fiscally responsible to the local Extension Council. All financial records shall be kept by the local Extension bookkeeper.

FUNDRAISING BY EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS

While the primary role of an Extension Master Gardener is to provide horticulture education, it is becoming increasingly necessary for state and local programs to generate funds from private sector donations and fundraising. Local county Master Gardener 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 Iowa Master Gardener program is under the umbrella of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and is not a separate 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, programs are prohibited from conducting fundraisers using games of chance such as raffles or bingo where a gambling license is required by Iowa law.

As part of the local Extension office program, local Master Gardeners groups are expected to follow county Extension fiscal policies: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/extensionfinance/policies.htm.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach policies and procedures provide the basis for Iowa Master Gardener program financial stewardship guidelines. As a public program of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, it is important that money raised to support local county Extension Master Gardener programs is handled with the greatest stewardship. Procedures for handling Master Gardener funds should be transparent and follow sound financial management practices.

TAX DEDUCTABLE DONATIONS

The Iowa 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 Iowa State University Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, can serve as a fiscal agent for this purpose at the statewide level.

For more information about tax-deductible contributions to local Agricultural Extension Districts, follow the tax-deductible contributions link at http://www.extension.iastate.edu/extensionfinance/policies.htm.
USE OF UNIVERSITY SALES TAX EXEMPTION

Even though part of the Iowa State University community, 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. In order to use Iowa State University’s sales tax exempt status when purchasing items, the University must pay directly for the items using (1) a University purchasing card, (2) payment by University check whether at the time of purchase or on an invoice. (Note: the state Master Gardener office does not have the capacity to place orders and process invoices on the behalf of the many county Master Gardener programs.) However, County Agricultural Extension Districts do have tax-exempt status through the state of Iowa. When Master Gardener finances are run through the local County Extension Council, as they should be, tax-exempt status on purchases may be possible if certain criteria are met. Details are at http://www.extension.iastate.edu/extensionfinance/policies.htm.

Using the Iowa Master Gardener logo

To raise awareness about the Master Gardener program it is important to keep marketing materials current and consistent. All promotional materials for the Master Gardener program should include: a) the most recent Master Gardener logo, b) colors as identified by the ISU visual identity system, c) fonts from the ISU visual identity system, and d) the ISU justice statement. Previous Iowa Master Gardener logos should not be used. The visual identity guidelines can be found here: http://www.brandmarketing.iastate.edu/brand-elements/color-palette/

You can find templates for promotional materials for your Master Gardener program on the For Staff webpage. These include press releases, banners, brochures, and more.

If you would like to order new materials, please contact the ISU Extension and Outreach Agriculture & Natural Resources Communication office at 515-294-3582.

Master Gardener shirts and other promotional materials can be ordered through the Iowa State University Extension Online Store. The Master Iowa Master Gardener logo may be used in promotional materials, brochures and program materials directly associated with events managed by local Master Gardener groups. However, use of the logo on clothing, nametags, awards or other similar items requires prior approval from the Iowa State University Trademark Licensing office and use of a University approved vendor. A list of approved vendors and links to the forms to complete are located at http://www.trademark.iastate.edu

Helping volunteers interact with the public

As interns become more confident and willing to interact with the public, go over the following sections in the “General Information” section of the Iowa Master Gardener Workbook (MG 5):
  - Writing Horticultural News Articles
  - Diagnosing Horticultural Problems by Phone
  - Sample Client Information Forms
  - Thirteen Steps to Better Instructional Visuals for Electronic Presentation

Some coordinators also have found it helpful to share these tips for working with the public with interns.  
- **Our clients are not always right, but they always have rights.** Each person you interact with has the right to courteous treatment, a response based on respect, and an honest answer—even if the answer is “I don’t know.”
• **Our clients do not have the right to abuse you or to be discourteous.** If you do not feel comfortable handling a question or responding to an individual, refer the question or the person to an extension staff member.

**Using photos**

Include photo release language in the application for all new Master Gardener trainees and collect forms for existing Master Gardeners where possible (see Appendix B: Sample Master Gardener Application Form). Please note, you can track who has signed the photo release in the Volunteer Reporting System (MG Account List – Click on red ID number – Click on Progress).

Sharing photos of Master Gardener activities through the media and your local office website is a good way to promote your program. However, publishing photographs of people and their names is a thorny issue, which involves concerns on everything from privacy rights to child protection. Emphasis is being given to concerns about child welfare and safety—making sure we do not reveal information that could be used to harm children.

Similar concerns may apply to adults. Is their privacy being invaded or are they put at risk by revealing information about them? The Office of University Council at ISU (Legal Services) has information about when and how you should obtain signed releases (permission) to use photos, images, or voices of program participants. Note that using a photo to report a public event does not usually require permission. Permission should be obtained for any use that is more extensive, commercial in nature, or is intended for promotional purposes. A photo release form is available here: [http://www.extension.iastate.edu/advancement/marketingmaterials/photorelease.htm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/advancement/marketingmaterials/photorelease.htm)

**Role as horticulture judges**

From time to time Master Gardeners may be asked to serve as a judge at local fairs or horticulture shows. This is a special honor and recognition, as well as a considerable responsibility.

Master Gardeners must have specialized training beyond the basic Master Gardener curriculum in order to be qualified to be horticulture judges. It is not fair to exhibitors, nor is it educational for the public when entries are judged improperly. All judges must be knowledgeable and articulate about published exhibition criteria, skilled and practiced in uniform judging and scoring practices, and able to clearly communicate and educate the public as to why one entry is better than another. Master Gardeners, by their training, have taken an important first step but must have additional training and/or experiences to be considered qualified judges.

Judging youth and 4-H exhibits involves additional skills and abilities. 4-H judges support youth, affirm their efforts, and help youth grow and learn through the 4-H exhibit experience.

**Initiating and managing community projects**

Some local Master Gardener groups use project proposal forms to define the role of the group in community projects. Others use monies raised from plant sales and garden programs to offer mini-
grants to help support horticulture education in their communities. See these examples: Sample Master Gardener Community Project Agreement (Appendix I), Sample Master Gardener Letter of Intent (Appendix J), Sample Master Gardener Mini-grant Proposal Form (Appendix K).

Celebrating achievements

Showing appreciation can range from simply saying “Thank you,” to nominating veteran Master Gardeners for state awards. Printed certificates are available from the state coordinator for recognizing interns and veteran Master Gardeners (see Materials Order Form). A potluck dinner and graduation ceremony that includes spouses and guests is a great way to recognize new and existing Master Gardeners.

Master Gardener volunteers are recognized with name badges and pins to reflect their commitment and service. If desired, these can be presented at a special awards ceremony. The cost is included in the Master Gardener training. A list of existing recognition materials is:

- **VOLUNTEERS** - service pin, certificate, and engraved name badge are given to interns who have completed their 40 hours of volunteer service.
- **SERVICE HOURS** – service pins are available to volunteers who have completed 500 volunteer hours, 1000 volunteer hours, 2000 volunteer hours, or 3000 volunteer hours. Continuing education hours do not count towards these totals.
- **LONG TERM COMMITMENT** – 10-year service certificate and lifetime certificate (completed at least 10 years & 1500 volunteer hours)
- **HONORARY MASTER GARDENER** – certificate for honorary Master Gardeners, community members who have contributed significantly to the Master Gardener program, but have not taken the classes.

To place an order, coordinators should use the Materials Order Form to provide the information about the appropriate recognition pins and certificates on the “For staff” page of the Iowa Master Gardener website [http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff)

Accurate recordkeeping is an integral prerequisite of such celebrations. Remind interns and veteran Master Gardeners to regularly report their hours through the Master Gardener Volunteer Reporting System. Remind interns and veterans to submit their completed service records—both for documenting their own earned credit, and for showing what local Master Gardeners accomplish. Ask volunteers to make monthly or quarterly reports to help minimize confusion at the end of the year. Regular reporting to the local coordinator also helps develop the habit of writing down the service activity and client contacts before they are forgotten.

Creating a long-term program

Management is the most challenging and rewarding phase of a successful Master Gardener program. The local coordinator assumes a variety of roles: coach, supervisor, leader, decision-maker, educator, and cheerleader.

Frequent communication is vitally important, not only as a means to encourage active local Master Gardener participation, but also as a way to maintain contact with the
A statewide network of other Master Gardener coordinators. Communication can happen through local newsletters and/or meetings. As a local coordinator, be sure to ask the state coordinator to provide access for you to the Master Gardener coordinator CyBox where materials relating to Master Gardener management and training are shared with coordinators. Also, make sure to participate in the regularly scheduled regional Master Gardener coordinator conference calls.

The best way to keep interest high and to have a dynamic local Master Gardener program is to offer a variety of volunteer opportunities and to encourage group gatherings for tours and educational presentations. Large groups may benefit from division into smaller interest or activity groups. Interest areas will be evident from surveys received as part of the application process or collected during training sessions (see Appendix E for a sample). Some programs develop a local Master Gardener directory that lists names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses, as well as interests and talents.
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Local Master Gardener Advisory Committee Guidelines

Purpose:
To serve in an advisory capacity to the local Master Gardener program it represents regarding program direction, development, planning, delivery, and evaluation.

Objective:
To advise local extension staff in developing functional, relevant home horticulture programs and services involving Master Gardener volunteers.

Committee members:

Chairperson
Conducts meetings (selects site, sets time, prepares agenda, etc.)

Secretary/treasurer
Records minutes and maintains mailing list as well as recertification and financial records to assist committee members to fulfill their responsibilities

Public relations committee representative
Helps produce local newsletter, press releases, social media efforts, and advertises program activities

Education committee representative
Coordinates annual training program (schedule), recertification activities, and educational programs at Master Gardener group meetings; interviews Master Gardener training applicants

Projects committee representative
Receives program requests and project proposals and recruits volunteer(s) to fulfill accepted requests

Volunteer service coordinator
Oversees reporting of volunteer service and education hours. Makes certain that all Master Gardeners record their total number of service hours and years of service in the Master Gardener Volunteer Reporting System.

Liaison
Represents local extension staff

Suggested guidelines:

• Hold meetings at least every other month.
• Committee representatives report the activities of their respective committees. They may need to attend only when their committee is active, especially if planning, delivering, or evaluating a specific event.
• Terms of office should be at least two years with members rotating off the committee in manner that provides continuity from year to year.
• The committee may be selected by local extension staff or elected by the group. If multiple counties are involved, representatives from all counties should participate.
• The extension staff representative is the liaison between the Master Gardener group, the local extension council, and the state Master Gardener office. He/she should advise the group but not be the decision-maker for the committee.
• A member of the advisory committee or a Master Gardener selected by the committee may represent the committee and local Master Gardeners on the state advisory committee.
Appendix B: Volunteer Background Screening Authorization Form

I, ____________________________, hereby authorize ____________________________, County Agricultural Extension District, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, and/or its agents to make an independent investigation of my background, including social security number verification, motor vehicle, national criminal records, sex offender, state and federal abuse registry checks, including those maintained by both public and private organizations and all public records. A consumer reporting agency will be used to accomplish part of this background screen. The purpose of this authorization is to confirm the information contained on my Application and to obtain other information which may be material to my qualifications for service as a volunteer now and, if applicable, during the tenure of my volunteer service with County Agricultural Extension Districts (CAED).

To facilitate the background screening, I agree to provide CAED and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach (ISUOE) with my full name, date of birth, social security number, and other personal information requested on the Background Screening Disclosure Form. I understand that my failure to provide this authorization or information may result in my ineligibility to serve in any capacity involving youth, vulnerable populations, cash handling, or sensitive information.

Information provided by the consumer reporting agency for the criminal background check will not include a consumer credit report or credit score. The federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) promotes the accuracy, fairness, and privacy of information in the files of consumer reporting agencies. For a summary of your rights under the FCRA, please see www.fc.gov/credit or write to: Consumer Response Center, Room 130-A, Federal Trade Commission, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20580.

I have carefully read and understand this Background Screening Authorization and, by signing below, I authorize a consumer reporting agency to release national sex offender registry and/or criminal record reports to ISUOE and CAED. This Background Screening Authorization in original, faxed, photocopied, or electronic form will be valid for securing background screening reports that ISUOE and CAED may request.

Signature ____________________________ Date ______________

If applicant is under age 18, parental approval is required:

Signature of Parent ____________________________ Date ______________

This document will be kept on file with the County Agricultural Extension District.

[Handwritten note]

and justice for all

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, sexual identity, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, auditory, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 1-800-877-5237 (voice) or 1-800-845-6132 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating.

SF 442c 2013

Download form here: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/content/countyCouncils/
Appendix C: Volunteer Background Screening Disclosure

Complete and return this form with a completed Background Screening Authorization Form.

The following is my true and complete legal name and all information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge:

Full Name (Printed legibly)

Social Security Number

Date of Birth

Gender

Present Address

City

State

Zip

How Long at Present Address?

If applicable: Identification Number Passport Issued by (Country)

ID# Other Names Used

Maiden Name

Former Address

City

State

Zip

How Long at Former Address?

Please list all states and counties of residence within the past seven (7) years.

City

County

State

From

To

City

County

State

From

To

City

County

State

From

To

City

County

State

From

To

Driver's License Number

State of License

Disclosure of your Social Security Number (SSN) is required of you in order for Iowa State University and the County Agricultural Extension District for the purposes of conducting a background check, as required by ISU Extension and Outreach. Federal and State law protects the privacy and security of your SSN and Iowa State University and the Extension District will not disclose your SSN without your consent for any other purposes except as allowed by law. For a full description of the ISU Social Security Number Policy, please go to the Social Security Number Protection Policy: [http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/ssn/](http://policy.iastate.edu/policy/ssn/).

Download form here: [http://www.extension.iastate.edu/content/county councils/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/content/county councils/)
Appendix D: Sample Interest Inventory

Name:
Phone: Check one: mobile _____ work _____ home _____
E-mail:

In order to best match Master Gardeners with projects and activities, and know more about the talents and special interests we have in our group, please complete the following questionnaire. Be honest, not humble.

**Interest Questionnaire:**

| What days and times are you (most often) available? | Mondays a.m. p.m. eve. |
| Circle the days and times that work best for you. | Tuesdays a.m. p.m. eve. |
| | Wednesdays a.m. p.m. eve. |
| | Thursdays a.m. p.m. eve. |
| | Fridays a.m. p.m. eve. |

List your volunteer special interests (community garden, perennial flowers, prairie restoration, greenhouses etc.):

List your special talents or skills (carpentry, drawing, painting, calligraphy, writing, etc.)

List activities you particularly enjoy (working with young people, writing, teaching, public speaking, etc.)

Check the activities below that you would like to be involved with.

*You are not required to do all of the activities you check. If needed, you may be asked to help with activities you don’t check.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Answer telephone questions</th>
<th>Assist with youth groups (schools, 4-H, etc.)</th>
<th>Work with the elderly</th>
<th>Set up and/or work at displays</th>
<th>Plant and help with demonstration gardens</th>
<th>Assist with office work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any type of planting activities</td>
<td>Assist with organizing the Master Gardeners</td>
<td>Write garden column or newsletter articles</td>
<td>Assist with communications</td>
<td>Work with community garden projects</td>
<td>Other, please explain:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix E: Sample Master Gardener Training Schedule – Flipped Classroom

**Dickinson County, 2018 Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Topic(s)</th>
<th>Description and Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 21, 6:00-7:00PM</td>
<td>Orientation Session</td>
<td>Begin the journey at Extension &amp; Outreach office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 28, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Sustainable Home Landscape Design</td>
<td>Tour of garden to see rain gardens, swales, and water retention ponds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 4, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Vegetables and Herbs</td>
<td>Tour of community gardens and nearby vegetable farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 11, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Weeds, Integrated Pest Management, and Pesticides</td>
<td>Meet at the Extension office to learn about weed control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 18, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Herbaceous Ornamentals</td>
<td>Learn about perennials at garden center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 25, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Entomology and Plant Pathology</td>
<td>Visit Lakeside Lab to visit lake and prairie to learn about insects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Fruit Culture</td>
<td>Tour orchard to learn about fruit production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 9, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Landscape Trees and Shrubs</td>
<td>Meet at nature center to learn tree identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 16, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Animal Ecology</td>
<td>Visit Lakeside Lab to learn about wildlife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 23, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Turfgrass Management</td>
<td>Visit golf course to learn about maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 30, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Soils and Botany</td>
<td>Come to Extension office to learn about soil compaction and rain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 3, 9:00AM</td>
<td>Class on Campus</td>
<td>Scheman Building, Ames</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 6, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Houseplants and Plant Propagation</td>
<td>Tour garden center and learn about propagating plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 13, 6:00PM</td>
<td>Closing Session</td>
<td>Wrap up the training at Extension office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Guidelines for Iowa Master Gardener Interns and Master Gardener

Using the Master Gardener title

The title Iowa Master Gardener is to be used only and exclusively in the ISU Extension Service Master Gardener Program. Iowa Master Gardeners are expected to identify themselves as Master Gardeners only when doing unpaid public service work for ISU Extension and Outreach-sponsored programs. Master Gardeners should not advertise or promote their place of business while working as a Master Gardener or solicit business because of their training as a Master Gardener. Appearing at a commercial activity, having association with commercial products, or giving implied University endorsement of any product or business is improper. ISU Extension, of which the Master Gardener program is a part, must be viewed as a source of unbiased, research-based information.

When performing Master Gardener activities, Iowa Master Gardeners are agents of Iowa State University. When it is necessary to make recommendations that include the use of pesticides, Master Gardeners must follow ISU and label recommendations. Master Gardeners are expected to give ISU recommendations and not rely on their own personal experience, that of others, or common garden folklore. Experienced Master Gardeners may receive invitations to give educational presentations to various groups and organizations. Any payments or honorariums received can be accepted if offered at the discretion of the group or organization sponsoring the presentation. However, Master Gardeners should not seek payment for such activities. Many Master Gardeners contribute the honorarium money back to their local program to purchase reference materials or to support other local horticulture programs. It is legitimate to be reimbursed for the cost of class materials.

Master Gardener Service Opportunities

The state Master Gardener Advisory Committee has defined appropriate Master Gardener service as any horticultural-related public service, educational program, and/or activity that is sponsored by ISU Extension and Outreach or approved by a local ISU Extension office.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Organize and/or staff displays or booths at lawn and garden shows
- Teach horticulture therapy activities at nursing homes
- Write columns for the local newspaper
- Write a local Master Gardener newsletter
- Answer horticulture-related telephone calls during scheduled hours at extension office
- Serve as superintendent or volunteer for horticulture exhibits at local fairs
- Assist 4-H’ers with garden projects
- Teach horticulture programs as guest speaker to school-age youths
- Present in radio and TV programs
- Conduct educational meetings or workshops for youths and adults
- Assist with community solid waste reduction programs
- Coordinate gardening project at correctional facility
- Plant and maintain a demonstration garden and host field days
- Help at public parks, arboretsums, botanical centers
- Assist with community Arbor Day festivities
- Answer clientele questions one-on-one
- Help at ISU Research Farm demonstration gardens
- Serve as local Master Gardener volunteer coordinator
- Help teach Growing in the Garden curriculum in elementary schools
- Set up and/or assist with community garden

Continuing Education Opportunities

Several opportunities exist for Master Gardeners to receive additional training as required to remain active. Here are a few examples.

- Master Gardener training lectures (after the initial training year)
- State, regional, or national Master Gardener conferences
- Field days, workshops, or conferences sponsored by ISU Extension and various grower groups, such as the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, Society of Iowa Florists and Growers, Iowa Turfgrass Conference, and the Shade Tree Short Course (Master Gardeners are required to pay registration fees for these events.)
Local meetings specified by the ISU Extension and Outreach Education Director or state coordinator
Field days at ISU Research and Demonstration Farms held during the summer at locations around the state
Horticulture workshops offered by public gardens and by other garden-focused groups, such as the Federated Garden Club
Webinars offered by eXtension

Maintaining status as an active Master Gardener requires at least twenty hours of volunteer service, and at least ten hours of continuing education annually.

Local programs can (and many do), set additional requirements. Questions about whether a particular activity counts for volunteer or continuing education hours should be discussed with the county ISU Extension and Outreach staff.
Appendix G: Sample Master Gardener Community Project Agreement

Thank you for inquiring about a potential Master Gardener volunteer project and/or program. Please review the information below and answer the questions on the next page. The information you provide will help Master Gardeners determine the eligibility of your project. If approved, a committee of Master Gardeners will work with you to complete the project.

Please send your application to: [ADDRESS]

The Iowa Master Gardener program is an educational and volunteer opportunity through which individuals receive advanced training in horticulture and environmental topics of special value to home gardeners. In addition to training, each Master Gardener is expected to donate at least 40 hours of educationally related volunteer service.

Volunteer service projects must:
- provide home horticulture information and education consistent with Iowa State University recommendations.
- provide educational value to participants; for example, by consulting, sharing information, demonstrating techniques, and/or assisting with organizing or publicizing an event.

The following types of projects are generally discouraged:
- Projects in which Master Gardeners are expected only to provide labor, or to provide all of the labor on a project.
- Projects or events involving commercial businesses that appear to be a conflict of interest or endorsement of a particular business.

Iowa State University policy discourages Master Gardeners from competing with commercial landscape design businesses. It is not appropriate for individual Master Gardeners to provide landscape design services as a Master Gardener volunteer. It is appropriate for volunteers to provide educational information and ideas for the selection of appropriate plants for particular sites.

Master Gardener volunteers reserve the right to select projects based on community needs, availability of volunteers, and the educational impact potential of the project.
Your answers to the following questions will help Master Gardeners decide how to respond to your request. Please be as complete and concise as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your idea for a project/program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What organization is responsible for the project/program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is this a one-time or on-going project/program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. If this is a one-time project, what opportunities will there be for additional educational activities related to this project/program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If this is an existing project, why are Master Gardeners being consulted now?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. If this project involves planting or establishing a garden, what plans exist for ongoing maintenance of the garden?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. If this will be an on-going project, what specifically are you requesting from Master Gardeners?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How will your project/program be financed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Will this project/program generate income? If yes, how will it be allocated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Please list all organizations involved in this project/program and describe their role(s).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. What else do you want Master Gardeners to know about this project/program?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 12. Who should Master Gardeners contact if they have questions about this request? | Name:  
Address:  
Phone:  
E-mail: |
Appendix H: Sample Master Gardener Letter of Intent for Client

The intent of this letter is to specify the services that will be provided by the [County Name] Extension Master Gardeners and to state the responsibilities of the client.

The [County Name] Extension Master Gardeners will
• provide design plans and suggestions for landscaping (*specified place or address*)
• suggest appropriate plants for growing conditions in this site
• demonstrate recommended planting and maintenance techniques

The [County Name] Extension Master Gardeners will NOT
• provide watering or on-going maintenance

The client [Client Name] will
• choose a final design plan
• purchase plants
• provide workers for creation and planting of garden area
• be responsible for watering and on-going maintenance

Please sign here.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: ____________________________
Appendix I: Sample Master Gardener Mini-grant Proposal Form

Mini-grants are available from [County Name] Extension Master Gardeners

Application packet should include the following information:

- Name of applicant(s), including description of mission if an organization, and any partners
- Name, phone number, and e-mail for one designated contact person
- Project description and justification
  • What is the project?
  • What is the educational component of this project?
  • How will project benefit area citizens? How many people will benefit?
  • Where is project located?
  • What is the project time frame?
  • What specific help is requested from (county name Extension Master Gardeners)?
  • What is applicant providing to support this project?
    (Include a budget if requesting dollars and/or a detailed list of tasks if requesting Master Gardener consulting/teaching/speaking time.)
  • Why should [county name] Extension Master Gardeners support this project?

Successful proposals will

- provide specific educational/other benefits to area citizens,
- encourage and/or demonstrate environmentally sound horticultural practice(s), and
- include resource contribution (time/money/materials) from applicant(s).

Examples of projects that could be funded include (but are not limited to)

- School- or preschool-based gardens,
- Summer garden camps,
- Horticulture education interns, and
- Horticulture resources for libraries.

Proposals are accepted year-round but must be received at least one month before desired start of project.

Proposals may include requests for dollars, materials, and/or time.

A committee of [county name] Extension Master Gardeners will review proposals within a month after they are received.

Successful applicants will be expected to give appropriate public credit to [county name] Extension Master Gardeners and to provide a written report with photos, if appropriate.

Mail 3 copies to:
[ADDRESS]
Or, e-mail to:
[me@iastate.edu]
Questions? Call
[xxx-xxx-yyyy]
Appendix J: Horticultural Plant and Pest Specialists

Please contact consumer horticulture specialists with gardening questions. In general, commercial horticulture specialists assist commercial business owners and managers. They also help people who are interested in starting a new or expanding an existing horticulture business.

**Horticulture, Iowa State University**

- **Adam Thoms** athoms@iastate.edu  
  Turfgrass

- **Christopher Currey** ccurrey@iastate.edu  
  Commercial Greenhouse Production

- **Kathleen Delate** kdelate@iastate.edu  
  Organic Agriculture/Alternate Crops

- **Joe Hannan** jmhanan@iastate.edu  
  Commercial Horticulture

- **Cynthia Haynes** chaynes@iastate.edu  
  Consumer Horticulture

- **Jeff Iles** iles@iastate.edu  
  Woody Ornamentals

- **Richard Jauron** rjauron@iastate.edu  
  Consumer Horticulture  
  106 Horticulture, 515-294-1871

- **Ajay Nair** nairajay@iastate.edu  
  Consumer Vegetables

- **Patrick O’Malley** omail@iastate.edu  
  Commercial Horticulture  
  319-337-2145

**ISU Plant & Insect Diagnostic Clinic**

- **Lina Rodriguez-Salamanca** lina@iastate.edu  
  Horticulture Crop and Household Insects  
  104 Insectary, 515-294-1101

- **Ed Zaworski** zaworski@iastate.edu  
  Pesticide Applicator Training and Urban IPM,  
  10 Insectary, 515-294-5963

**Other Specialists, Iowa State University**

- **Adam Janke** ajanke@iastate.edu  
  Wildlife Specialist

- **Billy Beck** wbeck@iastate.edu  
  Forestry

- **Ken Holscher** kholsche@iastate.edu  
  Pesticide Applicator Training and IPM  
  102 Insectary, 515-294-5967

- **Donald Lewis** drlewis@iastate.edu  
  Horticulture Crop and Household Insects  
  104 Insectary, 515-294-1101

- **Mark Shour** mshour@iastate.edu  
  Pesticide Applicator Training and Urban IPM,  
  10 Insectary, 515-294-5963

- **Bob Hartzler** hartzler@iastate.edu  
  Weed Management  
  2104 Agronomy Hall, 515-294-1164

- **Mike Owen** mdowen@iastate.edu  
  Weed Management  
  2104 Agronomy Hall, 515-294-5936

- **Kristine Schaefer** schaefer@iastate.edu  
  Weed Management
Appendix K: ISU Insurance Liability Policy

Introduction

As an agency of the State of Iowa, Iowa State University is self-insured for liability. Claims against the State of Iowa are handled according to provisions in the Iowa Tort Claims Act (Iowa Code, Chapter 669), which also sets forth the procedures by which tort claims may be filed.

In general, Iowa State University does not purchase commercial liability insurance. The majority of liability issues for the university are covered under Chapter 669 of the Code of Iowa. However, unique circumstances may warrant the purchase of commercial liability insurance.

Policy Statement

Claims Against the State

Under Chapter 669, claims may be filed against the State on account of wrongful death, personal injury or property damage (including reasonable attorney fees) incurred by reason of the negligence of the University or its employees while acting within the scope of employment. The State will defend, indemnify, and hold the University or its employees harmless against any and all tort claims under the U.S. Constitution, statutes or rules of the United States and/or any other state, but will not cover willful or wanton acts, omissions, or malfeasance in office.

The above provisions apply to all employees of Iowa State University including faculty, staff, and graduate assistants on appointment, or any other individual full or part time, including students, volunteers, and agents acting in a temporary or permanent capacity on behalf of the institution.

Commercial Liability Insurance

The University may purchase liability insurance or participate in self-insured liability pooling or other arrangements for professional liability, motor vehicle liability, or other liabilities if required by statute, contract, or special circumstance. Purchases must be made through the Office of Risk Management.
Appendix L: Master Gardener Standards of Behavior

Extension Master Gardener volunteers are representatives of Iowa State University and their local county Extension program, and serve at the discretion of ISU. 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 must understand and accept responsibility for their actions, words and deeds when volunteering on behalf of ISU.

Master Gardener volunteers are expected to review and abide by the standards of behavior as listed below. These important policies are designed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all Master Gardener participants (audiences, staff, professionals, and other volunteers) and promote a positive, enjoyable experience for all. Extension volunteers are representatives of the Iowa State University and must conduct themselves accordingly.

Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Standards of Behavior:

1. Uphold volunteerism as an effective way to meet the horticultural education needs of Iowa citizens.
2. Accept supervision and support from Extension staff while involved in the program.
3. Represent the local county Extension program and the Iowa Master Gardener program with dignity and pride by being positive spokespersons and mentors for others.
4. Be courteous, civil and respectful, refraining from profanity and behavior that physically, verbally, or emotionally abuses, threatens or harms any Extension program participant.
5. Abstain from the 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 Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.
7. Perform duties in a responsible, professional and timely manner.
8. Dress professionally and wear the Iowa Master Gardener nametag whenever serving as a volunteer.
9. Report immediately any threats to the volunteer’s emotional or physical wellbeing 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 volunteer peers in order to develop an effective county and state program.
12. When applicable, operate machinery, vehicles, or other equipment safely and responsibly.

Failure to follow the standards of behavior listed above can result in termination from the program and loss of all privileges associated with the status of an Iowa Master Gardener volunteer.
NETIQUETTE

“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. Inappropriate communication or misuse of the internet as a volunteer can lead to restrictions on using Master Gardener internet-based tools and programs.
Appendix M: Available Promotional Materials

For Staff [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mg/homepage.html](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mg/homepage.html)

- Training Materials
  - MG Training Brochure & Registration Form
  - Editable Press Release
  - Training Flyer
  - ProHort Flyer
  - Editable Newspaper Ads
- General
  - Webinar Flyers
  - Editable Event Flyer
  - Editable Vertical Flyer
  - Postcard
  - Yard Signs
  - Custom Banners

Extension Online Store (login to see available products)

- Master Gardener Brochure (MG 1103)
- Master Gardener Workbook (MG 5)
- Master Gardener Resource Guide (MG 15)
- Master Gardener Business Cards (MG 1104)
- Master Gardener T-shirts & Polo Shirts (MG 109 & 110)

Materials Order Form

- New Master Gardeners
- Replacement MG Name Badge
- Hours-of-Service Pins: a) 500-hour service pin, b) 1,000-hour service pin, c) 2,000-hour service pin, and d) 3,000-hour service pin.
- Service Certificates: a) certificate of appreciation, b) 10-year service certificate, c) lifetime MG certificate (at least 10-years & 1,500 hours of service), and d) honorary MG certificate.
- MG Lapel Pin