

October 20, 2020

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

**Master Gardener
Advisory Committee**

The Iowa Master Gardener program advisory committee met virtually on Tuesday, October 20, 2020. The Zoom meeting was called to order at 10 am.

Members present include: Co-chair Becki Lynch, co-Chair Chelsea Martens, Doug Brightman, Katelyn Brinkerhoff, Ann Carter, Susan DeBlieck, Steven Eilers, Sherry Ford, Cindy Hutcheson, Donald Lewis, Clint Mercer and RoxAnn Rhodes. Cindy Haynes and Sharon Jeter were not in attendance.

Committee Updates:

Terms are expiring for Doug, Katelyn, and RoxAnn. (Susan incorrectly said that Chelsea's term was up, but it does not expire until 2021) All three agreed to stay on for a second term until 2023. Sherry moved to approve minutes from March meeting. RoxAnn seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business:

Susan reported on:

- Master Gardener program mission and Advisory Committee purpose.
- Winter webinars were offered by 39 counties. When offices closed to the public in March webcast links were posted to YouTube so they could view them from home.
- Growing Together Mini-grants: 29 mini-grant applications were funded. To-date 74,500 lbs of produce has been donated. Produce is still being collected/counted. 2021 mini grant announcement meeting is scheduled for Friday, Oct 30.
- Fall Webcasts focus on water quality. These are available at no charge to counties and links will be on YouTube when ready. Topics: Forest Impacts to Water Quality, Increasing Wetland Vegetation Throughout Iowa, Becoming an Urban Water Steward.
- Conferences:
 - Master Gardener Coordinator Conference hosted virtually in Sept 2020. Susan, Katelyn and Chelsea commented on key take-aways.
 - Looking ahead:
 - International Master Gardener Coord. Conf. hosted by VA Tech in Sept 2021 and Kansas State in 2023 – available to volunteers and coordinators
- Master Gardener Hours – recorded to-date (0 hours required in 2020)
 - 7,721 continuing education hours (33% of 2019 hours recorded)
 - 37,168 volunteer hours (32% of 2019 hours recorded)
 - Acknowledged many people wait until the last minute to enter their hours.

New Business:

Committee was divided into three breakout rooms to discuss what went well in the 2020 year for volunteers and what hours should be required for 2021.

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The group reconvened and agreed to return to the previously expected hours in 2021 (10 continuing education, 20 volunteer). There are multiple ways for volunteers to earn these hours going forward. A discussion was held about the need for a waiver for volunteers who are unable to commit in a year. The 2021 Annual Agreement will be updated. Good communication between county coordinators and volunteers is needed when volunteers need to have an extended absence from recording hours.

The whole group discussed various options for Fall 2021 training. Ideas include:

- Not offering the Class on Campus as a cost-saving measure for the program.
- State office offers virtual training.
- Offer local/regional option through MG county coordinators.

Committee was divided into three breakout rooms to discuss training options for active Master Gardeners and how better to define qualifying volunteer hours.

The group reconvened with these ideas for training for active MG volunteers:

- Professional Development – handling calls/client questions, presenting to an audience
- Finding research-based sources (continuing education hours, answering client questions)
- What does and does not count as volunteer service. How to start new projects.

The committee will hold a special session to create a check-list/document to better define acceptable MG hours – intended audience both county coordinators and local volunteers. In general, the project should support the program mission.

With no further business, the committee adjourned at 12:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Carter