

# Master Gardener Coordinator's Guide



**MASTER GARDENER**

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Extension and Outreach



# Objective

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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?

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# About the Master Gardener Program

## Focus on education and volunteerism

The Iowa Master Gardener organization is an educational and volunteerism program of the Iowa State University 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 US 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 1973. The pilot program provided interested individuals with specialized home gardening 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 the program spans the nation and the globe. 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 75% of the state. The Master Gardener program also has been used as a model for several other volunteer training programs, including the Iowa Master Woodland Steward Program, Master Composter and Master Conservationist.

## 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 information on the [history of Iowa State University](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/100years) go to [www.extension.iastate.edu/100years](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/100years).



## 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 in the reliability and credibility of the information received 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

The state coordinator is responsible for supporting county coordinators and state-wide communications. They coordinate the Master Gardener training and work with ISU faculty and Extension and Outreach 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

### Where to find Master Gardener Coordinator materials and information:

- **Website:** Iowa Master Gardeners
- **Facebook:** Iowa Master Gardeners
- **Twitter:** mgardener\_IA
- **Instagram:** mgardener
- **Youtube:** @iamastergardeners



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 and 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 website.

## Local responsibilities

Local Master Gardener programs require effort and commitment. Extension staff will need to be involved in promoting and supporting 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:

- Support the Master Gardener training.
- Verify Master Gardener service hours.
- Support Master Gardener volunteer projects.

For more information about handling finances related to the Master Gardener program see the working with [Master Gardener Finances Section](#).

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.

## ISU Extension and Outreach educators and faculty

Select faculty members with extension appointments teach and provide expertise to support the Master Gardener program. The specialists are housed not only in the Department of Horticulture, but also in the Departments of Agronomy and Plant Pathology, Entomology, and Microbiology. See [Appendix J](#) for a listing of extension specialists.

## Program funding

Funds for the Iowa Master Gardener program come from core training fees, continuing education, conference registration fees, and sales of Master Gardener promotional items. 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.

Funding Source	What The funding Source Supports
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and Department of Horticulture through Federal and state funds	Master Gardener state coordinator position; state extension faculty positions that support the Master Gardener program; operational expenses (facilities) for the above position
State Extension Master Gardener office through core course fees; ProHort class fees; continuing education class fees; sale of promotional items; conference fees; grants; donations	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; state coordinator travel costs; support for selected educational programming activities; scholarships
County extension funds based on county extension budget allocation	Local extension staff and Master Gardener coordinator positions; county extension support staff positions; county extension office operations
Local Master Gardener Program: local program generated fees through classes; horticulture events; sales, gifts, grants; donations	Local Master Gardener educational events, classes, etc.; local Master Gardener operations; possibly local Master Gardener revenue share toward local extension staff position or operations; scholarships

## 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 a 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, canvas modules, and has passed the final class assessment with a score of 70/100 or higher.
- Has access to all program and extension resources, staff, website, education, events, etc.

### Inactive Master Gardener Intern

- Volunteer-in-training who has not completed the 40-hour internship by the due date (December 31 of the year after the Master Gardener training is completed).
- May reactivate by: Logging 40 hours of volunteer service within 12 months.
- Logging 12 hours of continuing education within 12 months.

### Active Master Gardener

- Successfully completed initial internship of 40 volunteer hours.
- Annually fulfills and reports online a minimum of 20 volunteer service and 10 continuing education hours.
- Signs the annual volunteer agreement.

- Has access to all program and 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(s).
- Years in inactive status do not count toward years of Master Gardener service awards.
- Has access to all program and 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 1,500 or more volunteer hours as an active Master Gardener.
- May continue to volunteer and report hours as able, but is not required to meet annual hour requirements.
- Has access to all program and 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 50 hours of research-based hybrid 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 2021 and finishes the classes in November 2021 must complete a 40-hour internship by December 31, 2022.

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 three 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. County coordinators place a request through 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 through 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 31 of each year. Local Master Gardener programs may require additional service or education hours.

### **How is volunteer service defined?**

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Master Gardener volunteer service is:

- Unpaid.
- Voluntary service.
- With an emphasis on gardening or horticulture.
- In public spaces.
- Has an educational focus.

### **What counts as volunteer service?**

Volunteer service is not limited to physically laborious tasks. Below is a broad list of allowable types of volunteer service.

- Maintain a public garden (city park, county fairgrounds, healthcare grounds).
- Answer garden questions for the public (farmer's market booth, ISU Extension and Outreach county office).
- Create community connections (collect excess produce from farmer's market for donation to food pantry, build partnerships to increase pollinator habitat).
- Support garden design for a community space (school garden, main street plantings, community visioning program).
- Teach gardening lesson (demonstration at a community garden, present at school, community presentations/lectures)
- Coordinate a volunteer event (street tree planting, invasive species removal from park).

- Create communication materials about gardening (write newspaper article, create content for county administered Master Gardener social accounts).
- Plan a public event (e.g. plant sale, garden tour, garden symposium).
- Participate in Master Gardener management (attend monthly MG meetings, lead local MG team, serve on Iowa MG advisory committee).

See [Master Gardener Volunteer Guidelines](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/files/page/files/2021_mg_volunteer_and_continuing_education_hours_0.pdf), [www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/files/page/files/2021\\_mg\\_volunteer\\_and\\_continuing\\_education\\_hours\\_0.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/files/page/files/2021_mg_volunteer_and_continuing_education_hours_0.pdf), for more information.

Ultimately, what counts as volunteer service is a local decision made by the 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 record keeping. Some examples of volunteer service projects are provided in [Appendix F](#).

### **Things that do not count as Master Gardener volunteer service**

- Maintaining private gardens (volunteering in a neighbor's yard, gardening at a family member's house).
- Answering private garden questions (giving garden advice to a neighbor, friend, or family member).

### **What counts as continuing education?**

- Webinars (live Iowa Master Gardener webinars, recordings of webinars, and webinars from peer institutions).
- Videos from ISU Extension and Outreach (Iowa Master Gardener YouTube channel).
- Workshops (hands-on tree pruning event).
- Docent or staff guided garden tours.

Continuing education is expected to advance the Master Gardener volunteer's knowledge and understanding of horticulture. It must

be factual, accurate, and provided by a source recognized as research based. Most training opportunities offered by educational institutions, public gardens, and education-focused gardening organizations meet this requirement.

As the world moves in a more digital direction, extra care is being taken to make sure Master Gardeners are actively engaged in continuing education offerings. To help with this issue, **it is now recommended that half of a Master Gardener's continuing education hours come from interactive sources**, such as live webinars or in-person trainings. These opportunities allow for communication with peers and experts, networking opportunities, and provide a more engaging experience for learning to be achieved.

See [Master Gardener Volunteer Guidelines](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/files/page/files/2021_mg_volunteer_and_continuing_education_hours_0.pdf), [www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/files/page/files/2021\\_mg\\_volunteer\\_and\\_continuing\\_education\\_hours\\_0.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/files/page/files/2021_mg_volunteer_and_continuing_education_hours_0.pdf), for more information.

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 record keeping. Some examples of continuing education opportunities are given in [Appendix F](#).

### **What does not count as continuing education hours?**

- Listening to radio programs.
- Visiting gardens.
- Travel time to continuing education programs.
- Watching television programs.
- Reading books or magazines.

**Gardening sessions offered by entertainers, mass media, and sales people are not continuing education.**

## **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.

The reporting year coincides with the calendar year; volunteer and continuing education hours are due by December 31 of each year. Volunteers may report their hours throughout the year on an ongoing basis. Late submissions are not included in state or federal reports about the program. The county coordinator needs to verify the hours in the VRS to mark that 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, reporting impact to extension stakeholders including to federal and state funding agencies. Data collected from online reporting is used to generate reports about impact and help illustrate the value of the program.

New Master Gardener trainees should be entered into the VRS once they successfully pass their post-training examination. 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. Coordinators may add trainees prior to test completion for purposes of system training or reporting volunteer hours completed during the training period.

## **Background checks**

Because they are volunteers on behalf of ISU Extension and Outreach, all Master Gardener volunteers need to pass the background check process. Volunteer background checks need to be renewed every 3 years.

Learn more about [Background Screening](http://www.iaextensioncouncils.org/background-screening) here, [www.iaextensioncouncils.org/background-screening](http://www.iaextensioncouncils.org/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, innovative projects, workshops/presentations, special needs audience, and community service projects.

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. All SFE winning projects must be a team effort. Awards may be presented to individual county groups or inter-county collaborations.

SFE award submissions are made by the Master Gardeners to the advisory committee in March. For more information and to see the [guidelines and application](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/search-excellence-award), visit our website: [www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/search-excellence-award](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/search-excellence-award).

## Pesticides and Master Gardener volunteers

Please note the following restrictions on the use of pesticides by Master Gardener volunteers:

1. It is the Master Gardener programs' policy to implement integrated pest management to prevent and control garden pests using cultural and mechanical controls such as resistant varieties, best horticultural practices, mulch, cultivation, screening, hand-picking, etc.
2. The application of pesticides is regulated by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS). Master Gardeners must abide by applicable state laws and rules to use pesticides in display gardens, donation gardens, or other Master Gardener projects.
3. For Master Gardener projects located on

personal property: A Master Gardener who donates space on land they own can apply general use pesticides according to label directions to the Master Gardener project.

4. For Master Gardener projects located on public lands such as school grounds, community colleges, community gardens, or fairgrounds: A Master Gardener may not apply pesticides unless they are certified as a public applicator for the property in question. Pesticides could be applied by a commercial pesticide applicator certified in the appropriate certification categories.
5. For Master Gardeners projects located on non-public lands such as church property. A Master Gardener may apply pesticides according to label directions and without certification if they are a member of the organization (a church member).

Any Master Gardener volunteer applying pesticides must follow all label directions, including:

- PPE to be used.
- Proper dilution rate.
- Allowed frequency of use.
- Maximum amount used per season.
- REI–restricted entry interval.
- PHI–pre-harvest interval.
- Pollinator/bee toxicity statement.





## 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 Iowa State-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. There are two categories for active Master Gardeners wishing to transfer into the state of Iowa. See below for requirements of each category.

These categories apply only to active Master Gardeners in other states. Inactive Master Gardeners from other states will be treated as first-time Master Gardener applicants and will need to complete training at the full price, complete the internship, pass a background check, and pass the final exam with a passing score of 70/100.

### Midwest Neighboring States—Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wisconsin:

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

**Recommendation:** Forward an email to the ISU Extension and Outreach county staff from your previous Master Gardener program coordinator. The email should include the following:

- Confirmation 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, skills, or leadership positions.

**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.

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

### **Non-neighboring States (any states not listed in category 1)**

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

**MG Training:** Pay a discounted fee (\$75) to take the Iowa Master Gardener training.

The training fee includes the following:

- Background check: complete the volunteer background check.
- Assessment: complete the 100 question Iowa Master Gardener open-book assessment with a passing score of 70/100.
- Book: Resource Guide for Iowa Master Gardeners.
- Internship: 40 hours of volunteer service to be completed by the end of the following calendar year.

### **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:

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

**Share:** Forward an email to the ISU Extension and Outreach county staff from your previous Master Gardener program coordinator.

The email 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.

**Background Check:** Make sure background check information is up to date in the volunteer reporting system.

**Current county coordinator:** Contact state coordinator to request to update volunteer record in the volunteer reporting system to change the 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 volunteers in another state: Iowa Master Gardeners may count a portion of out-of-state hours towards their progress in the program as described in the following guidelines. It is the main intent of the Iowa Master Gardener program to serve Iowans, but we understand volunteers may have special opportunities out-of-state that they desire to add to their portfolio of service as a Master Gardener. During an internship period, no more than 25% of an intern's hours may be completed out-of-state. In subsequent "active" years, a Master Gardener may only count hours out-of-state above and beyond their 20 hours required in-state.

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 may be reinstated as Iowa Master Gardeners by following the procedures below:

### **Inactive for two years or fewer.**

**Hours:** Complete 24 volunteer hours and 12 hours of continuing education during the first calendar year of reactivation.

### **Inactive between two and four years.**

**Hours:** Complete 24 volunteer hours and 12 hours of continuing education during the first calendar year of reactivation.

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

**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.

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

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

### **Inactive for four or more years.**

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

**Training:** Pay a discounted fee (\$75) to retake the Iowa Master gardener training.

The training fee includes the following:

- Background check: complete the volunteer background check.
- Assessment: complete the 100 question Iowa Master Gardener open-book assessment with a passing score of 70/100.
- Book: Resource Guide for Iowa Master Gardeners.
- Internship: 40 hours of volunteer service to be completed by the end of the following calendar year.

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

## **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 and carry out 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 county Master Gardener coordinator will inform and work in concert with the state 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 state coordinator must authorize any termination from the program.

See the 4-H Iowa State University Extension and Outreach [Identify Select Orient Train Utilize Recognize](#) (ISOTURE) document at [my.extension.iastate.edu/4-h-volunteer-development](http://my.extension.iastate.edu/4-h-volunteer-development), for additional guidance on:

- 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 printed material created by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach staff.

### Nondiscrimination Statement–Full Version

In accordance with Federal law and US Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, and American Sign Language) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a [Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), which can be obtained online at [www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027), from any USDA office, by calling 866-632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by: (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or (2) Fax: 833-256-1665 or 202-690-7442; or (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to [www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext).



## **Copyright**

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (Title 17, US Code) to the authors of "original works of authorship." It gives extension the right to say how others use extension materials. It provides legal recourse if the materials are used in unintended or unendorsed ways. It discourages copying in lieu of purchasing which helps recover production costs and produces income to fund future material development.

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. Materials authored or created by the United States government are by law in the public domain, and therefore not copyrighted.

Before using materials in creating a document, make certain that the references have no copyright protection. If they are copyrighted, get permission from the author(s) or creator(s) prior to using them. It is always important to acknowledge authors, photographers, and musicians when quoting them or using their work in finished materials.

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.

## **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 US. 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 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). Money is handled through the extension office according to University accounting and audit policies (similar to other extension programs). 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.

## 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 deductible 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.

Please reach out to your local Agricultural Extension Districts for more information about tax-deductible contributions to an Agricultural Extension District.

## 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.

## 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](http://www.brandmarketing.iastate.edu/brand-elements/color-palette/) can be found here: [www.brandmarketing.iastate.edu/brand-elements/color-palette/](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](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff), [www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff). These include press releases, banners, brochures, and more.

Master Gardener shirts and other promotional materials can be ordered through the Iowa State University [Extension Store](#). The 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, signs, 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 [www.trademark.iastate.edu](http://www.trademark.iastate.edu).

## Helping volunteers interact with the public

Some coordinators also have found it helpful to share these tips for working with the public.

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.

## Photos

Photo release language is included in the application for all new Master Gardener trainees and consent is collected in the VRS annually. You may also choose to collect paper copies of photo release forms and store them at the county level. To track who has signed the photo release in the VRS, go to MG Account list and click on the red ID number. Look under the progress tab (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](https://iastate.app.box.com/s/psg1z07ook1jg8i3x4w63b6ml4jktbtb) is available here: [iastate.app.box.com/s/psg1z07ook1jg8i3x4w63b6ml4jktbtb](https://iastate.app.box.com/s/psg1z07ook1jg8i3x4w63b6ml4jktbtb)

## 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 [property release form](https://iastate.app.box.com/s/fjtvkq1td1g5pfrt52yl2ebj60kla9rw), accessible by extension staff, is located at [iastate.app.box.com/s/fjtvkq1td1g5pfrt52yl2ebj60kla9rw](https://iastate.app.box.com/s/fjtvkq1td1g5pfrt52yl2ebj60kla9rw).

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:

- 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.
- 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.

## 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.

In order to count judging services as volunteer service for the Master Gardener program, service time must be unpaid in alignment with overall program volunteer requirements. Master Gardeners may be compensated for their role as judges if they are not counting the time as volunteer hours for the program and are functioning on their own behalf instead of the program's behalf

## **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 G](#)), Sample Master Gardener Letter of Intent ([Appendix H](#)), Sample Master Gardener Mini-grant Proposal Form ([Appendix I](#)).

## **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 volunteer milestones, [iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_4HJVZOcC1viHGND](http://iastate.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4HJVZOcC1viHGND). 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 are:**

### **Initial Iowa Master Gardener status achievement**

Master Gardener pin, certificate, and engraved name badge are given to interns after they have completed their first 40 hours of volunteer service.

### **Certificates**

Certificates are available to recognize:

- 100 hours of service.
- Volunteer appreciation - both for MGs and non-MGs serving the program).
- Honorary Master Gardeners - people who have given a substantial amount of time/effort to the program and have a strong understanding of both horticulture and the Master Gardener program.

### **Certificate and Pin**

Certificates with matching lapel pins are awarded for the following service hour levels:

- 500 hours
- 1,000 hours
- 2,000 hours
- 3,000 hours

### **Long Term Commitment**

- 10-year service certificate.
- Lifetime Master Gardener - certificate and special engraved name badge for MGs who have achieved at least 10 years of service and 1,500 volunteer hours.

To place an order, coordinators should use the materials order form on the [For Staff page](#)



of the Iowa Master Gardener website [www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff).

Accurate record keeping is an integral prerequisite of such celebrations. Remind interns and active Master Gardeners to regularly report their hours through the Master Gardener volunteer reporting system. Communicate the importance of submitting volunteer hour records, not just for documentation that leads to personal credit, but also to show what the program achieves at the local and state level. 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 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 Master Gardener participation, but also as a way to maintain contact with the statewide network of other Master Gardener coordinators. Communication can happen through local newsletters and 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 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 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 D](#) 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.

# Appendix A: Sample Local Master Gardener Advisory Committee Guidelines

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## 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. They 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: Background Screening Information

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[Background screening forms](http://www.iaextensioncouncils.org/background-screening) and resources can be found on the Iowa Extension Council Association webpage: [www.iaextensioncouncils.org/background-screening](http://www.iaextensioncouncils.org/background-screening)

## **Why is background screening necessary?**

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the Extension districts continue to work together to implement the background screenings required by the memorandum of understanding. The purpose of a county employee and volunteer background screening process is to create and maintain the best possible environment for all clients and program participants, including vulnerable persons, of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. This is one step in selecting and placing qualified employees and volunteers in appropriate positions.

Screening employees and volunteers also reduces exposure to risk, allowing a reduction in insurance rates.

## **What is IECA's role in background screening?**

The Iowa Extension Council Association has negotiated a reduced rate for its members with First Advantage Background Screening (FABS). Because of this relationship, IECA facilitates providing forms and guidance when using First Advantage's services.

## **Where can I go with questions about background screening?**

First, take a look at the documents under the Resources heading in the sidebar at the right. If you still have questions after reviewing those documents, please contact IECA program assistant, Julie Baumler.



# Appendix C:

## Volunteer Background Screening Disclosure

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Extension and Outreach

COUNTY County Extension and Outreach  
Office Street Address  
Office City, IA Zip  
xxx-xxx-xxxx  
extension.iastate.edu/COUNTY

### EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND SCREENING DISCLOSURE

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

Required items are noted in **red** and with an asterisk (\*). Please print legibly.

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

**Full Legal Name\*** \_\_\_\_\_  
First\* Middle\* Last\* Generation (Sr., Jr., III, etc.)

**Gender** ☐ M ☐ F **Date of Birth\*** (mm/dd/yy) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Present Street Address\*** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**City\*** \_\_\_\_\_ **State\*** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip\*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have a Social Security Number? \*** ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, list:

☐ Social Security Number\* \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

If no, select alternate U.S. issued identification: (if no U.S.-issued identification is available, contact your Extension Office)

☐ U.S. Passport Identification # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Other U.S. Government Identification # \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Driver's License # (enter number below)

**Do you have a driver's license? \*** ☐ Yes ☐ No (Must be provided in order to be approved to volunteer.)

**Driver's License issued by** (state) \_\_\_\_\_ **License Number** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address listed on license** ☐ Same as above If not, please list \_\_\_\_\_

**Please list all cities and states of residence within the past seven (7) years including your present address** (mm/yyyy):

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Have you ever used another legal name?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

(examples may include maiden names, shortened or abbreviated names, form names that may have been legally changed, etc.) If yes, please list below:

**Other names used** \_\_\_\_\_ **Maiden Name** \_\_\_\_\_

+ Providing your social security number allows the most complete and efficient background screening possible. 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/>

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you can find the [volunteer background screening disclosure form](http://iaextensioncouncils.org/files/page/files/volunteer_disclosure_form_fillable_5.pdf) here:  
[iaextensioncouncils.org/files/page/files/volunteer\\_disclosure\\_form\\_fillable\\_5.pdf](http://iaextensioncouncils.org/files/page/files/volunteer_disclosure_form_fillable_5.pdf)

# Appendix D: Sample Interest Inventory

Name:			
Phone:	Mobile ____	Work____	Home____
Email:			

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? Circle the days and times that work best for you.	Monday	p.m.	a.m.
	Tuesday	p.m.	a.m.
	Wednesday	p.m.	a.m.
	Thursday	p.m.	a.m.
	Friday	p.m.	a.m.
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.			
Answer telephone questions____	Write garden column or newsletter articles____		
Assist with youth groups (schools, 4-H, etc.)____	Assist with communications____		
Work with the elderly____	Work with community garden projects____		
Set up and/or work at displays____	Other, please explain:		
Plant and help with demonstration gardens____			
Assist with office work____			
Any type of planting activities____			
Assist with organizing the Master Gardeners____			

# Appendix E:

## Sample In-Person Training Session Schedules

Master Gardener Training Schedule – In-Person Sessions (Example 1)

Date	Start Time	Day	Location	Topic	Online Lecture (view before class)
9/4	9:00 AM	Saturday	Discovery Garden – Iowa State Fairgrounds 1207 E Iowa St, Des Moines, IA 50317 Near the Agricultural Building	Landscape Design, Ornamentals	RSVP Link
9/8 9/11	5:30 PM 9:00 AM	Wednesady Saturday	Enabling Garden 1050 1st Ave S Altoona, IA 50009 (behind HyVee)	Vegetables and Herbs	RSVP Link (choose one date)
9/13 9/25	5:30 PM 9:00 AM	Monday Saturday	Brenton Arboretum 25141 260th St, Dallas Center, IA 50063	Landscape Trees	RSVP Link (choose one date)
9/29 10/9	5:30 PM 9:30 AM	Wednesday Saturday	Sprout: Urban Youth Learning Garden – Drake University 1300 30th St, Des Moines, IA 50311	Composting, Permaculture	RSVP Link (choose one date)
10/12	6:00 PM	Tuesday	Extension Office – 1625 Adventureland Dr., Ste. A Altoona, IA 50009	Volunteer Fair	RSVP Link

### 2022 In-Person Training Schedule (Example 2)

Meet and Greet for New Trainees-Introduce yourself to our new trainees.  
 Raised beds behind WPL. Bring a chair.  
 Extreme heat or rain: Extension office

Aug. 25 at 6 pm: No-Till Vegetable Garden with Cover Crop-Nancy Forrest at The home of Nancy Forrest  
 Rain date: August 26 at 6 pm

Sept. 6 at 5:30 pm: Pollinators, Fall and Migration-Jana Erickson-owner at Wit's End Garden  
 8299 50th Ave, Prole, IA 50229

Sept. 15: Rose Farm-Karri Rose at Rose Farm.  
 Karri will choose a topic.

Sept. 28 at 6 pm: Selling Garden produce-Lisa Jones at Extension office

October: Wine Wednesday-ISU Enology Specialist Aude Watrelot at Madison County Winery

Seed Starting -Todd Olerich at Extension office

November 3, 6-8 pm: Produce Basics- Cathy Drost, Human Sciences Specialist (Food and Health) @Winterset Public Library

# Appendix F:

## Master Gardener Volunteer Guidelines

### Master Gardener Volunteer Guidelines

These guidelines are part of the Master Gardener Volunteer Manual. Check with your county MG coordinator or Iowa MG Advisory Committee member if you have additional questions on what counts towards volunteer service or continuing education hours.



#### MG Volunteer: What counts as volunteer service?

- Maintain a public garden (e.g. city park, county fairgrounds, healthcare grounds)
- Answer garden questions for the public (e.g. farmer's market booth, ISU Extension & Outreach county office)
- Create community connections (e.g. collect excess produce from farmer's market for donation to food pantry, build partnerships to increase pollinator habitat)
- Support garden design for a community space (e.g. school garden, Main Street plantings, Community Visioning program)
- Teach gardening lesson (e.g. demonstration at a community garden, present at school)
- Coordinate a hands-on event (e.g. street tree planting, invasive species removal from park)
- Create communication materials about gardening (e.g. write newspaper article, post on county MG social media page)
- Plan a public event (e.g. plant sale, garden tour, garden symposium)
- Participate in MG management (e.g. attend monthly MG meetings, lead local MG team, serve on Iowa MG advisory committee).

#### MG Volunteer: What counts as Continuing Education?

- Webinars (e.g. live events listed on Iowa MG Upcoming Events webpage, recordings of webinars)
- Videos from ISU Extension and Outreach (e.g. Iowa MG YouTube channel)
- Workshops (e.g. hands-on tree pruning event at local botanical garden)
- Guided garden tours (e.g. participate in a tour of a public garden led by a tour guide)

Continuing education is expected to advance the Master Gardener volunteer's knowledge and understanding of horticulture. It must be factual, accurate, and provided by a source recognized as research based. Most training opportunities offered by educational institutions, public gardens, and education-focused gardening organizations meet this requirement.



**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
Extension and Outreach

[www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener)

#### Out-of-State Volunteer hours

Iowa Master Gardeners may count a portion of out-of-state hours towards their progress in the program as described in the following guidelines. It is the main intent of the Iowa Master Gardener program to serve Iowans, but we understand volunteers may have special opportunities out-of-state that they desire to add to their portfolio of service as a Master Gardener. During an internship period, no more than 25% of an intern's hours may be completed out-of-state. In subsequent "active" years, a Master Gardener may only count hours out-of-state above and beyond their 20 hours required in-state.



# Appendix G: Sample Master Gardener Community Project Agreement

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Thank you for inquiring about a potential Master Gardener volunteer project and 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 20 hours of educationally related volunteer service.

## **Volunteer service projects must:**

- Serve the public.
- Educate participants; for example, by consulting, sharing information, demonstrating techniques, and/or assisting with organizing or publicizing an event.
- Provide home horticulture information and education consistent with Iowa State University recommendations.

## **The following types of projects are generally discouraged:**

- Projects in which Master Gardener volunteers 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.

Questions	Answers
1. What is your idea for a project/program?	
2. What organization is responsible for the project/program?	
3. Is this a one-time or on-going project/program?	
4. If this is a one-time project, what opportunities will there be for additional educational activities related to this project/program?	
5. If this is an existing project, why are Master Gardeners being consulted now?	
6. If this project involves planting or establishing a garden, what plans exist for ongoing maintenance of the garden?	
7. If this will be an on-going project, what specifically are you requesting from Master Gardeners?	
8. How will your project/program be financed?	
9. Will this project/program generate income? If yes, how will it be allocated?	
10. Please list all organizations involved in this project/program and describe their role(s).	
11. What else do you want Master Gardeners to know about this project/program?	
12. Who should Master Gardeners contact if they have questions about this request?	

# Appendix H: Sample Master Gardener Letter of Intent for Client

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

The [County Name] 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] Master Gardeners will NOT

- Provide watering or ongoing 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.

<b>Please Sign Here</b>	
Signature:	Date:

# Appendix I: Sample Master Gardener Mini-grant Proposal Form

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**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 the project benefit area citizens? How many people will benefit?
- Where is the project located?
- What is the project time frame?
- What specific help is requested from (county name) 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] Master Gardeners support this project?
- Gardeners are available for support of horticulture-related education projects.

**Successful proposals will:**

- Provide specific educational/other benefits to area citizens.
- Encourage and/or demonstrate environmentally sound horticultural practice(s).
- 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.
- 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] 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] Master Gardeners and to provide a written report with photos, if appropriate.



# Appendix J:

## Horticultural Plant and Pest Specialists

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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.

### Iowa State University Department of Horticulture

Adam Thoms  
athoms@iastate.edu  
turfgrass

Christopher Currey  
ccurrey@iastate.edu  
commercial greenhouse production

Kathleen Delate  
kdelate@iastate.edu  
organic agriculture/alternate crops

Randall Voss  
rjvos@iastate.edu  
commercial fruit crops

Cynthia Haynes  
chaynes@iastate.edu  
consumer horticulture

Jeff Iles  
iles@iastate.edu  
woody ornamentals

Ajay Nair  
nairajay@iastate.edu  
consumer vegetables

Patrick O'Malley  
omall@iastate.edu  
commercial horticulture

### ISU Plant and Insect Diagnostic Clinic

Chelsea Harbach  
lcharbach@iastate.edu  
Plant Disease Diagnostician

Ed Zaworski  
zaworski@iastate.edu  
Plant Diagnostician

Zach Schumm  
zschumm@iastate.edu  
Insect Diagnostician

### Other specialists, Iowa State University

Adam Janke  
ajanke@iastate.edu  
wildlife

Billy Beck  
wjbeck@iastate.edu  
forestry

Evan Alderman  
alderman@iastate.edu  
Pesticide Safety Education Specialist

Meaghan Anderson  
mjanders@iastate.edu  
weed management

# Appendix K: Insurance Liability Policy

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## 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 US 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 ISU Office of Risk Management.

# Appendix L:

## Master Gardener Standards of Behavior

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Extension Master Gardener volunteers are representatives of Iowa State University and their local county extension program, and serve at the discretion of Iowa State. 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 Iowa State.

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 (audience, 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 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 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: Locating Promotional Materials

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## CyBox

For Master Gardener Coordinators (if you do not have access, ask state coordinator for permission)

- Meeting Recordings
- Webinar Recordings
- Flyers and templates
- Training Data
- Important bookmarked sites

## For staff

[Iowa State University Extension and Outreach](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff)

[Master Gardener Staff Page](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff): <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/staff>

- Master Gardener coordinator guide
- Annual Volunteer Agreement
- Link to post an event to the Master Gardener Calendar
- Master Gardener Training Brochure
- Links to other volunteer and coordinator resources

## Extension online store

Login to see available products

## Materials order form

- New master gardener
- Replacement name badge
- Lifetime master gardener name badge
- Certificates
- Service hour awards



In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, and American Sign Language) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling 866-632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by: (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or (2) Fax: 833-256-1665 or 202-690-7442; or (3) Email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to [www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext).