



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
Of Tulare - Kings Counties
POSITION DESCRIPTION

Title: UC MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

Purpose of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program

To extend UC Cooperative Extension's educational programs in the areas of horticulture, gardening, and backyard food production through the elective use of trained and certified volunteer Master Gardeners.

Brief Description of the Position

A Master Gardener is a "formal volunteer" of the University of California Cooperative Extension who:

Answers questions, diagnoses plant problems and gives horticultural assistance to the public via telephone, plant clinics, demonstrations, talks and the mass media on ... *flowers, houseplants, vegetable gardening, fruit and landscape trees, lawns, diseases, insects (home and garden), weeds, soils and water, pesticides and related topics.* Pesticide recommendations must be those of the University of California.

- , Cooperates with and assists the UCCE Farm Advisors and Tulare & Kings County staff.
- , Helps prepare and organize specific educational activities.
- , Keeps appropriate records of volunteer service time and contacts made.
- , Assists in the administration of the UC Master Gardener Program of Tulare-Kings Counties.

Requirements of a Master Gardener

- , Will pay a \$50.00 program fee prior to the start of the training program (to cover cost of educational materials).
- , Will complete a background check including fingerprints prior to graduation from the training program.
- , Will complete a 50-hour (approximately 17 week) training program in plant science and horticulture and pass a written exam to become a **Master Gardener Intern**. The training program provides a basic, general, integrated and practical course in horticulture and pest management. *Each MG trainee is expected to attend every weekly training session.*
- , **To become a Certified Master Gardener**, MG interns will complete 12 hours of post-training continuing education and will volunteer a minimum of 50 hours of time within one year of completing the training program in activities that support Cooperative Extension's educational programs in home horticulture that are approved by the Master Gardener advisor.

- , **To remain a Certified Master Gardener**, each year he/she will give 25 hours of volunteer time plus complete 12 hours of continuing education.
- , Must be able to schedule time so as to be available to do the kinds of volunteer work listed in the Volunteer Service Description.
- , Will submit monthly records of volunteer activities and contacts.
- , In all activities for which hours are reported, Master Gardeners will represent themselves as a UC Master Gardener either by listing themselves as such in written materials or by wearing their badge or introducing themselves as a Master Gardener.
- , Will not use the Master Gardener title while conducting commercial activities for monetary gain.
- , Must effectively communicate with the public by telephone, personal contact, and/or group contact and through written language.
- , Enjoys working with people and is able to work with many different types of people.
- , Is a self-starter and completes assigned tasks.
- , Will be responsible to the UC Cooperative Extension Advisor in charge of the Master Gardener volunteer program.

Supervision

- , A Cooperative Extension advisor will provide supervision and support to the Master Gardener volunteer program.
- , The MG Advisor may assign, review and assess work.
- , The MG Advisor will help coordinate in-service training.
- , The MG Advisor will provide space, telephone and other needed support.

Revised October 2003



For special assistance regarding our programs, please contact us.



UC Master Gardener Program of Tulare-Kings Counties

VOLUNTEER SERVICE DESCRIPTION



There are a number of ways in which Master Gardeners serve their volunteer time. The following are brief descriptions of some of their activities.

Public Service Phone Calls and Visitors

Within the Cooperative Extension office there is a Master Gardener office with a reference library. Master Gardeners staff this office during the workday or as needed. Currently the office hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Master Gardeners answer plant and garden telephone and visitor questions on a wide range of topics. Flower and vegetable gardening, pruning, lawn care, insect identification, plant problems and integrated pest management (IPM) recommendations are some of the topics Master Gardeners may handle when answering public service calls.

Plant Clinics

Plant clinics are held at nurseries, libraries, community gardens or other appropriate settings. These clinics are for the public to bring their plant questions and to get answers on gardening topics. Plant clinics are usually held on Saturdays for 3 to 4 hours. Two to four Master Gardeners are on duty at each clinic. Normally a formal presentation is not involved, but rather the Master Gardeners are available as “plant doctors” for any question the public might have.

Talks and Demonstrations

Talks differ from clinics in that they are prepared in advance on a particular subject and given to a specific audience. Visual aids are often used. Garden clubs, homeowner associations, and other community organizations are some of the groups to which Master Gardeners speak on gardening and horticulture topics.

Demonstrations are a more “hands on” approach than clinics or talks. They can involve planting or pruning plants, vegetable gardening, plant propagation, or landscaping tips. The variety of topics and settings for these presentations are endless.

News Media

Newspaper - The Master Gardeners have a weekly column in several local newspapers. Oftentimes Master Gardeners are encouraged to contribute to a newspaper article on a horticultural topic. Master Gardeners research, outline and write the column, which is then edited and published with the Master Gardener’s name. Sometimes local newspapers request assistance from Master Gardeners in their gardening features.

Radio - Master Gardeners may be asked to give short radio interviews or appear on local garden shows.

Trade Shows and Expositions

On occasions Master Gardeners set up and staff an information booth at home and garden shows, trade shows, or county fairs. This booth is similar to a plant clinic. Gardening questions are answered, publications are available, and the Master Gardener Program is publicized. The hours of the booth may include days and evenings, weekends and weekdays, so all Master Gardeners may become involved.

Garden Projects

The Master Gardeners may have hands-on gardening projects, such as the rose garden renovation for Tulare County. Future projects could include establishing a demonstration garden with lawns, flowers, vegetables, herbs, shrubs, fruit, nut, and landscape trees. The purpose of these gardens is to learn for ourselves and to educate others.

GUIDELINES FOR TULARE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

- A new Master Gardener is required to put in a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer time within one year (January - January) of certification in activities mutually agreed upon with the Master Gardener program advisor/Master Gardener coordinator. Hours in excess of 50 may not be counted toward the following year.
- A certified Master Gardener is required to put in 25 hours of volunteer time within one year of recertification. Hours in excess of 25 may not be counted towards the following year.
- All Master Gardeners are required to obtain 12 hours of continuing education within one year of certification or recertification. Continuing education includes Master Gardener monthly meetings, field trips, talks, horticulture classes, radio and TV gardening programs, or other activities designed to increase your horticulture knowledge.
- All Master Gardeners will keep quarterly records of their volunteer work on a Record of Volunteer Work form, which shall include the activity and its location, number of people contacted and the number of hours volunteered. Continuing education hours should be listed separately on the same form. The form will be provided quarterly in MG newsletter. The reports are due in the Cooperative Extension office, or to hours coordinator, by the second week of the month following the receipt of Record Forms. They may be mailed or turned in at monthly meetings or in the office. Any Master Gardener who fails to turn in their volunteer reports for a period of six consecutive months without good reason may be terminated from the Master Gardener program.
- Master Gardeners will wear their Master Gardener name badge or other identification when engaged in a Master Gardener activity and at the monthly meetings.
- Master Gardener meetings are held monthly, the second Tuesday of each month, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The meetings primary focus is education, but should include both business and social components. Two hours of continuing education credit is given.
- When acting as a Master Gardener, the service you provide is free of charge and you cannot solicit

payment. However, if offered payment for mileage or some other gratuity, you may accept for remuneration for yourself or the Master Gardener program. **If you are charging for a service, you cannot use the Master Gardener title when doing so. The Master Gardener title cannot be used for commercial purposes.** The Master Gardener program is strictly a volunteer one.

- The Master Gardener program advisor/Master Gardener coordinator may with just cause and prior warnings, terminate any Master Gardener whose conduct is inconsistent with policy guidelines or is inappropriate as a representative of the University of California.

Activities that count toward volunteer hours:

- a. Any educational activity where you provide information on horticulture and gardening to the public and you are represented as a University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener and which has been approved by the horticulture advisor/Master Gardener coordinator in charge of the Master Gardener program. A limit of 10% of your minimum volunteer requirement can be spent consulting with neighbors, individual community gardeners, etc. However, all hours spent in educational activities for a **group** of neighbors, community garden or others may be counted.
- b. Answering home horticulture phone calls and helping visitors at the Cooperative Extension office.
- c. Plant clinics, talks, demonstrations, and tree tours.
- d. Radio and TV appearances.
- e. Writing newspaper articles, newsletters, preparing leaflets. You may use your Master Gardener title and count time to volunteer hours for newspaper and magazine articles for which you receive payment only if they are proofed by the Urban Horticulture advisor and follow University of California recommendations. You Master Gardener title must be used in the article or as a byline to receive volunteer credit.
- f. Any time spent in organization, research, planning and preparation of a talk, a clinic, a leaflet or other Master Gardener project or event, including social functions such as the certification potluck and Christmas party.

- g. Art work - posters, flyers, displays the benefit the Master Gardener program, Cooperative Extension or extended horticulture information.
- h. Time spent on committees or as a coordinator for any Master Gardener purpose.
- I. Typing, clerical work or other administrative duties for the Master Gardener program or Cooperative Extension.
- j. Picking up and delivering supplies for a talk, clinic or other Master Gardener function.
- k. Consulting for or organizing a community garden - but not the physical work required to keep the garden going once it is organized. (Exception is Garden of the Sun activities)

Activities that don't count toward volunteer hours:

- a. Monthly Master Gardener meetings - however, each meeting counts two hours toward the 12 hours continuing education requirement.
- b. Travel time to and from volunteer activities - the exception would be if the travel was the actual job, i.e., picking up clinic materials. (You may want to keep track of your mileage for income tax purposes. You can deduct 11 cents per mile for volunteer work when you itemize deductions.)
- c. Consultations with neighbors, co-workers, friends, fellow community gardeners, or other individuals may only count toward 10% of the minimum volunteer requirement. After the minimum has been met, additional hours in this area may be counted. (Five hours for newly certified Master Gardeners, 2-1/2 hours for recertified Master Gardeners.)
- d. Physical labor for a community garden, home gardener or community group may not be counted unless it is being done to teach others how to do something. An occasional work party for a special event such as an Arbor Day planting or to help get a project started may be counted. Remember, however, we are **educators**--not a source of free labor to other agencies or community groups.
- e. Any activity for which you charge a fee. (See "e" above)

This is by no means a complete list. Please consult the Master Gardener program advisor/Master Gardener coordinator if you have any questions or are in doubt about whether a project is eligible to fulfill your volunteer requirement. Exceptions to these rules for volunteer hours may be granted by the advisor.

If you keep in mind that Master Gardeners are a support group for the Cooperative Extension--they are trained by the Cooperative Extension to be extenders of Cooperative Extension research based horticulture information through education - it may make the do's and don'ts of volunteer hours clearer.