Master Gardener Planning and Coordination Meeting
Maricopa County Cooperative Extension Office
4341 E. Broadway, Phoenix
April 23 – 24, 2015

Agenda & Participants

April 23

12:00  Welcome - Paul Brown

Paul began the meeting with a short presentation on why this meeting was necessary.

The Master Gardener program is a very successful and effective program. However, Extension Administration has limited information regarding the structure and operation of the program. Through this and future meetings, Extension Administration would like faculty and staff to 1) develop a flexible, yet sensible set of operating rules for the Master Gardener Program and 2) work together to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the Master Gardener Program.

1:10  Master Gardener Manual – Ed Martin

Ed Martin led the discussion and provided a status update on the revised Master Gardener Manual. Much of the discussion addressed unfinished chapters and how to complete the manual as quickly as possible. The action items from this discussion are presented below:

**Action Items**

**Unfinished Chapters**

- Basic Botany: Kelly agreed to complete figures and send for another review
- Entomology: Stacey revising before review
- Pesticide Use & Safety: Paul will ask Michael Wierda to review and update
- Vegetable Gardening: Kelly, Hattie & Stacey will submit by June 30
- Fruit Trees: needs to be expanded to include nuts and vines. Glenn, Josh, Jeff, Hattie and Bill Cook will submit by June 30
- Landscape Design: Existing chapter difficult to use due to technical content, Rick, Josh, Jan [Groth] will rework chapter and submit by June 30
- Cactus & Succulents: Ursula, Tanya [Jack Kelly?] will be asked to write this chapter
- Weeds: recently submitted. Bill expressed concern that chapter might be too technical. He also indicated an interest in increasing the number of figures if we can obtain permission to use figures in existing publications. Bill will increase the number of figures send expanded list of figures to Ed
- Lawns: Dave submitted 4.17.15; sending out for external review
- Citrus: Glenn submitted 4.23.15; sending out for external review
Due date is 30 June 2015 for completion of writing; Ed will handle reviews
May need an illustrator to complete some figures
The UA can obtain approval from publishers to use existing figures; contact Ed if this is required

Publication Process
- Paul will provide funding for publishing
- Will need a technical editor, particularly in relation to irrigation which is covered in a number of chapters
- Publish as print-on-demand so each chapter may be updated when needed
- Price range discussed: $35-$45/copy, perhaps with discount for volunteers/classes
- Available to public in hardcopy and flash drive if document can be protected
- On-line version: pared down version of full manual

2:50 Master Gardener Volunteers: Protection & Management
Background Checks, Volunteer Registration & Liability Insurance – Paul Brown

Paul addressed the rules and complexities of managing University of Arizona Volunteers (see attached PowerPoint presentation). A lively discussion resulted with numerous comments and questions, to wit:

- The DCC process is onerous and challenging to use. Can this be streamlined?
- Total volunteers in Master Gardener Program and 4-H approach 15,000
- Confusion exists regarding “grandfathered” volunteers and annual roll over of volunteers
- We have to pay staff time to help volunteers navigate the DCC process
- If volunteer refuses to comply with DCC, can they sign a waiver/release & still serve?
  - Discuss this with Risk Management and Office of General Counsel
- Only approved volunteers are covered by University insurance
  - University insurance is secondary to volunteer’s personal insurance for liability relative to personal vehicle use
  - University insurance does not cover damage to personal vehicle
  - University does provide general personal liability insurance for volunteers
  - Covers alleged harm to or property damage of others
- Defensive driving classes will be available on-line ‘soon’
- Everyone [including faculty & staff] are required to have a form/letter (Volunteer Letter of Appointment) in the respective county office for each volunteer. The letter outlines what the volunteer is authorized to do. Authorization to drive must be included in the letter along with a copy of the driver’s license if relevant.
  - Why is copy of driver’s license required if they have completed the Motor Vehicle Check?
Marketing the UA through Master Gardeners – Jeff Schalau

Yavapai County initiated Master Gardener Public Outreach Training in 2013 as part of MG classes. Jeff summarized this training program. Some important aspects/concepts of the program:

- The training consumes an entire Master Gardening class period
- Associate Master Gardeners are matched up with experienced mentor
- Topics covered in the training:
  - Office hours, locations, services available
  - Extension horticulture resources
  - Internal county resources (time reporting & program procedures)
  - Branding
  - Referrals to agents/specialists
  - MG volunteers are expected [urged] to use UA email address rather than their personal email to ID with the UA
  - Checking out supplies, tables, printing guidelines
  - Teamwork & relationship to and importance of Cooperative Extension
  - Display setups
  - How to best represent yourself, how to engage with public
  - Things to avoid
  - Documenting contacts
  - Behavioral styles
- Impacts have been significant for program, Extension and U of A
  - Jeff agreed to distribute his presentation and assist other counties with this type of effort

Operating Rules: AZ Master Gardener Programs

Introductory Comments – Paul Brown

Paul explained the necessity for consistency across the state
- Administration would like documentation and procedures related Master Gardener programs
- Mission statement
- Curriculum
- Requirements to be Master Gardener
- Volunteer requirements
- General operating rules and cost structure/justification
Mission Statement - Stacey & Hattie

Two draft Mission Statements were proposed & feedback is being requested by mid-May: [Emailed to coordinators 4.29.15]

**Arizona Master Gardener Volunteer Program Mission Statement**

*The Master Gardener Program supports University of Arizona Cooperative Extension by training volunteers to educate the public with research-based information on the best practices in urban horticulture and sustainable gardening.*

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*The Master Gardener program will provide volunteers with continued education, the tools to facilitate public outreach, an environment that is friendly and supportive, and opportunities to strengthen their communities while enhancing the quality of their lives.*

**What this mission statement says**

- Who is supported? – U of A Cooperative Extension AND Master Gardener volunteers
- How we do this? – by training volunteers to educate and supporting volunteer efforts
- How is the public helped? - they receive best horticultural information
- What is the value? – increase in educational outreach for sustainable horticulture practices

- What we do? – train and support Master Gardener volunteers
- How do we do it?
- Whom do we do it for – support the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension System
- What’s the value?

**General recommendations regarding Mission Statements**

- One sentence is best
- Make it broad
- Needs to say concisely what we do

**Review of Requirements to be an Arizona MG - Rick Gibson**

Rick presented ‘What Does It Take to Be a Master Gardener in Arizona?’ which summarized the results of a survey distributed to determine the requirements associated with Master Gardener programs within the counties (see attached PowerPoint presentation). The requirements were fairly consistent across most counties. The group of attendees then discussed setting minimum requirements for each aspect of county Master Gardener programs. Individual counties would be free to exceed these requirements if interested.
The consensus was reached for minimum requirements were as follows:
- Hours of approved training per year: 50
- Hours of service required to be certified: 50
- Hours required to maintain certification: 25
- Hours of continuing education required annually: 6

Some discussion ensued regarding how hours are counted and whether travel and break time was considered when hours were calculated for continuing education, service and certification. There is some difference in the way counties compute hour requirements.

Rick also presented several other factors/requirements required to participate in Master Gardener Programs including:
- Ability to successfully pass an interview
- Fit a preconceived mold
- Be able to obtain DCC status
- Computer literacy to obtain online information and access University email
- Ability to pay to participate (unless covered by scholarship)

He finished with a discussion of governance styles for individual programs, program evaluation, the need to address new issues (e.g., food security, health, water savings, energy consumption), and the challenges of internal regulation and volunteer management.

April 24

8:00  MG Curriculum Review & Recommendations - Stacey & Jo [Jo unavailable for meeting]

Stacey presented survey results received from counties for questions:
- What subjects do you currently teach?
- What subjects do you feel should be core for all MGs?

The group discussed the subjects that should make up the core curriculum and the subjects that could serve as electives. The consensus of the group was to require a minimum of 45 hours of class instruction in the core and elective areas listed below:

Core subjects
- Botany
- Soils/Plant Nutrition
- Soil/Plant/Water Relationships (Irrigation)
- IPM/Entomology
- Plant Pathology [Abiotic/Biotic]
- Plant Problem Diagnosis
- Volunteering/Marketing/Branding
- Pruning, plant selection, staking
Elective subjects
- GMOs
- Propagation
- Wildlife Damage
- Annual Vegetable Gardening
- Turf
- Citrus & Fruits
- Structural Pests [termites, scorpions]
- Native Plants
- Weeds
- Water Conservation
- Processing

There was some subsequent discussion regarding the manual and whether the manual contained chapters to address all of the core and elective subjects. A review of the chapters in the manual suggested adequate coverage, and the group felt materials outside the manual could be used to supplement areas not covered by the manual.

9:00  MG Fee Structure Review & Recommendations - Rick Gibson

Rick presented the results of a survey pertaining to fees charged by county Master Gardener programs. Faculty/staff from 11 counties participated in the survey. The survey consisted of the four questions listed below:

- What is the amount charged to take the Basic Training Course?
- Are there additional fees charged to the volunteer?
- Are there repeating charges, such as an annual membership fee?
- Do you ask the volunteer to any other cost recovery item fees or donations as part of the volunteer experience?

Fees for the basic training course range from $85 to $275 with an average of $182. The fees vary in part because some counties include more materials (e.g., manual, additional books, shirts, etc.) than others. In a few cases volunteers are charged additional fees if plants are required for continuing education or if the participants wish to purchase the manual (if not provided in basic fee). Just one county charges an association membership fee of $10. Volunteers are in general not asked to pay additional fees or provide donations. Exceptions to this generalization include: costs to cover an annual recognition banquet, cost of annual countywide conference and auction of small items to support workshops.
The participants agreed that cost recovery was the appropriate means of setting charges. There was some general discussion regarding the cost recovery process and a couple of counties have used this method to set fees. There was some confusion among the group regarding the University cost recovery process and whether it could be used for an ongoing program as opposed to a specific event.

Factors to consider in the cost recovery analysis:

- Supposed to add 15% into cost recovery for overhead
- Should also factor in staff time required to conform to DCC requirements
- Is fund raising by volunteers a part of the cost recovery?
- Volunteers are not supposed to be charged cost recovery fees

Paul will check into the cost recovery procedures and have Extension Administration clarify the cost recovery procedures for Master Gardener programs.

10:00 Break

10:20 New Technologies for MG Program Delivery - Kelly Young

Kelly led a discussion on the potential for using new technologies to more effectively deliver Master Gardener programs. She submitted a Strategic Program Initiative proposal last fall that received favorable reviews. Paul indicated a willingness to provide financial support for such an effort if the group can develop an effective strategy/plan. Options range from pre-recorded videos, voice over PowerPoint presentations and use of D2L/Moodle. To effectively implement these strategies one needs the assistance of an expert in instructional design.

Attendees complained that campus support for implementing new technologies was lacking, particularly in relation to D2L and Moodle. Apparently, one needs a direct campus linkage to utilize these systems. Stacey, Steve Poe and Tanya Quist indicated a willingness to assist others with D2L. Mike Proctor, VP for Regional Development, Outreach and Global Initiatives, was mentioned as a possible resource in this area as well. Jan Balzer and the Maricopa Master Gardeners agreed to investigate the procedures other Master Gardener programs are using to deliver on-line classes. They will also be investigating how other states market their programs.

Jeff Schalau offered some words of caution on this effort, expressing some concerns that use of new technologies for delivery could diminish face-to-face contact time which is a required part of the Master Gardener program. He also warned about the costs in terms of money and people’s time, and recommended the group wade into this effort slowly. There was a general consensus that the first group effort in this area might involve his Master Gardener Public Outreach Training module.
Susan Pater indicated the University was developing a new initiative on Learning Management Systems (LMS). Details on the initiative are located at:

http://itprojects.arizona.edu/project/non-credit-lms-pilot

From the minutes of their April 2014 meeting they recognize the need within Cooperative Extension. The point person is Htay Hla. Melody Buckner may also be someone that can provide a status update? According to an addendum the RFP for the new system was due March 27 and a decision is to be made early May. They are actually looking for one system to meet all the LMS needs. So D2L may be discontinued in July if they select another vendor.

11:00 Other MG Needs/Statewide Coordinator – Paul Brown

The entire group agreed that we should be sharing existing Master Gardener materials and discussed establishing a Drop Box where all materials could be deposited and shared. Susan Pater indicated that the UA is working to provide free enterprise Box accounts with 35GB of storage for all current faculty, staff, students and DCCs. Box@UA is an online cloud storage and collaboration tool that enables campus users to easily store, access and share files anytime, anywhere, from any device. For more details see:

http://uits.arizona.edu/services/box

The group asked that CE Administration work with the UA to make the volunteer registration and/or the DCC process less burdensome.

The group asked for CALS administration to provide more support to county faculty relative to distance learning systems.

Another concern expressed related to Certificates of Insurance that are required by some cooperating entities providing classroom space for Master Gardener programs. It has been a challenge at times to obtain such certificates from Risk Management in a timely manner. Paul Brown will check with Risk Management to see if the process can be improved and streamlined.

There was general agreement that a statewide coordinator would be of value to address ongoing issues related to the Master Gardener program. There was less consensus regarding how this person should be selected and how much time such a position would require. Rick Gibson suggested the coordinator be someone not currently running a county program to avoid bringing local bias to the position. Paul Brown will follow up with participants to further refine the responsibilities of the coordinator and develop a process for selecting/appointing a coordinator.