



MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM POLICIES & PROCEDURES

University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Mohave County

Updated May 2018

The Master Gardener Program, administered by the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension in Mohave County, is a partnership between Cooperative Extension and volunteers enrolled in the program. Cooperative Extension trains, certifies and supervises Master Gardener volunteers who provide information about home horticulture to the public.

Training and Certification

Training is offered once a year rotating between Bullhead City, Kingman and Lake Havasu City. Classes are held at the local Mohave Community College campuses and run for 13 weeks from January – April. If you would like to be notified of upcoming classes, contact us by phone at 928-753-3788 or email at mohavemg@gmail.com.

Classes are taught by University of Arizona professionals, Mohave County Master Gardeners and other horticulture experts. The classes cover the challenges specific to gardening in the desert. Topics covered include: Botany, Soils, Planting & Pruning, Plant Propagation, Citrus & Fruit Trees, Cacti & Succulents, Plant Problem Diagnosis, Pest Identification & Control, Landscape Design, Irrigation and Vegetable Gardening. A Certificate of Completion will be issued if you attend 75% (10) or more classes and have a passing grade of 75% or higher.

Upon completion of the Training Program, volunteers are designated as Associate Master Gardeners. In order to become Certified Master Gardeners, the Associates must:

- Register with the University of Arizona as a Designated Campus Colleague (DCC).
- Register their Driver License info with the University of Arizona's Risk Management Department.
- Complete & document 50 hours of Volunteer Service within 13 months after completing the class.
- Contribute & document 12 hours of Continuing Education within 13 months after completing the class.

Upon completion of the first year requirements, you will become a Certified Master Gardener. To remain Certified, you will be required to contribute 35 hours of Volunteer Service and 12 hours of Continuing Education each fiscal year thereafter (June 1 – May 31) and maintain signed, current copies of the Volunteer Information Sheet and Terms of Agreement on file at the Extension Office.

Master Gardeners from another State/County must present their Master Gardener Certification from that State/County and complete the Volunteer Information Sheet and Terms of Agreement. Acceptance of a Master Gardener certified in another State may be required to complete the Mohave County Master Gardening classes depending on experience.

Any Master Gardener who resigns within two years may, upon consultation with the County Extension Agent and County Master Gardener Coordinator, submit a written request to rejoin the program and agree to fulfill 35 hours of Volunteer Service and 12 hours of Continuing Education during the following year.

A Leave of Absence for personal or medical reasons may be granted for a Master Gardener in good standing. A Leave of Absence form must be submitted through your Area Coordinator and be evaluated by the Area Agent/Instructional Specialist

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As a Master Gardener, you are representing the University of Arizona, College of Agriculture & Life Sciences (CALs) and Cooperative Extension. Your Master Gardener name badge is to be worn if you are engaged in a Master Gardener activity. If you are charging or paid, i.e. teaching for Mohave Community College or as a consultant for a service, you cannot do this as an official representative of the University of Arizona Master Gardener Program.

Volunteer Service

Activities that count toward volunteer hours:

- Performing free educational activity on non-commercial horticulture & gardening to the public as a representative of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Master Gardener. Only one hour per month can be recorded for individual consultation with neighbors or friends.
- Responding to home gardening & pest management phone calls, emails or house calls. **NOTE:** Occasionally, it may be necessary to visit a client's home for consultation. It is requested that these home visits be made with two Master Gardeners present, mostly for safety reasons.
- Conducting horticulture talks, demos, tours, workshops, staffing booth exhibits, etc., when you are represented as a Master Gardener.
- Making unpaid radio and TV appearances.
- Writing unpaid articles for newspapers and other publications. These must be presented to the County Coordinator for approval.
- Time spent organizing, researching, planning and preparing for a presentation.
- Preparation of art, flyers or displays which benefit the Master Gardener Program or Cooperative Extension.
- Time spent on committees or as an Area Coordinator for any Master Gardener purpose.
- Working with other groups as an educator or organizer of a horticultural event.
- Organization of reference materials and performing clerical or administrative work for the Master Gardener Program of Cooperative Extension.
- Picking up and delivering supplies for a workshop, demo, booth exhibit or other Master Gardener functions.
- Working on research projects & reports for the purpose of developing and disseminating information on non-commercial horticulture or pest control topics under the supervision of a Cooperative Extension advisor.
- Travel time to and from a volunteer activity.
- Work with youth groups and schools. **NOTE:** It is the policy of the University of Arizona that any volunteer who has unsupervised contact with minors must go through a complete background check which includes fingerprinting. The cost for this, either to the program or volunteer, is \$55 plus the fee from the sheriff or police department. If this is not the case, another adult, such as a teacher, 4-H Leader, Scout Leader, etc., must be present when working with minors.

If there are any other activities that may not be mentioned above, contact the Mohave County Master Gardener Instructional Specialist for further clarification.

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Volunteer Service

Activities that do not count toward volunteer hours:

- Physical labor for a community garden, home gardener or community group cannot be counted unless it is being done to teach others. However, installation, maintenance and support of sanctioned educational gardens may be counted as volunteer hours. Contact the Mohave County Master Gardener Instructional Specialist to find out if a project is eligible. Keep in mind that we are educators, not a free source of labor for other agencies or community groups.
- Any activity for which you charge a fee.

Continuing Education

As representatives of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Master Gardeners are expected to keep abreast of current local horticulture issues and current U of A recommendations. In general, you are all encouraged to continue to increase your knowledge of home gardening.

The requirement of 12 hours per fiscal year for Continuing Education may be achieved by attending agriculture-related classes, local garden seminars, on-line reading & research, watching programs or reading articles that are horticulture-related.

Travel time to and from Continuing Education activities will be accepted as part of the hours reported.

Hours Reporting

Records of Volunteer Service and Continuing Education hours must be submitted on the official reporting form, either electronically or manually. Documentation must be legible and contain a sufficient description for each activity. These should be submitted to your Area Coordinator each month, preferably at your monthly meeting. Retain a copy for your records. Both Volunteer & Education hours should be submitted at your May business meeting for fiscal year-end reports and at your December meeting for calendar year reports.

Business Meetings

Master Gardeners are expected to attend as many monthly meetings held in their respective areas as possible. These meetings are vital in keeping abreast of the group's activities and to provide input and ideas.

Name Badges

Associates are provided with temporary name badges and veterans with permanent name badges. These must be worn when involved in any Master Gardener meeting, activity or event, or attending a conference as a Master Gardener.

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Transportation and Insurance

Transportation to and from meetings and events is at your own expense using your personal vehicle. If a group is attending an event, you may use a County van or car depending on availability and if you have an authorized driver who has completed the certification classes. Current costs for use of a County vehicle is \$22 per day plus \$.27 cents per mile.

The University of Arizona provides Volunteer Accident Insurance if you are traveling on Master Gardener business and have completed the DCC registration process which includes providing your Driver's License information to Risk Management. However, your personal insurance is always your primary coverage.

Out of State Travel

Travel to and from an out-of-state workshop, seminar or conference from your home or the Kingman office requires a Travel Authorization from the University of Arizona. Exceptions to this would be Laughlin, NV and Needles, CA. Contact the Instructional Specialist if you have any questions about an out-of-state location. You must provide your Area Coordinator and the Instructional Specialist details on the Event Name, Date(s), Location and Estimated Travel Miles.

Conferences and Scholarships

There are several horticultural conferences offered each year, hosted by other area Master Gardener groups and organizations. You are strongly encouraged to attend if you are able to. Travel costs are normally at your own expense. However, there is a Scholarship Fund available to offset tuition or registration fees. You can submit a Scholarship Request Form which must be authorized by your Area Coordinator and the Instructional Specialist. Scholarship Funds are limited and may be declined at the discretion of the Area Agent.

Donations and Gifts

The Mohave County Master Gardeners are a non-profit group. Donations and gifts are accepted for volunteer service to fund costs that each area incurs, such as purchasing materials for booths and workshops, travel costs, etc. Use of the funds is at the discretion of each area group.

Donations would be considered the 'small' dollar donations given at workshops or trade show booths. These will be deposited to the respective area's account which is administered by the Yavapai County office. Donations may be subject to an administrative fee when deposited to the area's account.

There is a Donation Form that must be used for in-kind gifts in excess of \$19.99. Quite often, we receive these when making a visit to a home by the homeowner for their appreciation. A copy is given to the donor for their tax records and a file copy is to be submitted to the Extension Office with the donation.

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Area Budgets

Each area is currently allocated an annual budget for the fiscal year (June-May) of \$100 to offset printing costs and \$200 for program costs, such as booth fees for a show. The Kingman group uses the office for most of their printing needs (see Kingman Area General Information & Procedures for guidelines and costs). The Bullhead City and Lake Havasu City groups have accounts with a local printer for their needs. Invoices or statements are sent directly by the printers to Yavapai County administration for payment. When using any offsite printer, you must note the area (BHC or LHC MGs) and the purpose (flyers for October workshop, etc.).

Homeowner Phone Calls and Emails

Residents of Mohave County can call or email the Kingman Extension office with questions about gardening issues, plant & insect id's and more. Office staff will take down pertinent information and forward it to the designated Master Gardener contact in each area. Each area has different protocol for how their calls are managed, but ultimately follow-up to each call must be sent to the Instructional Specialist and office staff in the form of an email and/or written Plant Diagnosis Form. Records are kept on file at the Kingman office.

Most areas have some commonly asked questions. Irrigation is common to most; citrus is big in the River Cities, other fruits trees in Kingman; vegetable gardening is popular in all areas. Get well-acquainted with the questions or topics most often asked in your area. You will always receive a topic you may not be familiar with. Do not feel that you have to give the homeowner an immediate response. Ask questions, take notes and tell them that you would like to confer with a colleague or further research and get back to them.

Some calls may entail a home visit. If so, you are required to have another Master Gardener accompany you. This is primarily for your safety.

Responding to these calls is a great way to educate or re-educate yourself and become confident in fielding questions from the public.

Business Cards and Stationery

Generic business cards are available from your Area Coordinator or the Instructional Specialist. If you would prefer to have personalized business cards, these will be at your expense. All business cards and stationery must be ordered through the County Coordinator utilizing the University of Arizona required format and logos.

Flyers & Handouts

The University of Arizona Mohave Cooperative County Extension and Master Gardener Logos should be used on all flyers and handouts for workshops or other event communications. All flyers and presentations must be reviewed and approved by the Area Agent, and/or Instructional Specialist prior to publishing.

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Workshops and Public Events

All events sponsored by or participated by Master Gardeners (workshops, informational booths, etc.) should include a sign-in sheet for all attendees, and a subsequent AAP-5 form completed based on that attendance. Workshop attendees should also complete a survey for the event. All of these forms are available at the back of this manual. Completed forms should be submitted to the Instructional Specialist on a monthly basis at minimum. If it is not feasible to submit originals in a timely manner, you may scan and e-mail copies.

Photo Releases

If you use a photo, video or audio clip of a person attending a Master Gardener workshop, seminar, booth or any other event, in which their face is clearly recognizable, you must get a signed release. If the person is under 18 years of age, the guardian of this person must sign the release. If possible, try to indicate how the photo may be used, i.e. in a news article, website, newsletter, etc. This requirement is more as a matter of common courtesy than of law to extend to community contacts the opportunity of knowing in advance where their image will likely appear. When in doubt, the best rule of thumb is to seek consent before using a photo of a readily identifiable individual.

Wind & Weeds Newsletter

The Mohave County Master Gardeners have a quarterly newsletter. It includes reports from the Area Coordinators, photos from activities and other articles. It is emailed to all Mohave County Volunteers and is available on our website. Everyone is encouraged to contribute to the newsletter! Submissions for each quarter are due on March 20, June 20, September 20 and December 20.

Reimbursement of Expenses & Substitute W-9 Forms

On occasion, Master Gardener Volunteers are reimbursed for expenses such as scholarships for seminar attendance, mileage, etc. Approval of reimbursements are at the discretion of the Mohave County Master Gardener Instructional Specialist and/or the Mohave County Extension Office Agent. If you have not been reimbursed by the University previously, you will be required to provide your SSN. This is required by the IRS for reporting income.

Expulsion, Reinstatement & Related Subjects

- Master Gardener credentials can be proudly displayed except when the use of such implies endorsement by the University of Arizona, Mohave County Cooperative Extension for monetary gains.
- Any volunteer who fails to carry out the requirements of the Mohave County Master Gardener Program will be dropped from the program.
- No use of alcohol or drugs while participating in all volunteer activities.
- No possession of weapons during all volunteer activities.
- No use of non-professional and/or foul language, aggressive actions or sexual harassment.
- Instances of a noncompliance with the spirit of this policy will be brought before the Mohave County Extension Agent and Instructional Specialist for review and appropriate action. Reinstatement requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.