UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, MARICOPA COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM POLICY

• Requirements for Initial Certification
• Requirements for Re-certification
• Approved Volunteer and Continuing Education Activities
• Use of the Master Gardener Title
• Expulsion and Reinstatement

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

1. INITIAL CERTIFICATION

Upon acceptance into the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Maricopa County Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program, volunteers are designated as Master Gardener Interns. In order to become Certified Master Gardeners, Interns must meet the following requirements.

A. Complete the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Course
   a. Attendance is mandatory and no more than three (3) absences will be excused.
   b. Excused absences should be made up during the next two sessions of Initial Training.
   c. Habitual tardiness will require review by Mentor and Program Staff.

B. Complete the final exam.

C. Complete all class assignments and quizzes.

D. Complete a minimum of 20 hours volunteer service; Mentors will be assigned to help facilitate this aspect of training.

E. Complete and document an additional 30 hours, for a total of 50 hours, of approved volunteer service within one year of the date of their graduation.

F. Maintain a current volunteer profile form on file at the Extension Office.

G. Maintain a signed Memorandum of Agreement on file at the Extension Office.
Interns who have met all requirements of Initial Certification with the exception of the 50 hour requirement are designated Associate Master Gardeners. Associate Master Gardeners are deemed Inactive if they have not met the 50 hour requirement within one year of graduating from Initial Volunteer Training Class.

2. RE-CERTIFICATION

Each year after certification, to become re-certified, Master Gardeners must submit documentation of completion for 25 hours of approved volunteer service and twelve hours of approved continuing education. Additionally, Master Gardeners must maintain signed, updated copies of the volunteer profile form and Memorandum of Agreement. The Master Gardener year runs from January 1 to December 31. Hours beyond the minimum requirement may not be carried over to the next year.

A. In order for activities to count toward approved volunteer service the Master Gardener must be identified by wearing a Master Gardener Badge. If applicable, promotion of the event should include reference to the contribution made by Master Gardeners.

Activities which count toward approved volunteer service for:

- 50 hours required of Associate Master Gardeners
- 25 hours per year required of Certified Master Gardeners

a. Any educational activity where you provide information on horticulture and gardening to the public and you are represented as a University of Arizona Cooperative Extension Master Gardener. However, only 10% of your minimum volunteer requirement can be individual consultations with neighbors or friends.

b. Answering home gardening and pest management phone calls and helping visitors at the Cooperative Extension Office or Satellite Offices. This activity can be used for volunteer activity or for continuing education. See Section 2.C.f.

c. Unpaid horticulture talks, demonstrations, tours, plant clinics, staffing exhibits, helping with seminars, etc., when you are represented as a Master Gardener.

d. Unpaid radio and TV appearances.

e. Writing unpaid articles for a newspaper or newsletter and preparing publications. The byline must include “University of Arizona Master Gardener.”

f. Time spent in organization, research, planning, and preparation for a talk, plant clinic, educational exhibit, seminar, or other Master Gardener projects or events.

g. Preparation of art work, posters, fliers, or displays that benefit the Master Gardener Program or the Cooperative Extension.
h. Time spent on committees or as a coordinator for any Master Gardener purpose.

i. Work with other groups as an educator or organizer of a horticultural event. See Section 2.B.b.

j. Organization of reference materials, clerical, or administrative work for the Master Gardener Program or Cooperative Extension.

k. Picking up and/or delivering supplies for a talk, clinic, exhibit, seminar, or other Master Gardener functions.

l. Work on research projects and reports for the purpose of developing and disseminating information on horticulture or pest control topics under the supervision of a Cooperative Extension advisor.

m. Travel time to and from a volunteer activity. Travel time may be submitted on the appropriate line on the official reporting form. Travel time will be counted towards overall totals of volunteer hours, but will not be counted towards satisfying the minimum volunteer requirements.

B. Activities that do not count toward volunteer hours of service:

a. Physical labor for a community garden, home gardener, or community group cannot be counted unless it is being done to teach others how to do something. However, installation, maintenance and support of sanctioned educational gardens may be counted as volunteer hours. Contact the Master Gardener Program Coordinator 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.

b. Attendance at continuing education projects.

c. Any activity for which you charge a fee.

When the Master Gardener Program began, Master Gardeners primarily answered telephone requests for horticultural information. They also staffed plant clinics and information booths. Those opportunities are still vital to Cooperative Extension. In addition, it has been recognized that talents which individuals bring to the Master Gardener Program can be utilized in a variety of horticultural activities.

The activities described above are by no means a complete list. Please consult the Master Gardener Program Coordinator if you have any questions or are in doubt about a project being eligible to fulfill your volunteer requirement. Exceptions to the above rules for volunteer hours may be granted by the Extension Office.
C. Activities which count toward approved continuing education.

0 hours required of Associate Master Gardeners
12 hours per year required of Master Gardeners

Hours beyond the minimum requirement may not be carried over to the next year.

a. Attendance of horticultural or related lectures, demonstrations, and field trips, including but not restricted to Cooperative Extension sponsored events.

b. Study of horticultural or related publications, including but not restricted to Cooperative Extension publications.

c. Horticultural or related radio & television programs, including but not restricted to Cooperative Extension productions.

d. Other activities which increase horticultural knowledge and are applicable to gardening in Maricopa County.

e. At least nine hours of the requirement must be educational activities sponsored by the Master Gardener Program such as meetings, Master Gardener Updates, educational tours, the Master Gardener Conferences, Advanced Training or other activities.

f. A maximum of three hours per year spent doing research to answer telephone calls and assist visitors at the Cooperative Extension Office or Satellite Offices may be used for as credit for continuing education.

D. Documentation:

a. Each Master Gardener must maintain an updated profile sheet in Office files. It is recommended that these forms be updated on a yearly basis.

b. Records of volunteer service and continuing education must be submitted via MGCentral or on the official reporting form, which are received by the Cooperative Extension office. Retain documentation of hours volunteered for personal records. Update the web site or office file at least quarterly (preferably monthly) for volunteer and education requirements prior to December 31.

c. Each Master Gardener must have signed a Memorandum of Agreement, to be kept on file at the Extension Office.

d. The final annual update of the Office database will be done no later than January 15 of the following year. The Master Gardener mailing list will then be purged of all inactive members.
D. Exceptions:

a. Master Gardeners who have substantially, but not completely, fulfilled the requirement may submit a written request to the Extension Agent in charge to be allowed to donate the remaining service during the following year in addition to that year's requirement.

b. Master Gardeners who do not meet these criteria due to illness, family emergency, or other reasons may submit a written request to the Extension Agent in charge in order to be classified as temporarily inactive. Temporarily inactive Master Gardeners will be required to complete only the current year’s requirements during the next year.

c. Any Master Gardener who is no longer active may request to rejoin the program by submitting to the Master Gardener Program Director a plan to donate 50 hours of volunteer service and participate in 20 hours of continuing education during the first year of reinstatement. This request must be made within three years of receipt of inactive status notification.

d. Master Gardeners who have been inactive for three years or more and wish to rejoin the program must reapply, and if accepted, complete all initial certification requirements.

3. USE OF THE MASTER GARDENER TITLE

A. As a Master Gardener you are representing the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension.

B. Your Master Gardener name badge must be worn when you are engaged in Master Gardener activities.

C. You may not charge for services you provide as a Master Gardener except to request reimbursement for personal expenses such as travel and duplication of handouts, etc. If you are charging for a service, you may not do so as an official representative of the University of Arizona Master Gardener Program.

D. Master Gardener credentials may be proudly displayed except when the use of such implies endorsement by the University of Arizona or Maricopa County Cooperative Extension for monetary gains.

4. EXPULSION AND REINSTATEMENT

A. Any volunteer that fails to carry out the requirements of the Master Gardener Program or abide by the spirit of the Memorandum of Agreement will be removed from the Program and must surrender all identifying credentials to the Extension Office.

B. Instances of non-compliance with the spirit of this policy or the Memorandum of Agreement will be brought before the Extension Agent in charge for review and appropriate action. Reinstatement requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
C. You understand that your status as a Master Gardener and that the Master Gardener Program are subject to the complete discretion of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, and as a volunteer in the program, you may be reassigned and/or terminated at any time for any reason or for no reason.

5. MASTER GARDENER ALUMNI AND MASTER GARDENER EMERITUS

A. Certified Master Gardeners who resign from the program may become Master Gardener Alumni. Master Gardener Alumni receive the following benefits:
   a. Master Gardener rates for attending Maricopa County Urban Horticulture Program;
   b. Eligibility to attend monthly Master Gardener Updates and Annual Recognition event and where space is available, Advanced Training courses;
   c. Participation as a member of the Master Gardener Listserv;
   d. Master Gardener Alumni may not wear a Certified Master Gardener badge, vest, or other uniform, and will not receive an annual certification card or directory.

B. A Certified Master Gardener who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, dedication, and motivation may become a Master Gardener Emeritus. Candidates will be nominated and selected by Urban Horticulture and Cooperative Extension staff members on an annual basis. Master Gardener Emeritus enjoys full Master Gardener privileges with no minimum requirement for volunteer service or continuing education hours.