

CMG GardenNotes #014

The Colorado Master Gardener Program: *Planting Gardens, Growing People*

- Outline: **Colorado Master Gardener Website**, page 2
Colorado State University Extension, page 2
County-based programs, page 2
Program funding targets issues, page 3
The Colorado Master GardenerSM Program, page 4
Mission, page 4
Vision, page 4
Titles, page 5
Colorado Master Gardener, page 5
Apprentice Master Gardener, page 7
Colorado Gardener Certificate, page 7
Limited Activity Status, page 7
Released, page 8
Affiliate CMG, page 9
Emeritus CMG, page 9
Membership and Transfers, page 10
Cross-county enrollment, page 10
Transfer to another county, page 13
Transfer from another state, page 13
Meaningful volunteer opportunities, page 14
CMG outreach, page 14
What counts for CMG volunteer activities, page 16
Education versus service, page 16
Volunteer commitment, page 17
What to expect, page 17
Service limitations, page 18
Conflict-of-interest, page 18
Copyright, page 19
Equal opportunity, page 19
Liability, page 19
CMG Audience, page 20
Legal and medical advice, page 20
Partnership with Colorado's Green Industry, page 22
Colorado's Green Industry, page 22
CMG partnership with the Green Industry, page 22
Fielding Questions, page 23
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Colorado Master Gardener Website at www.cmg.colostate.edu

The Colorado Master Gardener website is designed to support CMG volunteers and the gardening public in search of research-based home garden information. It has many features, including the following:

- **Master index to CSU Extension home gardening information online**
 - *CMG GardenNotes* are the online version of CMG training materials, giving in-depth coverage on the topic.
 - **Extension Fact Sheets** are one to four page discussions on a variety of topics
 - *PlantTalk Colorado* scripts are short focused messages on specific topics.
- County contact information for CMG volunteers.
- Summary of CMG outreach efforts in many counties.
- Information on CMG training and continuing education.
- Information on becoming a Colorado Master Gardener volunteer.
- Link to VMS, the CMG Program online sign-up and reporting system.
- Line to CMG Online, the online continuing education option for CMG volunteers.
- Program announcements.
- Related links.

Colorado State University Extension

Colorado State University Extension is a joint agency between the **United States Department of Agriculture**, USDA, (federal partner), **Colorado State University** (state partner), and **Colorado counties** (local partner). Extension is a nationwide system delivering research-based educational programs at the county level with resources from the state land grant university system and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

To enhance public recognition, please use the full name, *Colorado State University Extension*. After initial introduction, repeated referral may be shortened to *Extension*.

County identification may be added as *Colorado State University, _____ County Extension* or *Colorado State University, _____ County Office*.

County-Based Programs

In response to locally identified needs, the county is the basic program delivery unit for CSU Extension. County level staff includes:

- **Extension Agents**
 - *County Extension Director*, an agent leading the local team
- **Program coordinators and assistants**
- **Support staff**

In Colorado, county-based program works across county lines in multi-county clusters. This approach better supports broad-based program delivery with limited staffing and allows individual staff to focus on programming emphasis.

The *County Extension Advisory Committee* provides input on current and emerging issues that need local attention. Local citizens serving on the committee play a key role in helping staff identify and prioritize program needs at the local level.

University-based faculty also support the local Extension program behind the scenes by providing program leadership, research, and by assisting with program delivery. By assignment, Colorado State University campus-based, departmental faculty split time between **research, teaching, and Extension** activities. Campus-based faculty with Extension appointments are known as *Extension Specialists*. Extension programs also work closely with Agricultural Experiment Stations, located around the state.

Program Funding Targets Issues

Issues and Work Teams

Funding at the federal, state, and county levels is provided in support of *issues*. Issues are identified areas of community concerns and needs where research and educational efforts are concentrated. Locally identified issues are supported by research and educational programs, within state and federal issues.

For administrative purposes, Extension programs are organized into six *Core Competency Areas*, as follows:

- Community Resource Development
- Competitive and Sustainable Agricultural Systems
- Natural Resources and the Environment
- Nutrition, Health and Food Safety
- Strong Families, Healthy Homes
- 4-H and Youth Development

County-based and university-based staff work together in *Program Reporting Units* to plan and implement educational programs on a multi-county, regional, or statewide basis. These teams are the primary subject matter programming unit. The Colorado Master Gardener Program is part of the Environmental Horticulture Program Reporting Unit.

Funding

Current Colorado State University Extension funding sources include:

- 47% Colorado State University
 - 16% federal funds (USDA budget)
 - 31% state funds (Colorado State University budget)
- 41% County funds
- 12% other sources (sales, fees and program grants)

Note: Colorado Master Gardener Training is made possible, in part, by a grant from the **Colorado Garden Foundation**.

Outcomes

With increased accountability of government-funded programs, program planning focuses on **outcomes**, the “so what” of activities. Examples of outcomes of the Colorado Master Gardener Program include the following:

- Empowering Colorado gardeners with knowledge-based information to foster successful gardening;
- Protecting and enhancing the home landscape environment (including water wise gardening and responsible use of pest management options);
- Gardening for nutrition and health;
- Gardening to teach life skills, developing individuals, strengthening families, and building communities.

The Colorado Master Gardener Program

Mission

The Colorado State University, Colorado Master Gardenersm Program volunteer network strives to enhance Coloradans’ quality of life by:

- Extending knowledge-based education throughout Colorado communities to foster successful gardeners;
- Helping individuals make informed decisions about plants to protect neighborhood environments.

We are committed to using horticulture to empower gardeners, develop partnerships, and build stronger communities.

Vision

The Colorado State University, Colorado Master Gardenersm Program strives to lead educational efforts to nurture Colorado’s natural environment and communities by:

- Collaborating with the green industry, public agencies and nonprofits to provide current research-based information to the public;
- Developing educational programs for local needs such as water issues, alternative pest management and ecosystem characteristics, to encourage environmentally sound horticultural practices;
- Reaching out to new audiences through a variety of technologies;

- Providing lifelong learning opportunities and a variety of meaningful volunteer options for Colorado Master Gardeners, resulting in a committed, active network of horticultural educators who serve communities across the state;
- Cultivating long-term support and securing abundant resources from diverse constituencies for the Colorado Master Gardener Program by showing the differences that this program makes in Coloradans' quality of life.

Titles

These titles may be used only in connection with the Colorado State University Extension activities. The term “master gardener” is considered generic and is used by many organizations and individuals.

Colorado Master Gardener

The title *Colorado Master Gardener* is a registered service mark of Colorado State University Extension and is used to identify volunteers as representatives of CSU Extension. **It may be used ONLY in connection with official CSU Extension activities.**

In situations where the CMG volunteer is not officially representing Colorado State University Extension, please use the generic term “master gardener” without any verbal connection to the CSU Extension System.

When working as an Extension representative, introduce yourself as a “*Colorado Master Gardener Volunteer with Colorado State University Extension.*”

In print materials, the first use of the title *Colorado Master Gardener*sm needs to be followed with a small “sm” after Gardener. This is easy to create using a superscript.

To receive the title “*Colorado Master Gardener,*” the volunteer must complete the following requirements:

1. Be accepted into a county/area CSU Extension, Colorado Master Gardener Program;
2. Complete the *Colorado Master Gardener/ Gardener Certificate Training*;
 - Attend a minimum of 80% of the training classes.
 - Participants are expected to attend all classes and are responsible for content in all sessions. When a situation arises that prevents attendance (e.g., illness or weather-related travel issues), participants should invest extra time reviewing the *CMG GardenNotes* for the missed class and coordinate with staff to make up missed work (to the extent possible).
3. Complete 50 hours minimum *Colorado Master Gardener* volunteer service (considered part of the training process);
4. Turn in reports (online via VMS or by paper report).

After the first year, to continue as a *Colorado Master Gardener*, volunteers must participate in the following activities:

1. Volunteer service: 24 hours minimum per year;
2. Turn in reports (online via VMS or by paper report).
3. Continuing education: 12 hours minimum per year.
 - a) A minimum of six hours must be in Extension-sponsored CMG events. Examples include:
 - CMG online classes
 - County, regional and state Colorado Master Gardener updates
 - Clinic training
 - Re-attend basic training sessions
 - Volunteer development training
 - Writer's workshop
 - b) Other educational activities may count as 1) they relate to horticulture and to the CMG role, AND 2) with prior approval of the designated staff. For example:
 - Green industry training (e.g., ProGreen Expo, Turfgrass conference, Colorado Association of Lawn Care Professionals (CALCP) and International Society of Arboriculture conferences)
 - Public garden classes
 - Academic classes
 - Garden club speakers
 - Job-related inservice
 - Special research projects
 - Independent projects

Volunteer hours or continuing education hours? Volunteer hours are counted when the CMG serves to provide educational programs to clients. Continuing education hours are counted when the CMG is in the student role, receiving the training.

Time includes reasonable travel time to and from CMG events (unless prohibited by county policy) and preparation time for CMG outreach activities. It does not include personal study time.

Apprentice Master Gardener

New volunteers, who have not completed basic training and their first 50 hours of volunteer service, are identified by the title “***Apprentice Master Gardener.***”

Failure to complete the payback agreement

- Apprentice CMG volunteers receive the training at a reduced fee in partial exchange for their volunteer service (i.e., unpaid work). The volunteer service is considered part of the training received by *Colorado Master Gardeners*.
- Those who fail to complete the minimum payback hours by October 31st of the training year will be billed for the class tuition. The billing rate is \$15.00 per uncompleted hour, up to \$500 maximum. Individuals with special situations may be given an extension (up to 12 months) at the discretion of the agent.

Colorado Gardener Certificate, CGC

Colorado Master Gardener/Colorado Gardener Certificate Training is also open to individuals who desire the classroom training only, without a volunteer commitment. These students pay state and county program fees (the same as CMG volunteers) PLUS tuition (in lieu of the return service). They receive the ***Colorado Gardener Certificate*** upon completion of the class work.

In the Colorado Master Gardener Program, volunteer service is considered a vital part of the training program. *Colorado Gardener Certificate* students do not become *Colorado Master Gardeners*.

Since the *Colorado Gardener Certificate* implies training only, it may be used by individuals to establish their training credentials and market their expertise.

Any CMG volunteer who has completed the basic training and 50 hours minimum volunteer service may also request a *Colorado Gardener Certificate*, and may use the *Colorado Gardener Certificate* title for marketing purposes.

Limited Activity/Inactive Status

It is recognized that CMG volunteers may need to be temporarily less active or inactive in the program due to personal needs (illness, marriage, divorce, births, deaths, moves, job changes, travel, etc.). Upon consultation with the local agent, a CMG volunteer may be given ***Limited Activity/Inactive Status*** for up to 12 months.

Limited activity/inactive status should be arranged when the life conflict comes up (that is prior to the inactive period). It cannot be used at the end of the CMG year as a means to carry on less committed volunteers.

During the temporary inactive period, CMG volunteers:

- Will continue to receive emails, mailings and print materials;
- Will pay CMG fees;
- May attend meetings and participate in outreach activities;
- The minimum hours of volunteer outreach and continuing education will be set upon agreement of the volunteer and agent, depending on the situation.
- Will report volunteer hours and continuing education hours completed.

Released

“Released” individuals are no longer active or affiliated with the Colorado State University Extension CMG program. They must avoid identifying themselves as affiliated with Colorado State University Extension or using the term “Colorado Master Gardener.”

Volunteers may be released:

- At the request of the CMG volunteer;
- Due to failure to complete volunteer hours or educational hours or turn in reports;
- Due to failure to follow CMG Program procedures;
- Due to problems associated with volunteer performance, including people skills and ability to represent CSU Extension in a professional and positive manner;
- Due to failure to honor volunteer commitments;
- To accommodate the training of additional people as community gardening resources;
- At the discretion of the agent.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that volunteering with an organization is a privilege, not a right. Organizations may release volunteers at the discretion of the organization.

Return to Colorado Master Gardener service

- If a CMG volunteer left the program at their own request, they may APPLY for readmission within three years of active participation. Acceptance is at the discretion of the local agent based on previous volunteer experience and the need for additional volunteers in the local program. Readmission is not guaranteed.

In most situations, it will only be feasible to accept returning CMG volunteers near the beginning of the calendar year, when volunteer opportunities are readily open.

- If a CMG volunteer has been released for more than three years, readmission is not an option. They may start the process over, i.e., go through the application/selection process, attend training, and return minimum volunteer hours. Reacceptance is not guaranteed.

- If a CMG volunteer was released at the discretion of the Extension Agent, readmission is generally not reasonable. When released at the discretion of the Agent, individuals may not apply for the CMG program in another county.

Affiliate Colorado Master Gardener

The title *Affiliate Colorado Master Gardener* identifies CMG Volunteers whose role has evolved from the traditional CMG activities (including 24 hours minimum volunteer work and 12 hours minimum continuing education) but CONTINUE to serve valuable roles in the program as community contact or collaborator. Examples of *Affiliate Colorado Master Gardeners* **include (but are not limited to)** the following:

- A CMG who speaks for the CMG program interests on an advisory board;
- A CMG in a green industry role who continues to support the program as a consultant, collaborator, or instructor for a specific project;
- A CMG whose primary role serves as program contact for another organization in collaboration with the CMG program.

The intent of this status is to keep these individuals in their supportive roles in the CMG loop. This status is not intended as recognition for past work or as a way for individuals to continue to receive program benefits without a program commitment.

Affiliate CMG status is assigned by the county agent. *Affiliate Colorado Master Gardeners* must have completed basic Colorado Master Gardener requirements (i.e., training and 50 hours minimum volunteer service).

Affiliate Colorado Master Gardeners continue to receive the same privileges as other CMG volunteers (i.e., newsletters and print material updates, training opportunities, outreach opportunities, etc.). They also continue to pay fees and complete the reappointment form each year.

Colorado Master Gardener Emeritus

The title *Colorado Master Gardener Emeritus* serves as a transition from full activity (i.e., 24 hours minimum volunteer service and 12 hours minimum continuing education) to continued limited activity.

It is intended to support individuals who:

- 1) Have made a substantial contribution to the CMG program;
- 2) Desire to continue in full activity; and
- 3) Now must now limit full participation due to circumstances beyond their control (such as personal health or family health care needs).

It is not intended for individuals who elect to pursue other interests or activities (such as job/career needs, raising a family, serving in other organizations, etc.). It is not intended for individuals who elect to be less active in the CMG program.

Criteria for Colorado Master Gardener Emeritus

This title is award by the Colorado State University Extension, State Master Gardener office, after nomination by the county agent.

1. The individual must have a desire to continue his/her affiliation with the program; however, due to limitations beyond their control (such as health issues or family care issues) he/she must now limit participation in the CMG program.
2. The individual must have completed a minimum of five years and 500 hours of CMG volunteer work.
3. The individual must have made a substantial contribution to the program, giving some long-term leadership and definition to the program.
4. The local agent submits a letter of recommendation (outlining the individual's contributions and situation) to the state CMG office for consideration.
5. The title will be awarded judiciously based on the CMG's contribution and individual situation.

Emeritus CMGs continue to receive full program benefits (such as newsletters and updated print materials, training opportunities, outreach opportunities, etc.). They continue to serve the program as limitations allow. Reporting of activities is encouraged but not required. Emeritus CMGs continue to pay fees and complete a reappointment form.

The local agent should periodically visit with the Emeritus CMG to inquire about his/her interest to continue in the CMG program.

Membership and Transfers

Cross County Enrollment

To be inclusive of varying needs of CMG volunteers and ensure that each volunteer is engaged in an active local CMG Program, the following clarifies cross-county enrollment procedures (new students and transferring volunteers) in the CMG Program.

Residents from CMG Program Counties applying to neighboring CMG Program Counties

Colorado Gardener Certificate Students – Residents may register in a neighboring county based on available space and payment of fees (same process as an in-county registration).

CMG Volunteers

- Being accountable to local taxpayers and county budget support, applicants should apply to their home county program. Most counties will give priority to local residents.

- It is recognized that some potential applicants may better connect to a neighboring county (due to work, social, and family settings) rather than their county of residency. Residents may apply/transfer as a volunteer to another county under a written memorandum of agreement. The agreement basically includes the following:
 - Statement clarifying the situation why the applicant prefers membership in a program outside their county of residence.
 - Statement clarifying that the volunteer work will be done in and behalf of the host county. The volunteer understands and accepts the travel commitment between the between counties. Travel time incurred for volunteer outreach (from the home to volunteer activities) counts towards volunteer hours.
 - Statement clarifying that volunteer engagement support will be provided through the host county (that the non-county resident volunteer will be active member of the host county CMG Program) including:
 - Communications between the CMG volunteer and the CMG Program
 - CMG outreach activities links
 - CMG continuing education links
 - Volunteer reporting links
 - Volunteer recognition
 - The volunteer is not at will to float between the CMG Program in their county of residence and the host county.
 - The memorandum of agreement is agreed upon and signed as part of the application process by the CMG applicant, the hosting county CMG Program agent and the county of residence agent. A copy should be sent to the state CMG office.
 - After the initial year, active membership continues with the host county program.

Residents of an Extension County without CMG Programs applying to neighboring CMG Program

Colorado Gardener Certificate Students – Residents may register in a neighboring county based on available space and payment of fees (same process as an in-county registration).

CMG Volunteers – Non-county residents may apply/transfer to a neighboring county under a written memorandum of agreement in one of two programming options, as follows:

- **Volunteering for the host county** – work will be done for and in behalf of the host county. The memorandum of agreement includes the following items:
 - Statement clarifying that the volunteer work will be done in and behalf of the host county. The volunteer understands and accepts the travel commitment between the between counties. Travel time

incurred for volunteer outreach (from the home to volunteer activities) counts towards volunteer hours.

- Statement clarifying that volunteer engagement support will be provided through the host county (that the non-county resident volunteer will be regular active member of the host county CMG Program) including:
 - Communications between the CMG volunteer and the CMG Program
 - CMG outreach activities links
 - CMG continuing education links
 - Volunteer reporting links
 - Volunteer recognition
- The memorandum of agreement is agreed upon and signed as part of the application process by the CMG applicant, the hosting county CMG Program agent and the county of residence agent. A copy should be sent to the state CMG office.
- After the initial year, active membership continues with the host county program.
- **Cross-county outreach project** – volunteer service may include special cross-county volunteer projects.

The memorandum of agreement includes the following items:

- Statement clarifying the nature of a cross-county CMG outreach project, including:
 - Nature and scope of the work in the home county
 - Communications links related to the special project between the volunteer and agents
 - Technical support links related to the special project between the volunteer and agents
- Statement clarifying that volunteer engagement support will be provided through the host county (that the non-county resident volunteer will be a regular active member of the host county CMG Program) including:
 - Communications between the volunteer and the CMG Program
 - Inclusion in host county CMG outreach activities options
 - CMG continuing education links
 - Volunteer reporting links
 - Volunteer recognition
- Statement clarifying any specific division of volunteer efforts and other program support concerns between counties, as appropriate
- The memorandum of agreement is agreed upon and signed as part of the application process by the CMG applicant, the hosting county CMG Program agent and the county of residence agent and county directors. A copy should be sent to the state CMG office.
- The memorandum of agreement remains in effect while the volunteer is active in the CMG program. It may be modified with

- agreement of all parties. The volunteer remains a fully active member of the host county CMG Program.
- It is responsibility of the volunteer and/or resident county agent to initiate cross-county special projects.

Residents from a Non-Extension County (counties where the County Commission elects not to fund the Extension Partnership)

- **Colorado Gardener Certificate students** – Residents may register in a neighboring county based on available space and payment of fees.
- **CMG Volunteers** – Residents may not apply to or transfer to a neighboring county as CMG volunteers. If a county terminates funding of the Extension partnership, current CMG volunteers will be “released” from volunteer service. All CMG program outreach and training ends within the county.

Transfer to Another County within Colorado

Colorado Master Gardeners may request a transfer to another county’s program. Consideration will be based on recommendations of previous county staff and need for additional volunteers in the local program. Transfers are not approved for CMG volunteers who have not fully honored their volunteer commitment.

In most situations, a transfer may be feasible only at the beginning of the calendar year when volunteer opportunities are readily open.

Transfers will be denied for volunteers who have failed to complete volunteer commitments (50 hours volunteer service the first year and 24 hours additional years, plus continuing education requirements).

The US Supreme Court has ruled that volunteering is a privilege, not a right. A transfer is not guaranteed.

If a transfer is approved, the CMG volunteer should participate in some type of local orientation with the agent/staff. Volunteers need to understand that county programs may be vastly different in outreach focus and operational procedures. Procedures will be different than in the previous county and the volunteer needs to shift his/her mind-set to the new county’s procedures.

When a County Commission elects to end funding for Extension programs in that county, all CMG volunteers will be “released” with the closure of the program and county office. They may not transfer to another county.

Transfer From Another State to Colorado

Individuals who completed Master Gardener training in another state may APPLY to the Colorado program as follows:

1. If they were active within the past three years, they may APPLY to become a CMG volunteer. Acceptance is based on:
 - Recommendations from agent in previous state;
 - Interest and availability for volunteer work;
 - Gardening background.

CMG volunteers should understand that they may request a transfer, but that there is nothing automatic or guaranteed in the process.

In most situations, a transfer may be only feasible near the beginning of the calendar year when volunteer opportunities are readily available.

Nationally, MG training is not coordinated between states. States do not automatically accept training offered in other states. Each state varies in the amount of training and subject matter covered.

In Colorado, important skills for CMG work include being familiar with local soils, insects and diseases. Our training content is very Colorado-based. Content even varies to some degree within different areas of the state in order to focus on local needs.

Based on the area of the nation the volunteer is moving from, the agent will require that the CMG volunteer participate in basic training sessions where content would be different in Colorado.

2. They apply as an Apprentice CMG, going through the application and acceptance process, basic training and volunteer service.

Meaningful Volunteer Opportunities

Serving the specific needs of the county, volunteer opportunities vary greatly from county to county. Contact the county for specific details.

Volunteer opportunities can be divided into two types of educational products.

Technology transfer – Our role is to empower Coloradans to make yard care and garden management decisions using research-based information. Our educational product is the exchange of knowledge. Most CMG outreach falls into this type of activity.

Garden therapy – The purposeful use of plants to develop individuals, strengthen families, and build communities. Our educational product is life skills.

Volunteers are motivated by a variety of factors. Some individuals will find more fulfillment sharing their knowledge with technology transfer type activities. Others prefer the people association in horticultural therapy activities, like mentoring a community garden or children's garden. Some will find leadership roles in the program most rewarding.

CMG Outreach

In 2015, 1,350 Colorado Master Gardeners donated 58,900 hours valued at \$1.32 million in volunteer service.

Primary outreach avenues

| | |
|-----|---|
| 25% | One-to-one contacts including telephones and emails |
| 25% | Community greening and gardening projects |
| 21% | Informational booths including garden centers, farmers' markets and fairs |
| 12% | Classes and group presentations |
| 5% | Youth gardening programs |
| 3% | Print and electronic media |
| 9% | Program administrative support |

Central to the vision of the Colorado Master Gardener Program is the expansion of meaningful CMG volunteer opportunities. Expectations of local programs to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities include:

- All county/area CMG programs are expected to accept participation in a wide variety of CMG volunteer avenues and to encourage entrepreneurial efforts of CMG volunteers. Actual CMG opportunities will vary from county to county, reflecting local needs, priorities and resources.
- Extension expects county/area programs to credit CMG volunteers for hours spent where volunteer assistance was requested. Acceptance of CMG participation in regional events (e.g., ProGreen, Colorado Garden and Home Show, writing for regional newspapers, working on state CMG activities) is expected of all county/area programs.
- In response to local priorities, local programs may require that a percentage of CMG time (i.e., a minimum number of hours) be served in high priority activities.

Examples of volunteer activities

- Diagnostic activities (at county Extension offices or out in the community)
- Media activities (newspaper articles, TV and radio and electronic media (Web site development and e-mail inquires))
- Teaching activities
 - Speakers' bureau
 - Assisting agents with horticultural workshops for Colorado Master Gardeners, green industry or the public
- Community greening and gardening programs
 - Collaboration with other agencies and partners in horticulture-related outreach programs (e.g., school gardens, Arbor Day celebrations, jail gardens, and 4-H gardens)
 - Mentoring role with community gardens
 - Mentoring role with community greening projects (e.g., demonstration gardens, earth gardens, garden tours, school gardens)
- Informational booths at fairs and farmers' markets

- Administrative activities
 - Office assistance to horticultural staff (mailings, filing)
 - Volunteer middle management
 - Extension advisory and steering committees
- Other examples
 - Horticultural therapy programs
 - Research plots
 - Special projects (as approved by agent)

What Counts for CMG Volunteer Activities?

CMG volunteer activities must meet the following criteria:

1. Activities must be educational in nature. What are the knowledge and skills developed by the client?
2. Activities must be supportive of CSU Extension issues.
3. Volunteers must be identified as *Colorado State University Extension, Colorado Master Gardeners*.
4. Activities must be done with advance approval of *designated* county staff. The County Agent makes the final decision on what is acceptable.

Education Versus Service

As mentioned above, CMG activities must be educational in nature. Volunteers are encouraged to participate in service activities (like maintaining a local park or church garden) but not as Colorado Master Gardeners.

Below are some examples of how an activity could be either educational or service-oriented.

Education

- Share information about plant species adapted to local growing conditions.
- Mentor a community garden group, working with them.
- Implement a demonstration garden that empowers the viewer to adapt concepts demonstrated.

Service

- Develop a landscape design.
- Call around to find which nurseries carry a certain plant or product for an individual.
- Maintain a garden for a group or organization.
- Maintain a garden to beautify an area.

As *Colorado Master Gardeners*, volunteers may not work as a free labor crew to plant and/or maintain city and county parks, plant trees for community groups, grow produce for community gardens, or otherwise maintain private or public properties. These activities are not educational in nature. However, Master

Gardeners are welcome to participate as private citizens in these activities around their communities.

CMG volunteers are encouraged to serve as mentors to other groups (like 4-H clubs and school or church youth groups) who are planting and/or maintaining parks, community gardens and other green spaces. Here the CMG serves in an educational role as he/she works with clients.

CMG assistance in demonstration gardens can be an effective educational tool. To be acceptable for CMG hours, the demonstration garden must truly empower the viewer to make knowledgeable decisions. This requires signage and print materials about the garden's educational objectives. For example, an attractive xeric garden in and of itself does not give viewers the knowledge to adapt xeric principles in their home gardens. Signs need to identify xeric plants the viewer may want to purchase and print materials should give additional information about techniques for reducing water usage.

Interested CMG volunteers are encouraged to become actively involved in University research efforts, working with state and county staff. In these projects, it is expected that research staff work **WITH** Master Gardeners, to create a two-way flow of information and a learning environment for all.

Experience has indicated that only the more experienced Master Gardeners with seasoned diagnostic skills find success in home visits. On-site visits are not suitable for apprentices or less experienced CMGs. Since on-site visits are extremely time consuming, this may not be a prudent use of limited Master Gardener time in many counties. Careful consideration of overall program needs should be made before counties offer on-site garden calls as a local service. For most counties, on-site home visits are not a viable option.

Volunteer Commitment

The term "volunteer" is used to help the public understand that Colorado Master Gardener Volunteers are donating their time to assist them and are not paid staff of CSU Extension or the county. This is important in setting the public's level of expectations. Coloradans are very appreciative of CMG efforts donated to assist them. This is important because a few can become rather demanding of *paid staff*.

However, being a "volunteer" NEVER implies a lack of responsibility in fulfilling commitments. When a CMG volunteer fails to honor a commitment by not showing up, it may create serious problems for the program. In the county orientation session (near the end of the training course) volunteers will hear more about the local sign-up procedures for various projects.

A CMG volunteer who makes a habit of not showing up will be released from the program.

What to Expect

- Make a difference in the lives of individuals and build a stronger community. (As you see the successes, please let the staff know.)

- Have fun.
- Share your passion for gardening with clients and friends.
- Volunteer opportunities:
- Opportunities for continual learning through continuing education classes and print and Web-based materials.
- The program will challenge you, expanding your knowledge and abilities.
- There is an agent with responsibility and accountability for the program in your county/area. His/her accomplishment is measured by your success.

Service Limitations

Conflict of Interest

Any situation that has the potential to infer that Colorado State University promotes or endorses a private business or product could be a conflict of interest. In some situations, it may be in the best interest of both parties to formally establish a cooperative business agreement. This is done by University officials, closely following federal regulations.

Most conflict-of-interest problems arise from *implied endorsement*, i.e., implying that the service is provided by or in collaboration with Colorado State University, or implying that Colorado State University is recommending a business or product.

CMG volunteers with green industry connections must exercise caution to avoid any potential conflict-of-interest situations.

- CMG volunteers may be identified as *Colorado Master Gardeners* (or otherwise affiliated with Colorado State University) ONLY while serving in authorized CMG activities.
- Volunteers with green industry connections may NOT use CMG activities as a source of business contacts.
- CMG volunteers may not wear CMG name badges or CMG clothing items while working as employees or owners of a nursery, garden center or other business.
- The title “Colorado Master Gardener” (or other indicators suggesting affiliation with Colorado State University) may NOT be used on any marketing materials for private business.
- It is acceptable to list CMG training and volunteer experience on a resume or job application going to a few selected individuals, but not on marketing materials going to the general public.

“Master Gardener” – The term “master gardener” (without any reference to the Colorado State University Extension System at the state or county level) is considered generic, and is used by many organizations and businesses. It may be used in situations not affiliated with the Colorado State University Extension System. However, use of this term is discouraged.

Colorado Gardener Certificate

The *Colorado Gardener Certificate* implies participation in training only. Since it does not imply that the holder is representing the Colorado State University Extension System as a volunteer, it **MAY** be used for marketing purposes.

For example, the holder may state in marketing materials that they have completed the Colorado State University Extension *Colorado Gardener Certificate* training. They may post the certificate in a place of business.

CMG volunteers (who have completed basic training and their first 50 hours of volunteer service) may also use the title *Colorado Gardener Certificate* to establish a credential in a non-CMG situation. If they desire the certificate for personal or business purposes, they should notify their local agent.

Copyright Law

CMG volunteers must not violate copyright laws in performance of volunteer service.

CSU Extension gives permission to CMG volunteers to make copies of our fact sheets and *CMG GardenNotes* as part of their CMG work. (However, they are generally available free from the website.) Copies must be of acceptable quality, of the current version, and made without changes. Permission to copy Colorado State University materials does not extend to publications available for sale or other print materials.

Copyright law prohibits making multiple copies of any material for group distribution without permission of the copyright holder.

For additional information on copyright, refer to *CMG GardenNotes* #018, Using Copyrighted Materials: Are You Legal?

Equal Opportunity

CSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. Colorado State University has zero tolerance for discrimination based on:

- race
- age
- color
- religion
- national origin or ancestry
- Sex
- gender
- disability
- veteran status
- genetic information
- sexual orientation
- gender identity or expression

Liability

While working in an official CMG capacity (as volunteer, non-paid University staff) CMG volunteers are covered by University liability insurance for mis-information, provided they are using research/knowledge-based information and applying good judgment. (This means that the University may assist with a

defense if it is in the best interests of the University.) CMG volunteers will not be covered if they go out on a limb with personal information or information from special interest groups.

A CMG volunteer would not be covered for information shared outside of official (approved) CMG activities.

As non-paid staff, CMG volunteers are NOT covered by worker's compensation or other medical insurance.

CMG Audience

Services of CMG volunteers are limited to non-commercial home gardeners. They may also assist the agent in hosting educational events for the green industry and the public. As CMGs, volunteers may not directly consult with growers and other green industry professionals about commercial crop production or commercial landscape maintenance.

Legal and Medical Advice

While working as volunteers, Colorado Master Gardeners are not authorized to give legal or medical advice. Violation of this protocol by CMG volunteers is grounds for automatic dismissal from the CMG Program.

- **Hazard Trees** – CMG volunteers do NOT address hazard tree issues (concerns about the potential for a tree to fall on a house or other structure resulting in injury or property damage.) Rather, they should refer the client to a certified arborist. [legal issue]
- **Poisonous Plants and Mushrooms** – CMG volunteers do NOT address poisonous plant or mushroom questions. [medical issue]
- **Medical Issues including Human Health Entomology and Medical Marijuana** – CMG volunteers do NOT advise on medically related issues, including the influence of insects on human health and the medicinal use of herbs. [medical issue]

CSU Extension Protocol for Medical Marijuana

The General Counsel's staff at Colorado State University has informed CSU Extension of the following in regards to Medical Marijuana. These restrictions apply to all Colorado State University Extension staff members and volunteers, including Colorado Master Gardener volunteers.

1. While the use of Medical Marijuana is legal in the state of Colorado, Marijuana remains a Schedule 1 illegal drug under federal law and as such, Colorado State University Extension cannot be involved with this item.
 - a. Assistance with Medical Marijuana plant health questions will not be provided.

- b. Individuals requesting such information will not be provided referral information.
 - c. CMG volunteers will not address the issue with the media.
- 2. Our offices are considered drug-free workplaces, as CSU is a federal contractor.
 - a. Marijuana plants and/or plant parts are not permitted in CSU Extension offices.
 - b. Marijuana plants or plant parts delivered to or left at CSU Extension offices will be turned over to legal authorities for destruction.
- 3. If CSU Extension employees or volunteers (including Colorado Master Gardeners) assist medical marijuana growers, they will be acting outside the scope of their employee/volunteer role and assume personal liability for any legal action that may be taken against them.
- **Pesticides** – The role of Extension in pest management is to help clients understand non-chemical and chemical options, not to spread personal values or opinions about the use of pesticides. [legal issue]

Note: The term *pesticide* is an umbrella term that includes any chemical product (organic or manufactured) to manage pests. Examples of pesticides include the following:

- *Insecticides*, used for insect management;
- *Fungicides* and *bactericides*, used for disease management;
- *Herbicides*, used for weed management;
- *Rodenticides*, used for management of rodents;
- *Miticides*, used for management of mites;
- *Molluscicides*, used for management of slugs and snails.

When it comes to pesticides, the role of CMG volunteers is limited to directing clients to appropriate pesticides, using Extension Fact Sheets and other Extension print materials. It is a good practice to supply a print copy of the fact sheets when possible. Use of other reference materials is not acceptable.

When it comes to pesticides, the role of CMG volunteers does NOT include any discussion about merits or limitations of any organic or manufactured pesticides. As a CMG, volunteers are not authorized to discuss pesticide health and environmental safety issues.

- For additional information about pest management options beyond the scope of the fact sheets, refer the client to the county agent.
- For information about pesticide toxicity, refer the client directly to the **National Pesticide Information Network**. This program is sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in cooperation with Oregon State University.

Phone: 1-800-858-7378

Fax: 1-541-737-0761
E-mail: npic@ace.orst.edu
Web: <http://npic.orst.edu>
Hours: 7 days a week, excluding holidays
6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Pacific time

CMG volunteers do not advise on the misuse of pesticides. Rather, refer the client to the Colorado Department of Agriculture. [legal issue]

Partnership with Colorado's Green Industry

Colorado's Green Industry

The Green Industry is that segment of agriculture dealing with the landscape environment rather than commercial food and feed production. An easy way to describe the green industries of Colorado is to look at the associations affiliated with GreenCo; this organization is the collective parent association of the Green Industries of Colorado.

GreenCo Associations

- American Society of **Landscape Architects** Colorado, ASLA
- Associated **Landscape Contractors** of Colorado, ALCC
- Colorado Association of **Lawn Care Professionals** CALCP
- Colorado **Nursery and Greenhouse** Association, CNGA
- **Garden Centers** of Colorado, GCC
- International Society of **Arboriculture**, Rocky Mountain. Chapter, ISA-RMC (tree care professionals)
- Rocky Mountain **Golf Course** Superintendents Association
- Rocky Mountain **Sod Growers** Association, RMSG

The Green Industry directly reaches all Coloradoans, as it influences the quality of life related to home landscapes, commercial and business landscapes, parks and golf courses. In 1993, the Green Industries of Colorado provided 25,600 part- and full-time jobs.

Colorado Master Gardener Program Partnership with Green Industries of Colorado

The Colorado Master Gardener Program is a significant educational resource fostering successful gardening. Our niche includes 1) knowledge-based information, 2) non-commercial advocacy, and 3) home garden audiences.

CMG services are for the non-professional gardener only. In a supportive role (such as room hosts and registration check-in), CMG volunteers may assist Extension agents at educational events for the green industry, like ProGreen Expo.

However, it is totally unacceptable for CMG volunteers to advise green industry personnel. No matter who is right or more current on the research-based

information, when professionals feel that they are being corrected by a volunteer, it creates public relations problems for the CMG Program. Simply put, CMG volunteers do not consult with green industry personnel!

Working as a Team

Colorado Master Gardener activities may not duplicate paid services provided by the Green Industry. For example, CMGs do not make landscape design plans for clients. It is often the CMG role to refer clients to appropriate green industry professionals, such as landscape designers, certified arborists, private pesticide applicators or irrigation professionals.

Some differences of opinion do exist between Extension recommendations and Green Industry practices.

- Where differences of opinion occur, we need to help the client understand the various perspectives in a positive manner.
- Extension recommendations often deal with what is ideal for plant health. However, in the real world what is ideal may not be economically practical in many situations. For example, from the perspective of plant health and growth, we routinely recommend 4-5% organic content in the soil. In many situations, this may not be practical, economically feasible, or even possible.
- Colorado State University staff, CMG volunteers, and Green Industry staff occasionally mis-diagnose problems due to inadequate information about the situation. It is a challenge to all of us to work together as a team to provide the best information possible.
- Each of us sometimes forgets that general recommendations do not always fit site-specific needs. Again, we must strive to work as a team to provide the best information possible.

For our mutual success, Colorado State University staff, Colorado Master Gardeners, and Green Industry workers must support each other in a team effort. Comments that belittle or discredit the Green Industry are unacceptable.

Fielding Questions: Tools for Success

As a Colorado Master Gardener Volunteer, you will have the opportunity and the enjoyment of answering a stream of gardening questions. Responding to phone calls and emails is the flagship service of the program. As you field questions, you will be providing a great service to the residents in your area and to Colorado State University Extension staff. The following hints will help you be prepared to field questions and enjoy the activity.

Colorado State University Extension

Remember you are representing Colorado State University.

1. Identify yourself as a *Colorado State University Extension Master Gardener volunteer*.
2. Our role is to empower Coloradans to make decisions grounded in research-based information.
3. Clients expect research-based information, not your values or opinions on the topic.
4. Treat the client in the manner you would like to be treated, (i.e., professional, friendly, and to the point).
5. Our role is education and facilitation, not regulation.
6. Our best role is to help facilitate informed choices.

About Questions

1. **There are no dumb questions.** Treat each question seriously. Sometimes you will think people are joking when they ask some questions, but most of the time they are very serious and looking for help.
2. **Questions are not *context free*.** There is always a situation behind the question providing site-specific details about the problem. Ask for specifics about the situation.
3. The first questions asked may not reflect the real concern.
4. While we sometimes cannot answer the first question, we can often help the person address the real problem.
5. Our role is to empower people to make choices founded on research-based information, not to make the decision for them.
6. **Many questions do not have an answer.**
 - a. Sometimes we do not have enough information about the situation to diagnose the problem and need to see a plant sample.
 - 1) Instruct the customer about what symptoms to look for.
 - 2) Instruct the customer about how to collect a good sample and where to take it.
 - b. Many topics do not have a research base for information.
 - c. Often the question relates to personal values or expectations, not knowledge.

About People

1. Around 1/3 of the clients call to verify their own understanding or diagnosis.
2. Some just call wanting you to agree with them. **Stand firm on research-based recommendations.**
3. People often make decisions based on emotions and then want to justify the decisions with facts.
4. Some callers really do not want information. They just want to vent or to have someone listen to them.
5. Some callers demand services beyond the scope of the program.
 - a. Review with them what the program offers.
 - b. Point them to other agencies and businesses that may provide the services requested. However, do not send them on a wild-goose chase.

Information Sources

1. **Don't guess at answers.** Incorrect information is the most common complaint about CMG services.
2. **You are expected to look up information** in Extension materials and other reliable sources.
 - a. Read directly from the information: "Let me read what this says..." (It speeds up the process and increases your credibility.)
 - b. Cite references used. It will increase your credibility.
3. Become familiar with CMG GardenNotes, Extension fact sheets and other key reference materials.
4. Information sources must be research based in nature. CMGs must avoid using references from special interest groups or popular press (e.g., newspaper articles).
4. Your **personal experiences** are great IF they fit in with approved techniques and cause no safety problems. Always identify it as "from my personal experience". Avoid saying, "I do it this way even though the books don't recommend it." This discredits both you and the University.

Diagnosing Problems

1. **Ask questions to help you visualize the situation or problem.** For example:
 - a. "I'm trying to picture your situation in my mind. Would you explain that again." OR "Let me see if I understand what you're saying... (repeat in your own words what you've been told)"
 - 1) You will likely receive more details the second time through to clarify your understanding.
 - 2) It gives your mind time to process the information.
2. As you diagnose a problem, be flexible about receiving additional information. As the details unfold, you may find you are going down the wrong road and need to change your diagnosis.
 - ***"With that piece of information, the situation just changed. Let's back-up and look at this again..."***
3. **We often have inadequate information to confirm a diagnosis.** The best we can do is to suggest some possibilities. ***"Based on the information you provided, the problem could be..."***
4. **Be firm** in your stand on approved recommendations for a problem. Some people just call to get you to say what they want to hear.
5. **Work as a team.** Multiple minds, coming from different directions, are the best way to diagnose complex problems.

Taking Calls

1. Follow-up in a professional manner. If you cannot find the information needed by the appointed time, contact the client anyway to let them know that you are working on it and have not forgotten them. Lack of follow-up is the second most common complaint about Master Gardener services.
2. **Your confidence will grow with experience.** This training helps prepare you, but remember you already have a rich gardening background. Every day will bring something new, an opportunity for you to continually learn.
3. **Smile** when you talk. You will sound friendlier and more pleasant. You can hear a smile over the phone.
4. Fielding questions successfully requires active listening and active questioning.
5. Don't be afraid to say, "**I don't have that information** right now. May I have your name and number so I can get back to you?..."
6. **Ask for help**, when needed.
7. Avoid saying, "You can't do that..." or "You have to..." Your job is to give recommended procedures and probable results or outcomes.
8. Avoid "shaming" statements that put people down or place blame.
9. Don't get frustrated when you cannot answer every question or give the information the client wants.

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- Colorado Master Gardener *GardenNotes* are available online at www.cmg.colostate.edu.
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