The Colorado Master Gardener Program
Reference / Reading Materials

CMG GardenNotes on the Colorado Master Gardener Program

#010 References and Review Questions: The CMG Program
#011 Learning
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#014 The Colorado Master Gardener Program
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#018 Using Copyrighted Materials: Are You Legal?

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Class Objectives

At the end of this class, students will:

1. Describe techniques to enhance his/her learning.
2. Describe how mind filters influence communications.
3. Self-evaluate factors that enhance and impede his/her communications.
4. Describe the Cooperative Extension System.
5. Describe the CMG Program and the role of volunteers.

Homework

1. To become familiar with the resources, spend a few minutes surfing the CMG website at www.cmg.colostate.edu.
2. From the CMG website, enter VMS and set-up your profile.
3. Reading
   b. *CMG GardenNotes* #011, Learning #012, CMG Code of Conduct #014, The CMG Program #015, Communications #017, Listening Habits Evaluation #018, Using Copyrighted Materials…
4. Review Questions: *CMG GardenNotes* #010
5. Homework: *CMG GardenNotes* #019

Review Questions

**Learning**

1. In a long class period, like CMG/CGC training, it is easy to miss concepts that expand and update the student’s knowledge. What techniques can students use to maximize their learning potential?

2. In the learning process, when you question or reject a concept, how should it be reprocessed?

3. To gain the most out of the CMG/CGC training, take a few moments to self-reflect on your mind filters that may play into your learning potential. What mind filters will help you learn? What mind filters may impede your learning?

**CSU Extension**

4. Describe the Extension system. Who are the partners?

**Colorado Master Gardener Program**

5. When may the title “Colorado Master Gardener” be used?

6. What is required to become a CMG volunteer? After the first year, what is required to continue in the program?

7. In counting hours, what counts for volunteer hours versus continuing education hours?

8. List criteria for CMG activities.

9. What are “conflict of interest” and “implied endorsement”? As CMG volunteers employed in the green industry, can you advertise that you are a “Colorado Master Gardener”? That you have completed the Colorado Gardener Certificate Training?

10. Under the “fair use” doctrine of copyright law, what are the restrictions on making a single copy for a client? For making multiple copies for classroom distribution?
11. While working in official CMG activities, CMG volunteers are covered by University liability; but under what conditions?

12. CMG volunteers are not authorized to give legal or medical advice. Give examples of common questions that could fall under legal or medical advice. Where should clients be referred?

Communications

13. Take a few quiet moments for some self-reflection on your “mind filter”. What mind filters are powerful in your communications? What mind filters sometimes impede your communications?

Tools for Success

14. If you were calling CSU Extension for advice on a gardening problem, how would you like to be treated? (A rather simple question, yes; but we do not want to be that “governmental agency” which forgot customer service.) Give it some serious thought.

15. A client wants you to tell her what to do for a garden problem. What is your role in the decision making process?

16. Why do some questions have no answers?

17. What are the two most common complaints about CMG services?

18. Why do we recommend that you read directly from reference materials? Why do we recommend that you cite references?

19. What types of reference materials are not acceptable?

20. May you use your own practical experience? What if it is different from recommendations?

21. What is a CMG role related to pesticide information?

22. What sources are acceptable for pesticide information?

23. Where do you refer clients that need in-depth information about pesticide safety issues?

24. How does visualizing a client’s situation help you diagnose a problem?

25. How does repeating back, in your own words, what the client said help you diagnose a problem?

26. As you are talking with the client, you often have a new piece of information come up that does not fit the diagnoses you were thinking about. How can you look smart (and save face) and move on with a new direction of thinking?

27. Why should a diagnosis be framed such as “based on the information you provided, the problems could be…”?
Learning is a complex process. It happens **within** us, not **to** us. It involves our minds, emotions, values, interests, and behavior.

**Mind Filters Regulate Learning**

Like communications, all forms of input into our minds are processed through the mind filters of past experiences, understandings and personal values. Input may be: 1) accepted as familiar to what we already know, value and trust; 2) questioned; or 3) rejected.
Accepted

The input will be accepted when it is in harmony with our mind filter of knowledge, understanding and values.

Knowledge is added word phrase by word phrase and sentence by sentence, rather than by paragraphs and chapters. It must connect to prior knowledge and understanding, thus learning is easier when one has a prior knowledge of the subject matter.

**Familiar** – The input may be readily accepted because we already know and accept the input as fact (or fiction). The input may reinforce our knowledge, understanding and values.

**Expand** – We add the input to our mind filters as new knowledge and understanding only when it is in harmony with our current knowledge, understanding and values. In this situation, active learning takes place as we expand our knowledge and understanding of the topic.

**Update** – Here we may accept the input because it logically fits with our mind filters as we replace and update previous knowledge, understanding and values. In this situation, active learning takes place.

Since updating is changing our vision of the world and life, it is difficult for most people. People often refuse to learn because we are subconsciously unwilling to allow changes to our mind filters. Some students only want the input to validate their prior knowledge, thus blocking the learning process that updates their knowledge and understanding. When the mind filters of values and emotions are involved, updating is difficult for most people.

**Maximizing your learning potential** – Most students sit in class and passively process that they already know this point and that point. When a point is different from their current understanding, most students automatically disregard the input. With the normal approach, little learning actually takes place. People become bored when the bulk of the content is familiar and quickly feel overwhelmed when the content is unfamiliar to their current knowledge base.

To maximize learning, take an active approach in the classroom. Actively look for that word phrase and sentence that expands or updates your knowledge and understanding. Make notes on what is new and different.

With the active approach, learning skyrockets! Students become energized by input that expands and updates their knowledge and understanding. In classes where much of the content is already familiar, those update tidbits make the class still rewarding.

**Questioned**

We naturally question any input that is not in harmony with our mind filters of knowledge, understanding and values.

**New** – It is natural to question any input that is new to our mind filters.

**Interesting** – Our interest may increase as we begin to question the input as fact (or fiction) based on our mind filters.
Possible – With repeated input, the questionability of the input will become more focused as possibly factual.

Probable – With additional input, our mind filters will render the input as probably factual (or fictional). It may eventually be accepted as factual (or fictional).

Working in the questionable realm may be part of the learning process as we move from interesting to possible to probable to accepted. This is the science of marketing. In the marketing process we may eventually come to accept the input simply because it is familiar rather than because we actively legitimized the information as factual or fictional.

**Maximizing the learning** – When the mind filters question a concept, make a note and reprocess the input looking at why it was questioned. Understanding why your mind filters questioned it will enhance your learning potential. Common reasons for the mind filters to question a concept include the following:

- **New and different** – The mind naturally questions input that is new or different from current knowledge, understanding and values.

- **Different perspective** – A lot of questioning arises due to differing perspectives. Differing perspectives may be on target, but from differing frames of view.

  For most people, it is hard to understand another’s perspective unless the background is explained. For example, an instructor who works primarily with commercial growers may have different perspectives on growing techniques than instructors more focused on home gardening. An instructor with a soils background may have different perspectives on fertilizing flowers than an instructor with a background in flowers. Gardeners specializing in annual flowers may see general flower growing concepts differently than gardeners specializing in flowering perennials. Each could be factual from their respective points of reference.

  Oftentimes the confusion arises from changing needs in the life cycle of a plant. For example, newly planted trees are intolerant of water stress. Established trees in good health are tolerant of short-term drought. Older trees in decline are intolerant of drought. General statements about watering trees during a drought need to be prefaced with information about the life-cycle stage of the trees.

- **Gardening experience** -- Your own gardening experience will be different from that of other gardeners. Do not assume that other gardens have the same soils, pests, microclimates, irrigation needs, favorite plants, or landscaping styles. One of the difficult things in working as a CMG volunteer is understanding that the clients’ gardening needs, problems, and questions are different from your own.

- **Bridging between general concepts and site-specific needs** – Making the jump from general garden concepts to how they may or may not apply to site-specific situations can be difficult.

  For example, a general concept in soil management and water wise gardening is to improve the soil to 4-5% organic matter (general concept). This enhances plant growth and makes maintenance easy. However, soil improvement may not be possible in many sites due to cost, the physical labor involved, rocky soil, etc. (site-specific need). When soil improvement is not possible, we must adapt our
general gardening techniques to compensate for the unimproved soil. Some native plants may prefer a soil that is not improved (site-specific need).

Aphids on shade trees do not generally warrant management efforts for the health of the tree (general concept). However, trees that are water stressed (due to drought, new plantings, or restricted root spread) are rather intolerant of aphids (site-specific need).

Remember that no gardening concepts are universally adaptable to all sites. We have to match the approach with the objectives of the garden and site limitations.

- **Values and emotions** – If the topic tugs on values and emotions, learning may be difficult. People have many values and emotions about gardening that come from the plants we love and dislike and our values towards garden inputs such as pesticides, irrigation, and landscape styles. When emotions are highly charged about a topic, it is normal to block any input that has a different point of view. It takes active work to unblock the input that would update or expand our knowledge and understanding.

**Rejected**

People naturally reject input that our mind filters evaluate as contradictory to our accepted knowledge, understanding, and values.

- **Disregard** – In most situations, we simply disregard the input. In fact, we may disregard the input so automatically that we do not even process it.

- **Expel** – When the input is in strong opposition to our mind filters of values and emotions, we typically expel the input. We may respond in a variety of manners including getting an upset stomach or headache, feeling nervous or anxious, becoming quiet or vocal, feeling angry, or even becoming violent.

**Maximizing the learning** – When the mind filters reject a concept, make a note and reprocess the concept looking for why it was rejected. Understanding why your mind filters rejected it will enhance your learning potential.

Common reasons for the mind filters to reject a concept include that it was new and different, that it was a different perspective or experience from your own, and the strong filters of values and emotion.

**As the “Learner”**

Education is about change as we expand and update our mind filters of knowledge, understanding, and values.

When involved in a learning experience, pay attention to your mind filters that may enhance or detract from your learning potential. Being aware, up front, of the impact of mind filters allows us to focus energy where needed to enhance the learning process. For example:

- If you have high interest in a topic, learning may be easy.
If you have low interest in a topic, it will require more energy on your part to enhance the learning process.

If you feel well versed on a topic, your knowledge base may interfere with your learning potential. Your mind filters may be closed to input that expands and updates your knowledge and understanding. You may automatically disregard “new” and “relearned” input without even processing the data.

If you have values or emotions attached to a topic, your mind filters will be very powerful. This could enhance your learning if the input is in harmony with your mind filters. However, it may block learning as mind filters cause you to automatically disregard or expel any contrary input without evaluation.

In the Classroom Setting

To maximize the learning potential in a classroom setting, education experts teach students to take time to review the class content within 24 hours of the class period. This enhances the movement of expanded and updated input into long-term memory.

In the review process, give special attention to concepts that expand and update knowledge and understanding. Particularly in long class periods (like CMG training), so much material is covered so fast that students readily fail to make these new connections without actively reprocessing the input as new and different. Study questions with CMG units are designed to help with review of learning objectives.

As the “Teacher”

When CMG volunteers are in the teaching role, remember that your mind filters are trying to communicate with the client’s mind filters. Communication and learning are two-way processes. Most of the time our clients are thrilled with whatever help we can provide.

However, in limited situations we cannot educate when the client is not open to learning. Sometimes they just call to verify their current knowledge and understanding and will “auto reject” any new or different information. Sometimes they have an auto-rejection mode turned on due to values, emotions and interests related to pests, pesticides, organic gardening, and xeriscaping. Sometime they are unwilling to accept any responsibility for the problem they called about, blocking learning. As a CMG volunteer, do not take it personally when clients are not open to learning.

Characteristics of the Adult Learner

The framework for CMG volunteer work is education of the gardening public. Sometimes the CMG service is in organized outreach activities. Other times the CMG volunteer may be structuring the learning situation. People have their own motivations for coming to us for information. It is important to respect their reasons.
Motivations for Learning

**Application oriented** – They need to take action, solve a problem, or accomplish something.

**Knowledge oriented** – They want to satisfy their curiosity and learn for the sake of acquiring new knowledge and understanding. They want to use their intellectual abilities and sometimes like to be challenged. Unlike children, they come from a base of experience.

**Socially oriented** – They will attend a class or make a contact for social interaction and enjoyment.

Principles of the Adult Learning Environment

**Experience** – Adult learners have large and growing storehouses of experiences that represent rich resources for their own learning and that of others. Many want to share that knowledge and experience.

**Continuing process** – Adults see learning as a continuing process of gaining knowledge and skills that can be applied right away.

**Relationship** – The information must be related to the adult learners’ needs or interests.

**Logical** – The information must make sense to the adult learner.

**Independent** – Adult learners are independent, taking initiative without having to be told what and how to do it. They engage in learning activities because they want to—often with a clear idea of what they want to learn and how they want to learn. They seek step-by-step solutions.

**Self-diagnosis** – Adults learners like to see a model of competence—what good looks like—against which learners can compare themselves and figure out what they need to learn.

**Shared evaluation** – Instead of teachers deciding whether participants have learned, adult learners prefer to assess their own learning.
The online *Volunteer Management System, VMS*, is user friendly, intuitive, and has many helpful features. It was developed specifically for Master Gardener programs by the University of California Cooperative Extension and is used in Colorado under a license agreement with the University of California.

**VMS Login**

1. Go to the CMG website at [www.cmg.colostate.edu](http://www.cmg.colostate.edu). On the left hand navigation bar, click on the link to the VMS. The direct URL to VMS is [https://colorado.volunteersystem.org/](https://colorado.volunteersystem.org/).

2. Enter your email address (the email address that you have provided to your Extension office) and password. Click on **Login**. (Note: for your initial password, contact your county Extension office.)
3. Depending on your county, you may either go directly into the County Home Page or see a screen called Select Program. If Select Program comes up, click on your [county] link from the list.

Note on email addresses: Many volunteers have multiple emails. To login, use the one that you have provided to Extension. If in question, contact the CMG staff in your County Extension Office. For instructions on how to change your email address, refer to Change Your Email Address on page 3.

If you have problems with the login, contact the CMG Staff in your County Extension Office.

Change Your Password

1. Log in to VMS.
2. In the left-side Your Information pod, click on the Edit Your Profile link. This will open your profile page.
3. On the Edit Member Profile page, scroll down to the Change Password box. Enter the new password. It must have at least seven characters in length with no spaces and may contain numbers or special characters.
4. To save the change, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on the Save Information button.

Forgotten Password

A new password can be issued through two methods.

- Call the Extension Office – Call the CMG Staff in your County Extension Office. They CANNOT look up your password, but they can reset it.

- Temporary Password Sent to Your Email Address

1. Go to https://colorado.volunteersystem.org/.
2. Click on Password Problems? Click here for Help at the bottom of the page. This opens the Forgot Password page.
3. Enter your email address (the email address that your Extension office has in the system for you).
4. Click on the Receive email to access portal button. An email will be sent to the email address with an access link.
5. Go to your email account to open the email. It will be from Mary.Small@colostate.edu with the subject of ANR Master Gardener Login – Access Information. The message gives you a temporary password and a direct link into the system.
6. Click on the Access Colorado Master Gardener Volunteer Management System link. This will take you directly into the system. Note this direct link only works once. YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR PASSWORD TO GET BACK INTO THE SYSTEM AGAIN.
7. To change your password, refer to instructions To Change Password above.
Change Your Email Address

1. Log in to VMS.
2. In the left-side Your Information pod, click on the Edit Your Profile link. This will open your profile page.
3. On the Edit Member Profile page, scroll down to the E-Mail Address box. Enter the new email address.
4. To save the change, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on the Save Information button.

VMS Home Page

In VMS, the Home Page has a three-column format. The left column is a series of navigation pods used within VMS. The center column is county and state news. This is updated frequently. The right column has the Your Hours/Miles pod, which summarizes your hours to date, and the Your Calendar pod listing the events that you are signed up for. To review an event on the list, click the link for that event.

The State Links pod lists useful links related to CMG activities. It changes with the seasons. The most useful link here takes you to the Online Yard and Garden Publications Index on the CMG website. This is the master index to CMG GardenNotes, Extension Fact Sheets, and PlantTalk Colorado Scripts.

VMS Setup for the Volunteer

To make VMS functional, you need to do a couple of things:

1. Update your Profile and Interests.
2. Select Projects of primary interest. These can be changed by you at any time. Selecting Projects puts you on the email list for that project information. It does not sign you up for any specific events (date and times).

Update Your Profile and Select Interests

1. Click on the Edit Your Profile link in the left-side Your Information pod. This opens the Edit Member Profile page.
2. As you work down the Edit Member Profile page, update and add information, as needed.
   - Private – CSU Extension respects the privacy of your contact information. If you prefer that your address and phone numbers are not visible to other CMGs using the Roster, click the Hide this information from other Master Gardener box.
   - Upload Photo – We request that you upload a head-shot photo of yourself so that others can connect names with faces. Click on the Browse button to open your computer files to select the picture.
• **Edit Interests** – In this section, place a check in the topics where you have expertise that you would like to share in CMG outreach efforts. The list includes gardening topics and volunteering skills. Program coordinators and other volunteers will use the list to connect volunteers. You can change this list at any time by removing checks from topics.

• **Other Interests** – You may add other interests here that are not in listed above.

3. To save your information, click the **Save Information** button.

**Projects**

VMS works with two levels of activities, **Projects** and **Calendar Events**. Projects are the basis for system operations and hours are reported for volunteer activities related to projects. Projects are groups of similar outreach activities. Examples of projects include answering phones at the Extension office, staffing an informational booth at a garden center and working in a school youth garden.

The next level is **Calendar Events**. Events, located on Calendars, are tied to specific days and times. For example, answering phones at the Extension office on July 6th from 9 to 12 noon is an event on the Office Phones Calendar. When volunteers sign up for an event, they are committed to serve at a specific day and time.

**Sign-Up for Projects**

As part of the VMS setup, each volunteer needs to sign up for **Projects** of their interest. Signing up for a project puts volunteers on the email list for information about that project and notifies the project coordinators about their interests. It does not commit them to any specific event (day and time).

**To Volunteer for Projects**

1. In the **General Information** pod (lower left-hand corner), click on the **Project** link. This will open the **List of Projects** page showing the list of projects offered by the county/area program.
2. Click on the title to open the specific project page of interest.
3. Scan down the page to the **Volunteer For Project** section. Click on the **Volunteer for Project** button.

Note: Once you have selected at least one project, the **List of Projects** page changes to a list of your **Active Projects** and a list of **Projects You Can Volunteer For**.

**To Unvolunteer for a Project**

1. In the **General Information** pod (lower left-hand corner), click on the **Project** link. This will open the **List of Projects** page showing the list of projects offered by the county/area program.
2. Click on the title of the project that you want to remove your name from.
3. Scan down the page to the **Volunteer For Project** section. Click on the **Unvolunteer** button.
Event Calendars
Sign-Up/Unsign-Up for Volunteer Outreach and Continuing Education Activities

In VMS, Events refers to specific volunteer outreach activities and continuing education classes on a set day and time. Events are located on calendars related to the type of event or project or on the General Calendar.

Volunteer (Sign Up) for an Event

1. Click on the appropriate calendar for the event. The calendar for that project/type of event opens.

2. Events can be viewed in a Monthly View (calendar) style or in a List View style. Find the event in the Monthly View or List View style.
   - In the Monthly View (calendar style), move to the month of the event you want to see.
   - In the List View style, events are listed in order by date. To limit the list to a specific time frame, enter Start Date and End Date in the boxes and click on the Submit button to refresh the list to the time period entered.

3. Click on the event that you desire to look at. This opens the County Event page with details about the event.

4. To volunteer (sign up) for the event, scroll down the page to the Volunteer for Event section.
   - **IF space is available for this event**, the Volunteer line says You are not signed up for this event.
     - To volunteer/sign up, click on the Volunteer for Event button. The line will change to You are currently signed up for this event!
   - **IF space is NOT available for this event because the volunteer slots are all filled**, the Volunteer line is blank. There is no Volunteer for Event button.
• **Block Events** – The VMS system allows events to be blocked from volunteering/unvolunteering within 0-14 days of an event. When it is blocked, the Volunteer line will say *Volunteering and Unvolunteering is closed for this event.* You will need to contact the County CMG Staff about this event.

5. In the Comments to Coordinators box, you may add comments to the event coordinator, if desired. Save comments by clicking on the **Update Comments** button.

6. **Event Reminder** – If you want VMS to send you an email reminder of the event, move up to the Event Reminder Section. At Remind Me, select from the drop-down menu the number of days before the event that you want the reminder sent. Then, click on the **Save Reminder** button.

**Unvolunteer (Unsign-up) for an Event**

1. In the Your Calendar pod (right side), click on the event that you want to change. This will open the event page.
2. Scroll to the Volunteer for Event section near the bottom of the page. The Volunteer line says *You are currently signed-up for this event!*
3. To unvolunteer/unsqueeze, click on the **Unvolunteer** button. The line will change to *You are not signed up for this event.*

• **Note on Volunteer Commitment**

  o CMG Outreach events: The CMG program expects volunteers to fulfill their commitments for CMG outreach events. When conflicts arise, CMGs are expected to find replacements. **Failure to honor volunteer commitments, and leaving assignments unfulfilled are automatic grounds for dismissal from the CMG Program.**
o  **CMG Continuing Education Events**: When conflicts arise, so that you can no longer attend a Continuing Education Event, please unregister (unvolunteer) for the event, allowing others to fill in the space.

- **Block Events** – The VMS system allows events to be blocked from volunteering/unvolunteering within 0-14 days of an event. When it is blocked, the Volunteer line will say, **Volunteering and Unvolunteering is closed for this event.** You will need to contact the County CMG Staff about this event.

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**Hours and Contacts Reports**

**Reporting Hours and Contacts**

To report volunteer hours, continuing education hours and contacts:

1. Click on the **Add New Hours** link in the **Your Information** pod.

2. Work through the items on the **Add Volunteer Hours** page, filling in details as needed:

   - **Event Description** – Give a few words to identify the event, such as *Office phone, Maple Hills Garden Center Clinic*, or *Plant Select Demonstration Garden*.
   - **Event Date** – Enter the date of the event using the drop-down calendar.
   - **Apply to Project** – Select the Project Area for this event.
   - **Miles Driven** – Here you have the option of keeping track of miles driven for your income-tax purposes.
   - **Volunteer Hours** – Enter the hours of volunteer work rounded to the nearest half hour, such as 1.5.
   - **Continuing Education** – Record hours for continuing education, rounded to the nearest half hour.
   - **Population Served** – Enter your contacts for the outreach event.

3. Click on the **Save Hours** button.

**Viewing Your Hours**

1. To view your hours click on the **View Your Hours** link in the left-hand **Your Information** pod. This opens your **Volunteer Hour History** page. It will show all recorded events to date (since you started using VMS).

2. **To limit the list to a specific time frame** (such as the current CMG reporting year of November 1st to October 31st), add the **Start Date** and **End Date** in the boxes and click on the **Submit** button. The program will refresh the list using the entered time frame.

**Editing Your Hours Report**

VMS allows volunteers to edit reports for any given event.
1. To edit the report for any given event, click on the View Your Hours link in the Your Information pod. This opens your Volunteer Hour History page.
2. From the list, click on the event that you need to edit. This opens the Edit Volunteer Hours page.
3. Edit the information in the report as needed.
4. Click on the Save Hours button to save the change. If you want to delete the entire report, click on the Delete Hours button.

**Member Roster**

The Member Roster (General Information pod in the lower left-hand corner) allows you to contact other CMG volunteers. The roster lists volunteers and staff in the program with their emails and preferred phone numbers.

- Click on the person’s name for his or her photo (if he or she has uploaded one), address, and preferred phone number.
- Click on the person’s email to send the person an email.

The Roster is for internal communications within the CMG Program and must not be used for commercial purposes.

**Email an Individual**

- To send email to an individual, **click on the person’s email**. This opens your email program.

**Email a Group**

1. In the General Information pod, click on the Member Roster link. This opens the Member Roster page.
2. Click on the Email Member link. This opens the Email Volunteer page.
   - To email everyone on the list, check the Email all volunteers box.
   - To filter the email by Interests, Project or CMG Status, place checks in the boxes desired.
3. Click on the Email by Interest or Group button.
4. The Email Volunteers page opens. Write the email.
   - A list of volunteers will be shown. You may unselect individuals by unchecking their names.
   - Add a title in the Subject box.
   - Add the message in the Message box.
   - Attach files (if desired).
   - If you want a copy of the email, check the box in the Copy Me line.
5. Click on the Send Email button.
View Member Interests

1. In the General Information pod, click on the Member Roster link. This opens the Member Roster page.
2. Click on the View Member Interests link. Members will be listed, showing their interests.
3. To go back to the Member Roster, click on the Hide Interests button.

Newsletter and Documents

VMS has a feature for newsletters and documents. Click on the Newsletters/Documents link in the lower left-hand General Information pod. Click on the links to open items.

Needing Additional Help with VMS

When you need additional help with VMS, please contact the CMG staff in your county Extension Office.

Prepared by David Whiting, Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist (retired), Colorado State University.
Revised December 2017
Colorado Master Gardener℠

Volunteer Handbook

2020 Edition

GardenNotes #14
Welcome!

Welcome to Colorado State University Extension! We are thrilled you are joining the Colorado Master Gardener program. In your volunteer role, you serve as a Colorado State University authorized volunteer and your efforts contribute to an impressive and important statewide mission with 45 years of history in Colorado.

As a Colorado Master Gardener, your primary role is as a community educator – sharing knowledge and resources about horticulture and best practices for gardening in our state today within your local county or region. Your efforts are part of a much larger network of Extension Master Gardener volunteers – an incredible group of over 100,000 people serving across the nation and internationally.

Take the time to learn about this program through our online CMG Introduction course and this Volunteer Handbook. These resources will help you understand Extension and the Master Gardener program history and your role in educating and empowering Coloradans to improve our communities through horticulture. Consider this a guide to return to as you have questions and need a starting point. Your local county staff can answer additional questions or provide clarification.

Thank you for your service, time and talent. Your role as a Colorado Master Gardener volunteer is important and valuable. Enjoy the adventures ahead... we are so glad you’re with us!

In gratitude,

Katie Dunker
Katie Dunker
Statewide Coordinator
Colorado Master Gardener Program
Colorado State University Extension

Colorado Master Gardener Volunteer Handbook

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Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.
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CHAPTER 1:
ABOUT THE COLORADO MASTER GARDENER
PROGRAM & COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Colorado State University’s Mission & Values

Inspired by its land-grant heritage, Colorado State University is committed to excellence, setting the standard for public research universities in teaching, research, service and extension for the benefit of the citizens of Colorado, the United States and the world.

Colorado State University’s Values

- Be accountable
- Promote civic responsibility
- Employ a customer focus
- Promote freedom of expression
- Demonstrate inclusiveness and diversity
- Encourage and reward innovation
- Act with integrity and mutual respect
- Provide opportunity and access
- Support excellence in teaching and research

Colorado State University Extension’s Mission

Empower Coloradans to address important and emerging community issues using dynamic, science-based educational resources.

CSU Extension’s Vision

CSU Extension is highly valued for inclusive, impactful community engagement in support of our land grant university mission.

What is 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). It is a nationwide system delivering research-based education at the county level with resources from the federal and county partners and the state’s land-grant university.

When referring to the organization, use the full name: Colorado State University Extension. After the initial use of the term, repeated referrals may be shortened to Extension.

The Land Grant University System

Land grant universities have three primary missions: teaching, research and outreach. Extension’s start can be traced as far back as the early 1800s. When President Abraham Lincoln signed the Morrill Act of 1862, establishing the land-grant college system. Two additional acts
fueled the creation of the modern extension system; the Hatch Act of 1887 and the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. The former led to the establishment of agricultural research stations. The Smith-Lever Act of 1914 formalized the extension system across the nation. Agents (or county-based faculty and staff) were placed in nearly all of Colorado’s counties and were supported by specialists on the main campus, often professors who provided research and tools to the community-based staff. This exchange of information between campus and community was a novel innovation and became an integral piece of the land-grant system’s outreach efforts.

CSU Extension Funding

Current Colorado State University Extension funding sources include:

- 14% Federal funds (USDA budget)
- 33% State funds (Colorado State University budget)
- 41% County funds
- 12% other sources (sales, fees and program grants)

CSU Extension’s Regional Model

Colorado State University Extension is organized into three regions: Western Region, Peaks & Plains and the Front Range. Each county is part of a regional and statewide network of Extension & Engagement.

>> You can learn more about the CSU Extension’s Regions, Faculty & Staff Online at http://extension.colostate.edu <<
Staffing

**County-based faculty or agents and staff** - The county is the basic program delivery unit for CSU Extension and is staffed around locally identified needs. County level staff includes Extension Agents (or county-based faculty), a County Extension Director, (an Extension agent/faculty leading the local team), program coordinators and assistants and support staff. In Colorado, county-based educators may work across county lines in regional efforts or teams.

**University-based faculty and specialists** also support the local Extension program behind the scenes by providing leadership and research and by assisting with program delivery. Depending on assignment, Colorado State University campus-based, departmental faculty may 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.

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

The **Colorado Master Gardener Statewide Coordinator** is housed on the Main Campus in Fort Collins and is dedicated to serving the statewide needs to provide leadership, organization and support for both local county programs as well as statewide initiatives specific to Extension and the Colorado Master Gardener program.

History of the Master Gardener program

The Master Gardener program began in 1973, when it was founded in the state of Washington. With its success, it quickly spread to other states. In Colorado, the program began in 1975 in Denver, Boulder, Jefferson and El Paso counties. Today, there are programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, nine Canadian provinces and South Korea.

Volunteers in the Colorado program support gardeners from the plains to the highest elevations of the state. They support Colorado State University Extension staff through their participation in educational activities that expand the reach of local horticultural experts. Their journey begins with a rigorous 10 weeks of training on topics including everything from soils to plant diseases and insects. Volunteers then give back to communities through various activities.

Volunteers might teach public classes, respond to public phone calls and emails, staff booths at farmers’ markets and other events, teach youth and community gardening, maintain public research and demonstration gardens, write blogs and develop videos. In 2018, 1364 volunteers across 35 counties donated 54,111 hours, worth about 1.5 million dollars in community contributions.
Colorado Master Gardener Program™ Mission Statement

The Colorado State University, Colorado Master Gardener 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.

Colorado Master Gardener Program Vision Statement

The Colorado State University, Colorado Master Gardener 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.

GROWING PLANTS. GROWING PEOPLE.

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

CMG Mission
Colorado Master Gardener Program Funding

At the state level, the Colorado Master Gardener program is completely self-funded.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Source</th>
<th>What it supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Master Gardener training fees and CMG Annual volunteer dues</td>
<td>One full-time state coordinator salary and benefits including professional development and travel. Operational expenses for program such as travel for instructors, office supplies, IT support and educational materials production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Garden Foundation Annual Grant</td>
<td>Supplies and materials for training. Annual VMS lease fee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSU Online’s Certified Gardener online badging program</td>
<td>Course development, updates, marketing. Staff for short term projects. Additional program costs not covered by annual dues &amp; training fees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Accounts</td>
<td>Professional development for staff. Special projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Boardman CMG Endowed Fund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado Master Gardener Endowed Fund</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colorado Master Gardener Service Mark

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 print materials, the first use of the title **Colorado Master Gardener** should be followed with a small “sm” after Gardener.

When CMG volunteers are not officially representing Colorado State University Extension, the general term “master gardener” without any verbal connection to the CSU Extension System can be used.

Colorado State University Branding & Logo Information

The CSU logo and brand is an important identity marker for the University and university programs, such as the Colorado Master Gardener program. As a volunteer, you can work with your local county staff to gain access to the current logos and brand guidelines for CSU Extension and the CMG program specific to your county.

The university brand site will show you all of the general university brand guidelines: [https://creativeservices.colostate.edu/brand-style-guide/](https://creativeservices.colostate.edu/brand-style-guide/)

These are examples of current, official CSU Extension and Colorado Master Gardener logos:
CHAPTER 2:  
Volunteer Opportunities & Continuing Education

Colorado Master Gardener Products & Audience

Colorado Master Gardeners assist Colorado State University Extension staff in delivering research-based gardening information to foster successful gardening in Colorado communities. **Activities must focus on education.** CMGs do not provide garden labor or consultant services without an educational purpose. The Colorado Master Gardener program is neutral and unbiased toward specific commercial products, services and other groups.

**Audience**

The CMG Volunteer’s audience is exclusively non-commercial, home gardeners. Green Industry or commercial growers are referred to Extension faculty or agents.

**Educational Products**

**Transfer of technical knowledge and development of decision-making skills:** Our role is to provide Coloradans with research-based information and relevant options, empowering them to make informed decisions customized to their situations and needs. These decisions can have economic, environmental and health related impacts. The product delivered by CMG volunteers is **education** through the transfer of knowledge and skills. *Most CMG outreach falls into this type of activity.*

**Restorative gardening:** This is the purposeful production, maintenance and harvest of plants for individual and community resilience. Our educational product is **life skills.** The intended impacts are increased health and stability for individuals, families and communities relative to their emotional, psychological and physical well-being.

**Definition of a CMG Volunteer Activity**

1. Activities must be **supportive** of CSU Extension issues.
2. Activities must be **educational** in nature. What knowledge and skills does the client develop?
3. Activities must have **advanced approval of designated** county staff. The local CMG agent/coordinator makes the final decision about what is acceptable.
4. Volunteers must be **identified** as Colorado State University Extension, Colorado Master Gardeners.
How Do I Know if an Activity is Educational?

Sometimes there is confusion about what makes an activity an educational one – or not. In an educational activity, participants gain knowledge or skills or both. Three components that further help identify an educational activity are:

- The activity has been marketed.
- The activity has a defined audience.
- The activity has an intentional message.

Difference Between Educational and Service Activities

This is a very important distinction to understand so here’s an example: Let’s say you are involved in a youth garden with the assignment of coaching youth to transplant cabbages; this is an educational activity. You are teaching them how, perhaps even demonstrating how, they are learning the steps to transplant the cabbage and gaining the skill to perform transplanting. You do not transplant for them.

Another example may be demonstrating how to prune a tree as educational outreach to a local gardening club. Going to a gardening club member’s home and pruning all their trees is NOT educational. Pruning trees for citizens is an example of a service activity where education or learning a new skill are not provided to the consumer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational outreach</th>
<th>Service-oriented outreach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share information about right plant, right place and factsheets on landscape plants for Colorado’s climate, soils, sun, etc.</td>
<td>Develop a landscape design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share information about plant species adapted to local growing conditions.</td>
<td>Call around to find nurseries that carry a product or certain plants for an individual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor a community group, working with them.</td>
<td>Maintain a garden for a group/organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement an educational demonstration/teaching garden that empowers viewer to adapt concepts demonstrated.</td>
<td>Maintain a garden to beautify an area.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What about Landscape Design?

It can be tempting to assist the public with landscape design. However, this is not educational in nature and is outside the scope of CMGs. Landscape design is a profession that requires site visits, time and resources to do well.

In your role as a CMG Volunteer, you can recommend resources to support in this work such as design ideas/templates from Plant Select, Colorado Native Plant Society, & Garden in a Box; Soil testing information; Colorado-hardy plant lists; climate considerations (zones); and many factsheets related to the topic including, Selecting Trees, Selecting Shrubs, Selecting Plants, How to Plant a Tree, etc.
Projects Examples & Considerations

Mentoring

CMG volunteers can 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 demonstrating a technique, coaching or instructing clients.

Demonstration Gardens

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 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. Onsite printed materials, online links and/or QR codes should give additional information about techniques for reducing water usage. CMG programs should also consider sponsoring public educational activities in the garden. It could also be used as a backdrop or tool for blogs, newspaper articles and you-tube video production.

When a demonstration garden produces food that is donated to a food bank or similar entity:

1. The demonstration garden must meet the above description of an educational demonstration garden;
2. AND must meet the definition of a CMG volunteer activity to be counted as a CMG activity.

Food raised in a church, school or community garden may not be counted as CMG volunteer time unless there is an approved CMG educational activity affiliated with it.

University Research Efforts

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

Free Labor Crew

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 or otherwise maintain private or public properties. These activities are not educational in nature.
Initiating Local Projects

Local community projects may be initiated by CMG volunteers. However, they must be educational in nature, follow CMG guidelines and use Colorado State University recommendations. Projects should provide educational value to participants such as sharing information, consulting and/or demonstrating techniques.

Projects discouraged include those where Colorado Master Gardeners provide only labor or involve commercial businesses where there appears to be a conflict of interest.

CMG volunteers desiring to initiate projects should contact the agent/coordinator in charge of the local program and discuss it with him/her. Roles of volunteers, partners, funding, responsibilities and operations should be identified in written form before approval is given. When a county has ample, existing projects for the volunteer program, a project may be denied.

Cross-County Projects

Volunteer service may include special cross-county volunteer projects. There should be a memorandum of agreement that includes the following items:

✓ Statement clarifying the nature of a cross-county CMG outreach project, including:
  o Nature and scope of the work in the home county
  o Communication plan, related to the special project, between the volunteer and staff
  o A statement clarifying any specific division of volunteer efforts and other program support concerns between counties, as appropriate
  o A statement clarifying that volunteer engagement support will be provided through the host county and that the non-county resident/volunteer will be a regular, active member of the host county CMG Program including all communication and reporting.

✓ The memorandum of agreement is signed as part of the application process by the county CMG Program staff and county directors. It may be modified with agreement of all parties.

>> Volunteee Service: 50 hours in Apprentice year;
  24 hours per year thereafter <<
Continuing Education Requirement – 12 hours per year

The continuing education requirement serves three purposes:

- Provides opportunity for continued learning.
- Defines a minimum participation level within the program.
- Reduces liability to Extension and agents by expecting non-paid staff to be continually updated on research-based information.

A minimum of six hours must be from educational events specifically sponsored by Extension for CMG volunteers. All 12 hours may be from these events. Examples include:

- **CMG OnLine** classes. Counties are not to restrict the hours that volunteers may view these resources.
- A county may require that up to six hours of the continuing education be from other specific venues.
- County, regional, and state CMG updates by specialists, agents, experienced CMG volunteers, Green Industry members, etc.
- State CMG conferences
- Specialized training courses, like "Diagnostic Clinics"
- Re-attendance at basic training sessions
- Volunteer development training
- Writer's workshops

Other educational activities may count as they relate to horticulture as a CMG AND with prior approval of designated agent or coordinator. Examples include:

- Public garden classes
- Academic classes
- Garden club speakers
- Gardening videos
- Distance learning opportunities
- Job-related in-service
- Special research projects
- Independent projects

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

**IF IN DOUBT...**

**Volunteer hours** are counted when the CMG provides educational programs to clients. **Continuing education hours** are counted when the CMG is in the student role, receiving the training.
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 some 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. A CMG volunteer who makes a habit of not showing up will be released from the program.

Colorado Master Gardener Program Titles & Status’

**Apprentice Master Gardener**
- Applicants, 18 years of age or older, that have been accepted into the program and are working towards completing their apprentice requirements. These requirements include: completed core training, 50 hours of volunteer service (60 for 2-year apprentices), final coursework exam (70% or better) and paperwork.
- Receive the Colorado Master Gardener training at a reduced fee in partial exchange for their volunteer service. The volunteer service is considered part of the training received by Colorado Master Gardeners.
- Receive the Colorado Master Gardener certificate upon completion of the required training, service and reporting.
- May also receive the Colorado Gardener Certificate upon completion of the CMG certificate requirements. This certificate may be used to market their expertise.

**Colorado Gardener Certificate**
- Adults, 18 years of age and older, who desire the Colorado Master Gardener training only, without a volunteer commitment.
- Pay program’s full training tuition in lieu of the return volunteer service.
- Receive the *Colorado Gardener Certificate* upon completion of the coursework and passing the final exam with a score of 70% or better.
- Not Colorado Master Gardeners but may apply to become a CMG within three (3) years of their completed training without having to re-take the core training program.
- Certificate may be used to establish training credentials and market expertise.
Colorado Master Gardener
- Successfully completed apprentice requirements.
- Completes annual reappointment paperwork and pays annual dues each year.
- Completes 12 hours of continuing education each year.
- Volunteers a minimum of 24 hours each year.
- Completes reporting in VMS each year.
- In good standing with local county program.

Limited Activity/Inactive CMG
- This status is determined by the local coordinator following request and consultation.
- Status can be in place for up to 12 months and may be longer depending on circumstances.
- Continue to receive emails and may choose to participate in meetings and volunteer projects as able.
- Must continue to complete annual reappointment paperwork, pay CMG annual dues and report any volunteer and continuing education hours completed.
- May reactivate as CMG after consulting with local coordinator/staff.
- This status cannot be used at the end of the CMG year due to incompletion of commitments; rather it should be discussed with the local coordinator when a need arises and/or is anticipated.
- Note: Years in inactive status do not count toward years of CMG service

Affiliate Colorado Master Gardener
- CMG volunteers whose role has evolved from traditional CMG activities but continue to serve valuable roles in the program as community contact or collaborator.
- Have completed CMG requirements.
- May be a CMG who speaks for the CMG program interests on an advisory board.
- May be a CMG in a green industry role who supports the program as a consultant, collaborator or instructor.
- May be a CMG whose primary role serves as program contact for another organization in collaboration with the CMG program.
- Assigned this status by the local coordinator ONLY following consultation.
- Continue to receive emails and may choose to participate in meetings and volunteer projects as able and appropriate.
- Must continue to complete annual reappointment forms, pay CMG annual dues and report any volunteer and continuing education hours completed.

Colorado Master Gardener Emeritus
- Have made a substantial contribution to the CMG program; designated by county coordinator and CMG coordinator following consultation and review of requirements.
- Must be in good standing with the program at the time of the designation.
- Desire to continue, but circumstances limit participation beyond their control such as personal or family health needs.
- Continue to receive emails and may choose to participate in meetings and volunteer projects as able and appropriate.
- Must continue to complete annual reappointment forms, pay CMG annual dues and report any volunteer and continuing education hours completed.
**Released**

- Volunteer no longer active or affiliated with the Colorado State University Extension CMG program.
- May not identify themselves as affiliated with Colorado State University Extension or identify as a “Colorado Master Gardener.”
- Will be removed from the county VMS roster.
- May re-apply for admission within 3 years without repeating the core training if they left in good standing at their own request.

**Volunteer Release**

*Non-renewal, release or dismissal of a CMG*

Under a ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court, volunteering for any organization is a privilege, not a right. Organizations have the right to select individuals they desire to work as volunteers in their organization. Organizations may release volunteers at the discretion of the organization.

According to CSU Extension policy, volunteers serve at the request of CSU Extension as non-paid staff. That request can be withdrawn for any reason or no reason at any time.

Examples of situations when CMG volunteers may be released/dismissed:

- Repeated failure to give knowledge-based information.
- Repeated failure to show-up for volunteer commitments.
- Repeated failure to turn in reports in a timely manner.
- When a volunteer oversteps his/her authority.
- When safety of clients/staff/other volunteers is in danger i.e., abusive, bullying, disrespectful, hostile or threatening behavior.
- Showing up for CMG activities under the influence of drugs, including marijuana or alcohol.
- Other situations where the actions as a Colorado Master Gardener does not reflect well on the University.
- At the discretion of the agent or request of the volunteer.
- To accommodate the training of additional people as community gardening resources.
- At the discretion of the agent or request of the volunteer.
CHAPTER 3:
COLORADO MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM POLICIES

Apprentice Application Process

Newly accepted volunteers begin as Apprentices. This means you’re in-training to become a Master Gardener. The application and acceptance process occurs at the local county level. Like all programs, we have a few considerations for interested applicants:

- You must be at least 18 years old to apply.
- Criminal background checks are required for all volunteers. These are initiated by the local county but facilitated through the University Human Resources department. Detailed results are not shown – only a pass or no pass.
- If you’re accepted into a program, there are training fees your first year and dues ($25-35 in most counties) required every subsequent year.
- We do offer financial need-based scholarships reducing your fee to $85. Details are in the application.
- Initial horticulture training requires 80% minimum class attendance, completion of all on-line classes and completion of homework assignments and weekly reading.
- You will need reliable access to the internet and email to be successful in our program. Accommodations can be made in local offices as needed.
- Following training, apprentices are encouraged to engage in local projects which vary widely. Your apprentice year requires 50 hours minimum volunteer time in your county/area CMG program by the end of the program year, October 31st.
- Our program does allow for a 2-year apprenticeship option, requiring 60 hours of volunteer service over a 2-year period and successful completion of all other requirements.

Applicants interested in joining a program outside of their home county, due to personal reasons or because their local county does not offer a program, should see “Memberships, Transfers & Cross-County Enrollment” in this handbook.

Failure to Complete the Apprentice Volunteer Requirements

As outlined and agreed to in the Apprentice Volunteer Application, training fees are reduced for future volunteer requirements in the first one to two years. These hours are considered “payback” hours. 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 for up to 12 months at the discretion of the local staff based on extenuating circumstances and hardships.
Becoming a Colorado Master Gardener & Recertification

Once you’ve completed your Apprentice requirements (CMG Training program, including passing the exam, completing volunteer hour requirements and reporting all hours in VMS), you will graduate and become a Colorado Master Gardener [see Colorado Master Gardener Titles & Status in this handbook for more details]. Upon graduation, you’ll receive a certificate and name badge from the university.

Continued certification requires 12 continuing education credit hours per year and a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer service on authorized projects. [See Volunteer Opportunities & Continuing in this handbook] Annual dues are also required and collected by your local county when reappointment paperwork is done.

Use of Colorado Master Gardener Name

Our program is known as the Colorado Master Gardener program. 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. When volunteers refer to themselves as members of our program, they should use the term “Colorado Master Gardener” or “Colorado State University Master Gardener.” “Extension Master Gardener Volunteer” is another term used nationally and in other states to identify trained and active Master Gardeners.

Since Colorado Master Gardeners represent the university as “authorized volunteers,” you may not use this title outside of CSU sponsored/affiliated projects. Extension volunteers, such as Colorado Master Gardeners, provide a public service offering unbiased, research-based information. Representing yourself as a Master Gardener outside of your volunteer service in connection with commercial activity or personal financial gain is NOT allowed. However, Individuals are encouraged to list Colorado Master Gardener on their personal resume as volunteer experience.

The Colorado Master Gardener Code of Conduct

The agreements, policies and code of conduct below clarifies the scope and expectations of our program. CSU and local counties invest a lot in volunteers and volunteers in turn giveback and invest in CSU Extension and their local communities. It’s important for future and current volunteers to understand what our program is about and determine if it’s a good fit. CSU Extension values the service of CMG volunteers and commits to do our best to make the volunteer experience a productive and rewarding one. The information below is agreed to in the Apprentice application AND annually during reappointment.

In applying to become a Colorado Master Gardener Volunteer:

✓ I understand that the decision to accept me or not accept me as a volunteer is the right of Colorado State University Extension. I understand, that in many counties, more individuals apply than the program can accommodate.

✓ I understand my acceptance into the Colorado Master Gardener Program commits me to 1) the Colorado Master Gardener Training, and 2) 50 hours minimum volunteer work in the CMG program during the CMG activity year (ending October 31st) OR 3) 60 volunteer hours over a 2 year commitment ending October 31 two years from start date.
If I do not complete the 50 hours minimum volunteer work by October 31st, I agree to reimburse Colorado State University Extension for the course work at the rate of $15 per each uncompleted hour, to a maximum of $500.

I understand that Colorado State University conducts background checks on all volunteers. A criminal record will not necessarily bar me as a volunteer, but will be considered as it relates to the specifics of the volunteer work. I understand that if I do not respond to the inquiry regarding background checks, my application will not be processed.

I understand that volunteering for an organization is a privilege, not a right. If selected as a volunteer, I understand that I serve at the request of Colorado State University Extension and that the request can be withdrawn at any time.

In the capacity of a **Colorado Master Gardener Volunteer**:

- I agree to be civil and courteous towards Extension staff, other volunteers and the public. Others may think and do things differently than what I personally prefer, but I will be respectful of their values and perspectives.
- I understand that as a CSU volunteer I am part of the larger CSU community and agree to uphold the Principles of Community. Read these at [https://diversity.colostate.edu/principles-of-community/](https://diversity.colostate.edu/principles-of-community/)
- I agree to cooperate with and support the local Extension Office staff and volunteers to jointly further the missions and objectives of the CMG Program. In addition, I agree to comply with training, reporting, certification, annual renewal requirements and other program directives as stated in CMG GardenNotes #14 [https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/Gardennotes/014.pdf](https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/Gardennotes/014.pdf)
- I understand that the title “Colorado Master Gardener” may be used only in connection with official Colorado State University Extension activities. The title may not be used to associate the Colorado Master Gardener name with commercial products or give implied endorsements of any product or place of business. The title may not be used to advance my personal political, religious or environmental beliefs.
- I agree to disseminate information without regard to race, age, color, religion, national origin or ancestry, sex, gender, disability, veteran status, genetic information, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression.
- I agree to follow federal, state, county, Colorado State University and Extension Office policies and regulations appropriate to my role as a volunteer.
- I agree to provide research-based horticultural information from Colorado State University or other research-based institutions.
- I understand CMG volunteer clientele are non-commercial home gardeners. I understand that as a CMG volunteer it is not my role to advise commercial growers or green industry professionals and will refer these clients to the appropriate Extension staff.
- I understand that as a CMG volunteer, I may not give advice that could be considered by the client as legal or medical in nature. I will not discuss the following issues: hazard trees, poisonous plants and mushrooms, medical use of herbs including growing and use of marijuana, pesticide toxicity and the misuse of pesticides. I will refer these issues to the appropriate Extension staff.
- I will follow pest management recommendations based on integrated pest management (IPM) strategies, allowing the client to select methods in harmony with their values. Any reference to the use of pesticides must come directly from Extension resources. All inquiries beyond this scope will
be referred to appropriate Extension staff.

✓ I understand that I will not discuss or make comments about the toxicity of organic or synthetic pesticides. Inquiries about pesticide toxicity will be referred to the National Pesticide Information Center, found here: http://npic.orst.edu/

✓ I will avoid being disruptive and distracted in training classes and volunteer events. I understand that the CMG email communication system (VMS) and membership lists are for internal Extension business use only. I will not use it for commercial business, share the information in it outside of Extension business or send spam type communications.

✓ I will adhere to CSU’s Social Media policy (http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policy.aspx?id=497) and will avoid answering questions using the Colorado Master Gardener title or responding on behalf of CSU on my personal social media accounts.

✓ I agree to refrain from using or possessing alcohol or illegal substances while participating in volunteer activities. Being under the influence of alcohol, marijuana or illegal substances during CMG service will result in disciplinary action.

✓ In support of the program operations, I agree to pay annual CMG Fees and other expenses in regards to the program (i.e. books, transportation, course fees, clothing), as assessed by the state and my local county program.

✓ As non-paid staff, I understand that I am not covered by CSU worker’s compensation or other medical insurance.

CSU’s Minors’ Policy

All Colorado Master Gardeners, regardless of status in the program, must read and agree to uphold this University policy designed to protect vulnerable populations: http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policyprint.aspx?id=734

Colorado State University Extension to the extent possible will:

- Provide opportunities for my continual learning through volunteer activities, classes and workshops and online learning opportunities.
- Provide training, supervision, equipment, and direction to volunteers through the local Extension office.
- Communicate expectations and responsibilities of the program to volunteers.
- Uphold and cultivate a respectful relationship between staff and volunteers.
- Uphold CSU’s Principles of Community.
- Provide access to CSU Extension reference materials and professionals.
- Provide a safe working environment within the Extension office and at CMG events.
- While serving in an official CMG capacity preapproved by the local agent/CMG Program Leader, the University covers CMG volunteers with University liability insurance provided that the volunteer uses research-based information and applies good judgment.
- Match volunteer skills and interests with volunteer opportunities within the local program.
Colorado Driver’s License and Automotive Liability Insurance

Volunteers who drive as part of their volunteer service must be in compliance with State of Colorado laws, including, but not limited to:

1. Having a valid Driver’s License with a relatively clean driving record.
2. Having at least the minimum auto insurance required by state law.
3. Complying with seat belt use and other traffic laws.

Furthermore, it is expected that any vehicle used to transport CMG volunteers is maintained so that it is “safe and reliable” for the conditions, weather, and distance in which it is to be driven. Most counties do not allow volunteers to include driving time as part of their volunteer hours. Check with your county for local guidelines.

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. 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 are 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.** 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.

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?
What CMGs cannot provide: Legal & 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 ground for automatic dismissal from the CMG Program.

1. **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]

2. **Poisonous Plants and Mushrooms** – CMG volunteers do NOT address poisonous plant or mushroom questions. [medical issue]

3. **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]

4. **Pesticide Misuse** - CMG volunteers do not advise on the misuse of pesticides by others. In these situations, customers should contact the Colorado Department of Agriculture. [legal issue]

5. **Pesticide health and environmental safety issues** - As a CMG, volunteers are not authorized to discuss pesticide health and environmental safety issues. The role of CMG volunteers also does NOT include any discussion about merits or limitations of any type of pesticide. [legal issue]

Pesticide Information

**Provide Pesticide options** - 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.

**Direct to Appropriate 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 for pesticide information.

**Pesticide toxicity information** – Although CMGs may not discuss pesticide health and safety issues, a client may be directly referred to the National Pesticide Information Network (see box below for information). This program is sponsored by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in cooperation with Oregon State University.

**Pesticide Use in Demonstration/Research Gardens** - CMGs may use general use pesticides in these settings. All pesticides must be used in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations and the label directions. Volunteers must read and follow the label directions. No “home remedies” may be used as a pesticide unless Colorado State University has a published recommendation for the product.

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**National Pesticide Information Network**

**Phone:** 1-800-858-7378
**E-mail:** npic@ace.orst.edu
**Web:** http://npic.orst.edu
**Hours:** 7 days a week, excluding holidays, 6:30 am to 4:30 pm [PST]
CSU Extension Protocol for Marijuana

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

While the use of 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.

Assistance with Medical Marijuana plant health questions will not be provided. Individuals requesting such information will not be provided referral information. CMG volunteers will not address the issue with the media.

Our offices are considered drug-free workplaces, as CSU is a federal contractor. Marijuana plants and/or plant parts are not permitted in CSU Extension offices. Marijuana plants or plant parts delivered to or left at CSU Extension offices will be turned over to legal authorities for destruction.

If CSU Extension employees or volunteers, including Colorado Master Gardeners, assist 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.

Liability

While working in an official CMG volunteer capacity as a non-paid University staff, CMG volunteers may 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 would not be covered for information shared outside of official, approved CMG activities.

Assumption of Risk & Liability Waiver

As an authorized volunteer of Colorado State University, you are required to complete and sign a waiver annually acknowledging the inherent risks involved in volunteering. Contact your local county staff to obtain this waiver if you have not completed one for your current service year.

Worker’s Comp and Medical Insurance

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

Equal Opportunity

CSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. Colorado State University has zero tolerance for discrimination based on race, gender, age, disability, color, veteran status, religion, genetic information, national origin or ancestry, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity or expression.
Memberships, Transfers & Cross-County Enrollment

Cross-county enrollment procedures were developed to address varying needs of CMG volunteers and ensure that each volunteer is engaged in an active local CMG Program.

**Resident Applying to a neighboring County’s CMG Program**

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

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 or transfer as a volunteer to another county under a written memorandum of agreement. The agreement includes the following:

- A statement clarifying the situation why the applicant prefers membership in a program outside their county of residence.
- A 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 does NOT count towards volunteer hours in most cases.
- A statement clarifying that the volunteer is not at will to float between CMG Program in their county of residence and the host county.
- A 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 all communication, continuing education and reporting.

A memorandum of agreement is signed as part of the application process by the CMG applicant, the hosting county CMG Program agent/coordinator and the county of residence agent/coordinator. After the initial year, active membership continues with the host county program.

**Serving as a Master Gardener volunteer in two counties:**

CMGs must be committed to one county program. Volunteer service should be done in the home county program. Exceptions to this do occur but are managed by county staff based on program fit and extenuating circumstances. [see Resident Applying to a Neighboring County’s CMG Program] On a related note, cross-county projects do occur and can count for hours in your home county. [see Cross-County Projects]
Residents of an Extension County without CMG Programs applying to neighboring CMG Program

Non-county residents may apply or transfer to a neighboring county under a written memorandum of understanding as follows:

Volunteering for the host county – work will be done for and on behalf of the host county. The memorandum of agreement includes the following items:

✓ A statement clarifying that the volunteer work will be done in and on 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 does NOT count towards volunteer hours in most cases.

✓ A 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 all communication, continuing education and reporting.

✓ The memorandum of agreement is signed as part of the application process by the CMG applicant, the hosting county CMG Program agent/coordinator and the county of residence agent/coordinator. After the initial year, active membership continues with the host county program.

Residents from a Non-Extension County

Counties where the County Commission elects not to fund the Extension Partnership

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 of 50 hours volunteer service in the apprentice year and 24 hours each additional year, plus continuing education requirements.

Under a ruling of the US Supreme Court, 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 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 will need to shift his/her mind-set to the new county’s procedures.
Transfer From Another State to Colorado

Nationally, MG training is not coordinated between states. States do not automatically accept training offered in other states. Each state varies greatly 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 Colorado-based.** Content even varies to some degree within different areas of the state in order to focus on local needs.

In order to have years of service in the Master Gardener program transfer, a recommendation and verification of years serviced in good standing are required from a previous state/county coordinator.

There are two options for out-of-state Master Gardeners looking to join our program:

1. **Apply to the Colorado program as a transfer:**
   - If active within the past three years, the individual may APPLY to become a CMG volunteer. Acceptance is based on:
     - Recommendation from state/county coordinator in previous state;
       - Recommendation must include: confirmation MG was active and in good-standing, starting/training year, total years in program and any relevant information concerning leadership positions, contributions, certifications, etc.
     - Interest and availability for volunteer work; and
     - Background check.
   - CMG volunteers should understand that they may request a transfer, but that there is nothing automatic or guaranteed in the process. Volunteering is a privilege, not a right.
   - Based on the area of the nation the volunteer is moving from, the county staff will require that the CMG volunteer participate in basic training sessions where content would be different in Colorado. **Attending CMG Training does require paying training fees.**

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

Serving as a Master Gardener volunteer in two states:

If you live in two states and wish to be a Master Gardener Volunteer in two states you are expected to meet all program requirements in both states. Volunteer hours done in another state do not count towards your Colorado Master Gardener volunteer service.
CHAPTER 4:
Volunteer Resources

VMS - Online Volunteer Management System

The online Volunteer Management System, VMS, is user friendly, intuitive, and has many great features allowing CMG volunteers to:

- Sign-up for CMG Project
- Volunteer for CMG Events
- Sign-up for CMG Continuing Education
- View program calendars
- Report/View/Edit hours and contacts
- Email other CMGs
- Update directory information
- Change your login password

All Colorado Master Gardeners are required to report their hours and contacts and the information must be recorded in the VMS system.

Login at: https://colorado.volunteersystem.org/
You’ll use your email address and a temporary password sent by your local county coordinator. Contact your coordinator if you need to get set-up.

This program was developed specifically for Master Gardener programs by the University of California Cooperative Extension, and is used in Colorado under licensed agreement with the University of California.

>> VMS IT IS NOT TO BE USED FOR COMMERCIAL BUSINESS OR SENDING SPAM TYPES OF COMMUNICATIONS. IT IS FOR INTERNAL CSU EXTENSION BUSINESS USE ONLY. <<

Answering Horticulture Questions

Helpdesk, plant diagnostic clinics and "Ask a Master Gardener" outreach is a core project and “product” offered by most county CMG programs. As you continue in your training, you’ll receive ample information about helpdesk policies, processes and support. [see Master Gardener Tools & Resources in this handbook for a ‘cheat sheet’ of researching options and tools at your fingertips]

On-the-spot plant Q&A can be daunting and overwhelming - even experienced CMGs and agents do not know everything and pouring through resources to find answers can be difficult. Here are a few important tips to seeking research-based information and providing solutions and resources to clients:

- Ask lots of questions to get a better understanding of the problem. Suggestions include: Do you know the plant name? Tell me about where it's planted... Tell me about how you water... etc. Many counties have protocols in place to ensure you get as much useful information as possible.
- Ask the client for pictures and samples if possible.
- Never be afraid to delay a response so you can research appropriate solutions/possibilities. "Thanks for this information. I'll need to research this situation and get back to you."
- Extension Master Gardeners are not expected to know everything! You should utilize the resources available to you and lean on your training, fellow CMGs and county staff.
- Once you’ve researched possible researched-based solutions, follow-up with the client to provide answers, links and other resources based on the information provided to you.
Learn More About ‘Why Plants Matter’

**Hidden Value of Landscapes**
Explore the environmental, community and health benefits of landscapes particularly as it relates to water use and drought. This document was created by Colorado State University Horticulture faculty.

[https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/landscapes.pdf](https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/landscapes.pdf)

**Plant Blindness**
Learn more about what 'plant blindness' is and why it matters.


**Plants Do That**
Read about what wonderful things plants do in "Plants Do That" press releases from the National Initiative of Consumer Horticulture.

[https://consumerhort.org/plantsdothat](https://consumerhort.org/plantsdothat)

**Placemaking**
Learn about the art and science of improving communities through strategic greening and community gardening.

[https://doitgreen.org/topics/community/placemaking-designing-garden-community](https://doitgreen.org/topics/community/placemaking-designing-garden-community)

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**Colorado Master Gardener Statewide Website**

Our statewide website is your best tool for connecting with other resources you’ll need as a CMG.

[http://ColoradoMasterGardener.org](http://ColoradoMasterGardener.org)
Master Gardener Tools & Links

The following sites/links are resources you’ll use often as a CMG. Check them out so you’re familiar with them before you start at a Helpdesk or Outreach booth. These are all useful tools as a Colorado Master Gardener.

PlantTalk Colorado [http://planttalk.org](http://planttalk.org)

PlantTalk is a Colorado-specific horticultural resource site that features simplified information for home gardeners. Be sure to check out the video resources – these are especially useful. More in-depth resources are linked to most topics, including University factsheets. **This is an excellent resource for CMGs to share with clients – very useful for answering helpdesk questions – and provides an excellent first step when researching and providing links to clients.**

CSU’s Soil Testing Lab [www.soiltestinglab.colostate.edu](http://www.soiltestinglab.colostate.edu)

CSU offers soil testing for home gardeners and professional growers. Detailed instructions for how to collect and send in samples can be found on their website. These tests have associated costs and do not test for everything. Learn more before recommending to clients.

CMG’s GardenNotes [https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-information/cmg-gardennotes-class-handouts](https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/volunteer-information/cmg-gardennotes-class-handouts)

GardenNotes is your online text for the CMG training program. It’s also an excellent resource for answering client questions in your volunteer role. These are OK to reproduce, link to and copy so feel free to share these valuable resources.

Yard & Garden Factsheets [https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden](https://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden)

Become familiar with Factsheets – you will use them often as a CMG. Factsheets are University bulletins that cover a specific topic and provide useful solutions, advice, information and resources for common questions.

Online Garden Publications [https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/gardening-resources/online-garden-publications/](https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/gardening-resources/online-garden-publications/)

This landing page provides a simplified directory of factsheets by topic.

Ask An Expert [https://ask.extension.org/groups/1955/ask](https://ask.extension.org/groups/1955/ask)

Hosted by our national extension partner, eXtension.org (pronounced “e-extension”), this site links anyone with a Colorado question in your county to your local helpdesk and staff. Local county staff will provide training regarding how to respond to these questions. The link above is how the general public will ask questions. **Try it out if you have questions yourself!**
Plant Diagnostic Clinic  https://plantclinic.agsci.colostate.edu/

The CSU Plant Diagnostic Clinic offers more in-depth plant pathology assessment. This service does have costs associated with it. Most gardeners will not require this level of testing, but it is available.

Plant Select  http://plantselect.org

Plant Select is the country’s leading source of plants design to thrive in high plains and intermountain regions; more beauty, less work. This is a collaborative program between Colorado State University and Denver Botanic Gardens and Green Industry growers.

Social Media & Other Communication Tools

Follow horticulture and University social media channels – it’s fun and informative.

Instagram:
- Follow @ColoradoMasterGardeners https://www.instagram.com/coloradomastergardeners/
- Follow @JeffCoGardener https://www.instagram.com/jeffcogardener/

Facebook: Like/Follow https://www.facebook.com/extensioncolorado/

Blogs:  Trendy, timely information posted regularly from statewide faculty & staff
- CSU Horticulture Blog: http://csuhort.blogspot.com/
- CSU Mountain Gardening Blog: http://coloradomountaingardener.blogspot.com/

Important University Resources & Links

Principles of Community - https://diversity.colostate.edu/%20principles-of-community/
Each member of the CSU community has a responsibility to uphold these principles when engaging with one another and acting on behalf of the University.

CSU’s Social Media Policy - http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policy.aspx?id=497
We encourage CMGs to post about our program on their personal social sites, but please don’t post AS a CMG unless it’s pre-approved by your county program.

CSU’s Minors’ Policy - http://policylibrary.colostate.edu/policyprint.aspx?id=734
Become familiar with this policy to ensure the protection and considerations necessary when working with vulnerable populations.

Concerned about someone? Tell Someone – http://tellsomeone.colostate.edu
If you are concerned about safety or mental health – your own or someone else’s, please tell someone locally in your CSU Extension office or through this site.

CSU’s Bias Reporting - https://supportandsafety.colostate.edu/incidents-of-bias
If you experience a bias-related incident at work or witness bias firsthand, please use the CSU Bias Reporting System.

CSU’s Office of Equal Opportunity - https://oeo.colostate.edu
Matters of discrimination and harassment based on protected groups must be addressed by the Office of Equal Opportunity. If your concern is about unlawful discrimination or harassment, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at oeo@colostate.edu or 970-491-5836.
Mind Filters Interpret the Message

Ninety-three percent of interpersonal communication is nonverbal. In verbal communication, non-word aspects (tone, speed, inflection, emotions) account for the majority of the message.

We hear a message (verbal and nonverbal), but do we understand the intended meaning in the communication? As messages come into our minds, our mind filters of experiences, knowledge and understanding, values and emotions, interests, cultural conditioning, and self-image filter or interpret the messages. Our interpretation may be similar to or totally off-base from the sender’s intended meaning.

“Words do not convey meanings; they call them forth. I speak out of the context of my experience and you listen out of the context of yours; and that is why communications is difficult.”

David O. McKay, Educator and Prophet
Communication becomes more difficult when it involves messages linked to strong emotions or values. Common examples include discussions on money, religion, politics, love, sex, drugs, and violence. Recognizing when emotions and values (from either party) play into the message helps defuse sensitive issues.

Repeating back, in your own words, what you hear is an effective tool in helping to clarify meaning.

**Communicating as Gardeners**

In the gardening arena, communication barriers may include emotions and values related to pesticides, organic gardening, xeriscaping, expectations of what a garden should look like, and expectations about the time someone invests in gardening activities.

In diagnosing plant disorders, communication is key. The client will describe the situation based on his/her observations and gardening experiences. The CMG volunteer will interpret based on his/her gardening experiences. Inevitably, there will be some miscommunication!

In CMG volunteer work, we are often called upon to diagnose plant disorders solely through verbal descriptions by the client. As most clients don’t know what to look for in the diagnostic process, the description will typically be lacking in detail. Diagnosis may be impossible.

As professionals, we need to recognize that we have very limited potential to diagnose plant disorders over the phone or in a clinical setting. It is natural to add details about the plant’s problem based on our experiences, but details added by our mind filters may be totally off base for the specific situation.

In talking with clients about gardening problems, ask lots of questions and do lots of listening. Ask questions to verify every detail raised by your mind filters. Repeating back in your own words what you are hearing often helps to clarify where mind filters are interfering with communication.
As a Colorado Master Gardener volunteer, you will have opportunities to answer gardening questions in a wide variety of situation. The following hints will help you be prepared.

**Colorado State University Extension**
Remember that you are representing Colorado State University Extension in your county or area.

a. Identify yourself as a Colorado State University Extension Master Gardener volunteer, as a Colorado Master Gardener, or in a similar form that your county coordinator/agent directs.
b. We empower Coloradoans to make decisions using research-based information.
c. We give clients research-based information only.
d. Treat clients in the manner you would like to be treated – courteously and professionally.
e. The role of CSU Extension and the Colorado Master Gardener program is education, not regulation.

**About Questions**

a. There are no dumb questions; treat each question seriously.
b. Questions are not context free. There is always a situation behind the question. Ask for specifics so you can answer the question well.
c. The first question asked may not reflect the real concern. You may have to “dig deeper.”
d. We empower clients to make choices, not make the choice for them.
e. Many questions don’t have an answer because:
   - We don’t have enough information
   - Some topics don’t have a research base for information
   - They may relate to personal values or expectations
What Callers Want

- To get information.
- To verify their own understanding or diagnosis.
- You to agree with them. Stand firm on research-based information and recommendations.
- To justify emotional decisions with facts.
- To vent.
- To have you listen to them.
- Services beyond the scope of the program. Review with them what the program is for – education – and refer to businesses or agencies that may provide the services requested. When in doubt, check with your coordinator/agent.

Your Information Sources

Look up information in Extension materials such as CMG GardenNotes, PlantTalk scripts and CSU Extension fact sheets and publications. When using the internet, always look for educational resources (use site:.edu in your search engine).

Read directly from the research-based information and cite references used.

Questions About Pesticides

Our role is to help clients understand non-chemical and chemical options related to pest management issues. All information related to the use of any pesticide must come from Extension resources. Any pest management questions beyond the scope of the fact sheet should be referred to your county coordinator or agent.

For information about pesticide toxicity, refer the client directly to the National Pesticide Information Network, http://npic.orst.edu which is sponsored by the EPA and Oregon State University. Colorado Master Gardeners do not discuss pesticide toxicity with clients.

Diagnosing Problems

See GardenNotes #102 for more details on Diagnosing Plant Problems.

a. Ask questions to help you visualize the situation or problem. For example:
   - “I’m trying to picture your situation in my mind. Let me see if I understand what you’re saying” (repeat back in your own words)

b. As you diagnose a problem, be flexible about receiving additional information. As details unfold, you may find you are headed in the wrong direction. In this situation you could say:
   - “With that piece of information, the situation just changed. Let’s back up and look at this again….”
c. Usually there is 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…”

d. When possible, work as a team. Multiple minds, with different points of view, often are the best way to work through complex problems.

Taking Phone Calls

Don’t worry if you don’t know the answer to a question. You’re not alone! In the Colorado Master Gardener program, we don’t expect you to know everything; we expect you to be able to find the answers.

- When you don’t know the answer to the question or can’t find it quickly, tell the client “I don’t have that information right now” or “I’m not finding the answer quickly. May I have your name and phone number or email so I can get back to you?”

- If you can’t find the information promised to a client by the appointed time, contact the client anyway to let them know you are working on it and haven’t forgotten about them. This is just good customer service.

- Be an active listener and an active questioner.

- Smile when you talk as you will sound friendlier. You can “hear” a smile over the phone!

- Ask for help from your coordinator, agent or another Colorado Master Gardener.

- Avoid shaming statements that put people down or place blame like “you can’t do that!”

Your confidence will grow with experience and time.
CMG GardenNotes #017
Listening Habits Evaluation

Read each question. Do not try to second-guess the intent. Answer with a yes or a no, according to your usual behavior. Your answers may help you discover where you have good listening habits.

1. Science says that you think four times faster than a person usually talks to you. Do you use this time to turn your thoughts elsewhere while you’re keeping general track of a conversation?
   - Yes
   - No

2. If you feel it would take too much time and effort to understand something, do you go out of your way to avoid hearing about it?
   - Yes
   - No

3. If you want to remember what someone is saying, do you think it is a good idea to write it down?
   - Yes
   - No

4. Do your thoughts turn to other subjects when you believe a speaker will have nothing interesting to say?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Can you tell by people's appearance and delivery that they are not worth listening to?
   - Yes
   - No

6. When you are puzzled or annoyed by what someone says, do you try to get the question straightened out immediately, either in your own mind or by interrupting the speaker?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Do certain words, phrases or ideas so prejudice you against the speaker that you cannot listen objectively to what is being said?
   - Yes
   - No

8. Do you start formulating your response before you hear all of the facts or ideas?
   - Yes
   - No

9. When people are talking to you, do you try to make them think you are paying attention when you are not?
   - Yes
   - No

10. When you are listening, are you easily distracted by sights and sounds?
    - Yes
    - No
Evaluation

Each “no” answer indicates good listening habits. Each “yes” reflects an area where some attention may improve your communication skills.

1. Skip and jump listening

Most people talk at the rate of 125 words per minute. Most of us think at least four times faster than this. With concentration and practice, we can listen and understand as many as 400 words per minute. Since we think so much faster than people speak, our mind tends to wander to other things.

A good listener avoids mental wandering and concentrates on the speaker. Paying attention to voice changes, facial expressions and gestures will also help increase your ability to concentrate on what is being said. You can develop better thought patterns by asking yourself questions such as, "What is the person trying to say?" or "What point is the person trying to make?" Weigh facts and evidence given by a speaker by raising such mental questions as, “Are the facts accurate, prejudicial and complete?” or “Is the source reliable?”

2. Skip–the-difficult listening

To quit listening if a subject is difficult to understand can become a habit. You could cheat yourself by "tuning out" things you might really want to know.

Make a point to concentrate on topics that require effort to follow. It will help if you ask the person a question that will help clarify a point or help you understand a main idea. If you can't interrupt, make a note to ask the questions later.

3. Pencil-and-paper listening

When we concentrate on taking notes we can only hear half of what is being said. Write down just enough to let you recall those ideas.

Develop the habit of listening for ideas. Keep in mind that the more senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch – are involved, the more effective communication becomes.

4. Premature dismissal

Be cautious about developing the habit of deciding in advance that a subject is not important. We can close our minds to whatever the speaker has to offer. An open approach will help correct this habit. Listen for ideas.
5. Deceived by appearance or personal habits

Just because a person may not look like your image of an authority does not mean they aren't. Some of our greatest scientists, artists, and musicians have not been impressive in either appearance or manner. If you must be mentally critical, wait for the person to speak. You will find that by concentrating on what is being said you will no longer be aware of the person's appearance. Listen for ideas... then be critical.

6. Supersensitive or argumentative listening

If you have firm convictions or prejudices, a person presenting a different opinion may unwittingly step on your mental toes. When this happens, you unconsciously stop listening and start developing arguments to defend your position. In the meantime, you may have completely missed the main points of the other person's comments.

A good practice is to learn to control your emotional reaction. Hear the person out. Evaluate objectively the facts and opinions presented. Try to figure out why the person is saying what he/she says.

7. Emotional deaf spots

Certain words can push our buttons, making us see red. They trigger emotional reactions, and we pull down a mental filter tuning the speaker out. We start thinking of unpleasant memories brought up by the use of one of these words or phrases. While recovering from this emotional reaction, you may miss important data the other person is trying to give.

List those words and phrases that cause you trouble. Analyze them to find out why they bother you. Recognizing your response, listing the words, becoming aware of your sensitivity, and learning to be objective will help you control your emotional reactions.

8. "I get the facts" listening

A speaker is presenting a series of facts. While you are trying to concentrate on fact one and memorize it, the speaker may already be discussing fact two or three. After several facts you wind up with a few memorized, others garbled and some missed completely.

Instead, listen for ideas. Weigh one fact against another. Look for relationships between facts as a person is speaking, and you will find that she may be using several facts to develop one or two main ideas. You will be listening at the "thinking level."
9. **Pretending attention habit**

Many of us learned at an early age how to pretend to be listening. We frequently do this when the subject is difficult to comprehend, or the speaker is a person we do not recognize as an authority. Or we may have something else on our mind.

10. **Yielding to distractions habit**

It takes conscious effort to screen out distractions whether they are audible, visual or physical. Eliminate as many distractions as possible. If you cannot eliminate a distraction, fight it by concentrating on ideas presented by the person talking to you.

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**Source:** *How Do You Listen*, Ohio Extension Service

- Colorado Master Gardener GardenNotes are available online at [www.cmg.colostate.edu](http://www.cmg.colostate.edu).
- Colorado Master Gardener training is made possible, in part, by a grant from the *Colorado Garden Show, Inc.*
- Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating.
- Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

Revised October 2017
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Test</th>
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<tr>
<td>Quickly answer the following questions on legal copying of materials.</td>
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1. If there is no copyright statement on the material, is it OK to make copies as needed?
   - Yes  No

2. A garden book has a list of shade-tolerant flowers that would be useful as a handout for general distribution. May you legally make copies as handouts for general distribution?
   - Yes  No

3. Who owns the copyright on materials you produce as part of your Colorado Master Gardener service?
   - You  CSU

   A. May you legally make a copy of this page for a client?
      - Qualified Yes  No
   B. May you legally make copies of this page as a handout for general distribution?
      - Qualified Yes  No

5. In this month’s magazine, you find an article that would make a great handout in class next week.
   A. May you legally make copies for all class participants?
      - Qualified Yes  No
   B. May you legally make copies next year when you teach the class again?
      - Qualified Yes  No

6. You find a great article on the Web for your program.
   A. May you legally print a copy for your own scholarly reference?
      - Qualified Yes  No
   B. May you legally make multiple copies for class handouts?
      - Qualified Yes  No
   C. May you legally download a copy onto your Web site?
      - Qualified Yes  No
Background and Answers to Test

The following information is not intended as legal counsel. It is provided only to create awareness of copyright issues commonly encountered in Extension programs.

Copyright

Copyright is legal protection giving authors and other artistic creators exclusive rights to reproduce copies, make derivative works, use materials in other works, transfer format (such as from tape to CD), enlarge or reduce size, distribute, perform publicly, and display publicly.

Examples of copyrighted materials

- Print materials
- WWW materials
- Computer programs
- Pictorial works
- Graphic works
- Musical works
- Dramatic works
- Sculptural works
- Motion picture and video works
- Sound recordings
- Architectural works

What is not covered by copyright protection?

- Titles (covered under trademark or service mark registration)
- Ideas (but rather “tangible expression” of the idea)
- Common knowledge (but rather the “tangible expression” of the knowledge)
- Lists and bibliographies (but rather the “tangible expression” of the knowledge)
- Blank forms (but rather the “tangible expression” of the form)
- List of ingredients (But rather what you do with the ingredients)
- Some federal government documents

Duration of copyright

- After 1978
  - Life of author + 50 years
  - “Works for hire” – shorter of 75 years from first publication or 100 years from first creation
- Before 1978 – 28 years, renewable for 47 years

Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) of 1998, from the U.S. Copyright Office, is legislation that implements two 1996 World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) treaties: the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty. The DMCA also addresses a number of other significant copyright-related issues.
Question 1.

If there is no copyright statement on the material, is it OK to make copies as needed? **NO**

- Copyright registration is no longer mandatory for works published after May 1, 1989.
- Registration (filling out a copyright application and paying a fee) only enhances the copyright holder’s ability to collect damages.
- **Basically anything in a fixed, tangible form is automatically protected by copyright.**

Question 2.

A garden book has a list of shade-tolerant flowers that would be useful for a handout. May you legally make copies for a handout for general distribution? **NO**

- While the “list” is not covered by copyright, the “tangible expression of the knowledge” is covered.

**Copyright Ownership**

- The employer owns the copyright for any work done by employees as part the work assignment and responsibilities, unless other arrangements are made in writing in advance.
- Specially ordered or commissioned works depend on contractual agreement.
- Unpublished materials – The writer, not the owner of the materials, owns the copyright.
- Computer software – The purchaser “buys” a license to use software only as outlined in the agreement.
- Pictures – The person who takes the picture, not the person who owns the picture, owns the copyright.
- Videotaping –
  - The presenter holds rights on the presentation.
  - The video taper holds rights on the taped version.
- Music – Writers (words and music) and performers (vocal and instrumental) all have copyrights on what they contributed.

Question 3.

Who owns the copyright on materials you produce as part of your Colorado Master Gardener work? **Colorado State University**

- Unless other arrangements were made in writing, in advance, Colorado State University Extension owns the copyright of materials you produce as part of your Colorado Master Gardener service.
Fair Use Doctrine

“Fair use” doctrine defines the privileges of others to use materials in a reasonable manner without consent for “purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship or research.

- Criteria for “fair use” include:
  1. Use must be nonprofit, educational in nature.
  2. Nature of work – “Fair use” extends further in factual works, and is very limited in fictional works or artistic creations.
  3. Amount vs. total work – The laws get into word counts and percentages. Basically, the use must not convey the nuts and bolts of the work.
  4. Potential on market – The bottom line is how the use impacts potential sales of the product. Use must not circumvent sales in any way.

Criteria for single copy – Under “fair use” doctrine, for “scholarly review,” a single copy may be made of

- a chapter from a book
- an article from a periodical
- a short story, essay or poem
- a chart, graphic form from a book, periodical or newspaper

Criteria for multiple copies, classroom distribution – Under “fair use” doctrine, the making of multiple copies is extremely limited, and must meet all five tests:

1. “Spontaneity” –
   - Used within 60 days, thus the instructor doesn’t have reasonable time to seek copyright permission.
   - Used with “instance and inspiration of the teacher.”
   - Note: In Cooperative Extension work, it is uncommon that copies will pass this “spontaneity” test, since we typically use and reuse materials that have been in print for more than 60 days.
2. “Cumulative effect” – supportive to the educational process, but not the focus of the class.
3. Brevity – Keep it short, never more than 10% of the work.
4. Profit – Distributed without profit (may recover printing costs).
5. Copyright notice must be included on all copies.

Student use

- Students have “fair use” for classroom projects.
- But if the project goes beyond the learning classroom, copyright permission is needed.
  The scope of “fair use” is broader for factual works than fictional and creative works.

Misconceptions – Contrary to popular opinion, the following situations do NOT make copying “OK”:

- Educational
- Nonprofit
- Volunteers
- Church
- Out of print
- As a means of bypassing fees or purchase price
Common violations of “fair use” include:

- Copying consumable works (unless the copyright statement gives permission)
- Copying without including the copyright notice
- Copying more than one work from a single author per class and/or per project
- Copying the same item each time a class is taught (spontaneity test)
- Creating course packets
- Copying as a substitute for purchase
- Copying on direction of the “boss”

Question 4.
A client wants a copy of the page in a book you used for reference.

A. May you legally make a copy of this page for a client? **Qualified YES**
   - “Fair use” criteria permits a single copy for scholarly review of the page. Remember that it must also include the copyright statement from the book (see single copy criteria above).

B. May you legally make multiple copies of this page for a handout for general distribution? **NO**
   - Making multiple copies for distribution does not meet criteria for “fair use.” You must seek permission of the copyright holder.

Question 5.

- In this month’s magazine, you find an article that would make a great handout in class next week.

A. May you legally make copies for all class participants? **Qualified YES**,
   - This would meet “spontaneity” criteria for multiple copies.

B. May you legally make copies next year when you teach the class again? **NO**
   - You must seek the copyright holder’s permission. Next year (actually after 60 days) it doesn’t meet “spontaneity” criteria.

Question 6.

You find a great article on the Internet for your program.

A. May you legally print a copy for your own scholarly reference? **Qualified YES**
   - Meets single copy criteria for “fair use.”

B. May you legally make multiple copies as a class handout? **NO**
   - Doesn’t meet “fair use” criteria for multiple copy distribution
C. May you legally download a copy onto your Web site? **NO**

- Downloading it onto your website will be a clear violation of copyright law unless you have permission of the copyright holder. However, you may link from your website to their website.

- Contrary to popular belief, Internet materials are NOT free for the taking. All information found on the Internet is protected, just as any other print material. It’s just easier to violate copyright in the electronic media.

**Resources:**

- The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998

- Using the Name or Likeness of Another
  - [www.dmlp.org/legal-guide/using-name-or-likeness-another](http://www.dmlp.org/legal-guide/using-name-or-likeness-another)

- A document designed to collect resources and ideas for participants in the workshop “Opening Doors for Multimodal Composers: Intellectual Property and Fair Use in the Classroom” at CCCC 2014 in Indianapolis.
    - [http://web.law.duke.edu/cspd/comics](http://web.law.duke.edu/cspd/comics)
    - [http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.5/)