



MASTER GARDENER
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

COLORADO MASTER GARDENERSM

Volunteer Handbook

2021 Edition

GardenNotes #14



Colorado State University

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

© 2021 Colorado State University. All Rights Reserved. Colorado Master Gardener training is made possible, in part, by a grant from the *Colorado Garden Foundation*. Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating. No endorsement of products mentioned is intended nor is criticism implied of products not mentioned. Colorado Master Gardener *GardenNotes* are available online at <http://ColoradoMasterGardener.org>

Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| CHAPTER 1: Colorado Master Gardener Program & CSU Extension | 1 |
| - University Mission, Extension Mission & Program Mission & Vision | |
| - Information about Extension & Land Grant Universities | |
| - Staffing Structure | |
| - History of the Master Gardener Program | |
| - Program Funding | |
| - University & Program Branding | |
| CHAPTER 2: Volunteer Opportunities & Continuing Education | 6 |
| - Colorado Master Gardener Products & Audience | |
| - Definition of a CMG Volunteer Activity | |
| - How Do I know if an Activity is Educational? Educational vs. Service Activities | |
| - Project Examples & Considerations | |
| - Initiating Local Projects | |
| - Cross-County projects | |
| - Continuing Education Requirements & Examples | |
| - Volunteer Program Titles & Status' | |
| - Volunteer Release/Dismissal | |
| CHAPTER 3: Program Policies & Guidelines | 14 |
| - Apprentice Application Process | |
| - Failure to Complete Apprentice Volunteer Requirements | |
| - Becoming a Colorado Master Gardener & Recertification | |
| - Use of Colorado Master Gardener Name | |
| - Colorado Master Gardener Code of Conduct | |
| - CSU's Minors' Policy | |
| - Conflict of interest | |
| - Copyright Law | |
| - Legal and Medical Advice | |
| - Pesticides | |
| - CSU Extension Protocol for Marijuana | |
| - Liability & Waiver Information | |
| - Worker's Comp and Medical Insurance | |
| - Equal Opportunity Statement | |
| - Memberships, Transfers & Cross-County Enrollment | |
| CHAPTER 4: Volunteer Resources | 24 |
| - VMS - Online Volunteer Management System | |
| - Answering Horticulture Questions | |
| - Learn More about 'Why Plants Matter' | |
| - The Colorado Master Gardener statewide website | |
| - Master Gardener Tools & Links | |
| - Social Media & Other Communication Tools | |
| - Important University Resources & Links | |

CHAPTER 1:

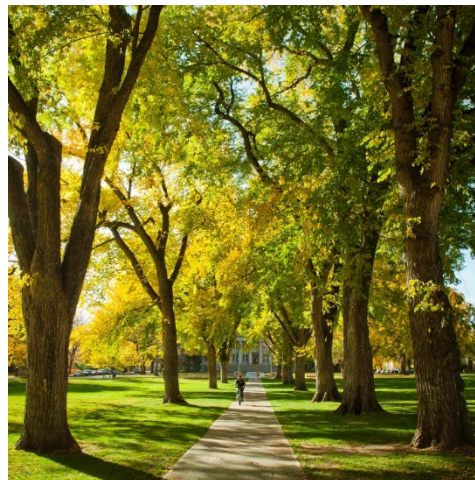
ABOUT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY, EXTENSION & THE COLORADO MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

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**. Extension is part of the larger Office of Engagement & Extension at CSU.

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.

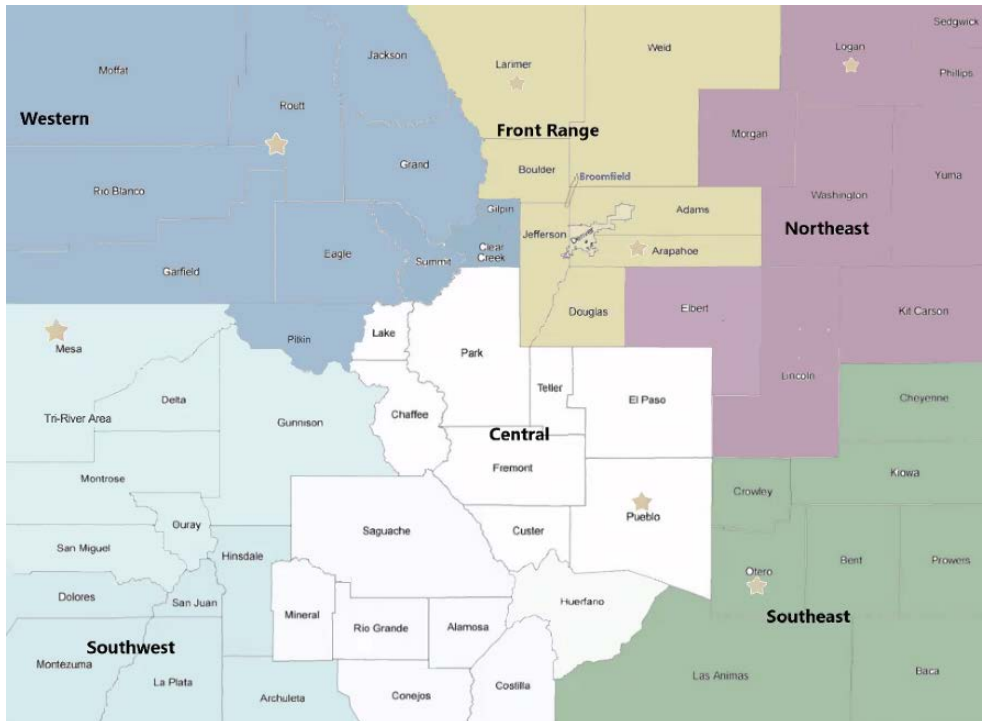
CSU Extension Funding

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 six regions. Each county is part of a regional and statewide network within CSU's Office of Engagement & Extension.



YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CSU EXTENSION'S REGIONS, FACULTY & STAFF ONLINE AT [HTTP://EXTENSION.COLOSTATE.EDU](http://extension.colostate.edu)

Staffing

County-based faculty/instructors 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/instructors), 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 ProgramSM 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.

| FUNDING SOURCE | WHAT IT SUPPORTS |
|--|---|
| Colorado Master Gardener training fees and CMG Annual volunteer dues | 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. |
| Colorado Garden Foundation Annual Grant | Supplies and materials for training Annual VMS lease fee |
| CSU Extension’s Online Certified Gardener Digital badging program | Course development, updates, marketing Staff for short term projects Additional program costs not covered by annual dues & training fees |
| Foundation Accounts Barbara Boardman CMG Endowed Fund Colorado Master Gardener Endowed Fund | Professional development for staff Special projects |

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 Gardenersm** 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/>

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.

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

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:
 - Nature and scope of the work in the home county
 - Communication plan, related to the special project, between the volunteer and staff
 - A statement clarifying any specific division of volunteer efforts and other program support concerns between counties, as appropriate
 - 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.

>> VOLUNTEER 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 incompleteness 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 ie., 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.

Volunteer Reactivation Following a Leave of Absence

If a volunteer leaves the program [is released] in good standing, they may be reactivated to the Colorado Master Gardener program in any county following these standards are met:

- The individual must have left in good standing at their own request.
- If it is within a 3-year window, the individual may re-apply for admission utilizing the annual reappointment form without repeating the core training following a meeting/confirmation with the local county staff.
- If it falls outside of a 3-year window, the individual must re-apply to the program using the Apprentice Volunteer Application process. Re-taking the core training may be required. An exception to this would be requested at the local county level and approved by the statewide team.

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/>
- ✓ 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>
- ✓ 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. **If you are not permitted to drive for any reason**, please notify your coordinator and complete a *CSU Restricted Driver Form* to indicate you cannot drive as a volunteer.

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]
6. **Commercial Horticulture/Green Industry inquiries** – The primary audience for CMGs are individual gardeners. These can be homeowners/renter/schools/community groups that garden indoors and/or outdoors on a small scale. Commercial questions are referred to Horticulture staff.

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.

NATIONAL PESTICIDE INFORMATION NETWORK

Phone: 1-800-858-7378 **E-mail:** npic@ace.orst.edu
Web: <http://npic.orst.edu> **Hours:** 7 days/week, excluding holidays, 6:30am to 4:30pm PST

CSU Extension Protocol for Marijuana & Hemp

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.

While **hemp** is a legal agriculture crop that is grown in Colorado, it would be rare that CMGs would answer questions about this plant, because it's typically grown for agricultural purposes, and not in home gardens. Typically these questions would be answered by Horticulture staff, not volunteers.

Liability

While working in an official CMG volunteer capacity as a non-paid University staff, CMG volunteers may be 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 must apply to their home county program.** Counties will give priority to local residents applying to their home county program.

Some potential applicants may better connect to a neighboring county (due to work, personal and family needs) rather than their county of residency. Residents may apply for a transfer to another county by creating a memorandum of agreement initiated with the home-county of residence. **This agreement, written by the applicant, must include 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 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 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 and that the non-county resident volunteer will be active member of the host county CMG Program including all communication, continuing education and reporting.

Upon acceptance into the host county's program, 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.

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) has many great features allowing CMG volunteers to:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ✓ Sign-up for CMG Project | ✓ Report/View/Edit hours and contacts |
| ✓ Volunteer for CMG Events | ✓ Email other CMGs |
| ✓ Sign-up for CMG Continuing Education | ✓ Update directory information |
| ✓ View program calendars | ✓ 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://vms.csuextension.org/> You'll use a FirstnameLastname username (ex: "SamRose") and a temporary password sent by your county coordinator. **Contact your coordinator if you need to get set-up.**

>> 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>

Plant Blindness

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

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190425-plant-blindness-what-we-lose-with-nature-deficit-disorder>

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>

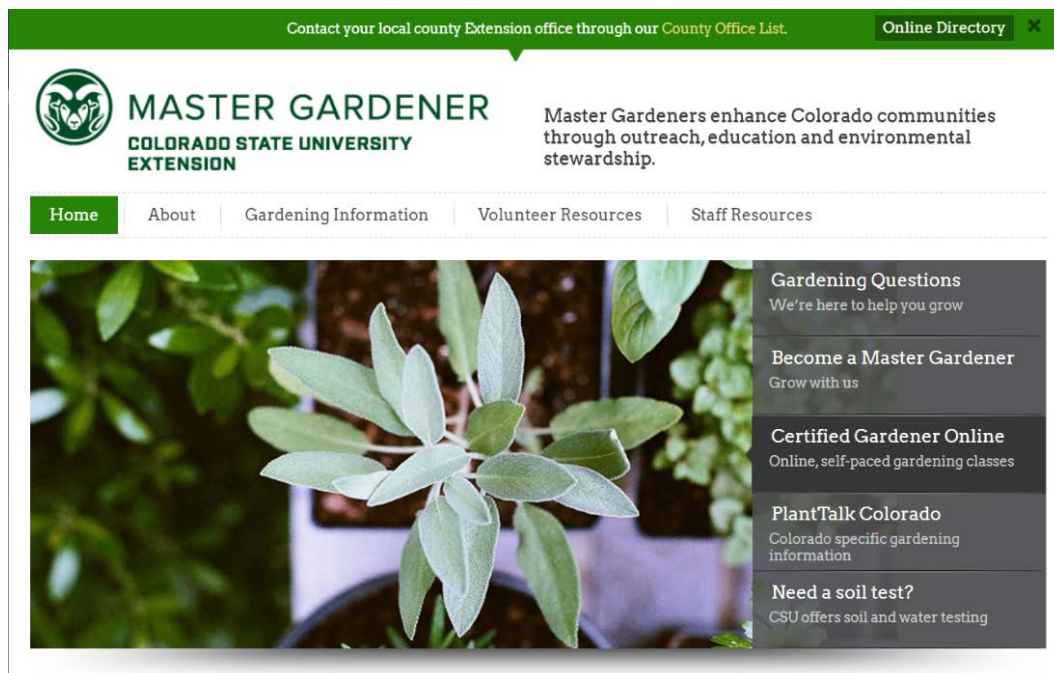
Placemaking

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

<https://doitgreen.org/topics/community/placemaking-designing-garden-community>

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>

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>

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

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>

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>

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/>

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

Ask An Expert <https://ask2.extension.org/>

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.

