

Master Gardener Volunteer Guidelines

These guidelines are part of the Master Gardener Volunteer Manual. Check with your county MG coordinator or Iowa MG Advisory Committee member if you have additional questions on what counts towards volunteer service or continuing education hours.



MG Volunteer: What counts as volunteer service?

- Maintain a public garden (e.g. city park, county fairgrounds, healthcare grounds)
- Answer garden questions for the public (e.g. farmer's market booth, ISU Extension & Outreach county office)
- Create community connections (e.g. collect excess produce from farmer's market for donation to food pantry, build partnerships to increase pollinator habitat)
- Support garden design for a community space (e.g. school garden, Main Street plantings, Community Visioning program)
- Teach gardening lesson (e.g. demonstration at a community garden, present at school)
- Coordinate a hands-on event (e.g. street tree planting, invasive species removal from park)
- Create communication materials about gardening (e.g. write newspaper article, post on county MG social media page)
- Plan a public event (e.g. plant sale, garden tour, garden symposium)
- Participate in MG management (e.g. attend monthly MG meetings, lead local MG team, serve on Iowa MG advisory committee).

MG Volunteer: What counts as Continuing Education?

- Webinars (e.g. live events listed on Iowa MG Upcoming Events webpage, recordings of webinars)
- Videos from ISU Extension and Outreach (e.g. Iowa MG YouTube channel)
- Workshops (e.g. hands-on tree pruning event at local botanical garden)
- Guided garden tours (e.g. participate in a tour of a public garden led by a tour guide)

Continuing education is expected to advance the Master Gardener volunteer's knowledge and understanding of horticulture. It must be factual, accurate, and provided by a source recognized as research based. Most training opportunities offered by educational institutions, public gardens, and education-focused gardening organizations meet this requirement.

Half of your continuing education hours should come from interactive sources (such as live webinars or in-person trainings).



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What does not count as volunteer hours?

Maintaining private gardens (e.g. volunteering in a neighbor's yard, gardening at a family member's house).

Answering private garden questions (e.g. giving garden advice to a neighbor, friend, or family member).

All volunteer hours should have a community impact, rather than a focus on one individual.

What does not count as continuing education hours?

- Listening to radio programs,
- Visiting gardens,
- Travel time to continuing education programs,
- Watching television programs, and
- Reading books or magazines.

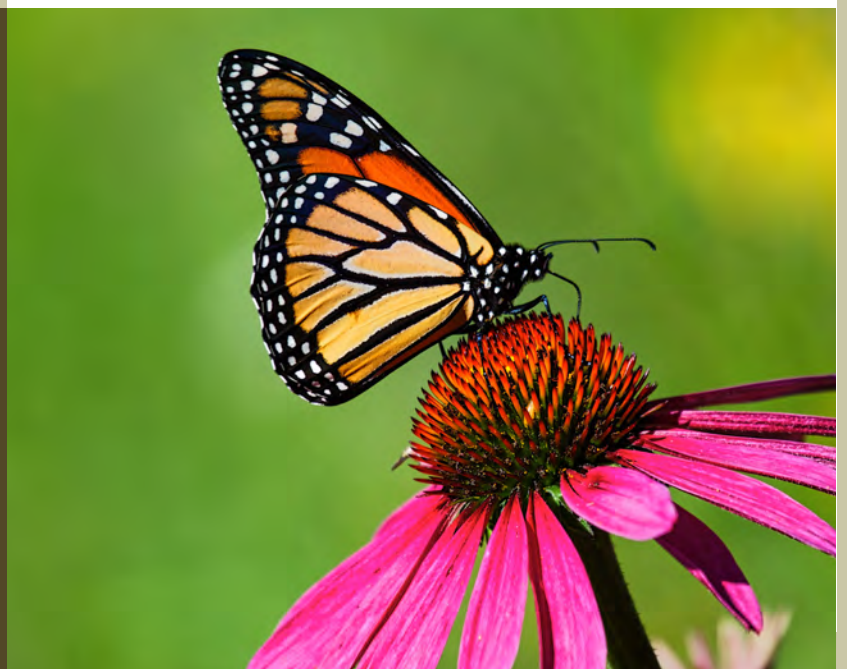
Note: gardening sessions offered by entertainers, mass media, and salespeople are not continuing education.

Volunteer Reporting System

Master Gardener volunteer and continuing education hours must be logged online in the Volunteer Reporting System by December 31st each year.

Annual requirements:

- Minimum of 20 hours of volunteer service
- Minimum of 10 hours of continuing education



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