

To be used when completing and MG Volunteer Project or Activity Request Form

Excerpts from:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County

Master Gardener Volunteer Program Policy Statements

Including qualifications, requirements, and steps to become a Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteer in Erie County New York

Find complete set of Policy Statements on-line at: <http://erie.cce.cornell.edu/gardening/what-is-a-master-gardener-volunteer>

I. Program Mission

The mission of the Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener volunteer program is to support Cornell Cooperative Extension by utilizing research-based information to educate the public on best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship.

II. Program Overview

Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners are volunteers who support Cornell Cooperative Extension's educational programs in consumer horticulture. They develop their horticultural expertise through participation in educational programs conducted by Cornell University faculty and Cooperative Extension staff. The county Extension Educator/coordinator provides diagnostic support for horticultural issues and questions to Master Gardener volunteers actively participating in the program. Extension publications, teaching materials, and other program support materials are provided as deemed appropriate by campus and county educators. Information presented by Master Gardeners must be consistent with Cornell Cooperative Extension recommendations concerning various aspects of consumer horticulture.

X. Guidelines for Service Hour Opportunities or Activities

- **All activities should be approved by the county Program Educator/coordinator.** (In the absence of the Program Educator/coordinator or other designated staff, the Steering Committee Vice President will work with fellow committee members to approve volunteer service hour opportunities and activities.)
- Service hour opportunities should align to the Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program mission and be listed as an acceptable activity in the guidance that follows in this section.
- There must be an educational purpose and/or teaching component to all approved service hour opportunities or activities.
- Service hour opportunities will strive as much as possible to reach diverse Erie County audiences and be accessible to all residents.
- If the service hour opportunity involves producing a tangible resource or educational piece, the service hour opportunity should not duplicate other recent efforts of Program volunteers.
- Approved service hour opportunities should be open to the participation of any interested Master Gardener volunteer unless permission to vary from this requirement is given by the Program Educator/coordinator.

Examples of **ACCEPTABLE** activities are:

1. Answer consumer/home gardener's telephone and email inquiries and assist Cornell Cooperative Extension office visitors with plant and insect samples for identification or diagnosis, and give general pesticide recommendations (Garden Hotline).
2. Assist with Cornell Cooperative Extension educational programming, such as talks for local organizations, Cornell Cooperative Extension-sponsored workshops, exhibits, displays, etc.
3. Write research-based gardening and horticultural information for fact sheets, newsletters, newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs, etc.
4. Design or assist with establishing and maintaining **educational** demonstration gardens, such as community, healing, school, pollinator, and Cornell Cooperative Extension office gardens.

5. Develop or assist with community-based environmental stewardship projects, including community composting
6. Assist teachers, 4-H volunteers and youth, and/or children with gardening education projects.
7. Conduct/teach horticultural related clinics, pruning, or other demonstrations at Cornell Cooperative Extension offices, local libraries, farmers markets, government centers, fairs, expos, garden clubs, civic groups, community events, flower shows, etc.
8. Teach about use of culinary herbs.
9. Teach Master Gardener training sessions.
10. Serve on municipal street tree/shade tree committee.
11. Create or prepare visuals/graphics, such as posters, flyers, program announcements, table-top displays for horticultural programs and/or publications.
12. Host, produce, or appear as guest on radio/TV and/or use station's radio/TV equipment.
13. Photograph Cornell Cooperative Extension/Master Gardener events.
14. Solicit donations and/or sponsorships to benefit the Master Gardener program.
15. Haul materials such as plants, program displays, soil clinic totes or other materials in his/her own vehicle in support of Cornell Cooperative Extension projects or activities.
16. Provide assistance to horticultural therapy programs for people with emotional/physical/mental disabilities, nursing homes, hospitals, state/county prisons, youth detention centers.
17. Organize and/or lead educational bus trips/tours and garden tours related to horticulture.
18. Open his/her garden to the public for educational tours/demonstration.
19. Assist with data collection, testing, and evaluating new varieties for vegetable, turf, ornamentals, and/or flowers research projects.
20. Assist with or organize horticultural files in Cornell Cooperative Extension office.
21. Serve on Cornell Cooperative Extension Association Board, Cornell Cooperative Extension Advisory committees or as liaison between the Cornell Cooperative Extension office and municipal officials.
22. Assist with fundraisers approved by supervising Cornell Cooperative Extension staff.
23. Conduct other activities as determined by local needs and the prior approval of supervising Cornell Cooperative Extension staff.

The following activities are **NOT ACCEPTABLE** for Master Gardener volunteer service:

1. Develop and deliver training for garden center employees, ground manager, and nursery personnel, unless approved by Cornell Cooperative Extension.
2. Teach pruning to municipal tree trimmer (arborist).
3. Design gardens/landscapes for schools or communities that are **non-educational**.
4. Maintenance of gardens for schools, civic groups, or community organizations that are not used for educational purposes.
5. Organize a community garden club.
6. Establish and manage a farmers market.
7. Glean fields/orchards for distribution to food bank.
8. Teach or make recommendations about the use of medicinal herbs.
9. Any activity that has not been approved by the Program Educator/coordinator supervising the Master Gardener Volunteer program.