



Welcome to the Master Gardener Volunteer Program

What is UW-Extension?

UW-Extension is a cooperative community education service provided by the University of Wisconsin in conjunction with local county governments. Their mission is to extend the research of the University to the residents of the state where they live, work *and garden*.

Who are Master Gardener Volunteers?

Master Gardener Volunteers (MGVs) are volunteers trained and certified in the principles and techniques of horticulture as taught by UW-Extension (UWEX). The MGVs, in turn, volunteer to assist the UWEX in providing public educational programs in horticulture.

What is SouthEast Wisconsin Master Gardeners (SEWMG)?

SEWMG is a non-profit organization of MGVs in southeastern Wisconsin, mostly Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. SEWMG has its own elected officers, holds regular meetings, raises funds to support horticulture education projects, belongs to the Wisconsin Master Gardener Association (WIMGA) and has two local UWEX advisors (Sharon Morrissey and Ann Wied).

Functions of these various groups

SEWMG members provide volunteer staffing and support for the UWEX at garden shows and horticultural events and give educational talks to groups. SEWMG members also support many public garden projects, youth gardening activities, adult gardening programs, and environmental improvement activities.

SEWMG offers continuing education that includes two or three program meetings¹ each month, trips to trade shows, seminars, conferences, other horticulture projects and public gardens etc. Its annual fundraiser (the Perennial Plant Sale) provides financial support for these programs, projects and activities.

WIMGA is the state MGV organization which provides coordination and support for local master gardener groups, sponsors a state conference and mails a bimonthly newsletter.

UWEX administers the MG Volunteer Program, coordinates training, educational materials and UWEX staff. They also maintain volunteer service and training records locally and statewide.

¹ SEWMG program meetings and trips count toward continuing education hours.

Why join SEWMG?

In addition to being part of the fun, you become part of the MGV organization that allows you to keep up to date with the latest developments in horticulture, continue your education and participate in the state and international master gardener organizations, while helping the community.

How to be a certified MGV

To become a certified MGV, volunteers must complete the General MGV Training course, pass a written exam, contribute a minimum of 24 hours of service² and pay dues to SEWMG within their first year.

To maintain certification, each year volunteers must contribute a minimum of 24 hours of service to and accumulate at least 10 hours of continuing education through UWEX³ and SEWMG programs or other approved activities.

MGVs are encouraged to contribute as many volunteer hours as possible and to accumulate additional continuing education hours as schedules permit.

Ways to Get Involved

There are hundreds of ways to complete your volunteer hours. You can participate days, nights or weekends and choose activities near home or work. Opportunities are presented by UWEX and SEWMG. You may choose to:

- ▶ work on garden projects
- ▶ be a plant health advisor
- ▶ give presentations to groups
- ▶ staff special events (i.e. State Fair, the Realtors Show, etc.)
- ▶ assist with youth activities
- ▶ provide service to SEWMG
- ▶ provide service to WIMGA
- ▶ provide service to UWEX personnel

² A list of approved gardening projects may be downloaded from the Master Gardener website; hard copies are available at the UWEX office.

³ UWEX offers a variety of specialty training courses *throughout the year* which qualify as continuing education.



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Timesheets and reporting

Individuals must complete (and turn in) a record of their service and continuing education hours to the Milwaukee County UW Extension office by September 15 of each calendar year. Timesheets can be obtained on-line or from the UWEX office.

Ways to get information about program & volunteer opportunities

Information regarding continuing education, volunteer opportunities and activities is available from many sources and include:

- ▶ *Good Earth News* (SEWMG newsletter)
- ▶ SEWMG calendar
- ▶ SEWMG meetings
- ▶ UWEX MGV coordinator at the Extension office (414 256-4661)

Master Gardener Volunteers with internet access can obtain this information online and by direct emails from the SEWMG list serve. Hard copies are available at the UWEX office or can be mailed.

Connecting with Other MGVs

We encourage you to join SEWMG and to attend meetings. This is your organization and we need your help and input in running it. This can be thought of as similar to voting. If you want to have a say, you have to participate in the process.

Who does what?

The following chart describes responsibilities of UWEX staff and the SEWMG organization:

| <i>UWEX</i> | <i>SEWMG</i> |
|---|---|
| Provides horticultural training | Funds gardens and other projects |
| Provides resources and materials on horticultural topics | Coordinates the local master gardener organization |
| Provides accreditation for master gardener volunteers | Provides financial support to specified community gardens and for other activities |
| | Partially funds UWEX office space |
| | Approves / provides funds for some UWEX materials |
| Coordinates volunteer opportunities for master gardener volunteers | Supports UWEX horticultural staff |
| Provides UWEX staff as horticulture experts | Members: |
| Collects and report volunteer and continuing education hours for state and local programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work in community gardens - staff booths (such as CNI show, Home Show and State Fair) - creates displays / exhibits for shows and other community outreach - give talks / presentations - assist in outreach programs (educational) - serve as plant health advisors |
| Provides newsletter | Edits and contributes articles for the newsletter |
| Maintains website | Plans / hosts continuing education programs for MGVs |
| | Sponsors committees for: |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - specified community gardens - programs - hospitality - newsletter - library - other |
| | Holds annual plant sale (fundraiser) |
| | Provides "mentors" to those enrolled in their first MGV training course |
| Provides information to the general public | Provides information to the general public |