

Georgia  
Master Gardener  
Extension Volunteer Program



# Policies and Procedures

January 2014





## Purpose

The Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV) program in Georgia is a volunteer training program designed to help University of Georgia Cooperative Extension staff transfer research-based information about gardening and related subjects to the public by training home gardeners. Master Gardener Extension Volunteers are active in many Georgia counties. Through this program, Cooperative Extension is able to reach out and serve more citizens with educational programming and demonstrations in the Georgia MGEV Program Initiatives:

**Environmental Stewardship** – Increasing awareness and knowledge of landscape and garden management for the optimum use and protection of the environment, including management of all aspects of the residential landscape (soil, plants, insects, diseases, and wildlife); and understanding and proper use of equipment, pesticides, fertilizers, and other landscaping inputs to have the greatest value with little negative impact on the environment.

**Home Food Production** – Teaching the benefits of home food production and developing skills and knowledge in growing food, managing community gardens, or contributing to food banks or kitchens.

**Gardening with Youth** – Increasing young people's awareness and understanding of the value of horticulture and landscaping, using horticulture as a tool to increase responsibility and leadership for youth, and teaching individuals and professionals (i.e., teachers and therapists) how to use horticulture to reach young people.

**Value of Landscapes** – Developing within communities the knowledge and skill to ensure proper design, installation, and maintenance of sustainable landscapes for economic benefit to residents, state and local government employees and agencies, and professionals in impacted fields, such as tourism and real-estate development.

**Health Benefits of Gardening** – Teaching the value of the interior and exterior landscape to human health, well-being, and quality of life, transferring knowledge and skills to intended audiences that they might utilize this information for personal health and a healthier workplace and community.

Volunteers benefit from the training, networking with other garden enthusiasts and the opportunity to serve their communities.

To build a consistent and cohesive Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program across the entire state of Georgia, the following policies and procedures will serve as the foundation for agents, staff and individuals connected to the Georgia MGEV program.

## Mission Statement

To assist University of Georgia  
College of Agricultural and  
Environmental Sciences  
Cooperative Extension  
by training  
Master Gardener  
Extension Volunteers  
to provide unbiased  
horticultural information  
through volunteer community  
service and educational  
gardening projects  
using applied research  
and the resources of the  
University of Georgia.

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# Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Policies

## Who is a Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV)?

**Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV)** — An official title for an individual who is partnering with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension to educate the public about environmentally sound horticulture. The individual has successfully completed all University screening requirements, at least 40 hours of core horticulture training, and 50 hours of initial volunteer time on Extension-approved projects within the first year of participating in the program, and is currently volunteering.

**Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Trainee** — An individual who is in the process of completing the MGEV core training program and the initial 50 hour volunteer service requirement.

**Active Master Gardener** — A Master Gardener Extension Volunteer who has completed all background screening and is currently volunteering. Also referred to as a “veteran” volunteer.

**Inactive Master Gardener Extension Volunteer** — A Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV) who has not completed the yearly 25-hour volunteer service requirement due to extenuating personal circumstances. This status can be requested one year at a time for a maximum of two consecutive years before the volunteer is considered an alumni of the MGEV program.

## MGEV Title and Badge

After completing 40 hours of core horticultural training, successfully passing course examination, and completing 50 hours of volunteer time on Extension-approved projects, an individual will be conferred the official title of Master Gardener Extension Volunteer (MGEV). The Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer title is intended to identify well-trained Extension volunteers who are education partners with University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

MGEVs assist University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Cooperative Extension by providing unbiased horticultural information to the public through volunteer community service and educational gardening projects using applied research and the resources of the University of Georgia.

MGEVs are not permitted to use their titles and/or positions for commercial publicity or private business. Participating in a commercial activity, associating with commercial products, and giving implied Master Gardener Extension Volunteer, UGA or Cooperative Extension endorsements to any product or place of business is in violation of program policy.

MGEV training and experiences may be listed as qualifications when seeking employment, but credentials must not be used in the place of employment. Individuals who desire professional recognition for horticultural training should pursue the Georgia Certified Landscaper Program (<http://apps.caes.uga.edu/urbanag/GCLP/WhatisGCLP.cfm>)

The MGEV badge is the identification symbol for a well-trained volunteer. The MGEV badge is only to be worn by an active MGEV acting in an Extension-approved capacity. The cost of one badge is included in training fees. Replacements may be ordered for a nominal charge from the State Program Office. Badge replacement orders will only be accepted from Cooperative Extension Offices or UGA /CAES facilities.

MGEVs will be supervised by an Extension Agent, Sponsoring Agent, or Program Assistant. Ultimate responsibility for the MGEV is that of the sponsoring Extension Agent.

## Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment of MGEVs is based on the Extension Plan of Work for consumer horticulture in a given county. MGEVs are recruited to assist Cooperative Extension in educating the public about environmentally sound horticulture.

The recruitment and selection process of new volunteers must assure that a diversified group of community representatives know about the MGEV program and its opportunities.

Applicants to the MGEV program should go through a selection process to ensure the best match between Extension, the volunteer, and current or proposed programming. The selection process for the MGEV program should include review of application as well as County Extension Staff-approved interviews by the staff and/or certified MG Extension Volunteers. The County Extension Staff is responsible for the final selection of candidates.

Applicants must be willing to comply with all Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures.

Any applicant from a nonparticipating county should be notified that volunteer service is expected to be performed within the county hosting the training. (A nonparticipating county is defined as any county that does not have a county agent or the support staff required to manage a MG Extension Volunteer program.)

All adults (age 18 or older) interested in participating in MG Extension Volunteer programs must complete an application available at their local county extension offices.

## UGA College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES) Volunteer Policies and Volunteer Screening

As a final step in the selection process, any individual volunteering on behalf of the University of Georgia, such as through the MGEV program, must sign a UGA Volunteer Agreement form. This form communicates University policy regarding the volunteer's relationship to the University and is kept in the volunteer's file at the local Extension office.

<http://www.georgia4h.org/public/more/guidebook/UpdatestoPoliciesApril2012/volunteerapplicationrevised5112012.pdf>

UGA Volunteer Agreements are accompanied by a General Role Description (intent to volunteer). This document defines MGEV responsibilities and expectations for a designated period of time. This should be kept in the volunteer's file at the County Extension Office. In this written agreement, the MG Extension Volunteer pledges to support the county Extension educational programs and abide by program policies. Agents will attach further role description information, communicating responsibilities and expectations, for the chosen volunteer opportunities. There are separate documents for trainees and veteran volunteers to reflect the differences in volunteer status and responsibilities. Role descriptions are available at:

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/departments/hort/extension/mastergardener/agents.html>

Additional screening, including criminal background investigation (BI) and motor vehicle report (MVR), is required for all MGEV roles to ensure the safety of clients and MG Extension Volunteers. There is no fee for this screening. Successful completion of the screening process is a requirement of enrolling in the training program. Application for Background Screening can be found at:

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/intranet/coextopr/reporting/documents/volunteerapplicationrevised5112012.pdf>

Information about UGA's policy on Background Investigations can be found at:

<http://www.policies.uga.edu/FA/nodes/view/1124/Background-investigations>

Information about MVR checks can be found at

<http://www.hr.uga.edu/motor-vehicle-record-mvr-checks>

## Annual Intent to Volunteer

Individuals who desire to remain active MGEVs, volunteering on behalf of UGA Cooperative Extension as education partners in consumer horticulture programs, will annually review their Volunteer Agreement and accompanying role descriptions with the Extension Agent or designated program coordinator. Prior to the beginning of a new calendar year, individuals will indicate their intent to volunteer in the next year (see "Active Status"), request inactive status, or become an alumni of the Georgia MGEV program (withdrawal).

## MG Extension Volunteer Training Requirements

**Class Time** — The MGEV training includes a minimum of 40 hours of class time. The training program uses the Georgia Master Gardener Handbook as a reference textbook. MGEV Trainees are encouraged to attend all sessions. Anyone absent from more than 20 percent of class time without reasonable excuse and approval from the County Extension Staff or training coordinator is not eligible to take the Final Examination.

**Exams** — MGEV Trainees must successfully pass (70% mastery) both midterm and final exams covering the material presented. The midterm examination will consist of 50-100 questions and will be prepared by the training coordinator. The final examination will consist of 100 questions representing all subjects taught and will be prepared by the training coordinator. Retake of exams is at the discretion of the County Extension Staff.

**Volunteer Time** — The final stage of MGEV training is spent volunteering on behalf of Cooperative Extension. Each trainee is required to complete 50 hours of volunteer service in Extension-approved projects and programs within 12 months of training (or other date set by the training coordinator) and 25 hours each year thereafter.

## Core Horticultural Training

To provide consistency in the Georgia MGEV training and preparation, all MGEV Trainees will complete 40 hours of core horticultural training covering required and elective topics. Thirty-four core training hours are to be spent covering required topics, and a minimum of six hours elective topics should complete the core horticultural training. Tours may supplement but not replace the required 40 hours of classroom instruction.

REQUIRED topics include:

- Introduction to Cooperative Extension and the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program; Basic Botany; Plant Physiology; Soil and Plant Nutrition; Basic Entomology; Basic Pathology; Weed Identification and Control; Integrated Pest Management; Vegetable and Herb Gardening, including insects and diseases; Herbaceous and Woody Ornamentals, including insects and diseases; Planting and Maintenance of Ornamentals; Troubleshooting Ornamental Plant Problems; Developing a Water-Wise Landscape; Turf Selection and Maintenance, including insects and disease; Composting, Grasscycling, and Mulching; and Leadership, Communications, and Basic Office Procedures.

ELECTIVE topics include:

- Fruit Gardening; Indoor Plants; Landscape Design Principles; Plant Propagation; Structural and Household Pests; Living and Gardening with Wildlife; Plants and People; Water Gardening; Gardening with Children, and Wildflower and Butterfly Gardening.

## Volunteer Service & Project Proposal Forms

The mission of the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program in Georgia is to assist Cooperative Extension in providing information to the public through volunteer service and educational programs/

projects addressing consumer horticulture and gardening topics. The volunteer service requirements should reflect the mission and goals of Cooperative Extension.

The primary service obligation of each Master Gardener Extension Volunteer is to the Extension Office with which he or she signed the UGA Volunteer Agreement.

Volunteer service credit is given when time is spent in support of Extension-approved projects and programs that are focused on the Georgia MGEV Program Initiatives or in support of Extension's educational mission. Only time volunteered on Extension-approved projects will be counted toward volunteer service requirements. New projects should be submitted to the Agent for review and approval via the Project Proposal Form.

Volunteer service at other events, including events in other Extension program areas, may count at the local County Extension Staff/MG Extension Volunteer Coordinator's discretion if the service is educational in nature (i.e. teaching, leading activities), but must have prior approval.

On occasion when cross-county collaborations have been approved for educational programs/projects, volunteer service should be credited wherever it occurs.

Volunteers residing in a nonparticipating county (any county that does not have a county agent or the support staff required to manage a MG Extension Volunteer program) should be notified that volunteer service is expected to be performed within a participating county.

Service at fund raising events should directly benefit CAES, Cooperative Extension, or CE-approved Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program activities in order to be counted as volunteer service toward the annual requirement.

Project Proposal Forms will be used to submit project requests to Extension for consideration.

### **Suggested Educational Projects**

- Children's programs for ages under 18 at 4-H clubs, libraries, schools, gardens
- Civic and garden club presentations, including speaking engagements, lectures, and demonstrations
- Community and demonstration gardens, including planning and maintaining historic projects and conducting educational tours
- Horticultural Shows: judge or conduct vegetable or flower shows or science fairs
- Exhibits: prepare/present information about horticultural/environmental topics
- Extension Office: answer phone questions, perform general office duties, assist walk-in clients
- Habitat for Humanity: teach skills in gardening, landscaping, and composting
- Home Garden Visits: educate homeowners per site visits or phone consultations
- Newsletters: write/research/edit for homeowner audiences and Master Gardener Extension Volunteer newsletters
- Plant Clinics & Fairs: organize/participate/answer questions
- Writing: assist/conduct research for fact sheets, brochures, and power point presentations, newspaper & magazine articles, and writing projects
- Teaching Adult Classes: for ages 18+
- TV & Radio Programs: provide information on horticultural/environmental topics

### **Suggested Administrative Projects**

- Time served in county or regional MG Extension Volunteer programs maintaining mailing lists, databases, web pages, newsletters, assisting with grant preparation, preparing for/ attending board or committee meetings
- Special committees/programs/activities approved by County Extension Staff

## **Service that does not qualify:**

- Volunteer service performed on behalf of another organization, such as Master Naturalists
- Attendance at state, regional or local MG organization or MG Extension Volunteer meetings
- Attendance at training, tours, or continuing education classes when acting as a participant and not as an instructor or facilitator
- Any activity where payment is received for services

## **Active MGEV Status**

To maintain active status as a Master Gardener Extension Volunteer, an individual must have on file a current UGA Volunteer Agreement, successful background investigation, supporting intent to volunteer, and identified volunteer roles.

Individuals are required to volunteer a minimum of 25 hours per year in approved Extension education projects or programs.

It is the responsibility of the individual to accurately and punctually report volunteer service time. The submission of the individual Annual Summary of MGEV Activities report by the published due date and County Extension Staff confirmation will verify completion of yearly requirements to maintain active status.

MGEV membership in any MG organization is not required and does not substitute for the above requirement for active MGEV status.

## **Continuing Education**

MGEVs are encouraged to expand/update their horticultural knowledge through professional development opportunities, such as advanced training, workshops, classes, and seminars. Training experiences can be recorded in the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Logbook.

Attendance at events where the MGEV is the student does not qualify as volunteer service, but can be tracked in individual logbooks as "continuing education."

## **Local Program Structure**

Successful Georgia MGEV programs function under the direction of a local Extension Agent, a program coordinator, and team-based organizational structure.

The local Extension Agent guides and directs the educational programming conducted by MGEVs and approves all projects to be conducted under the auspices of Cooperative Extension. Extension agents are encouraged to establish a team-based organizational structure for the MGEV program and have regularly scheduled planning sessions with team leaders for communication, decision-making, and project approval.

Program coordinators are largely responsible for administrative tasks, including volunteer hour collection, reporting, training coordination, recognition, and project scheduling and administration. This can be a paid or volunteer position. The program coordinator may be authorized to approve MGEV projects. MGEVs share in the responsibility of administrative tasks by completing individual and project record keeping and reporting.

A team-based structure includes a tier of project/team coordinators and supporting team members who take the initiative and leadership for MGEV educational programming efforts. Team leaders are encouraged to participate in regular planning sessions with the Extension Agent to ensure MGEV-led projects and programming continue to meet local issues and needs and can be served by the existing volunteer corps. Project leaders are eligible for special training opportunities and recognition. This team structure contributes to the strength and longevity of Extension programming within a community.

MG Organizations or associations (MGOs) serve the purpose of supporting Cooperative Extension and the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer experience. Formal MGOs are not required. The leadership structure of MGOs can provide the framework to delegate project responsibilities and tasks as well as create a communication network between the Agent, coordinators, and volunteers. Meetings, events and gatherings of the MGO provide camaraderie, networking and social opportunities to MGEVs, enhancing the volunteer experience.

Master Gardener Organizations do not substitute for Extension oversight and approval of MGEV projects and volunteer activities. MGOs may suggest and make recommendations for, but not give final approval to, projects that count for MGEV service.

Membership in a MGO is not required for active status and is not a substitute for active status.

Volunteers (whether or not receiving compensation) may have liability coverage under the General Liability, State Tort Claims Act, and Auto Liability policy when participating in a structured volunteer program organized, controlled, and directed by the University for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the University of Georgia. MGOs are strongly encouraged to have their own general liability policy for any activity not organized, controlled, or directed by The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

## **Conflict Resolution**

Any conflict or issue brought by or related to a MG Extension Volunteer should be addressed first by the County Extension Staff with responsibility for the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program in that county. The County Extension Staff should take the necessary steps to resolve the conflict. The County Extension Staff shall inform the State Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Coordinator (State Program Coordinator) about the matter and ultimate resolution.

If resolution at the local (County Extension Staff) level is not possible, the County Extension Staff must contact the State Program Coordinator for inclusion in the resolution process. The State Program Coordinator is charged with issuing a recommendation which is to be followed by the County Extension Staff and MG Extension Volunteer. The State Program Coordinator shall inform the District ANR PDC about the issue and recommended resolution.

If the State Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Coordinator's recommendation is not accepted by:

- **MG Extension Volunteer** — The State Program Coordinator will provide the MG Extension Volunteer with all possible options included within the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program policies and procedures as well as addressing his/her grievance with the District Director and/or the Associate Dean of Extension who shall decide on the matter and inform the State Master Gardener Coordinator of the ultimate resolution.
- **County Extension Staff** — The State MG Coordinator will contact the District Director who shall decide on the matter and inform the Associate Dean of Extension and State Program Coordinator of the ultimate resolution.

If a decision cannot be made by the District Director or if any party does not agree with the proposed solution), the matter will be submitted to the Associate Dean of Extension who shall decide on the matter and inform the involved parties.

Every effort should be made to achieve prompt and effective problem resolution at the lowest level possible. If the complaint involves another person, the MG Extension Volunteer is encouraged to first deal directly with the person involved.

## Dismissing a MGEV

A MGEV can be relieved of his/her title and privileges at any time, at the discretion of the local coordinator, Extension Agent, County Extension Coordinator, and the District Extension Director, in the event that the MGEV demonstrates actions that are in conflict with the mission and goals of UGA Cooperative Extension. Grounds for dismissal of a MGEV may include but are not limited to the following:

- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing a volunteer assignment
- Theft of property
- Misuse of funds, equipment, or materials
- Illegal, violent, or unsafe acts
- Inappropriate use of the MG Extension Volunteer Title or Badge
- Harassment, abuse, or mistreatment of clients or coworkers
- Not following Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program policies and procedures

According to the Volunteer Agreement Form that all MG Extension Volunteers must sign, both UGA and the volunteer have the right to end the volunteer relationship at any time for any reason, and without advance notice. Except in cases of egregious actions by the volunteer, the local program coordinator should always notify the State Program Coordinator and their District Extension Director before terminating a volunteer.

## Public Distribution of Materials Developed by MGEVs

MGEVs have opportunity to develop educational materials for public distribution to address gardening topics, including articles for print or web and presentations/PowerPoint's. All material should be original work or should properly reference sources when appropriate and provide proper credit for non-original photos, images, and content.

The UGA CAES Web Style Guide provides guidance for image use.

[\(<http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/octs/resources/web-style/images.html#permission>\)](http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/octs/resources/web-style/images.html#permission)

- The UGA Style Guide is also a useful resource.  
[\(<http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/styleguide2013.pdf>\)](http://www.caes.uga.edu/publications/styleguide2013.pdf)
- MGEVs cannot deviate from printed UGA pesticide recommendations or use pesticide recommendations from other states.
- Materials should be reviewed by Extension Agent, Sponsor, or Specialist prior to release to public or media.
- Follow University guidelines for logo and trademark use  
[\(<http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/octs/resources/logos/usage.html>\)](http://www.caes.uga.edu/unit/octs/resources/logos/usage.html)
- By-lines for MGEVs should read, "John Brown, Master Gardener Extension Volunteer, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, Pecan County"

## Commercial Recommendations

Questions concerning commercial production of crops and/or pest control for commercial producers should be referred to the County Extension Staff.

Active MG Extension Volunteers may make noncommercial cultural and pesticide recommendations provided they are consistent with published Georgia Cooperative Extension recommendations. The Georgia Pest Management Handbook will be the reference for all pesticide recommendations.

Extension Staff must approve written materials prepared by MG Extension Volunteers prior to release for publication.

## **Support provided by UGA Cooperative Extension**

Georgia Master Gardener programs are supported by the direction of the State Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Office (State Program Office) in the Department of Horticulture, University of Georgia, Griffin campus.

The State Program Office (SPO) provides developmental support for new MGEV programs, including management materials and training, planning assistance, and guidance.

## **Advanced Training**

Advanced Training is for the purpose of intensively training active MGEVs on specific subjects beyond the core horticultural training to further equip them as educators of environmentally sound horticulture.

Advanced training is sponsored by UGA Cooperative Extension and must be approved by the State Program Office. A list of approved training criteria is available from the State MG Extension Volunteer Program office or the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer web site.

Individuals must be active MGEVs to be eligible to attend Advanced Training.

Advanced Training categories include Sustainable Gardens and Landscapes (SGL), Water Quality and Management (WQM), Youth and Community Gardening (YCG), Diagnostics and Technology (DT), Urban Forestry and Ecology (UFE), or Required (R). The "required" category includes training in communications, creative teaching techniques, or leadership.

**Silver Star Recognition** — Recognition for volunteers who have successfully completed a generalist advanced training program consisting of five different Advanced Training sessions, including one Required (R) training session.

**Gold Star Recognition** — Recognition for volunteers who have successfully completed a specialist advanced training program consisting of six Advanced Training sessions, 3 of which will be in the same AT category and one of which will be a Required (R) training session; and completion of an educational project related to a specialty subject area.

Only two training sessions taken previously for Silver Star Recognition will count as electives toward the required number of training sessions for Gold Star Recognition.

MGEVs do not need to have earned the Silver Star to in order to begin the Gold Star program.

A Gold Star Application, including project proposal, must be submitted to the County Extension Staff with copy to State Office prior to commencing the Gold Star process. Project approval from the County Extension Office is required before and after project completion. Application form for Gold Star Recognition is available on the Master Gardener Extension Volunteer web site.

MGEVs with Gold Star Recognition agree to be a resource to Extension for the chosen specialty subject area.

## **Relocation and Transfer**

Individuals who train as Master Gardeners in other states may move to Georgia and request to continue volunteer service. MGEVs who have trained in Georgia may relocate to another part of the state and request to continue volunteer service in a new county.

Extension Agent/Sponsor of the new county should contact the Agent/Sponsor for the individual's previous county or state program to review the transferring individual's status and accomplishments in the Master Gardener program.

An "Application for Transfer" form is available to guide the process.

If it has been five (5) years or more since training and active volunteering, the individual may need to audit the entire MG Extension Volunteer Program Training program and may be required to take and pass the midterm and final exams.

Transferring MGEVs are required to follow Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program policies, including the completion of a UGA Volunteer Agreement and background investigation.

### **Out-of-State:**

MG Extension Volunteers transferring to Georgia must show proof of Master Gardener Volunteer status from a previous state (i.e. Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Certificate, completed Logbook or letter from a County Extension County Extension Staff indicating fulfillment of the training and required hours of volunteer work).

Transfer MG Extension Volunteers should purchase the current Georgia MG Extension Volunteer Handbook and Badge. These should be ordered through the State Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Office.

County Extension Staff will determine how many and what classes should be audited by transferring MG Extension Volunteers. Staff should consider the state and geographic region of transferee's training as well as length of time since initial training and active volunteering. At a minimum, transferring MGEVs should participate in an "Introduction to the Georgia Master Gardener Program" session (webinar version is acceptable). Upon completion of audited courses and 25 hours of volunteer service, a transfer MG Extension Volunteer will become certified as a Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer and should be presented with a Georgia MG Extension Volunteer Certificate and badge. Every year thereafter, 25 hours of volunteer service is required to remain active.

### **In-State:**

Individuals who have successfully completed MGEV training in Georgia can transfer to an existing MGEV program with the approval of the local Extension Agent/Sponsor.

Transferring MGEVs should complete a new UGA Volunteer Agreement for the new county in which he/she will volunteer. Copies of application for background investigation and approval status should be forwarded to the new office.

Transferring MGEVs must show proof of Master Gardener Volunteer status from previous county (i.e. Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Certificate, completed Logbook or letter from a County Extension County Extension Staff indicating fulfillment of the training and required hours of volunteer work) and participate in on-going projects in new county.

Extension Agent/Sponsor of the new county should contact the Agent/Sponsor for the individual's previous county or state program to review the transferring individual's status and accomplishments in the Master Gardener program.

MGEVs transferring in-state must be willing to abide by operating procedures in the new host county.

### **Recognition**

At the completion of the MGEV training requirements (40 hours classroom training, 70 percent or better score on both midterm and final exams, and 50 hours of initial volunteer service), individuals are recognized as a Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer. They receive a certificate and personalized name badge and become eligible to attend Advanced Training opportunities. This recognition is renewed annually when active status is maintained.

Georgia MGEVs can earn Advanced Training recognition at the Silver or Gold Star level (see Advanced Training policy).

Georgia MGEVs are recognized at the state level for their service as MGEVs and are given awards upon reaching service milestones. As MGEVs reach service milestones, recognition requests are made to the State Program Office.

Honorary Master Gardener — An informal honorary title recognizing a Georgia citizen who exemplifies the best goals and objectives of the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program. This recognition does not confer current, active status.

Lifetime Master Gardener — Recognition for a MGEV who has completed 10 or more years of active volunteer service in Georgia. Individuals with this recognition must continue to meet and report the annual 25-hour volunteer service requirement to maintain active MGEV status.

Individual recognitions are available at the discretion of the State Master Gardener Coordinator and the local program coordinator.

## **Certificates**

The State Program Office provides certificates for recognizing MGEVs. Blank regular certificates are ordered from the State Program Office, personalized at the county office, and presented when the volunteer achieves the initial 50-hour service commitment. Service award certificates are personalized at the SPO and mailed out to county offices. Personalized Advanced Training Certificates are also provided from SPO after verifying that all requirements have been met.

## **Badges**

The State Program Office creates personalized official program name badges for individuals who complete program requirements to become a MGEV (cost of one badge is included in training fees).

## **Volunteer Service Awards**

Georgia MGEVs are recognized at the state level for their service as MGEVs and are given awards upon reaching service milestones. As MGEVs reach service milestones, recognition requests are made to the State Program Office.

## **Financial Management**

The Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program is administered by the University of Georgia through the local Cooperative Extension offices. The University of Georgia is a public tax-supported institution of higher learning. All monies received by UGA in support of local Georgia MG Extension Volunteer Programs are considered public funds and are to be handled according to UGA policies. The Associate Dean for Extension has delegated County Cooperative Extension financial management responsibility through the District Directors to the County Extension Coordinators. (See COUNTY OPERATIONS COUNTY FUNDS POLICY Revised June 2014.

<http://www.caes.uga.edu/intranet/coextopr/fiscalcomp/documents/2014CountyFundsPolicy-June2014.pdf>

## **Contributions**

Gratuitous payments for any activity on behalf of UGA Cooperative Extension are strictly prohibited. Contributions may be made directly to county or state MGEV organizations or to a County Extension Account.

## **Liability Coverage for Volunteers**

The State Tort Claims policy protects the State, University of Georgia, and the University System of Georgia Board of Regents against liability for torts (wrongful acts) committed by their employees

while acting within the course and scope of their official duties of employment. The limits of liability are statutorily set at \$1,000,000 per person and \$3,000,000 per occurrence.

General liability is provided for the University of Georgia through the General Liability Agreement. The General Liability policy provides coverage for those employees of the State, University of Georgia, and the University System of Georgia Board of Regents against personal liability for damages arising out of the performance of their job duties. The limits of liability are \$1,000,000 per person and \$3,000,000 per occurrence.

Volunteers (whether or not receiving compensation) may have liability coverage under the General Liability, State Tort Claims Act, and Auto Liability policy while participating in a structured volunteer program organized, controlled, and directed by the University for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the University of Georgia.

MG Extension Volunteers should report immediately any accident or incident that occurs during MG Extension Volunteer activities to Extension staff who will then advise the State Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Coordinator.

Organizations are strongly encouraged to have their own general liability policy for any activity not organized, controlled, or directed by The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

## Use of Official Logos

The Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer logo is trademarked and the property of the University of Georgia CAES. In addition to the above logo, UGA CAES also uses the appellation "Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer" and "Reaching Out" in connection with the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program. The use of the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer logo on promotional materials, web sites or banners should include the "trademarked" symbol ® and is reserved for use only with approved Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program activities.

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## Equal Opportunity

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