MG SPROUTS

Horticulture Activities for Kids

PROJECT GUIDE

UGA extension

MG SPROUTS

The University of Georgia

Department of Horticulture

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About the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program

The Georgia Master Gardener™ Program is a volunteer training program that connects Extension, gardeners, and communities. Since 1979, Extension agents have trained volunteers to help fulfill UGA Cooperative Extension's mission of helping Georgians become healthier, more productive, financially independent and environmentally responsible.

Representing a variety of personalities, professions and talents, Georgia Master Gardeners are trained volunteers with unique skills and abilities who share a passion for teaching others about gardening. Young and old, these dedicated men and women are motivated by a desire to serve their communities, and are eager to reach out to share their experiences and knowledge with each other and their neighbors.

Georgia Master Gardeners enthusiastically extend the reach of Cooperative Extension by providing practical advice and information about gardening. Each certified Master Gardener provides at least 25 hours of volunteer service annually to their local Cooperative Extension office in support of Extension-approved events and projects. The variety of Master Gardener projects across Georgia reflects the combination of a passion for gardening with a passion for teaching others about good gardening practices.

Extension-approved Master Gardener projects include hands-on demonstrations, workshops, plant clinics, educational display gardens, community gardens, youth projects, school gardens, and lunch-and-learn presentations, to name a few. Many Master Gardeners work right in the Extension Office answering gardening questions on the phone and assisting walk-in clients. Along with their gardening knowledge, they contribute valuable skills, like photography, writing, editing, event planning, teaching, and leadership.

Though they may initially join the program to learn more about gardening, many Master Gardeners say the friendships they make and experiences they have while volunteering together are the biggest rewards of the program.

Big Ideas from MG SPROUTS

Plants grow from seeds and seeds come from flowers.

Plants grow in a natural and complex world filled with diversity.

Plants grow in soil; and gardeners can help the earth by composting to make good soil for plants to grow in.

Through gardening and growing plants, we can express creativity, culture and promote sharing.

Caring for plants and other living things is engaging and an enjoyable experience.

The things we grow and the ways we care for them can affect the health of the environment.

Section 1: PROJECT GUIDE

MG SPROUTS PROJECT DESCRIPTION

MG SPROUTS is a Master Gardener Extension Volunteer-led horticulture project aimed at youth ages 6-8. It is delivered through a six-session program, which may be repeated throughout the year in order to serve more youth participants. Libraries are logical partners in project delivery, but other community locations such as after-school programs, day camps, hospitals and other organizations serving children would also be good partners. The intent is to provide MGEVs with plant-related activities that excite youth about horticulture, help them establish relationships with caring adults, and allow for some self-exploration of the plant world. These activities are simple but effective, without extraordinary burden on the volunteer. A learning garden is not necessary. The activities can be implemented with simple supplies or observations of the landscape at home or the host site. The program may be offered outdoors or indoors and at any season or time of day.

Popular children's literature provides a base for each session, and each session includes active and creative exploration of related topics. As sessions are explored, connections will be made between horticultural and gardening practices and taking care of the environment. There is even a take-home for parents: each session for the youth is linked to corresponding UGA Cooperative Extension publications so that the adults can learn more between lessons. Each youth completing all six sessions earns their "MG SPROUT" certificate!

MGEVs planning to conduct MG SPROUTS are asked to conduct at least one project, consisting of six, hour-long sessions starting and ending between January 1 and December 31. Two adult volunteer leaders are required to be present for groups of up to 12 youth. Groups of 18 youth require three adults present. Groups should not be larger than 18 youth. Background screening is required for all participating volunteers.

GOALS

Provide fun activities that allow youth to develop positive experiences, make personal choices to explore growing plants, and connect horticultural and gardening practices with the health of the environment.

BENEFITS

- the joy of introducing children to the fun and wonder of gardening
- being a part of a rewarding project with good results
- fun gardening activities

MG SPROUTS PROJECT BOX CONTENT

MG SPROUTS is designed with all the tools you need in one place. See Section 2 ***Resources*** for lists, examples and details.

BOOKS: Six popular children's books with a gardening or horticultural theme.

SUPPLIES: Assorted craft and horticultural supplies.

VOLUNTEER TOOLS: Project Guide, session plans, and supporting tools to help you set up and carry out a MG SPROUTS project.

PROJECT BUDGET

MG SPROUTS can be done on a very modest budget. Here are some ideas

Item	Anticipated cost	Suggestions to reduce costs
Project supply box	$0.00 - $10.00	Use a copy paper box with lid from Extension office. Cover in fun-patterned paper.
Story books	$0.00 - $90.00	Borrow from host library; keep on reserve list; purchase used books.

Item	Anticipated cost	Suggestions to reduce costs
Activity Sheets	$0.00	Copy at Extension office.
Horticulture and Craft Supplies	$25.00 - $50.00	Ask for donations, stock up during back-to-school sales.
Journals	$0.00 - $36.00	Make construction paper covers, 3-hole punch, bind with yarn.

PROJECT TEAM

MG SPROUTS is designed to be carried out by a team of Master Gardener Extension Volunteers, all of whom have successfully completed background screening, 4-H Working with Youth training, and MG SPROUTS project training. The purpose of the MG SPROUTS project team is to meet the need for plant-related and gardening activities for youth in the community. By providing fun, hands-on activities, participants will have the opportunity to develop positive experiences, make personal choices to explore growing plants, develop relationships with caring adults, and connect horticulture and gardening practices with the health of the environment.

MG SPROUTS is designed for implementation by a team of Master Gardener Extension Volunteers who have a desire to work with youth and who have successfully completed background screening, risk management training, and MG SPROUTS project training. The team is responsible for designating a leader who will work with the Extension agent or staff to guide the team to project completion. It is the team that carries out the day-to-day, week-to-week details of the project, while the Agent meets with the team regularly to guide the team through project completion. Regular communication with the local 4-H agent is also encouraged so that project results are captured and reported. Role descriptions for team members can be found in the Resources section. Extension agents and staff will provide support and materials to the team and its coordinator in order to set up a MG SPROUTS project and will be responsible for sending final results to the State Program Office of the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

- "Growing a MG SPROUTS Project" online training session or MG SPROUTS Advanced Training– should include Risk Management Training from Georgia 4-H/UGA Extension
- Supply list to create a MG SPROUTS project supply box
- ***MG SPROUTS Project Handbook***
- Additional supplemental publications from UGA Extension publications (www.ugaextension.com)
- ***The Georgia Master Gardener Handbook***
- Other Extension or Extension-approved books, pamphlets, fact sheets, etc.

TIME REQUIRED:

One hour between sessions for team meetings, plus additional time for planning, preparation, sending reminders, evaluating, and reporting during the program year.

BENEFITS TO AGENT:

- Effective time management
- Meeting community need through targeted program
- Developing professional growth through delegation
- Satisfied volunteers
- Recognition for contributing to a statewide youth horticulture program
- Recognition for fostering middle-management volunteer leadership within educational programming

BENEFITS TO VOLUNTEER TEAM:

- Volunteers will have opportunity to be a positive role model for youth
- Professional development in youth development and leadership

- Opportunity to develop relationship with other MGEVs
- Self-satisfaction
- Opportunity to contribute to the county 4-H volunteer program
- Opportunity to receive positive support and growth experiences
- Receive training in youth development

MEASURING PROGRESS

MG SPROUTS is a project with six sessions. Over the course of the six sessions, youth will show an increased awareness of horticulture, gardening, and plants. An assessment activity will be used each session to get a sense of participants' initial experience with and awareness of plants and then to document what learning has taken place in and after the session.

At the beginning of each session, participants will work on the first two sections of a KWL (Know, Want to Know, Learned) sheet based on that session's activities. At the beginning of each subsequent session, participants will complete the final section of the KWL sheet from the previous session. The KWL primary purpose is as a learning tool for the participants, but this approach helps volunteers get a sense of the impacts of their work and helps to record the impacts of work that MGEVs do on a statewide level. Volunteer leaders will work with the agent to summarize the results for sessions 2 & 4 (directions included in section 3) and share with the State Program Office. After each sheet is complete and or tallied, it will be saved and inserted in the My SPROUTS journal at the last session for the participant to keep.

Ideally, a successful MG SPROUTS project will create demand for more youth gardening activities, such as a 4-H garden club. MGEVs can become trained to lead youth garden clubs or provide leadership to other adults in the community who would be willing to bring these opportunities to youth.

REPORTING AND SHARING

MG SPROUTS projects fall under the MGEV Initiative, Gardening with Youth, and should be categorized this way in the Georgia MGEV record keeping system.

Be sure to track information via the Session Reports for each session and overall Master Gardener Activity Report for the project so that totals can be included in online reporting. The SPROUTS team leader can oversee entry of data, such as in-kind contributions, total number of contacts, number of volunteer hours contributed, and number of instructional hours, into the MGEV record keeping system.

At the conclusion of the project, Agents can pull the tallied data from the MGEV record keeping system and transfer it to GA COUNTS. Please use keywords such as "youth horticulture," "SPROUTS," "and horticulture/gardening." If you are offering the project at a local library, you can also tag it as "community based program." Likewise, if conducted at school after class time, you could add the additional "after school program" tag.

Results from the KWL activities conducted in sessions 2 and 4 (1, 3 & 5 are optional) will be reported via the MG SPROUTS Project impact site. These results will be compiled statewide for use in an overall impact statement about MGEV-led youth horticulture efforts.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

COMPLETED	TASK	NOTES
SIX MONTHS OR MORE PRIOR TO FIRST SESSION		
	Contact interested volunteers to set training session. (All participating volunteers at this point must have successfully completed background screening and 4-H Working with Youth training.)	AGENT SPONSOR
	Schedule "Growing a MG SPROUTS Project." Provide a copy of the MG SPROUTS Project Guide to each member of the project team.	AGENT SPONSOR Available as a pre-recorded webinar session to be viewed locally, statewide AT, or Agent can conduct.
	Form team and determine who will be the TEAM LEADER.	TEAM of interested MGEVs
	Conduct a Growing an MG Sprouts Project training for all MG SPROUTS team members. (Required)	AGENT SPONSOR
	Determine who will be the TEAM LEADER.	TEAM/AGENT SPONSOR
	Decide upon a venue for the MG SPROUTS project and assign dates for the six (6) sessions. Team Leader should contact the venue and schedule the six (6) sessions. The Team Leader should create a contact list for the team, sharing with everyone (including Extension office).	TEAM LEADER /TEAM/ AGENT SPONSOR
	Team Leader schedules the next meeting.	AGENT SPONSOR/TEAM LEADER/TEAM
THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO FIRST SESSION		
	Schedule a team session to review the MG SPROUTS project materials.	TEAM LEADER/ AGENT SPONSOR
	Team Leader confirms venue and dates for the six (6) sessions. Appoint one lead volunteer to deliver the lesson and identify multiple support volunteer roles for each session. (See Making the Most of MG Sprouts in the Resources section of this guide.) Lead volunteers are responsible for reviewing the materials prior to the next meeting. Delegate other team responsibilities for the 6 sessions. A copy of the final project schedule should be shared with the Extension office.	TEAM LEADER/TEAM
	Decide how promotion and registration will be handled and by whom.	TEAM LEADER
	Develop time frame for promotion and registration process.	TEAM LEADER
	Decide how story books will be acquired.	TEAM LEADER
TWO MONTHS PRIOR TO FIRST SESSION		
	Review the procedures for working with the group of youth.	AGENT SPONSOR
	Review the information to be collected during each session and the process for returning information to the Extension office.	AGENT SPONSOR
	Communicate the process for sharing the MG SPROUTS project box. (I.e., will it be stored at the Extension office between sessions or will it pass between MGEVs?)	TEAM LEADER/TEAM

COMPLETED	TASK	NOTES
	Each session lead volunteer should present an overview of the session they have chosen. Any additional supplies or materials that are needed should be identified and a plan made to gather them for the supply box.	TEAM LEADER
	Agent Sponsor will review with MGEVs the procedure for working with the group of youth as well as the information to be collected during each session and the process for returning information to the Extension office.	AGENT
	Schedule the next team meeting after the first session.	TEAM LEADER
	Review the SPROUTS time line to determine additional preparation steps (I.e.; plants needed in session 1). Gather any additional supplies or materials.	TEAM
SESSION 1		
	Have fun presenting SPROUTS!	TEAM
AFTER SESSION 1		
	Lead volunteer for session 1 should share what happened during their session time.	TEAM
	Decide if any additional steps should be taken.	TEAM/TEAM LEADER
	Answer any questions about youth audiences and protocol. Review the information collected during the first session and the process for returning information to the Extension office.	AGENT SPONSOR
	Communicate the process for sharing the MG SPROUTS project box. Any supplies need refreshing?	TEAM LEADER /TEAM
	Schedule the next team meeting after the third session.	TEAM LEADER
SESSIONS 2 & 3		
	Have fun presenting SPROUTS!	TEAM
AFTER SESSION 3 (Mid-way point)		
	Lead volunteers for sessions 2 and 3 share what happened during their session time.	TEAM
	Score KWL sheets from Session 2.	TEAM/TEAM LEADER
	Decide if any additional steps should be taken.	TEAM/TEAM LEADER
	Communicate the process for sharing the MG SPROUTS project box. Any supplies need refreshing?	TEAM LEADER /TEAM
	Schedule the next team meeting after the fifth session.	TEAM LEADER
SESSIONS 4 & 5		
	Have fun presenting SPROUTS!	TEAM
AFTER SESSION 5		
	Lead volunteers for sessions 4 and 5 should share what happened during their session time.	TEAM
	Score KWL sheets from Session 4.	TEAM/TEAM LEADER
	Decide if any additional steps should be taken.	TEAM/TEAM LEADER
	Communicate the process for sharing the MG SPROUTS project box. Any supplies need refreshing?	TEAM LEADER /TEAM
	Determine schedule for final activity.	TEAM LEADER/TEAM

COMPLETED	TASK	NOTES
	Schedule the next team meeting after the sixth session.	TEAM LEADER
AFTER SESSION 6		
	Lead volunteer for session 6 should share what happened during their session time.	TEAM
	Review and evaluate the entire project:	
	1. Were volunteers adequately prepared for their roles? 2. Was the MG SPROUTS project box adequate? What was missing? 3. Review the 6 sessions. Were they successful in engaging the youth? Did they allow for self-exploration? 4. Did the youth connect horticultural activities with the health of the environment?	AGENT SPONSOR/TEAM LEADER/TEAM Review data.
	Write final Educational Activity project report.	AGENT SPONSOR OR VOLUNTEER
	Follow up with team members to thank them for their service and to share a copy of the final project report. Remind the Team Leader to send thank-you letter to host site and share a copy of the final project report.	AGENT SPONSOR
	Report project outcomes including KWL scores from sessions 2 & 4 via the MG SPROUTS Project Impact site (TBD).	AGENT SPONSOR

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