

November 17, 2015

Hendricks County Master Gardener Guidelines & Information

There have been a lot of questions and discussion regarding what types of activities count towards Master Gardener volunteer hours. This can often vary from county to county. This document cannot cover all possible scenarios, however the purpose of this document is to provide some clarification of a few common possibilities. Other activities not listed may count for volunteer hours- check with the MG County Coordinator to determine if the activity would be appropriate. This document will only apply to Master Gardeners in Hendricks County.

The primary objective of the Master Gardener program is to help others grow as we grow ourselves. The ultimate purpose of the program is to educate others about consumer horticulture to support Purdue Extension in Hendricks County.

All Master Gardeners are representatives of Purdue University and must maintain an active status to be engaged in volunteer activities on behalf of the Purdue Master Gardener Program.

To remain in compliance with the Purdue Master Gardener Policy Guide (MG-5-W) each Master Gardener **MUST** complete 12 volunteer activity hours and 6 educational hours each year. These hours are due to the MG County Coordinator *prior* to November 1 of each year. Every year each Master Gardener volunteer must authorize Purdue Extension to search the National Sex Offender Public Registry and the Indiana Sex and Violent Offender Registry websites.

You are encouraged to submit hours monthly and not wait until the end of September. All of these hours can accrue towards ADVANCED levels.

Basic Requirements for Volunteer Hours:

1. The effort must truly be volunteer in nature. You should not receive payment with perhaps the exception of reasonable mileage at the county rate.
2. The project should be of a public nature and open to all.
3. The project should extend the Master Gardener's volunteer efforts beyond what is typical for them.

Acceptable Examples for Volunteer Hours:

- Planning and conducting an educational workshop for gardeners
- Developing a horticultural exhibit or demonstration garden for the public
- Writing a newspaper article, social media post or blog
- Presenting a session at a Master Gardener Class or meeting on a garden related topic
- Answering horticultural questions brought to the Extension Office
- Developing and conducting a youth related gardening program
- Time spent as a Hendricks County Master Gardener Association office or committee chair

Note: You may use both *reasonable* planning and preparation time and presentation/work time for public presentations and/or workshops.

Unacceptable Examples for Volunteer Hours:

- Answering questions or doing anything for which you are paid. (If you are being paid, DO NOT identify yourself as a Purdue Master Gardener in any way).
- Attending a horticulture trade show
- Working in your garden at home or in a neighbor's garden
- Doing physical labor with no educational value- cleaning up landscape beds at your church or for a public entity

Travel To and From an Approved Purdue Master Gardener Program or Project:

You may report *reasonable* amounts of travel time for programs and projects where you have played an active role as a Purdue Master Gardener volunteer.

Educational Training Hours:

There are a variety of opportunities for advanced training. Among these are:

- Attending **approved** Master Gardener Advanced training programs sponsored by this or other counties
- Attending a garden show **AND** attending educational sessions as part of the show. Please provide proof of attendance at educational programs for approval by the County MG Coordinator
- Attending any training which the Hendricks County Master Gardener Coordinator approves. There may be programs I am not aware of that qualify. Please provide an agenda in advance for approval
- The training offered during any regularly scheduled Hendricks County Master Gardener Association meeting will count for no more than one hour provided that it is of a topic relevant to consumer horticulture
- Time spent in travel to and from such an activity does NOT count toward advanced training hours

For Those Currently Participating in the Purdue Master Gardener Basic Training:

You may not begin to accrue volunteer hours until you have completed the training series and passed the exam.

Advanced training hours only begin to accrue once you have completed the Master Gardener training, passed the exam and completed all volunteer hours needed to become a Master Gardener.

Special Note: This document is only meant to provide clarification and guidelines. There are a lot of activities that could be considered but are not listed here. It is always a good idea to discuss these with the County Master Gardener Coordinator **prior** to undertaking any project or activity you intend to submit for volunteer or training hours.