

Gregg County VMS Reporting Guidelines & Instructions

By David Hackley

There have been recent questions and some confusion regarding earning and reporting the required volunteer and continuing education hours for becoming a certified master gardener and subsequently maintaining the certification. I felt it should be addressed here to clarify this issue.

The first requirement is to complete a 50-hour course of instruction in various horticulture topics. The basic curriculum is determined by the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service. Upon completion of the 50 hours of course instruction, master gardener interns at this point are required to complete 50 hours of volunteer service within one year of course completion. There are several areas of opportunity in the Gregg County Master Gardeners organization to fulfill this requirement.

As stated in the Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement:

“I understand that I am trained by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in the field of Horticulture and I am expected to extend research based information to the public on behalf of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In exchange for the minimum of 50 hours of Master Gardener Training provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, I will:

- Commit to a **minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service** to the horticultural programming efforts in _____ County within one year to become a certified Master Gardener.
- I understand that in order to maintain active status as a Master Gardener Volunteer, I must volunteer _____ (varies by county, but must be a **minimum 12 hours**) hours annually after my intern year and gain _____ (varies by county, but must be a **minimum 6 hours**) continuing education hours annually.
- Provide a record of this service as directed by the Master Gardener Program Coordinator...”

As you can see the volunteer hours required for certification do not include continuing education hours such as those obtained by attending monthly master gardener meetings where a program is presented. Once you have attained your certification, a minimum of 12 hours of volunteer service, and 6 hours of continuing education are required annually. One hour of credit is earned for each monthly meeting as long as an educational program is presented. Education hours may also be earned by attending other educational offerings associated with the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service.

To receive credit for volunteer and education hours, you must report them to the Agrilife Extension Service. This can be done through the VMS system, or if you do not have access to a computer, by completing a form available at the monthly meetings.

Below is information sent to members regarding how to use the VMS system for reporting hours. If you have questions regarding the VMS system, you can email me at puttdball@att.net.

Volunteer Hours Reporting System – Cheat Sheet

****Log-In (First time ONLY)****

1. Go to <https://texas.volunteersystem.org/>
2. At the bottom of the page, click on “New User/Password Problems” – this will take you to a forgotten password page. Enter in the email address you provided for the GCMGA Roster
3. Click “Receive email to access portal” button.
 - a. You will receive an email with a **temporary password**. **Copy the temporary password**.
 - b. Go back to <https://texas.volunteersystem.org/> enter your personal email and **Paste** the temporary password.
4. Once you’ve logged in, go in to the “Edit Profile” section and Change Your Password to something you will remember. (**Note: It is toward the bottom of the page. It’s a box that says “Change Password.” After you have chosen a password, make sure to hit the “Save Information” button at the bottom of the page.**)
5. From now on, you will log in with your personal email and your password that you chose.

Updating Profile Information:

How To

- 1.
2. Project (drop down menu), and the number of hours.
 - a. Note: There are now 2 categories for hours. *Please make sure you either enter Volunteer Hours or Continuing Education Hours.*
3. Click on Save Hours at the bottom of the page. You **MUST** save your hours each time you enter or they are not reported.

*Note: **Travel** to and from volunteer sites does not qualify as credit hours. Individuals may enter miles for personal records to

Contact Ethnicity	Male Adult	Male Youth	Female Adult	Female Youth
White	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Black	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
American Indian	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Hispanic	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Volunteer Hours Categories:

Select a Project	REQUIRED
Select a Project	
Adult Education	
Community Garden	
Continuing Education	
Media	
MG Administration	
Youth/Jr. Master Gardener	

Examples of Volunteer Hours:

Adult Education:

- A volunteer prepares and/or presents a program as a representative of the Master Gardener Program through the BCMGA Speaker's Bureau
- Performs an essential task regarding an exhibit, educational program, etc
- Provides education in one-to-one consulting - site visit, diagnosis, problem solving
- Prepares published printed material – website, news article, publication
- Clients Trained – report audience number, ie. 1-neighbor; 8 at Veggie Demo (When reporting hours, it will ask you for ethnicity of your contacts. If you are unable to determine ethnicity, please use the “Unknown” category.)

Community Garden: DIG, any other pre-approved garden

Continuing Education: BCMGA programs, garden center seminars, arboretum/botanical garden guided tours, state MG conference sessions, Extension Horticulture programs

Media: Website, publicity, television, radio, Facebook, blog

MG Administration: BCMGA Board, Fundraising, Plant Sale

Youth/Jr. Master Gardener: Support of a registered Jr. Master Gardener group, Extension sponsored youth program – ie. Pizza Ranch

Privacy & Security:

The Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Management website is a “secure” website. It has been reviewed by the Texas A&M System (Contracts & Grants division). If you notice the website address, it says “https” – the “s” in the address means that the website is secure. Your personal information will not be shared or accessed by unauthorized users.
