

Extension Master Gardeners

Situation

Extension Master Gardener volunteers are a vital part of K-State Research and Extension. Donating time in return for horticultural training, Extension Master Gardener volunteers help our agents meet the need for horticultural information in their communities. The Extension Master Gardener program is designed to provide trained volunteers to help meet that need at minimal cost.

The means of providing this information is diverse including horticultural "Response Lines," demonstration gardens, working garden shows and community events, public presentations and providing garden tours. Kansas Extension Master Gardener volunteers donated 100,308 hours during 2017 for a total value of over 2.2 million dollars. This is equivalent to 48 full time extension staff positions.

Extension Master Gardener volunteers are provided with the required continual education in best management practices, conservation of natural resources, waste management, integrated pest management, identification and selection of proper plant materials, and landscape design appropriate for healthy people, plants, and the environment.

Outcomes

Short-Term (Knowledge)

- Community members will have increased awareness of the EMG program.
- EMG volunteers will improve their horticultural skills and knowledge of best management practices, conservation of natural resources, waste management, integrated pest management, identification and selection of proper plant materials, and landscape design appropriate for healthy people, plants, and the environment.

Indicators

- Are more community members aware of the EMG program?
- Have EMG volunteers improved their knowledge and skills related to adaptable plant materials, best management practices, products and cultural practices?

Medium-Term (Behavior)

- EMG volunteers demonstrate leadership skills that they apply in the organization and community.
- By providing timely, accurate information, our Extension Master Gardener volunteers influence our clientele to use appropriate horticultural practices

Indicators

- What leadership skills do EMG volunteers demonstrate in the organization and the community?
- How does the information EMG volunteers provide influence clientele behaviors, including their use of fertilizers and pesticides?

Long-Term (Change in Condition)

- Extension Master Gardener volunteers, with their enthusiasm and commitment, influence family, friends and neighbors to use proven horticultural practices.
- Extension Master Gardener volunteers have a positive impact on the environment and improve the quality of life in the community by providing research-based information and promoting sound horticultural practices.

Indicators

- Do the family, friends and neighbors of EMG volunteers use proven horticultural practices?
- How do EMG volunteers work to have a positive impact on the environment and improve the quality of life in their communities?

Public Value

More than 1,300 Kansas Extension Master Gardener volunteers donated over 100,000 hours during 2017 for a total value of over 2.2 million dollars. This is equivalent to about 48 full time Extension staff positions.

Outputs

Participants: Potential volunteers who wish to develop their expertise in research-based horticultural practices and be willing to teach it to others.

Activities:

- Work with Ward Upham, State EMG Coordinator, who provides leadership in organizing and implementing Advanced Master Gardener Training each year as well as provide assistance with counties determining statewide rules and regulations.
- Basic training will provide a “flip-the-classroom” model to increase learning options and make the program more available to counties that are not near a training site.
- Active EMGs will receive ongoing training and program guidance at the county or district level. A web-based training system will be developed.
- EMGs will be provided with volunteer opportunities to complete their volunteer hour requirements.
- Horticulture Rapid Response Center - Provide Extension Master Gardeners rapid informational support if Horticulture Agent is unavailable.
- Weekly Newsletter - Provides timely information on current problems and appropriate cultural practices.
- New EMG training - Agents, specialists and industry leaders are used to provide accurate, research based horticultural training to beginning volunteers. Potential Extension Master Gardeners are given 40 hours of horticulture training in return for 40 hours of volunteer time. The basic training course consists of a minimum of 11 core-curriculum topics.
- Fall Advanced EMG Training - Provides classes in areas not covered in Basic Training or provides more in-depth information in areas that were covered.