

Questions & Answers on Master Gardener™ Certification/Recertification

What is the difference between certified and recertified? An individual (trainee) who has completed the Master Gardener training course, and contributed their 60 hours of volunteer time, is certified for one year following graduation. They are then considered a “veteran” and must recertify annually to remain a certified Coos County Master Gardener.

Why is recertification required? All volunteers benefit from receiving refreshers on diagnosing problems and providing appropriate advice and direction. Plus, information is constantly changing with new research and product test results, as well as new ideas on cultural treatment options. Therefore, veteran Master Gardeners who wish to provide answers to the public, or work in the capacity of an instructor, must recertify each year.

As a veteran, how do I recertify? Recertification comes from providing 20 hours of volunteer time each year - 10 hours in OUTREACH, and 10 hours in SUPPORT. Also, at least 10 hours must be devoted to classes, webinars or study courses for continuing education. A list of suggestions for all hours is on the next page.

What are continuing education hours? “I learned something” hours - those that you spend in classes and seminars which qualify for recertification, such as a MG Training classes, Fertilize Your Mind and the Spring Garden Series. See *CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES* below for more ideas.

What are OUTREACH hours? “I taught/shared something” hours - those that support the Master Gardener educational mission by providing direct public contact that is educational in nature, and also the hours spent in preparing for educational contact with the public. Examples would be working in the Plant Clinic or at the Farmers’ Market, demonstrations at the county fair, teaching classes at Fertilize Your Mind or in a school classroom, etc. Other OUTREACH hours could be “behind the scenes” such as writing an article for the newsletter or creating educational exhibits for a fair or festival booth. Answering questions in a community garden would also count. In that case you would count one-third of your total time in the garden as OUTREACH, and two-thirds as SUPPORT because you’re probably not instructing the entire time you’re working there. However, if it was a planned lesson time in the garden, posted so the public was aware a presentation would be given, you would count the entire time you were presenting the lesson, plus all the time you spent researching and preparing for the lesson. See *OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES* below for more ideas. *Note: Outreach hours were formerly called Educational Outreach hours.*

What are SUPPORT hours? “I helped with something” hours - the other hours (aside from the OUTREACH hours) that you contribute in support of the Master Gardener program. Helping at Fertilize Your Mind, the Spring Garden Series, or county fair would be SUPPORT hours – whether you are the planner, worker, clean-up crew, etc. Other ideas would be: serving as an officer or historian, making reminder calls, or mentoring a trainee. Attending MG meetings or helping with promotional activities also counts for SUPPORT. See *SUPPORT HOUR OPPORTUNITIES* below for more ideas.

Do I have to recertify? If you wish to work in the Plant Clinic, Farmers’ Market, give instruction at events such as Fertilize Your Mind, Coos County Fair, in classrooms, community gardens, etc., you must recertify. However, you can be a member of the Coos County Master Gardener Association without recertifying (must pay CCMGA dues). We ask that you still record any hours that you volunteer, as those hours are tabulated to show impact of the program in Coos County.

How important is recertification to the program? We encourage recertification, not only for your own personal benefit from continually learning and making connections, but also to ensure the program will prosper and grow. Veterans are needed to assist with training up each new class of trainees through staffing Plant Clinic and Farmers' Market hours. They are vital to the success of the program because they ensure knowledge is gained, and shared, throughout the community in a variety of venues and with the assistance of trainees.

What about Coos County Master Gardener Association (CCMGA) fundraisers, such as the plant sale?

Currently, trainees may count all hours contributed at the plant sale – working at setup, clean up and during the sale. Trainees should divide their hours – one-third toward OUTREACH and two-thirds toward SUPPORT. In the past only half the time contributed was allowed to be counted. This revision was made in order to make the trainee's 60 hours of time attainable. Because veterans are only required to give 20 volunteer hours total, they may count only half the hours they contribute to the plant sale. They, too, should count one-third toward OUTREACH and two-thirds toward SUPPORT. At this time no hours contributed BEFORE the plant sale, e.g., sterilizing pots, growing plants, making labels, etc., can be counted. We are waiting for direction from the state coordinator on whether or not those hours will be allowed to be counted.

What if I've been inactive and want to get involved again, or didn't get in all my hours last year?

We encourage all inactive MGs, or those who didn't get in enough hours last year, to become recertified. You may contribute your 10 hours of SUPPORT even if you're not certified. The OUTREACH hours are a little trickier because volunteers who are not certified should not be instructing/demonstrating. However, you can work alongside a veteran, in the role of a trainee, and get in your 10 hours that way. You also have the option of taking the recertification (open book) exam to recertify. Note: Any MG working at venues such as Fertilize Your Mind and the Farmers' Market must pay either a \$5 insurance fee, or their CCMGA dues which includes the \$5 insurance fee.

How do I report my hours? Hours can be recorded on paper, or in the online system at:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/vrs/> Instructions for using VRS can be found in the **VRS Instructions** document, or get assistance from the MG coordinator.

If you don't choose to use the online system, we would prefer you use the electronic **MG Timesheet 2017**, which is an Excel document. It automatically will calculate totals for you, which simplifies the recordkeeping process for all of us. If you do not have Excel on your computer, you can use the PDF (hard copy) version of that same document. Both can be found at extension.oregonstate.edu/coos – click on the Master Gardener link on the right side menu, then scroll down the Master Gardener page until you see the link to the document. If you choose the Excel version, a pop-up will ask for confirmation that you want to open the Excel document.

How do I sign up to volunteer at the Plant Clinic or Farmer's Market? The Plant Clinic and Farmers' Market schedules can be seen online at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/coos-county-master-gardener-calendars> You can get to that page from the main Extension website at extension.oregonstate.edu/coos – click on the Master Gardener link on the right side menu. Under that heading another link will drop down called Master Gardener Calendars. Click there to go to the calendar page where you will see the schedules. It allows you to scroll through the months and see both the Plant Clinic (orange) and Farmer's Market (green) calendars at once. If you click on any orange or green button it will pop up a window which will show you who is signed up for that date, or if there are available slots. Plant Clinic scheduling – contact Kathy Creason at jkcreason@frontier.com or 541-396-3665. Farmers' Market scheduling – contact Samantha Clayburn at samantha.clayburn@oregonstate.edu or 541-572-5263, ext, 25299. You may also sign up for both venues on the calendars at the Extension Office.



What are contacts and how do I report them?

Contacts are educational interactions between OSU Extension trained volunteers and individual community members. Contacts include class participants, face-to-face meetings (i.e. Farmers' Market), telephone calls and emails. Each and every conversation/interaction with an individual may be counted as a contact. For example, if Barney attends a workshop, comes into the plant clinic with a question and has questions two different weeks at the Farmers' Market, you would count a total of four contacts with Barney. To meet reporting requirements by the federal Civil Rights Act, OSU Extension must track the following information about contacts: race, ethnicity, gender and age (adult/youth). As a volunteer, you may ask for this information or observe it – but **YOU'RE NOT REQUIRED TO ASK**. Clients should be aware that providing this information to us is optional. **For all of our venues we have a contacts form that the MG volunteers are asked to use to track race, ethnicity, gender and age distinctions with the contacts you have. We realize it is sometimes your "best guess," but please make every effort to record those demographics with each contact made.**

Definitions:

- Race refers to a person's physical appearance, such as skin/hair/eye color, bone/jaw structure, etc.
- Ethnicity refers to cultural and/or geographic practices: ancestry, language, customs, beliefs... Example: Caucasian is a race, and within that race are ethnicities such as French, Asian, Spanish, etc.
- Nationality relates to a person's country of citizenship/origin.

Suggestions for Accumulating Volunteer Hours:

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES	TRAINING CLASSES – Attend Coos County Master Gardener training classes – Master Gardener training classes offered in other counties would also count. Check to see if they are open to the public and what the cost is. Curry and Douglas counties both offer trainings in January through March. Ask the MG coordinator for a copy of their class schedules if you cannot find it online.
	FERTILIZE YOUR MIND GARDEN SEMINAR CLASSES – Attend Fertilize Your Mind garden seminar classes – most classes at Fertilize Your Mind can be counted for recertification. The exception would be a class on recycling or backyard farming – topics that aren't directly related to growing.
	SPRING GARDEN SERIES CLASSES – Attend the Spring Garden Series classes offered by the South Coast Garden Association and Master Gardeners – all classes in the series (offered in February, March and April) count for recertification.
	MINI COLLEGE CLASSES – Attend classes at Mini-College. All classes at Mini-College count toward continuing education hours for recertification. MG veterans and trainees can also offer to volunteer in putting on the event; those hours would count toward SUPPORT.
	OTHER GARDENING CLASSES – Attend gardening/horticulture classes given by other entities, such as those offered at shows like the Lane County Home & Garden Show. Provide a description of the class to the MG coordinator to ensure the class can be counted. Sometimes a portion of MG monthly meetings is devoted to educational topics. That time can be counted toward continuing education; the remainder of the meeting time can be counted toward SUPPORT.
	ONLINE CLASSES – Participate in online garden classes such as those offered by OSU at https://pne.oregonstate.edu/catalog (scroll down to Gardening) There is a charge for most, but the Introduction to Plant Disease Diagnosis class is free. Other classes offered by community colleges and universities would likely also count – provide a description to the MG coordinator for evaluation.
	ONLINE WEBINARS – Tune in to an educational webinar such as those offered at http://www.extension.org/pages/25242/webinars-by-eorganic#.U3pPM_lXzg http://earthfort.com/training-education/webinars.html The eOrganic webinars at www.extension.org are free, others may charge a fee (responsibility of participating Master Gardener). Most are archived in case you miss the live showing. Only those that are horticulture related count – many of the eOrganic webinars are agriculture related.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

FARMERS' MARKET and PLANT CLINIC – during the season, work at the Farmers' Market booth in Coos Bay on Wednesdays (mornings or afternoons) or at the Bandon Farmers Market (second Friday of every month). Or work at the Plant Clinic in Myrtle Point on Monday or Thursday mornings.

PLAN A PRESENTATION – research a project on any garden-related topic, such as a new method for raised garden beds or container gardening. Preapprove this project with the MG coordinator, then do the research and document what you have found. Work alone or with a partner or team to make a presentation in person (as a demonstration at the fair, to a school class, service club, in a community garden, at a CCMGA meeting, etc.) or as an article for the newsletter or local paper. **CREATE A POSTER** - research could also be done on invasive species, or other topics, in order to create posters to be displayed in the Extension Office lobby, in the county fair booth, at Tomato-rama, etc. Talk to the MG coordinator before beginning a research project, and/or creating posters.

WEEDING PARTY – Research and plan an invasive plants weeding party at a local park or other venue. Determine what public setting would have adequate foot traffic to plan a weekend event where passers-by would see the work being done and Master Gardeners would have opportunity to interact and educate. Arrange with venue for necessary permission to do the project, research appropriate publications to have on hand, recruit veteran and trainee MGs to do the work, etc.

4-H CLUB – Plan and lead a 4-H horticulture club. Requires a cleared background check. Talk with the MG coordinator and the 4-H program assistant, Heather Lilienthal, if you're interested.

GROWIN' YER GRUB – Assist with Growin' Yer Grub day camps in Coquille and Coos Bay/North Bend. Held in August each year, the 4-day-long camps for 3rd through 6th grade students emphasize growing, harvesting, preparing and eating your own foods. You can be an assistant, or give a hands-on demonstration on gardening, cooking etc. See Heather Lilienthal for more information; must have background check completed to participate.

DEMONSTRATION BEDS AT OSU EXTENSION – We are interested in having some demonstration beds at the Extension Office. Working with a veteran, trainees could research a variety of beds that could be reasonably built and planted to show the community different options for raised beds, container growing, etc. Talk to the coordinator before beginning this project.

COMMUNITY GARDEN EDUCATIONAL SIGNS – Research and create posters on a variety of vegetable plants. Work with a woodworker to create a way to display the posters – perhaps a shadow box sign that could be mounted to a pole, or put on a stake, to be displayed in a community garden. Posters can be updated weekly to provide information on different vegetable varieties, beneficial insects, etc.

GARDEN THYMES NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS – Write a research-based article for the newsletter, or write about a personal gardening experience in your own garden or a garden you have visited. Other options: write a book review on a gardening or horticultural book, or interview a fellow Master Gardener for a more in-depth look at another gardener's experiences. Check with the newsletter editor if you choose to write an article that covers a specific topic, to ensure that topic has not been covered in previous issues. The editor can also provide suggestions for a seasonal article for a particular issue. You can record the time spent researching and writing the article(s) as OUTREACH hours. To view past issues of the newsletter visit www.extension.oregonstate.edu/coos/MG/gardenthymes

SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

TRAINEES NOTE: If you accumulate more than 20 hours in OUTREACH activities, the remaining hours can be applied to the 40 hours needed in SUPPORT. Veterans who wish to recertify must do 10 hours each in OUTREACH and SUPPORT.

Suggestions for SUPPORT hours:

- Assist with 4-H or Open Class horticulture entry days and judging at county fair during entry days
- Attend MG monthly meetings
- Build/create teaching samples to display at the county fair, etc. Items such as a mock-up of a raised bed, etc.
- County fair booth: plan, prepare for, setup/cleanup and work. Working during fair would count toward OUTREACH hours (contact current county fair booth coordinator)
- Fertilize Your Mind garden seminar in March: setup/cleanup and work
- Plan, prepare and implement demonstration beds at the Extension Office
- Research and present a lesson at an MG meeting on how to use the Plant Clinic resources (see coordinator for handouts you can use)
- Serve as host/setup crew for monthly MG meetings
- Spring Garden Series classes: planning, preparing and working (contact Renee Blom - back40four@gmail.com)
- Straighten and clean the MG shelves in the basement of the Extension Office
- Tomato-rama Plant Sale: setup/cleanup and work (contact Lynn Menashian- lynnmenashian2@gmail.com)
- Work in a community garden –one-third of your total time in the garden counts toward OUTREACH, and two-thirds as SUPPORT.
- Work in a garden at a local senior center or school (school sites require approved background checks)

Contacts & How to Record Them

Contacts are educational interactions between OSU Extension trained volunteers and individual community members. Contacts include class participants, face-to-face meetings, telephone calls and emails. Each and every conversation/interaction with an individual may be counted as a contact.

For example, if Barney attends a workshop, comes into the Plant Clinic with a question, and has questions two different weeks at the Farmers' Market, you would count a total of four contacts with Barney.

However, what we can't do is have more than one volunteer count the same contact.

If you had a conversation with someone that was educational in nature, and related to gardening, follow this flow chart to determine if you or someone else should record that contact.

