Online Volunteer Reporting System (VRS)

The OSU Master Gardener Program online volunteer reporting system is now available. This handout is intended to give Master Gardener volunteers a broad overview of how to work through the system.

Volunteer Reports Home:  http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/vrs

From this page, you can enroll in the Volunteer Reporting System as a Master Gardener. Simply click the link on the left hand side of the page that says ‘Enrollment’. You will then be taken to the:

Master Gardener Enrollment Page:  http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/vrs/enrollment

After you enroll, you will need to login in order to access the system. Your username is the email address you entered when you enrolled.

Once you are logged in, you can begin entering:

- volunteer service hours and category of service (i.e. plant clinic in Extension office, school garden, plant clinic in farmer’s market, speaker’s bureau, etc.). If the category of your volunteer service hours are not listed (i.e. pruning specialist demonstration, compost specialists demonstration), please choose ‘other’, and write in a description of your service category. If there are enough ‘other’ descriptions written in for a certain category, we may add in more pull down options. However, I wanted to keep the list of pull down service categories manageable, and applicable to all counties. (Many of the specialist programs are specific to only one or a few counties).
- continuing / advanced education hours
- miles driven for volunteer service (you can use this log for your tax records, to the extent permitted by law)
- pounds of produce donated from your private garden or community garden to a local food bank or food pantry. Make sure that you do not double report a group donation. Thus, if you and 5 other community gardeners donated a total of 50 pounds of produce to a local food bank, you would want to be sure that all 5 of you do not report donating 50 pounds.

To log out, click the ‘Log Out’ link near the top left hand of the web page. This link can be found just to the left of the ‘Contact Us’ link.

Questions? Comments?

Should you have any questions or comments, please use the ‘Tech Support’ link (on the left hand side of the page, under ‘Useful Links”) to submit your comments directly to the web developer. We will make a best effort to improve the current system, based upon all comments received.
Online Volunteer Reporting System (VRS)
Enrollment

This sheet provides an overview of how to enroll in the VRS.

Volunteer Reports Home: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/vrs
Volunteer Reports Enrollment: http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/vrs/enrollment

All items marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer. Items without an asterisk are optional.

Email*: Please type in your email. This email will also be your ‘username’ that you use when you log into the online volunteer reporting system.

Password*: Please choose a password, between 6 and 10 characters in length, that you will remember. Your local Master Gardener coordinator and the statewide Master Gardener coordinator will be able to retrieve your password for you, should you forget. Thus, you should make the password one that is different from any ‘high security’ passwords you might have (i.e. those connected to your email, banking sites, etc.).

First Name*: Please enter your first name.

Last Name*: Please enter your last name.

Address*: Please enter a street address. Your mailing address will not be distributed, shared or made public. The mailing address will be used only if your local or the statewide Master Gardener Program staff needs to contact you in connection with Master Gardener business.

Phone*: Please enter a contact phone number. This phone number will be used only if your local or the statewide Master Gardener Program staff needs to contact you in connection with Master Gardener business.

Are you a dues-paying member of the Oregon Master Gardener Association?: Most, but not all, Master Gardener volunteers are also members of the Oregon Master Gardener Association. If you would like to learn
more about the Oregon Master Gardener Association, please ask your Program Coordinator to direct you to your chapter representative, or visit http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/omga

Last year you were certified*: Master Gardener Certification is good for 1 year. Master Gardeners are encouraged to recertify each year, by taking qualified recertification courses and fulfilling volunteer service requirements. Requirements for recertification courses and continuing volunteer service hours vary by county. Please check with your local Program Coordinator to learn more about recertification requirements and opportunities in your area.

Year you became a MG*: This is the year that you graduated from being a Master Gardener trainee, and were awarded a Master Gardener badge.
Online Volunteer Reporting System (VRS)
Report New Volunteer Service Hours

This sheet provides an overview of how to report your volunteer service hours.

Once enrolled, choose the link titled ‘Report New Volunteer Service Hours’ from your home page. You will be asked to choose between Volunteer Service Hours or Continuing Education Hours.

**Volunteer Service Hours** are those hours that you spend as a Master Gardener volunteer, on a variety of projects that benefit your local Extension office and your local community.

**Continuing Education Hours** are those hours that you spend in classes and seminars, which qualify for recertification credit in your county. In order to work at the Plant Clinic desk, where you answer questions from the public and deliver recommendations, it is important to accrue the educational credits necessary to maintain your Master Gardener certification.

**Report Hours: Volunteer Service Hours**

*All items marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer. Items without an asterisk are optional.*

**Category**: You will be asked to choose among 13 different service project categories, which are listed alphabetically. Brief descriptions of each service category can be found below. All projects for which you submit volunteer hours must be approved by your Master Gardener Program Coordinator and/or local Extension Agent. Thus, you may be very active in your local community garden, projects for which you receive credit should be focused on education and must be approved by your local Master Gardener faculty and/or staff members

- **Beautification Project**: work to beautify a public space, such as a library, roadway or other area in the community. This is different than work on an Extension demonstration garden.

- **Community Garden**: work on a Master-Gardener affiliated or Master Gardener approved community garden. To find out more about Master-Gardener affiliated or approved community gardens in your area, please contact your local Master Gardener Program coordinator or agent.

- **Demonstration Garden**: work on a Master Gardener demonstration garden at the Extension office, fairgrounds or another Extension managed site.
- **Educational Conference**: work on a single day or multi-day educational conference. Examples include Gardeners Mini-College, Winter Dreams/Summer Gardens, Polk County Fall Fling, Central Oregon Spring Seminar, Josephine County Home Garden Seminar, etc.

- **Educational Seminar Series**: work on a repeated series of educational events. Examples include the Clackamas County Master Gardener 10-Minute University, Benton County Gearing Up for Gardening Series, Lincoln County Community Gardening Classes, etc.

- **Garden Tour**: work on an educational garden tour.

- **OMGA and Chapter Board Meetings**: work done for the Oregon Master Gardener Association or its local chapters. Such work can include attendance at Board meetings, but can also include work done for the association outside of a meeting.

- **Other (Describe)**: If you do not see a category listed for a volunteer service project on which you have worked, select this option from the pull down menu, and write a brief description of the service in the ‘Description’ Box.

- **Other Garden**: work on a Master-Gardener affiliated or Master Gardener approved garden (not including community, school or demonstration gardens).

- **Plant Clinic in Extension Office**: Plant Clinic is the term used to describe the phone hotline or clinic desk that Master Gardeners in most counties use to receive and answer gardening questions from the public. Plant Clinics are often conducted out of an Extension office, during specified days and times. However, it is not unusual to find a Plant Clinic desk at a local farmer's market or at a Master Gardener educational conference or seminar.

- **Plant Clinic in Farmer's Market**: Please see description for ‘Plant Clinic in Extension Office’.

- **Plant Clinic in Other Venue**: Please see description for ‘Plant Clinic in Extension Office’.

- **Plant Sale**: work on a Master Gardener Plant Sale. All Plant Sales that are approved for volunteer service hours should include a strong education and outreach component.

- **School Garden**: work on a Master Gardener affiliated or Master Gardener approved school garden. To find out more about Master-Gardener affiliated or approved school garden projects in your area, please contact your local Master Gardener Program coordinator or agent.

- **Speaker’s Bureau**: Speakers' Bureau is the name given to a group of Master Gardeners who have expertise in particular subject areas. These MG's are qualified to donate their time as public speakers, to community groups that call the Extension Office and ask for an individual to come and speak on a particular topic. The hours reported can include actual time delivering the talk, as well as time spent preparing for the talk (i.e. researching and writing the talk).
Youth Project Other than School Garden: work on in a classroom, after-school club, with 4-H or with another youth-oriented

Date of Service*: It is important to remember that this reporting system can and should be flexible. You can input your Date of Service by manually typing in a month, day and year (mm/dd/yyyy), or by using the date picker.

Date of service can have several applications. It does not necessarily only pertain to service on a single day. If you volunteer over a period of a week or a month and your service can be attributed to one category, you may use ‘Date of Service’ as a week-ending or month ending date. There is no need to input 5 separate records for work that took place over a week’s time.

Example 1: You volunteer 5 days per week doing administrative duties at the Extension office. Use ‘Date of Service’ as the week-ending date, and input your total hours of service for that week. In the ‘Description’ box, input ‘weekly service at Extension’.

Example 2: You volunteer several hours over the course of the year, for your work on the Insights into Gardening educational conference. Use ‘Date of Service’ as the month-ending date, and input your total hours of service for that month. In the ‘Description’ box, input ‘monthly service for Insights into Gardening’.

Location*: List the location of the service in 500 characters or less. Examples are ‘Jackson County Extension Office’, ‘Baker County Fairgrounds’, etc.

Description of Service: Writing a description of the service is optional, and is only necessary if you chose ‘Other (Describe)’ as the Project Category. Your description of service should be brief, and limited to 500 characters or less.

Volunteer Service Hours*: Input the total number of hours you have worked on the selected project, during the time period noted.

Mileage*: Please note the total miles driven for the selected project, during the time period note. You may be able to deduct mileage associated with volunteer service on your tax returns. Please check with a tax professional for verification of your particular deductions and tax situation.

Pounds of produce donated from a Public or Demo Garden*: If fruits or vegetables harvested from a Master Gardener-affiliated or approved garden have been donated to a food pantry, food bank, or other charitable organization, please estimate and report the pounds donated. To avoid double-reporting on this item, make sure that no other Master Gardener is reporting produce donated from the same harvest. For example, five Master Gardeners work at the Ladybug Landing Garden in Coos County. A total of 30 pounds of produce is harvested and donated. Only one person should report the 30 pounds in the volunteer reporting system. It does not matter who reports the total donated. This information will be attributed to the Coos county, rather than to an individual.
Report New Volunteer Service Hours
This sheet provides an overview of reporting your continuing education hours.

Once enrolled, choose the link titled ‘Report New Volunteer Service Hours’ from your home page. You will be asked to choose between Volunteer Service Hours or Continuing Education Hours.

**Volunteer Service Hours** are those hours that you spend as a Master Gardener volunteer, on a variety of projects that benefit your local Extension office and your local community.

**Continuing Education Hours** are those hours that you spend in classes and seminars, which qualify for recertification credit in your county. In order to work at the Plant Clinic desk, where you answer questions from the public and deliver recommendations, it is important to accrue the educational credits necessary to maintain your Master Gardener certification.

**Report Hours: Continuing Education Hours**

All items marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer. Items without an asterisk are optional.

- **Date of Training***: Please list the date of the class or training that you attended. If training occurred over several days, you can use a week-ending date, rather than inputting each class separately.

- **Location***: Please report the name of the city or county where the training occurred.

- **Description of Training***: Please write a short description of the class content. Limit your description to 500 characters or less.

- **Continuing Education Hours***: Write in the total number of hours spent at the training. You can enter in hours in decimal increments (i.e. 1.25 hours = 1 hour and 15 minutes).

- **Mileage***: Please note the total miles driven for the selected project, during the time period note. You may be able to deduct mileage associated with volunteer service on your tax returns. Your continuing education is an important part of your service as a Master Gardener volunteer, and may thus qualify as a deductible expense. Please check with a tax professional for verification of your particular deductions and tax situation.