



Online Volunteer Reporting System (VRS) Reporting Volunteer Service Hours

THIS SHEET PROVIDES INFORMATION ON USING THE VRS 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

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.
- Greenhouse: work in a Master Gardener Program greenhouse (e.g. upkeep, propagation, etc.), that does NOT include presenting a class or teaching a class. These items should be filed under the category of 'Instructor' (for annual Master Gardener trainings, or other Master Gardener trainings) or 'Speakers' Bureau' (for classes presented to the community)
- Instructor: Classes taught to Master Gardeners, during annual trainings or recertification events. Classes presented to the community should be filed as 'Speaker's Bureau'.
- Mentor: Serving as a mentor to Master Gardener trainees.
- Office Support: helping out with general office support at or for the Extension office (e.g. filing, database work, computer support, word processing, answering the office phone (not the plant clinic phone hotline), and other support tasks).
- 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.
- Publicity/Communication: work on a Master Gardener newsletter (as an editor or a writer), or to advertise and/or market Master Gardener Program educational events.
- 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.

Contacts: Input the total number of public contacts (i.e. clients) that you served, on the selected project, during the time period noted. For example, if you delivered a talk, as part of a Master Gardener Speakers' Bureau, to 25 people, you would input 25 contacts. If you participated in a mobile plant clinic, and you answered 25 questions, from 10 different people, you would input 25 contacts – because each question counts as a separate public contact.

When reporting your public contacts, on projects where you worked with one or more Master Gardeners, make sure to coordinate your contacts reporting. For example, if you participated in a mobile plant clinic, and were partnered with another Master Gardener volunteer for this activity, make sure that the two of you report the combined number of contacts for this activity. You can do this by dividing the number of public contacts, equally, between the two of you – or use another system that is mutually agreeable. Do not double report contacts.

Alternatively, you can leave this section blank, and report your contacts to the faculty or staff member, or Master Gardener Program Coordinator, who manages the Master Gardener Program in your area. The faculty/staff/coordinator can then use the VRS to record the contacts for the activity.

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 more information.

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.