

UC Master Gardeners of Solano County  
University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE)

**Volunteer Position Description**



**PURPOSE**

The purpose of UC Master Gardeners (UCMG) of Solano County volunteers is to meet identified educational needs of Solano County residents in the field of home gardening. UCMG volunteers promote the application of useful basic gardening skills through UCCE-organized educational programs transferring research-based knowledge and information.

**CORE VALUES**

Criteria for designing and implementing educational activities and measuring educational impacts are based on the following core values:

**1. Programs focus on education, not service.**

UCCE programs provide information and teach practical and usable skills, but do not provide garden labor or regular/scheduled consultant services. UCCE programs are neutral/unbiased toward specific commercial products, services, and support groups. Instructors and volunteers may not solicit or perform contract services for personal gain while representing UCCE.

**2. Programs are designed to meet identified clientele issues and needs.**

UCMG programs target Solano County adult home gardeners and their needs. Occasionally, MGs do activities with children at local libraries or schools. Participants and audience help determine program content and delivery methods. Ideas for program improvement are regularly sought from clientele.

**3. We respect others' viewpoints and abilities.**

UCCE programs respond to a range of individual learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds. UCCE teaching staff provides appropriate available information while respecting alternative viewpoints. UCCE teachers are guides to learning. They present horticulture technology and appropriate garden management information, including multiple options to solving local garden problems. In this way, UCCE helps clientele make more informed garden management decisions.

**4. Programs are inclusive, not exclusive.**

UCCE program methods and content are evaluated to assure information is not exclusively held and that programs are available to the gardening public on an equal opportunity basis in accordance with UC and federal affirmative action policies. Our door is open to all, limited only by our resources.

**5. Program information is research-based and is technically accurate.**

UCCE programs extend information based on recognized university research that flows through the Cooperative Extension educational system. Instructors provide information with honesty and to the best of their ability, and refer more complex queries to more qualified UCCE employees. Problem-solving options are discussed, but recommendations are not given.

**6. Programs are designed to enhance environmental quality through sustainable gardening practices.**

Environmental issues are key to many UCCE educational programs thrusts, including support for improved environmental quality and wise resource management.

**7. Programs stress learn-by-doing methods.**

UCCE teaching methods emphasize the hands-on demonstration, and provide an opportunity for clientele to practice new skills.

**8. Programs teach new skills, validate achievement, and encourage extending to others.**

UCCE programs recognize new skills learned. Appropriate methods are used to teach improved gardening skills, build individual confidence, and encourage application of new skills. Further, clientele are encouraged to share new skills with family, friends, and neighbors.

**9. Programs build community support for UCCE through improved visibility.**

UCCE programs are represented with standardized educational information, packaged and advertised by UCCE for local clientele consumption. All UCCE programs, information and activities are readily identifiable as products of the UCCE. UCCE instructors dress appropriately to their role and wear identifying labels (a UCMG badge). Printed information has UCCE office identification and encourages additional contacts. Instructors note the range of local UCCE programs offered and invite further participation.

**10. Non-profit status.**

The UCMG Program of Solano County is administered by UCCE office in Solano County, Fairfield. The University of California is a tax-supported institution of higher learning with 501(c)(3) tax code status. UCCE programs may be offered on an 'at cost' basis. All monies received are considered public funds and are handled accordingly to UC policies.

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

Master Gardener trainees will:

- Complete an 18-week (approximately) training program in plant science and horticulture. This year, classes will be held every Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., January through April. During the training, only one (excused) absence is permitted.
- Attend the training class, complete weekly quizzes, and pass a final, written exam with 70% or more.
- MG trainees will volunteer a minimum of 50 hours of time within one year of certification in activities that support Cooperative Extension's educational program in home horticulture and are approved by the advisor. Thereafter to remain a Master Gardener, will give 25 hours of volunteer time and will continue to complete 12 hours of continuing education each year (July-June).
- New MGs are encouraged to try a variety of activities from hotline, to farmers market, to public demonstrations-and much more.
- Master Gardeners are encouraged to attend continuing education meetings held each month and will submit monthly records of volunteer activities and contacts.
- MGs must be able to schedule time so as to be available on projects, effectively communicate with the public by phone, personal contact, and/or group contact, and through written language. Be a self-starter and complete assigned tasks.
- In all activities for which hours are reported as Master Gardener time, will represent themselves as a MG either by listing themselves as such in written materials or by wearing their badge or introducing themselves as a Master Gardener.
- A MG will not use the Master Gardener title for commercial purposes or monetary gain.

## **SUPERVISION**

The Master Gardener Program Coordinator (MGPC) provides supervision and support to the volunteer Master Gardeners. They will assign, review, and assess work. The MGPC will provide for in-service training based upon needs of the MG. The Coordinator will provide office space, telephone, and other needed supplies and support.