

Garden Guidelines

Before beginning work on a garden project, get project approval from the Master Gardener Coordinator to ensure it meets the requirements for a volunteer activity. If garden project approval is not obtained before starting the project, it may not be possible to use the work hours towards Master Gardener credit.

Garden Requirements

As with all Master Gardener activities, planting and maintenance of educational or demonstration gardens must meet three criteria to qualify as a volunteer project.

1. The garden must be a purely volunteer activity.
2. There must be acknowledgement of UNL Extension for providing the training and management of Master Gardeners. This is accomplished through UNL signage discussed below.
3. There must be an educational component to the garden provided by Master Gardeners for the visiting public.

Garden Locations

Educational and demonstration gardens must be located in areas that can be visited freely by the general public, such as the following locations.

- Public parks or community spaces, such as a fairground or cemetery.
- Around public buildings, such as a school, library, church or Extension Office.
- On commercial properties, with permission of the owners, such as a retirement center, nursing home, hospice, Lincoln Zoo, etc.

Signage

All gardens **MUST** display a UNL Extension Master Gardener sign, which will be provided by the Extension Office. When a garden project is discontinued, it is the Master Gardener crew leader's responsibility to return the sign to the Extension Office.

Educational Component

Master Gardeners who volunteer in educational or demonstration gardens must provide an educational opportunity for the visiting public. This can be accomplished in one of the following ways.

- Label plant material with common and scientific names, and cultivar name if applicable, so that garden visitors can learn about selecting well-adapted plants for their landscapes. The style of plant labels must be approved by the Master Gardener Coordinator and paid for by the owner of the garden being maintained. Crew leaders should recheck plant labels at least once per year, and missing labels replaced.

***If the name and cultivar of a plant is not known, it should not be planted in the garden.

- Develop and present a class or program for garden visitors. (Master Gardener speaker fees may be waived.) Consult with the Extension Associate or Educator on program development if help is needed, and please provide them with a copy of your program announcement.
- Develop an educational brochure about the garden, and make it available to garden visitors. Consult with the Extension Associate or Educator on brochure development. Each project will be provided with an initial printing of 30 brochures from the Extension Office and an electronic copy of the brochure file will be provided to the garden owner for any additional printings.
- Serve as a garden docent, answering questions about the garden for visitors. Please wear a Master Gardener shirt and nametag when working as a docent.

Management of Garden Projects

Garden Owner Responsibilities

- Agree to allow a UNL Master Gardener sign to be placed in the garden being created or maintained, which will be provided by the Extension Office.
- Agree to pay for plant labels in the garden area being created or maintained, if that is how education will be provided to the general public. The Master Gardener Coordinator must approve the style of plant labels used.
- Agree to provide a reasonable budget for garden maintenance and supplies as needed, such as mulch, and pre-emergent herbicide. Master Gardeners should not be required or expected to provide supplies.
- Work with the Master Gardener crew leader(s) so that they understand your expectations for the garden.

Master Gardener Responsibilities

A. Individual projects

Master Gardeners may undertake a garden project by themselves, if they first have approval from the Master Gardener Coordinator. The individual Master Gardener will serve as crew leader and be in charge of signage and education, following the guidelines stated above.

For new garden projects, the crew leader(s) must talk with the garden owner before starting the project to explain the Garden Owner responsibilities outlined above.

B. Group projects

The Master Gardener Coordinator will determine when a garden project can become a group project. However, if several Master Gardeners are interested in working on a garden project together, please let the Master Gardener Coordinator know. One or two individuals will be asked to volunteer as crew leader(s) for the project, and the garden may become a group project.

Crew leaders responsibilities include:

- *For new garden projects*, the crew leader(s) must talk with the garden owner before starting the project to explain the Garden Owner responsibilities outlined above.
- Develop a garden planting and/or maintenance plan.
 - Work with the garden owner and incorporate their expectations for the garden into the plan.
 - The Extension Associate and/or Educator can assist with development of a sustainable maintenance plan.
- Schedule garden workdays for the season, including a fall session for garden cleanup.
- Contact and organize Master Gardeners who have offered to help with the project to set up garden workday schedules.
- Place a UNL sign in a visible location within the garden.
- If plant labeling is being used as an educational tool, they should be rechecked at least once per year, and missing labels replaced.