



Lancaster County
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Garden Guidelines

Before beginning work on a garden project, get project approval from the Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Coordinator (hereafter, the “EMGV 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 volunteer hours credit.

Garden Requirements

As with all Extension Master Gardener Volunteer (EMGV) 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 Nebraska Extension for providing the training and management of EMGVs. This is accomplished through signage discussed below.
3. There must be an educational component to the garden provided by EMGVs 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 Nebraska Extension EMGV sign, which will be provided by the Extension Office. When a garden project is discontinued, it is the EMGV crew leader’s responsibility to return the sign to the Extension Office.

Educational Component

EMGVs 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 EMGV 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. (EMGV speaker fees may be waived.) Consult with the EMGV Coordinator or Extension 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 EMGV Coordinator or Extension 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 an EMGV shirt and nametag when working as a docent.

Management of Garden Projects

Garden Owner Responsibilities

- Agree to allow a Nebraska Extension EMGV 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 EMGV 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. EMGVs should not be required or expected to provide supplies.
- Work with the EMGV crew leader(s) so that they understand your expectations for the garden.

Master Gardener Responsibilities

A. Individual projects

EMGVs may undertake a garden project by themselves, if they first have approval from the EMGV Coordinator. The individual EMGV 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 EMGV Coordinator will determine when a garden project can become a group project. However, if several EMGVs are interested in working on a garden project together, please let the EMGV 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 EMGV Coordinator 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 EMGVs who have offered to help with the project to set up garden workday schedules.
- Place a Nebraska Extension EMGV 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.