

Hamilton County Master Gardener Mentor's Guideline

A mentor, by definition, is a person who is a wise loyal advisor. A mentor is a person who takes another person into their care to advise, guide and instruct in a particular subject or matter.

A Master Gardener Mentor will be that person for the new interns each year. They will work in support of the county agent conducting the Master Gardener Program by providing help where it is needed.

A mentor is the first person besides the county agent that a new intern meets. The retention of new members depends in a large part on the first impressions made by the mentors.

Qualifications of a Master Gardener Mentor

1. A mentor must be a current certified Master Gardener while they serve as a mentor.
2. All dues, service hours and CEU's must be current and up to date.
3. A mentor should be in regular attendance of monthly meetings.
4. A mentor should be active in several Master Gardener Volunteer group projects.
5. Before each class year, the mentors are to have a meeting with each other to set in motion the activities of the year. This will be a planning session as to what is needed for the classes and how to assist the County Director. If more than one class is planned, the mentors from each class are to attend this class together.
6. There will be one coordinator for each class and that person will be responsible for getting other mentors lined up for that class.
7. Should there be more than one class running simultaneously, each class will have a coordinator and the coordinators will be co-coordinators working together for the mentoring program.
8. All mentors should be able to share and instruct the interns in the following;
 - a. The address of our website. [Hamilton County Master Gardeners.org](http://HamiltonCountyMasterGardeners.org) or MGHC.org
 - b. The address of University of Tennessee website. mastergardener.tennessee.edu
 - c. Be able to explain how to use the Yahoo.com sight and what it is for. It is out communication venue and encourage each intern to be a member.
 - d. How to fill out service hours sheet.
 - e. Be able to explain what each item is on the service hour sheet and how it is complied.
 - f. Be able to explain the difference between CEU's and service hours.
 - g. Be able to tell interns where they can get their hours, what projects they can work on and who the contact persons are for the projects.

- h. A mentor should know the certification officer.
- i. A mentor should know the names of the board members and their basic duties.
- j. Be able to show/explain how to use the UT web sight to log in their hours after the first 40 service hours and 8 CEU's have been turned into the certification officer.

It is a requirement that a county personnel person be present in the building when meetings are going on, however, their can be emergencies. In the case of emergencies, the lead mentor needs to be sure that all the mentors have the necessary information as to who to contact in the event our extension agent isn't present.

This information will be given by the extension agent, to the lead mentor for the day and night classes as he deems necessary each year.

On a normal basis, mentors will not have keys to the building or access other than at class times unless directed by the extension agent.

Duties of the Mentors.

1. The mentors are to be helpers to the county agent as he needs them.
2. Mentors are to prepare the room, food brought in and/or any handouts for the class. Coffee should be made and the silverware, dishes, cups, napkins and other drinks set out on tables with easy access for break time.
3. The Monday night mentors will leave the room and all other utensils in good order for the Tuesday morning class.
4. Mentors should be encouragers to all the interns.
5. Mentors should see that the interns are greeted by name as much as possible and make an effort to make all interns feel wanted and needed.
6. Mentors should see that late comers find seats and encourage all seats to fill from the front to the back.
7. Mentors should be supporters of the Master Gardener organization and set an example for all the interns by their service to the community.
8. When interns show up for projects, the mentors who know them should introduce them to other Master Gardeners and help the intern feel welcome and needed.
9. Mentors should encourage the interns to start attending the monthly meetings as soon as possible.
10. When a mentor sees an intern at the monthly meetings, especially the first time, they should call this to the attention of the president so that they can be recognized.
11. Mentors will take the seats in the back of the room and see to it that the interns are all near the front, however, before, after, and at break time, mentors should mingle and talk with the interns.

12. Mentors are to check the smoothie sheets each week to see that the next week has enough people signed up to bring food, introduce speaker, come early or stay late for set up and clean up.

13. Interns earn service hours by getting; 1 hours for bringing food, 30 minutes for coming early or staying late for set up and clean up, 30 minutes for interviewing and introducing the speaker and 1 hour if they bring door prizes or other garden related items to give away.

14. In the event there are not enough people and no one comes forward to fill those slots, the mentors need to be prepared to step in and see the jobs are filled themselves.

14. As soon as a mentor notices an intern earning hours, they should be sure to get the intern to start the service sheets. If necessary, go and get one and start them filling it out.

15. Make sure that interns understand that MG shirts are only worn and/or ordered after they have certified with 40 hours of service and 8 CEU's. Shirts are only worn at volunteer activities or to monthly and conference meetings.

Suggestions (not requirements) to improve the mentoring program.

1. When possible, have as many door prizes each week to let the interns anticipate something special.
2. Use the interns names when giving away door prizes.
3. Small easy to do projects in the form of contest with simple prizes adds togetherness. One thought is to plant bulbs and give a prize to the first one that blooms, etc. Have a contest on the most unusual display of a plant, etc.
4. Present a plant or other garden related article to an intern when they get their first 10 service hours.
5. Encourage interns to wear badges and use their names as often as possible.
6. Listen for suggestions from the interns as they may think of ways to do things together as a class. Suggestion might be to give change each week and purchase a tree for the arboretum, etc. They might want a plaque in honor of their class, etc.
7. Interns should come in to a room ready for class with a pleasant atmosphere. Maybe for special occasions or holidays, a few decorations theme orientated is a change of pace.
8. Have speakers or representatives from all projects to come to one of the classes and tell interns about their project and how they can become a part of it.
9. Have speakers come from any of the local "spin off" groups, such as Bonsai, Herbies, Natives, etc.