

Application Code: _____
(for committee use only)

**Tennessee Master Gardener Search For Excellence
2011 Application**

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS NOVEMBER 30, 2011

NAME OF MG GROUP: Putnam County Master Gardeners (PCMG)

COUNTY: Putnam County

MASTER GARDENER CONTACT:

NAME Nancy M Rich
Mary Dell Sommers

EMAIL blooming@twlakes.net
ms66799@gmail.com

MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR/EXTENSION STAFF:

NAME Scott Chadwell

TITLE Putnam County Extension Agent

EMAIL jchadwe2@utk.edu

PHONE 931-526-4561

CATEGORY---MUST SELECT AND SUBMIT IN ONLY ONE CATEGORY

- Youth
- Demonstration Garden
- Workshop or Presentation
- Community Service
- Innovative Project
- Research
- Special Needs Audience

COMMENCEMENT DATE OF PROJECT: April 2010

LIST THE NAMES OF MASTER GARDENERS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT. Do not include their roles or any other individuals in this listing. *(Place the cursor in the box to type a name.)*

Nancy Rich	Micki Loyd
Mary Dell Sommers	Jan Tollett
Teresa Bostic	
Gloria Vick	
Carolyn Hinton	

If you are using Word, place your cursor in the boxes and click twice. If using PDF, place your cursor in the box and begin typing.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT (include name, location, target audience, goals, and partnerships)

Project Name:	Ask the Master Gardeners – Newspaper Column
Location:	Herald Citizen Newspaper, Cookeville TN
Target Audience:	General Public
<p>“Ask the Master Gardeners” is a weekly horticultural based Q&A column written by PCMG. It has appeared every Monday in the Herald Citizen Newspaper, Living Section since April of 2010 and is still appearing weekly in 2011.</p> <p>PCMG have partnered with the Herald Citizen, the general public who submit questions and our UT Extension agent to create this easy to read, light and informative format.</p> <p>Each week the article is accompanied by a picture of a PCMG member performing a task relevant to the subject matter.</p> <p>Informative responses to questions are developed utilizing university based research and are reviewed and approved prior to publication by Scott Chadwell, Putnam County Extension Agent. References to UT publications are throughout the article for those that seek additional information for problem solving or general knowledge.</p> <p>PCMG’s have added their special “flair” - by often adding a personal touch to answers based on their own experiences, adding a section titled “Tip of the Week” as well as an occasional Book Review. The second Monday of each month a “Monthly-To-Do List” is published for the upcoming month.</p> <p>The concept of “Ask the Master Gardeners” has been and can be replicated in other forms such as the Q&A tables county groups have manned at MG events, Q&A that appear on MG County Websites, MG newsletters and newspaper insertions.</p>	

Goals:

- Disseminate horticultural information in a simple easy to understand format that can appeal to all levels of public interest and reach all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin and marital or family status
- Provide a broad platform for PCMG to further their mission to outreach, educate and encourage individuals in our community.
- Raise public awareness of the Master Gardener Program and its role within the community
- Raise public awareness of the UT Extension and its resources and available publications that assist the homeowner in problem solving and continued learning.
- Achieve continued learning and education of our Putnam County Master Gardeners through their efforts of researching questions utilizing available UT resources.

DESCRIBE THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT.

January of 2010 our PCMG media director made us aware of the opportunity to partner with the Herald Citizen by writing a Q&A column for the Living Section.

- A project sheet and plan were submitted to our executive committee for review.
- UT Extension Agent approved the project and committed to review each article
- PCMG membership voted to undertake the project
- An “Ask the Master Gardeners” committee was formed.

The “Ask the Master Gardeners” Committee:

- Created an initial list of questions provided to members to research and answer.
- Subsequent questions were received through:
 - PCMG website
 - USPS –mail
 - UT Extension “most often asked” questions
 - From attendees at PCMG Public Classes
 - From Attendees at PCMG events
 - Course Cards – questionnaire cards
 - PCMG membership
- PCMG members are sent questions to research
- Set up committee members responsible for:
 - Editing & assembling each Q&A article – subjects matter in articles were assembled in a “time relevant” manner
 - Photography for each article
 - Retrieving questions submitted on the website and other sources

- System of approval and placement
 - PCMG to “proof” each Q&A article
 - Extension Agent review and approval
 - Weekly transmittal for placement (Q& A and picture)

The committee also addresses promoting “Ask the Master Gardeners” at all relevant PCMG events.

HOW HAS THE PROJECT BEEN FUNDED AND HOW HAVE THOSE FUNDS BEEN SPENT?

The “Asked the Master Gardeners” newspaper column has required little funding.

It has been promoted through:

- Herald Citizen newspaper prior to its inception and through its weekly appearance in the newspaper (PCMG Cost \$0)
- Flyers at PCMG events and classes (PCMG Cost for Paper \$5.00 per 500 sheets)**
UT Extension provides copier service – PCMG Cost \$0)
- PCMG volunteer their time and travel to perform research and take pictures for publication (PCMG Cost \$0)

** Cost of paper is offset by the funds received at PCMG events and classes where the flyers are distributed, resulting in a PCMG Cost \$0)

DESCRIBE THE OUTCOMES OF THIS PROJECT. HOW HAS IT AUGMENTED LEARNING, INCREASED KNOWLEDGE OR CHANGED PRACTICES TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE? INCLUDE THE METHODS YOU USED TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT. (These impacts could be economical, educational, environmental, health or community based. SFE projects should be developed to reach the most people possible from the target audience. Impact numbers are not significant if the target audience does not learn or utilize the information. Make sure that you ask participants how this information helped them and record this as an impact. For example, evaluation questions that ask, “How do you plan to use this information?” or “Can you share specific information that you learned today?”

Goals have been met. (Figures below are based on April 2010 to current 2011)

Horticultural information for the public – availability, outreach, education, & encouragement.

PCMG outreaches and augments learning to:

- 9400 households. (Weekday distribution of Herald Citizen)
- 24,111 individuals had access to this information
(2.7 persons per household x 9400 households less 1269 (6% under the age of 5) - reference Putnam County, TN Census 2010)
- 90% Average readership (polled at recent presentation to Active and Retired Federal workers)
- The information was made available to all persons without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, political beliefs, sexual orientation, national origin and marital or family status.

PCMG raises public awareness of the Master Gardener Program and its role within the community and augments learning through the column resulting in:

- 33% increase in attendance of public classes**
(based on attendee averages 2009/2010/spring 2011)
- 35% increase in registration notification list for 2011 MG Classes**.
(based on sign-up averages for 2009/2010/2011 classes)
- 29 times – PCMG events were promoted in the article
- PCMG have become easily recognizable within the community due to the weekly pictures. PCMG report being stopped “on the street” and in their neighborhoods to be asked a question.
- BONUS: HC featured four (4) PCMG in an article series “Meet a Master Gardener” with personal interviews and pictures.

Raises public awareness of the UT Extension and its resources and available publications that assist the homeowner in problem solving and continued learning.

- 81 Q&A articles have appeared in Herald Citizen (to date)
 - 211 Questions have been addressed (to date)
 - 22 references to specific UT Publications and how to obtain them (to date)
- NOTE: UT Extension phone number and address appear in every article.

Continued learning and education of PCMG through their efforts of researching questions utilizing available UT resources.

- 18 PCMG members have participated in research
- 211 Questions have been researched and answered (to date)
- 422 Avg Hrs continued education PCMG (avg 2 hr research x 211 questions)

“We read the column every week and look forward to it!” - The Boyd’s, Hurricane Apple Orchard
“Every time I’m in the yard now my neighbor comes over to ask a gardening question, or talk about something in the article” - PCMG Member

PAY IT FORWARD

2010 & 2011 Q&A Articles are currently being compiled on disc to be sold to the public resulting in forward reaching public education while serving as a PCMG fundraising project.

** Increases are attributed to the Ask the Master Gardener articles coupled with our public events & classes