Chapter 27

The A.C.T.s of Volunteering

Learning Objectives

1. Explain the requirements of certification and recertification for the Master Gardener volunteer
2. List the administrative resources for Master Gardener volunteers
3. Define the three types of volunteer service hours for Master Gardener volunteers
4. List some of the proper techniques for educating the community effectively
5. Learn how to report hours using the Master Gardener Website
The concept of Master Gardener volunteer training began more than 25 years ago. The Master Gardener program is so broad in terms of subject matter that no one person can be expected to be an expert in all areas. At the state level, horticulture program specialists provide information and leadership. They also support Extension agents by providing training and materials for the Master Gardener program. Generally, these specialists are faculty of the university. Agents at the county level are also classified as faculty of the landgrant university. The role of Extension agents with Master Gardener volunteer responsibilities is Master Gardener coordinator. Volunteer programs require a dedicated staff member to devote the care and attention required for fitting together a complex system of matching the needs of the Extension with the needs of the community.

County Master Gardener coordinators:
- Lead and manage volunteers to enable them to share and deliver Extension information with the consumer horticulture community
- Promote continued education opportunities to cultivate volunteers
- Provide and organize intern Master Gardener horticultural education training programs

### About the Master Gardener Volunteer

The Master Gardener program is a volunteer-based, educational outreach component of Extension. While staff members of landgrant universities have the responsibility for providing leadership to the Master Gardener program at the county and state levels, many volunteers are needed to expand the scope and quality of the program.

A volunteer can be described as anyone who, without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement, performs a task at the direction of, and on the behalf of, the agency. Volunteers who subscribe to serve must be trained, perform volunteer service and advocate to the program’s policies and guidelines for certification. A volunteer must be officially accepted and enrolled by the Extension office prior to performing a task.

Recent research has found that Master Gardener volunteers benefit from the service provided by the program as much as the

### Some Benefits of Being a Master Gardener

1. Help to educate the community
2. Help gardeners solve their plant problems
3. Promote environmental responsibility through best management practices
4. Beautify Tennessee by teaching about appropriate plants for our climate
5. Work with school and community gardens
6. Seize educational opportunities to benefit personal interests
7. Fun and friendship
8. Work with some of the most talented and interesting gardeners in the area
9. Participate in team projects
10. Take on leadership roles

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Figure 1.

Master Gardener Volunteers provide service without monetary compensation.
Extension clientele they assist. Volunteers gain knowledge and confidence about gardening, an activity for which they are passionate. Additionally, volunteer training and participation was found to lead to increased physical activity, social activity, self-esteem and other positive effects.

The Extension Master Gardener program’s goals and objectives cannot be realized without volunteer support. Each Master Gardener volunteer is different and comes from a diverse background to bring a variety of skills and talents to the program. Extension personnel are sensitive to the incredible potential each volunteer’s uniqueness offers Extension and feel fortunate to benefit from its volunteers.

Volunteers are critical to the mission of Extension and Master Gardeners. They work to improve their communities through promoting citizen involvement in horticulture and add relevancy to local situations and allow horticultural education to become more available to a greater number and more diverse audience.

Program Policies

The University of Tennessee has developed basic policies and procedures to organize and direct participants of the Master Gardener program. Each member must be aware of the administrative details of the program in order to maintain a structured, flourishing Master Gardener Program. To be a Master Gardener volunteer is to agree and adhere to the program policies. There are two main documents that guide the Master Gardener volunteer:

- Tennessee Master Gardener Volunteer Handbook (W199) details the policies and procedures for individual volunteers as they relate to subjects such as certification, the volunteer title, code of conduct, pesticide recommendations, etc.
- Tennessee Master Gardener County Program Handbook (W193) guides the county group in management and project activities of their volunteers. Both documents are available on the Tennessee Master Gardener website and the UT Extension website and are updated regularly.

Volunteer Training

Master Gardeners may feel intimidated when considering volunteering because the title designates a degree of expertise in gardening that most feel too humbled to claim. In actuality, the requirements to apply to the program are a love for gardening and the willingness and time to volunteer. The expertise comes from the training provided by the program, particularly from the information available at the Extension Office and the knowledge shared by other Master Gardeners. Volunteer training is one of the major aspects of developing a confident and dependable Master Gardener. Master Gardener intern training is a mixture of leadership and horticulture training to guiding the growth of new volunteers so that they can be more effective and proficient.

Volunteer training continues as Master Gardeners develop more interests in gardening and find new resources in the community. The Master Gardener program encourages this personal development in new gardening interests and civic leadership. Continued education and advancement is essential in cultivating satisfied volunteers. New educational opportunities expose volunteers to new trends, techniques, topics and ideas in gardening.

Certification Requirements

Upon acceptance into the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program, volunteers are designated as Intern Master Gardener Volunteers. To become a Certified Master Gardener Volunteer, interns must complete all of the following steps.

1. Complete an Official Tennessee Master Gardener Application
2. Complete the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Course
3. Complete and Report Internship Volunteer Service Hours
4. Complete and Report Continued Education Hours
5. Accept or Sign the Tennessee Master Gardener Program Memorandum of Agreement
6. (TMG website)
Volunteer Service

A Master Gardener’s service is the most rewarding and impactful way to make change in a community. There are a variety of ways Master Gardeners can serve the community through Extension. The most effective and satisfying volunteer service is often accomplished through teamwork.

There are specific ways that each county authorizes volunteer service activities. Usually, these activities are various aspects of community service projects. It is important that Master Gardeners understand the process that a project is approved and what activities are needed before volunteering on a project. Selecting service projects are the result of Extension’s (or the County Master Gardener coordinator) assessment of a community’s needs and capacity of the local Master Gardener Program.

There are three categories of volunteer hours in the Master Gardener Program: administrative, community and teaching. All are of equal importance in running a smooth organization. These categories are defined as the A.C.T.s of the Master Gardener Volunteer. All service must meet county UT Extension or Master Gardener approval, and Master Gardeners must continually submit volunteer service hours through the Tennessee Master Gardener Web site.

Administrative hours are contributed while conducting organizational work for Master Gardener activities, projects, county organizations or the UT Extension Office. Examples of administrative hours include coordinating Master Gardeners to help with an event, recording hours into the Tennessee Master Gardener website, preparation for committee meetings and fundraising.

Community hours are contributed while working on Master Gardener-approved community projects that are non-educational. Examples of community hours include watering or maintaining a demonstration garden, acting as a docent or taking tickets at a garden event.

Teaching hours are contributed while teaching or preparing Master Gardener or UT Extension educational programs, answering horticulture questions, writing articles or performing office duty in the UT Extension Office. Examples of education hours include writing newsletter articles, conducting research for educational programs and teaching gardening programs to consumer horticulture clientele.

The rest of this chapter is broken down to provide information in the areas of Administration, Community and Teaching.

Administrative

Much of the service time spent designated as administrative hours involve project coordination, organization communication and leadership. The following information is practical advice to help Master Gardeners in these various roles. Leadership is a major component of administrative work. If leadership is insufficient, structure and process for the organization projects and activities could not be communicated or organized.

The Master Gardener Team

There are activities that will help make the transition from a loose collection of volunteers to a cohesive team. Members must work out personal differences, find strengths on which to build, balance commitments to the project against the demands of their everyday routine, and learn how to contribute to the team’s goals. Effective volunteer teams will:

- Exhibit a high level of trust
- Have positive shared experiences
Master Gardener Volunteer Service Activities

The following activities are examples of how the volunteers contribute to the Master Gardener Program. Any questions should be directed to the local Master Gardener Coordinator (UT Extension agent). Often, committees may manage activities and projects, see the Tennessee Master Gardener County Handbook for more information.

Volunteer service activities include:

- Answering home gardening and pest management phone calls and helping visitors at the county UT Extension Office
- Managing and requesting hours from volunteers
- Assisting the UT Extension agent in compiling volunteer service hours for all Master Gardeners in the county or entering hours into the Tennessee Master Gardener Web site
- Coordinating or assisting with home and garden shows, county fairs, gardening information booths, problem diagnostic clinics, etc
- Writing garden articles and photographing events and projects
- Serving as a chair, director or officer for the county organization
- Working on research projects and reports to develop and disseminate information to interested parties or seeking grants under the supervision of the county UT Extension agent
- Serving as a project coordinator/chair
- Working with 4-H or Junior Master Gardener
- Serving as a Master Gardener group liaison (coordinating cooperative programs with other agencies)
- Organizing, researching, planning and presenting programs/classes to civic or garden clubs, schools, Master Gardener classes or meetings, conferences, botanical gardens, community colleges, etc
- Assisting with assembly of written materials and handouts, equipment setup, refreshments, test grading, etc
- Serving as a Master Gardener training class coordinator
- Master Gardener volunteers should be aware of the value in reporting their activities and time spent in service. Volunteer service hours should reflect the actual time spent supporting the mission of the Master Gardener Program. Hours are important in providing the state and federal government with data about the Master Gardener Program’s impact, progress and needs.

- Document team member roles/responsibilities
- Abide by agreed upon consequences of behavior
- Possess excellent communication skills
- Ensure a common focus on content and process

To outside observers, the only obvious volunteer team efforts are associated with the tasks at hand: having meetings, gathering data, planning community activities, making changes, writing reports and so forth. However, if these were the team’s only concerns, progress would be fast. But when people form into groups, there are often challenges to efficient progress. The problem is that there are hidden concerns that, like undercurrents, pull team members away from their obvious tasks. If left unattended, these concerns can inhibit a group’s chance of becoming an effective team. Every team must therefore spend time on
activities not directly related to a task, activities that build understanding and support in the group. A Master Gardener should consider personal identities and relationships within the team when gathering a group of volunteers together to tackle a community project.

Stages of Team Growth

Another consideration regarding team dynamics is the stages of growth most teams go through. As the team matures, members gradually learn to cope with the emotional and group pressures they face. As a result, the team goes through fairly predictable stages.

Stage 1: Forming

When a team is forming, members cautiously explore the boundaries of acceptable group behavior. This is a stage of transition from individual to member status and of testing the leader’s guidance both formally and informally.

Stage 2: Storming

Storming is probably the most difficult stage for the team. It is as if team members jump in the water and, thinking they are about to drown, start thrashing about. They begin to realize the task is different and more difficult than they imagined. They become testy, blameful or overzealous.

Stage 3: Norming

During this stage, members reconcile competing loyalties and responsibilities. They accept the team, team ground rules (or norms), their roles in the team and the individuality of fellow members. Emotional conflict is reduced as previously competitive relationships become more cooperative.

Stage 4: Performing

By this stage, the team has settled its relationships and expectations. They can begin performing: diagnosing and solving problems, and choosing and implementing changes. At last, team members have discovered and accepted each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and they have learned their roles.

Leader Roles and Responsibilities

Leaders are responsible for motivating and recognizing their volunteer team members. One of the most important leadership skills with any group of people is to involve each person in the work of the group. Involvement is also known as engagement, response and active participation. There are many ways to involve people in Master Gardener group meetings. Involvement is essential for leader and group success because people need to feel they are valued, recognized, cared about and that they belong.

Involving people in group processes does not absolve the leader from being responsible for all of the activities and outcomes of the group. Sharing the work with group members frees the leader of details so that more thinking and planning can be done. By sharing group responsibilities, the leader is helping to develop the team.

The Master Gardener leader can overcome most challenges by simply acting by the golden rule: “Treat volunteers as you would like to be treated.” Master Gardener leaders need to be considerate of time when working with volunteers. Also, good communication skills, listening skills and professionalism need to be demonstrated.

Suggestions for Meeting the Challenges

1. When appropriate, hold a formal training session at a convenient time and location to give volunteers the guidance they need to be good team members. Possibly provide refreshments. Thank volunteers for their interest. Give them an overview of the goals and projects...
for the entire year. Explain the value and need for planning and teamwork.

2. Describe to the volunteers the various types of skills they will need to help the Master Gardener program meet specific objectives. Matching a person’s time, interest and ability as much as possible to the appropriate project will help ensure a successful relationship with the individual volunteer. It will also help ensure they are on the right team project.

3. Develop exercises that enable them to get to know a little bit about each other. Various types of ‘icebreaker’ activities described later in this chapter will help them develop a sense of team. For example, role-playing exercises can help make the volunteers feel more comfortable with certain tasks they may be asked to do. Written materials may need to be provided for the volunteers to review later.

**Effective Meetings**

Before calling a meeting, the necessity of a meeting should be determined. Often, meetings are held only to update people or to share information. If this is the sole purpose of the meeting, then an e-mail should be considered instead. If it is determined that a meeting needs to be held, it should always serve a purpose or meet specified objectives. The volunteer who calls the meeting is responsible for meeting these objectives in a defined time frame.

To insure that time is used efficiently, an agenda should be created prior to each meet-
Suggestions for meeting guidelines

- Respect each person
- Share responsibility
- Respond to ideas, not people
- Keep an open mind
- Question and participate
- Listen constructively
- Attend all meetings

When volunteers meet with a leader, the purpose of the meeting is not always the same. The leader may need to customize the planning and preparation to the purpose of the meeting(s). Meetings usually fall into four categories: sharing, problem solving, decision-making and combination meetings.

- Some meetings are for sharing information only; these should be kept short with only relevant information provided. Problems should be listed for future meetings.
- During problem solving meetings, problems are clearly defined and discussed. Team members who are willing to work together should resolve the problem(s).
- During decision-making meetings, members should choose from alternatives and rely on decisions made by team consensus.
- The most common type of meeting is a combination, or a mixture of problem solving, planning, decision-making and information sharing.

A functioning group of volunteers need to embrace the collaborative, creative connections of the members of the group to solve problems and to emotionally connect with others. Many people feel that one-way dialog is more like a dictator bellowing orders. The group should be allowed interactive opportunities to share ideas. If there is a need for a decision, the meeting leader can ask for a consensus. Consensus requires all the decision makers to discuss the issue until everyone can agree on a solution. Everyone should be willing to lend support to the final decision and help carry it out. Consensus guarantees that nobody will lose because it requires that the decision not be made until everyone shares in the acceptance of the resolution. Below are two methods of the decision-making processes that result in consensus.

**Tool 1. Brainstorming**

**Brainstorming** is when participants come together in a freethinking forum to generate ideas.

- **Generation:** The team leader clearly states the topic to be brainstormed in specific, precise terms and makes it visible on a flipchart. A recorder is selected to list ideas on a flipchart.
- **Clarification:** The team reviews the list to make sure that everyone understands all the items and duplications are eliminated. At this time, the ideas are not discussed.
- **Evaluation:** The team reviews and discusses the list to eliminate irrelevancies or issues that are “off limits” (i.e., salaries, absenteeism, etc.). The team consolidates similar ideas.

**Brainstorming Rules**

- Write the title of what is being brainstormed on the flipchart page
- Each person takes a turn, in sequence, around the group
- One thought is presented at a time
- No ideas are discussed or criticized during the Generation Phase
- It is okay for participants to pass
- Build on the ideas of others
Tool 2: Multivoting

Multivoting narrows a large list of possibilities to a smaller list of the top priorities or to a final selection. Multivoting is preferable to straight voting because it allows an item that is favored by all, but not the top choice of any, to rise to the top.

- **First Vote:** Each person votes for as many items as desired and items with a high number of votes are circled.
- **Second Vote:** Each person gets to vote a number of times equal to 1/2 the number of circled items.
- **Continue Voting:** Multivote until 3-5 items remain, this eliminates team members’ close identification with items. The remaining few will be easier to narrow to one and come to an agreement.

Rules for Multivoting

- There is a structured series of votes
- The number of items on the list is reduced to three to five
- This results in a high degree of agreement

Community

Community service hours can be performed in a variety of ways. The most well known aspect of Master Gardener volunteering is a community garden care and planting. It is the part of the service that people see and relate to the service of a gardener. Community service hours defined in this handbook are much more. For the most part, the following information will discuss how Master Gardeners should effectively communicate and interface with the public.

Demonstration Gardens

Demonstration gardens are excellent spaces/ opportunities to share effective gardening techniques and strategies. They also allow Master Gardeners the opportunity to practice skills learned in the classroom. Demonstration gardens can serve many different purposes, but they primarily serve to educate the public through example. They may be developed for a certain audience, illustrate a gardening concept/process or display various types of plants. To develop a demonstration garden, a Master Gardener group must commit to a partnership where there is agreement on design, cultivation, care and support.

Working with the Public

Working with the public has its own set of unique challenges. Master Gardeners will work with diverse people in age, socio-economic, educational and varying degrees of horticultural backgrounds. These people will be asking horticultural questions with
Tips for Demonstration Gardens

Tips for demonstration gardens:

1. The garden needs to be accessible for the intended audience. If the space is open to the public, make sure that the garden is Americans with Disability accessible.
2. Interpretive signs should be used to communicate information about the garden, techniques, conditions or plants.
3. The space and/or plant should be changed regularly to add interest for regular visitors and volunteers.
4. The garden should be maintained and managed the garden. A well-kept or neat garden space helps the gardener realize the potential for their garden.
5. Volunteers should work in teams. Seeing the volunteers working together in the space may allow the visitors to see gardening techniques and processes in action and allow them to ask questions about gardening activities, creating a learning opportunity for that visitor.

Post a Photo Disclaimer

If there are photos being taken at an event, Master Gardener groups can post a sign visible to the public that states the purpose for taking photos and how the photos will be used. For example a sign may read: “Photos will be taken at this event and used for Master Gardener training and Extension educational purposes only.”

Telephone Etiquette

When working with clients by telephone, communication can be even more difficult because there are no visual clues to assist with meaning. Thus, it is important to listen carefully and ask as many questions as necessary. Every time a telephone called is made or received as a Master Gardener, Extension is being represented. The impression created can be a lasting one and may determine whether or not the client will use the services of Master Gardener.

When Answering the Telephone at the Extension Office

After learning from an Extension agent or someone on the staff what to say when answering the phone and how to log calls, phone calls should be answered promptly. Quick service helps build a reputation of efficiency. Master Gardeners should identify themselves to personalize the call and should have a friendly tone and be good listeners. Simple, straightforward language should be used and technical terms and slang should be avoided. Words should be pronounced clearly and the talking tone should be at a moderate rate and volume, but with the tone of voice varied.

The county Extension office may have a specific way they would like phones to be answered when assisting in the office. For example:

**Hello, University of Tennessee/ Tennessee State University ______________ County Extension Office this is __________ a Master Gardener volunteer. How may I help you?**
not the person will continue to turn to Master Gardeners or the Extension for assistance.

When a Master Gardener is asked a question and the answer seems to have given the client all the information he/she was searching for, the individual should be thanked for their interest in the Extension service and referred to contact the office of a Master Gardener for future assistance. It would also be appropriate for a Master Gardener to offer to mail a copy of a pamphlet, if it would be of assistance (such mailing would be coordinated with the help of one of the secretaries or one of the extension agents).

Plant Clinics

The plant clinic is staffed with trained master gardeners, and it serves as a resource and information center to satisfy the home gardening needs of the general public. Master gardeners working in the plant clinic are provided with resources such as the Insect and Plant Disease Control Manual UT Extension PB1690, multiple identification guides, The Master Gardener Handbook and the extension website, if the internet is accessible.

Master Gardeners should work in teams where each volunteer has an area of expertise. Times and locations of plant clinics should be advertised ahead of the event so that attendees have an opportunity to bring plant or insect samples to the clinic. Master Gardeners in the clinic embrace the opportunity to assist and educate home gardeners. Those who sought assistance from the plant clinic receive information and solutions to their problems gain a greater appreciation and understanding of gardening and Extension.

Plant clinics also benefit the Master Gardeners. By working a clinic, volunteers have an opportunity to exercise the knowledge and skills learned from their training. Also, volunteers develop people and problem solving skills by researching and answering a multitude of specific questions as they further their gardening knowledge. Moreover, these benefits build confidence in Master Gardeners, which makes them an asset to the surrounding communities and the Extension office.

Making a Recommendation

Master Gardeners often find themselves solving problems for other gardeners. One of the most common services Master Gardeners provide is making recommendations that include the use of pesticides, soil building, and selecting, propagating and planting plants. Tennessee Master Gardeners must follow

Tips for Public Service Announcements

1. Identify it as a “public service announcement” at the top of the document
2. List the date of airing/announcement
3. The Master Gardener organization (and partners) should be on the letterhead or with a logo
4. Include name, phone, email and fax of the contact person
5. Skip a few lines and entitle the announcement, in bold letters, by the name of the event, followed by a short, concise explanation of what is to be aired
6. State what type of coverage is sought
7. Send it about three weeks in advance. At the end, write ‘-end-’ or ‘# # #’
8. Mail the announcement to the proper contact i.e. community calendar, program director, on-air Interviews coordinator
9. Follow-up by calling the station or the publisher

Plant Clinic Supply Check List

- Notepad and pen
- Extension Office phone number
- Insect & disease specimen forms
- TMG recruiting information
- Magnifying glass
- Re-closeable bags
- Gloves
- Clippers
- Reference materials
- Name badges
- Paperweights or clips (windy days)
- Sunscreen and hat
- Water or cool drinks
current recommendations found in the various publications available from the University of Tennessee Extension (including this handbook). Use of other pesticide recommendations, chemical or "organic," is not approved.

1. When making pesticide recommendations, if more than one product is listed as satisfactory, each product should be recommended.

2. Questions concerning commercial production of crops and pest management on such crops are always referred to local county Extension personnel.

3. It is O.K. to not know the answer to a question. Ask to call a person back when the correct answer is found.

By thinking of all the possible symptoms and conditions that might match up with the described issue, enough questions should be asked that should yield enough information to find the solution. However, if there is a lot of uncertainty, the volunteer should write down the person’s name, address, phone number and email and then research the question thoroughly or see that it is answered by the Extension agent or a specialist.

**Teaching**

Teaching can be done in many different styles, but for simplicity, we are going to describe two styles: informal and formal. Informal teaching may be sharing a hands-on demonstration with a small group of individuals. Formal teaching is a traditional classroom-style lecture. Both teaching methods can be effective if the following principles are followed. As Master Gardener Educators study and apply these principles, their teaching effectiveness will improve. The Master Gardener should:

**Be purposeful:** Purposes should be written and used in the lesson. These are specific knowledges and skills that the audience is to learn.

**Be prepared:** A lesson plan should be prepared and written in advance. A plan encourages organization of the content and gives confidence to the teacher. A recommended lesson plan is included in this chapter.

**Be enthusiastic:** Enthusiasm is contagious.

**Use color:** Color attracts and holds learner’s attention. Plants, soils, tools and plant materials have natural color and realism to keep the audience focused on the subject matter.

**Make content relevant:** Subjects should be taught in a timely manor, in the proper season and when the audience ‘needs to know’.

**Be creative:** Lectures should be mixed with pictures, stories, examples and real objects from the garden and landscape. The audience should be invited to ask/answer questions and share experiences.

**Be organized:** The lesson should be presented in logical steps. The objectives of the lesson plant should be taught and key points should be reviewed. The audience should be frequently checked for understanding.

**Engage the audience:** Frequent opportunities for the audience to be involved should be provided during the lesson. A few examples include asking and answering questions, participation in a hands-on activity, problem solving or a game activity.

**Interact with the audience:** Two-way communication and constant eye contact should be maintained. Attention should be paid to the physical teaching situation and temperature, comfort and external noise should be monitored.

**Evaluate what was taught:** Did the audience achieve the lesson objectives? What was the ‘take home’ content?
Effective Teaching Strategies

Incorporating a variety of teaching and learning strategies supported by technology can have an increased affect on participants’ engagement and behavior. When Master Gardener educators apply the use of varied teaching strategies, they are supporting a belief in individual learning styles and preferences. Thus, students may be able to engage and experience the learning concepts more effectively. Learning strategies have evolved over the past two decades, for Master Gardener training purposes, it is important to learn to teach using at least two of the four learning strategies listed below.

Active Learning Strategies

Active learning strategies focus on exploration by interacting with an environment and manipulating the objects in that environment. Example: A learner plants seeds, some seeds are scratched, some are soaked and others have no treatment. Observations are made as to which seeds germinated faster.

Constructive Learning Strategies

Constructive learning strategies bring context to learning as students begin from a point of already existing personal experience, knowledge or interests. Example: Construct models to explain how soil holds water, building on prior knowledge. New information is then taught to clarify and refine knowledge.

Collaborative Learning Strategies

Collaborative (group) strategies take advantage of, and build upon, shared individual knowledge. Example: A project team is asked to design a demonstration garden for drought tolerant plants. Volunteers discuss the site, plant selection and assign tasks to complete the project.

Intentional/Reflective Learning Strategies

Reflective learning strategies provide opportunities for students to construct their own knowledge and understandings. Example: A learner conducts an experiment by growing organic carrots. The learning goals must be understood: what is organic, how to grow a carrot, how long to harvest, etc. Then, the learner explains the strategies used to combine the ideas to harvest an organically grown carrot.

Teaching to an Audience

A big part of being a trained Master Gardener volunteer will be educating the community. Some individuals experience anxiety about speaking in front of an audience. The following tips can help to reduce stage nerves.

▪ Be prepared. A well-planned and well-rehearsed talk will sound clear and organized and seem natural to deliver
▪ Speak on topics of personal interest or knowledge. This will increase confidence.
▪ Chat with a few members of the audience before giving a speech. This helps establish contact and often calms nerves.
▪ Be attentive to other speakers
▪ Take opportunities that arise to speak at local Master Gardener meetings, school groups, community clubs or committees. These are great opportunities to acquire and practice basic skills in speaking and to gain self-confidence surrounded by those who have the same interests.

Figure 7.

Master Gardeners Are Asked to Speak in All Venues. It is important to know the audience and engage them in the lesson.
Delivery

Delivery is a very important aspect of public speaking. Delivery includes the use of voice and nonverbal body actions, otherwise known as gestures. These qualities contribute to the outcome of a presentation. The remark: “It’s not what you said, but how you said it,” validates that the way we speak has much to do with what our audience actually hears. A good speaking voice should have:

Vocal Expression

▪ Quality of voice should be mellow, clear, stable, steady, rich and full. It should not be thin, harsh, nasally and shaky.
▪ Force is the volume and intensity of the voice. It should vary according to what is being said to avoid monotony, but it should be pleasant to listen to and loud enough to be heard.
▪ Pitch is the position on the scale that one speaks. Different words will have higher or lower inflection than others, such as the rising of pitch at the end of a question. Normal speaking pitch should be at a moderate level.
▪ Rate is the speed at which one speaks. Rate will change with the desired effect. Slowing down will allow one to think ahead and give the audience a chance to absorb what is being said. Pauses can be used effectively, but they should not appear to be memory lapses.
▪ Enthusiasm

Enunciation and Articulation

▪ All words need to be pronounced so that the audience hears them. Word endings, such as “ing,” should not be allowed to drop off words.
▪ If the correct pronunciation of a word is unknown, it should be looked up. Watch words such as just, government, set, statistic and athlete.
▪ Most of us have a tendency to slur words together, but over-precision is undesirable, too. It will sound “mech-can-i-cal.”

Breathing

▪ A pleasing voice comes from being relaxed. Breathing deeply and evenly will allow one to overcome a
little bit of nervousness. Short sentences will help put the pauses where they belong in relation to breathing.

As mentioned above, in addition to voice, a good delivery also depends on nonverbal body expressions. These are referred to as gestures. A gesture is a physical movement by the speaker. It can relate thoughts and feelings to the audience almost as effectively as words, so it is very important to understand this type of communication. Any body movement, except moving from one spot to another, is considered a gesture. To convey ideas to the audience, the whole body may be used, including facial expressions and direct eye contact with the audience. Emotions should be shown as in normal conversation. Most gestures are variations and combinations of different movements. There are four basic hand positions used to express several meanings, these are detailed below.

- **Index finger:** This gesture can be suggestive or descriptive. It is used to point out an object or an idea. For example, this gesture can be used to emphasize the idea that, “you are the problem and solution.”

- **Palms up:** This gesture can show that someone is in favor of something or that items are being compared. It is never used for emphasis alone. For example, this gesture can be used to emphasize the statement, “on the one hand... while on the other hand...”

- **Palms down:** This gesture is the opposite of palms up. It shows disapproval and is made rapidly. For example, this gesture can emphasize the statement, “I want nothing to do with it!” Crossing hands and arms in a downward sweep can emphasize the palms down gesture.

- **Fist:** Using the fist is a very emphatic gesture. It can be used to show an important feeling of the speaker such as “We must fight this problem.”

Beginners may need to make a conscious effort to include gestures because they feel inhibited. However, gestures are necessary to express ideas. Therefore, it is important to work toward a natural look as gestures and movements are made to emphasize points.

**Public Speaking Tips**

It is a good idea to record or make a digital video of a speech before it is given publicly. The recording can be used to diminish habits such as nervously pushing back hair or fidgeting. Practicing should be done enough so that a presentation does not sound memorized. Practice speeches should be treated as the real thing. Meaning, one should remember to pause before starting and make eye contact with the audience initially and continually. One should also keep the pace steady, the tone confident and the momentary pauses comfortable. Pauses should not include the use of “eh’s,” “um’s” and “you knows.” Additionally, if right-handed, one should stand with their right foot about 1 inch ahead of the left and with feet 2 to 4 inches apart. If left-handed, this stance should be reversed. This stance allows the speaker to step forward easily, it counteracts the rocking tendency and it lets gestures occur without an overbalanced or awkward feeling. Prior to a speech beginning, or when not gesturing, the speaker should stand straight with arms at the side. Finally, good posture should be practiced at all times. A common fault is to lean on the table or podium.

**Use of Notes**

The use of notes in a presentation is a helpful tool to keep the presenter on track and focused. Notes can be added to presentation slides, note cards or any type of paper allowed. However, one should not read directly from the notes or outlines. Instead, they should be referred to as a reminder of, or to prompt, the next topic. However, because reference to notes, and especially to a script, may detract from eye contact, audience interaction and smoothness of delivery, it should be done only as necessary.

**Using a Microphone**

When speaking to a very large audience, a microphone should be used so that the speech can be clearly heard by everyone. Before the speech, it is important to check the microphone by talking into it to see if the height and volume is correct. One should speak directly into a microphone (about 4 to 8 inches is usually best) and not lean into or away from it. If the microphone is a lavaliere/lapel, that the head should not be moved from side to side.
Instead, the entire body should be turned so that the microphone follows the voice. Also, rustling papers or tapping on the podium for emphasis should be avoided.

Acknowledging Sources
When using material written, spoken or photographed by someone else, the source needs to be acknowledged. Crediting the author or artist can be done in a speech or on a presentation slide. Also, if possible, one should try to be knowledgeable about the information presented so that basic questions can be answered. Additionally, any claims made in a presentation should be researched to ensure that the information comes from a credible resource.

Listening
There are numerous opportunities for volunteers to grow and learn as they are actively participating as audience members. It is important and respectful to actively listen to the information and experiences shared in presentations by experts. Productive listening activities include listening ahead of the speaker by preparing for the direction of thought, weighing the evidence of the speaker with an open mind, periodically reviewing and mentally summarizing the points, taking notes, and writing down any questions. It is also a good idea to frequently review notes so the information can be added to personal experiences. Finally, and most importantly, remember that one simply cannot be a good listener while talking.

Teaching and Gardening to Children
When teaching about gardening, a diversified learning environment that challenges all aspects of learners’ development should be created. The physical work required by gardening promotes muscle development and teaches patience. While ‘playing’ in the garden, children are able to slow down and observe what is going on around them. All the while, the teacher is using gardening as a basis for a curriculum that incorporates science, math, language, cooperation and respect for all living things. Once the garden is planted, it becomes a part of everyday classroom activities.

Gardening activities may be conducted informally, as when the student is outside playing/gardening, or formally, with a designed lesson. Handling a large number of people can be difficult, especially with younger children and those who require one-on-one attention. In these situations, parents can be great sources of assistance. Teachers or volunteers can softly redirect students who are in the garden during unplanned times to prevent accidents and to keep everyone safe.

To fulfill garden upkeep requirements, it is wise to develop a good maintenance system. A dry-erase board, kept in a shed or other designated area, can be used to record jobs that need to be done and to check off jobs as they are completed each day or week. This will help alleviate any confusion about when the garden is attended, watered or fertilized, for example. Mulching the garden is one of the best things that one can do for weed control and for water conservation. When working with children, hand weeding is the best option so that the children are not exposed to pesticide residues. Mulch materials may include newspapers, bark mulch, pine needles or aged sawdust. Aged materials should be used because fresh sawdust or mulch can rob the soil of essential nitrogen. These materials are generally cheaper when purchased in bulk from a nursery rather than buying bags at a garden center.

Annual plants, including vegetables, require watering at least once a week, maybe twice during the hottest months. If the garden does not receive 1 to ½ inches of natural rainfall a week, supplementary irrigation must be considered. Established perennial beds and trees may not need watered as often. It really
depends on the type of plant. Watering the
garden presents the opportunity to use rain
gauges to measure weekly rainfall amounts
and to make seasonal graphs as a learning
activity. As far as fertilizers are concerned, a
slow-release-type granular applied at planting
will feed plants slowly over a period of 2 to 3
months. As a learning activity, natural, organic
fertilizers such as bone meal, cottonseed meal,
age manure and fish emulsion can be used.

Labeling the plants is very important and
can be a writing lesson for older children or
for local youth groups. Those working in the
garden full-time may know what has been
planted, but a visitor to the garden may have
trouble identifying which plant is which. La-
bel may be made from Popsicle® sticks, paint
stir-sticks, old window blinds cut into pieces or
purchased markers.

A great deal of educational benefit can be
achieved during the harvest season as children
learn characteristics that indicate when to
gather vegetables, herbs and flowers. Em-
phasing words such as green, unripe and
overripe should take place during the entire
gardening process. Items harvested in the gar-
den should be used to make healthy snacks, to
make craft projects or to harvest and save the
seed for the next year.

The importance of insects in the garden
should be shared with all audiences. Children
should be taught to be calm, not to run and
not to wave their arms if approached by a bee
or wasp while gardening. It should be ex-
plained that the bees are important pollinators
and that they are out gathering nectar, which
will be made into honey. Bees will only sting
if they are afraid. They do not typically go
around looking for the opportunity to attack,
it is more of a defensive reaction. However,
some children and adults are highly allergic to
bee stings. This requires that one should work
closely with that child and his/her parents to
develop a plan of action in case the child is
stung.

Summary
A successful volunteer program requires
extensive volunteer training in the areas of
A.C.T. (Administrative, Communication and
Teaching). Training should include a variety of
teaching methods and opportunities. There is
a positive domino effect of having trained and
empowered volunteers who will educate the
community and recruit future volunteers, en-
suring the vitality and longevity of the Master
Gardener Program.

Terms To Know
Active Learning
Administrative
Brainstorming
Collaborative Learning
Community
Constructive Learning
Insect and Plant Disease Control Manual
Lesson Plan
Multovoting
Reflective Learning
Teaching
Volunteer Service

Test Your Knowledge
1. Name the three different types of volun-
tee service hours and give an example of
each from your county.
2. Master Gardeners educate the public us-
ing informal and formal teaching meth-
ods, create a lesson on composting for a
public meeting or an impromptu question
from a friend?
3. How can Master Gardeners work as a
team to better accomplish the goals of the
program?
4. How should Master Gardeners make
recommendations?
5. Demonstration gardens and plant clinics
are two common ways Master Gardeners
share UT horticulture information with
the public. Do you have any other ideas
on how your group could better share
gardening with the public? How would
you involve your group team members
and market this idea to the public?
## Resources


Bender, Steve (Editor). *Southern Living Garden Problem Solver.* Oxmoor House. 1999.


Tennessee Master Gardener Handbooks
mastergardener.tennessee.edu