

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Training and Utilizing Master Gardener Volunteers as Teachers in Horticultural Programming

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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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Abstract

The mission of our Master Gardener program is, "We are Ohio State University Extension trained volunteers empowered to educate others with timely research-based gardening information." Beyond answering questions and coordinating committees to do meaningful work in the community, these volunteers can and do teach great programs to extend the reach of the university's horticultural information. This session with share data from two counties where training has included a required teaching exercise. Through this exercise, a large number of Master Gardener Volunteers report increased confidence in their ability to teach, gained skills in creating presentations and satisfaction from increased programs and activities. Beyond this, these volunteers expanded the number of programs and the number of participants in horticulture programs in the counties.



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Training – Up front!

- What is the county program?
- What can they do for the county program?
- “We are Leaders, Not Weeders”
- We are NOT a garden club



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Focus on Mission

"We are Ohio State University Extension trained volunteers empowered to educate others with timely research-based gardening information."

Empowered

- Committee leadership (active MGV)
- Kit System
 - Various topics, one page outline/handout
 - Focus on hands-on activities
 - No PowerPoints!
 - Groups of two the first time they teach
- Training
 - At Monthly Meetings
 - During lunch time of initial class

Educate Others

- MGVs handle requests from libraries, garden clubs, etc
- Teach at new MGV trainings
- Plant ID at plant exchange
- Lead planting groups at CityScape (planting all garden beds, downtown Youngstown, etc)
- "We are Leaders, Not Weeders"

Research Based

- Added "Myths & Legends" to training to focus on unbiased research based information
 - Every answer and presentation must be backed by a factsheet or bulletin
 - Search using "university extension" with the search terms
 - Explain why something might be common practice (lime every year when we had lots of acid rain from burning coal)

Training to Teach

Focus on empowerment

You can do it!

"This is not rocket science!"

Goals

- 1) Increase skill and comfort level of volunteers in the area of public speaking on horticulture topics.
- 2) Utilize expertise of volunteers to teach classes/sessions on horticultural topics.
- 3) Develop new programs based on volunteer expertise.
- 4) Generate revenue for volunteer support and county budget through program fees for workshops

Presentation Requirement

- Each trainee presents in front of volunteers only
- Focus on something they love about gardening
- Detailed instructions. Q&A each week
- One-on-one assistance is given to ease nerves
- Experienced volunteers teach mini-sessions
- Trainees attend other programs to observe

Teaching Assignment – MGTV Training

Presentation Date: _____

1. Pick one of your favorite topics relating to gardening, for example:
 - a. Shade Gardening;
 - b. Everlastings;
 - c. Rock Gardens;
 - d. Container Gardening;
 - e. Plant Pathology ; and so on.
2. Make a handout.
 - a. One page outline
 - b. Include one attachment - Utilize OSU Extension factsheets and information:
 - i. Use <http://ohioline.osu.edu> for Ohio based factsheets
 - ii. Articles from <http://extension.org>
 - iii. Search Google or related site using terms relating to your topic plus the words 'university extension' – i.e. – "shade gardening university extension" to find Land-Grant University information
 - c. List any additional references at the bottom of your one-page outline
3. Presentation must be based on "unbiased, knowledge-based research" from a land-grant university.
4. Must also have a "twist" of personality and personal experiences.
5. Gardening humor is always appreciated.
6. Each week, feel free to take the first few minutes of class to get help or gain input from others in the class.
7. Feel free to "team-up" with a partner to do a presentation. If you do so – it must be with someone who you did not know before you came to the Master Gardener Class!
8. Presentation must be at least 20 minutes long, no longer than 25. Q&A will follow presentation. (Just like teaching at the Gardening Adventure Series, at a local garden club, library, garden clubs and more!)

After Training: Prepared Topics

- Some trainees will have great presentations, but difficult to duplicate and train other MGVs
- Technology is often a barrier, sometimes for volunteers, many times for venue/location
- Solution?
- Kit System
 - No tech necessary – hands on!
 - Basics gardening skills the public needs (or has forgotten)

Kit System

How to Grow Vegetables Kit

Items in Kit

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to teach/organize the program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Handout o Lesson plan o Clipboard w/ Sign-in Sheet o Email o Pens/Pencils/Sharpie o Copies of evaluation - How to Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Half Bucket or half gallon jug with screw o Aluminum Can (tuna) o Hose Nozzle o Male Hose Connector o Female Hose Connector o Y Hose Connector o Shut-off Valve o Soaker Hose Pieces o Drip line piece | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Starting Seeds/Selecting Plants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Magazines o Newspaper Pot o Tongue Depressor - Disease Reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Pruners o Newspaper o Mulches o Wood Post piece o Steel Post piece o Types of strings - Soils <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Trowel o Peat Moss o Potting Soil o Potting Mix o Soluble fertilizer o Osmonocote, type product - Wildlife Control - chicken wire strip |
|--|---|

Top 10 Ways to a Better Veggie Garden¹

A well informed gardener can be happy with their accomplishments in the vegetable garden with a few simple guidelines. Working with and understanding the natural growth of plants will help immensely to get the results you want without all of the extra work. The first step in growing good vegetables is keeping the plants healthy. If you keep them healthy, they will be less susceptible to disease and provide you a bountiful harvest. Here are some tips to help you grow a better vegetable garden this and every year:

10. **Good Bug, Bad Bug?** – Knowing the bad ones from the good ones will get you moving in the right direction. Gardeners are best off adopting integrated pest management where they scout, identify, and then control harmful insects. Most plants can take on quite a few bad insects before harm is done. Many times, picking off the bad insects can work. Knowing the insect and its life cycle will also help eliminate the potential destruction. Maintaining the good bugs will help reduce some populations of the bad ones.
09. **Lift Your Plants** – You can decrease disease pressure immensely if you can change the environment which supports diseases. The best environment for most diseases? Warm temperatures, darkness and humidity/moisture. So, if you can control the environment (i.e. – eliminate moisture through proper airflow and sunlight exposure) disease can be reduced, controlled or eliminated! Use stakes, trellises, panels, fencing and whatever else you can find to get plants up off the ground. Items need to be strong and sturdy to support plants at their largest size.
08. **Prune** – Suckering tomatoes, but also thinning their thick canopy will help improve air flow and reduce disease. Pruning is a chore, but saves lots of time later. Pruning basics: prune for air flow and sunlight penetration. Make clean cuts. Tomato cages limit your ability to prune and harvest.
07. **Pollinate** – Yes, bees and other insects can pollinate the plant. Protect ground nesting bees, bumble bees and carpenter bees. But, are there other rules? Sweet corn must be planted in squares, not just rows. They need another plant's pollen to pollinate. Blueberries? Apples? These need another cultivar for full production.
06. **Mulch** – Using four layers of newspapers will stop most weeds in the vegetable garden for the season. Do this after seeds emerge and transplants are planted. Cover with a thin lay of mulch (grass clippings, bark, compost, etc.) Wetting during application keeps them from moving around. For other mulches, mulching too thick can kill plants. Mulching too thin can leave you with lots of weeds. Mulching takes some work and practice to find what best fits you. Mulching also reduces the splash effect, where soil borne diseases get onto the plant.
05. **Recycle** – Compost will help add organic matter to clay for better root penetration. Compost will help sandy soil hold more water and nutrients. Either way, plants will be healthier for the addition. A compost pile can be simple. Start with all yard/garden waste and everything from the kitchen (except oils and meat scraps). Other ways to recycle? Find used stakes for tomatoes, sheets for frost protection, newspapers for mulch and more.

Training to Diagnose

Experts do some training
Specifics locally

Difficult Questions: a different perspective...



Scenario: Fruit Question



A call comes in from a gentleman who says he has just noticed caterpillars on his blueberry bushes. They are chewing up the leaves. He has two products in his garage, one is a product for fruit that contains captan and the other is Ortho Bug-be-Gone. Which product should he use?

How do you respond to this question?
What are some educational points you may want to make?
What are some questions you might ask?
What are control options?



Coming Soon: Training to Write!

Expansion of Valley Grows

Writing!

- Front page, section D every Thursday
- Third year of publication
- 2 articles
- 1 Q&A
- Calendar & 2 'plugs'



The Increased Impact

“Out of Many, One” ... impactful program
Truly Extending Our Reach

Mahoning County Plant & Pest Diagnostic Clinic

Year	Vol. Hours	Questions	Soil Tests	Total
2011	222.75	378		
*2012	428.75	432	82	514
2013	428	547	101	648
2014	434.25	636	141	777
2015		#487	#132	#519

*Year I started in this new county #Data to date in 2015

Washington County Garden Party Events

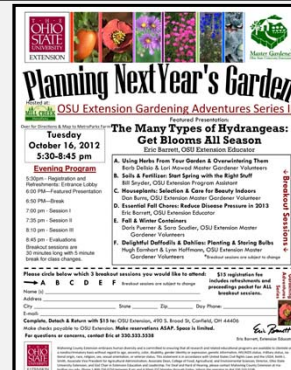


Progressive Gardening Garden Party XXIV (Saturday, September 18, 2014)
12:30-5:00 pm

Almanac Program
9:30 - 1:00 PM
Registration and coffee
1:00 pm - Noon Presentation
2:00 pm - Breakout Session I
3:00 pm - Breakout Session II
4:00 pm - Luncheon
5:00 pm - Entertainment

Selection & Care of Garden Tools
12:30-5:00 pm

Topics:
A. Happy Hydrangeas
B. Autumn, OSU Extension Volunteer
C. Certification Personnel Care
D. Dave Smith, OSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer
E. Preparing Your Garden & Improving OSU Data
F. Preparing Your Garden & Improving OSU Data
G. Preparing Your Garden & Improving OSU Data
H. Preparing Your Garden & Improving OSU Data
I. Preparing Your Garden & Improving OSU Data
J. Preparing Your Garden & Improving OSU Data



Planning Next Year's Garden
OSU Extension Gardening Adventures Series II

The Many Types of Hydrangeas: Get Blooms All Season
October 16, 2012
5:30-8:45 pm

Topics:
A. Using Merits From Your Garden & Overwintering Them
B. Safe & Fertilizer Smart Spring with the Right Stuff
C. Measurements, Selection & Care for Beauty Indicators
D. Essential Fall Chores: Reduce Disease Pressure in 2013
E. Fall & Winter Compost
F. Delightful Daffodils & Double Planting & Storing Bulbs

34th event planned..

Impacts to date

- Nearly 100% of trainees described increased skills
- Nearly all sessions taught at horticulture programs in the two counties are taught by trained volunteers.
- Trainees noted that by seeing experienced volunteers teach, it increased their comfort level for the teaching experience.
- Volunteers also reported:
 - Increased confidence in their ability to teach;
 - Enhanced skills in creating presentations; and
 - Satisfaction from their participation in and contributions to Extension programs and activities.

Impacts to date

- The results of 10+ years of training volunteers to teach:
 - Thousands of dollars in revenue has been generated to support the volunteer program and to supplement county budgets.
 - This has paid for volunteer shirts/badges, awards, background checks, kit supplies, training expenses and more.
 - Over 65 trained volunteers have volunteered to teach a class/session at a major Extension program after completing the teaching assignment in class.

