

## Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement

We appreciate your commitment to the Texas Master Gardener program. Your satisfaction and progress in this volunteer position are important to us. Please read the following expectations and indicate your willingness to cooperate by signing at the end of this form. This form must be signed and filed with the county Extension office and will need to be updated every three years. Volunteers not adhering to all items in this agreement may forfeit their certification as an Extension Master Gardener volunteer.

I understand that I am trained by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in the field of Horticulture, and I am expected to extend research-based information to the public on behalf of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In exchange for the minimum of 50 hours of Extension Master Gardener Training provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, I will:

- Commit to a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service to the horticultural programming efforts in \_\_\_\_\_ County within one year to become a certified Extension Master Gardener.
- I understand that to maintain active status as an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, I must volunteer \_\_\_\_ (varies by county but must be a minimum 12 hours) after my intern year and gain \_\_\_\_ (varies by county but must be a minimum 6 hours) continuing education hours annually.
- Provide a record of this service as directed by the Texas Master Gardener Program Coordinator.
- Comply with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Background Check policy. The background check is to be renewed every three years.

Please read the Texas Master Gardener Management guide found at <https://txmg.org/administration/management-guide> for further details on the Extension Master Gardener program, volunteerism, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

When acting as a Texas Master Gardener volunteer, I agree to:

- Consistently exhibit a positive professional manner toward and about Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Master Gardener Program, the Master Gardener Coordinator, other Extension Master Gardener volunteers, other Texas A&M AgriLife employees, and clients.
- Carry out and discharge all duties in a responsible and timely manner.
- Avoid any conflict of interest
  - Not use my Extension Master Gardener status to promote any commercial activity or private business.
  - Volunteer's efforts at their place of employment will not be considered volunteer service to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
- Recommend and use (when functioning as an Extension Master Gardener) Texas A&M AgriLife approved information for any public pesticide, herbicides, fertilizer, or cultural practices.
- Provide my own transportation and pay my own expenses incurred as part of official volunteer activities. (Expenses may be tax deductible with proper documentation.) Some County Master Gardener Associations may assist volunteers with expenses for certain types of events. Check with your local Master Gardener Program Coordinator for more information on specific association policies and procedures.

- Act in accordance with the highest standard of ethics:
  - Not physically, verbally, or sexually harass/abuse anyone
  - Refrain from illegal or unsafe behavior
  - Dress appropriately and not use harsh language
- All work by an Extension Master Gardener - text, written, spoken, images, photos, illustrations - is expected to result from the Extension Master Gardeners thought, research, or self-expression. All outside work sources (text, written, spoken, images, photos, and illustrations) must incorporate appropriate attribution. Failure to comply is plagiarism and puts the Texas Master Gardener program and the Extension Master Gardener at risk of copyright infringement.

In regard to Master Gardener Coordinators, Extension Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Recognize the responsibilities of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service staff/ Master Gardener Coordinator in setting program priorities, standards, and direction. Specific projects for the performance of the volunteer work are determined locally and should reflect local needs.
- Refer all commercial horticulture inquiries to the Master Gardener Coordinator or other Extension staff.

In regard to Master Gardener Colleagues, Extension Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Welcome volunteers from all backgrounds
- Respect and safeguard the individual rights, competencies, safety, and property

In regard to Clients, Extension Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Provide quality service to the public without regard to socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

I further understand that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees are held to the highest standard of respect and ethical behavior toward all. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will hold employees accountable for providing the following:

- Provide training, supervision, and direction to Extension Master Gardeners through the local county Extension office.
- Communicate expectations and responsibilities of the program to volunteers.
- Match volunteer skills and interests with volunteer opportunities within the county.
- Support Extension Master Gardener volunteers and the local Master Gardener Association.
- Provide continuing education opportunities.
- Provide access to Extension horticulture reference materials and reasonable access to Extension professionals.
- Uphold and cultivate a trustful relationship between staff and volunteers.

- Reassign and/or terminate, if necessary, any volunteer who does not uphold Texas Master Gardener policies, procedures, guidelines, and/or values.

### Grievance Policy

In the event of a disturbance in the program or between individuals, it is expected that you will visit with your agent to communicate the facts of the events. Your agent will consider all positions and determine what is best for the program. Further, if you have a conflict with your agent, it is expected that you will visit with the agent first about your perspective and try to resolve the situation with them. If a resolution is not found, please contact Jayla Fry, Texas Master Gardener Coordinator, who will determine the best course of action. You will be contacted within two weeks of the initial communication.

I understand that, as a volunteer, I will not be acting as a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employee and will not receive pay or employee benefits. I also understand that I am not covered by workers' compensation laws in connection with my volunteer affiliation. I understand and agree that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and I both have the right to end my volunteer relationship with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at any time, for any reason, and without advance notice.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and am familiar with the [Texas Master Gardener Management Guide](#) (both the volunteer and agent).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Agent Printed Name