

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Mission

The mission of the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program is to support Extension by providing volunteers trained in horticulture to educate the public with research based information on the best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship.

The Master Gardener Program will provide a friendly and supportive environment for volunteers so their training, experience, and enthusiasm will produce maximum benefits for their communities.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

The Standards of Behavior are a contractual agreement accepted by volunteers who commit to the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program. These standards guide the volunteers' behavior during their involvement with the program.

The University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program provides unbiased, research-based educational information and programs accessible to all Minnesota citizens. The primary purpose of the standards of behavior is to ensure the safety and well-being of all Master Gardener Program participants (i.e. target audiences, staff, other professionals and especially volunteers) and to ensure that volunteers have a positive, enjoyable experience.

Master Gardener volunteers are representatives of the University of Minnesota Extension and the local county Extension program, and serve at the discretion of the University. Just as it is a privilege for University of Minnesota Extension to work with volunteers who offer their time and talent to Master Gardener Program, volunteer involvement in the program is a privilege and responsibility, not a right.

Master Gardener volunteers are expected to abide by University of Minnesota Board of Regents Code of Conduct Policy and function within the guidelines of University of Minnesota Extension and University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener state and local program policies. A complete Board of Regents Code of Conduct Policy can be found on the Master Gardener website: www.mg.umn.edu.

In addition to conduct outlined in the Board of Regents document, University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Uphold volunteerism as an effective way to meet the horticultural needs of Minnesota citizens.
- Accept supervision and support from Extension staff while involved in the program.

- Represent their county or local Master Gardener program and the Minnesota Master Gardener Program with dignity and pride by being positive spokespersons and mentors for others.
- Conduct themselves in a courteous, civil and respectful manner, refraining from profanity and behavior that physically, verbally, or emotionally abuses, threatens or harms any Extension program participant.
- abstain from use or influence of alcoholic beverages or other controlled substances when interacting with the public as a Master Gardener volunteer,.
- Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws and the policies of University of Minnesota Extension.
- Perform duties in a responsible, professional and timely manner.
- Dress professionally and wear the Master Gardener nametag whenever serving as a Master Gardener volunteer.
- Report immediately any threats to the volunteer's emotional or physical well-being to the county or state Extension staff coordinating the Master Gardener Program.
- Be responsible and accountable for personal actions.
- Promote and support Master Gardener activities and their Master Gardener volunteer peers in order to develop an effective county and state program.
- When applicable, operate machinery, vehicles, or other equipment in a responsible manner.

Failure to honor and follow Standards of Behavior can result in termination from the Program and loss of all privileges associated with the status of a University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer.

Based on the nature and seriousness of a situation, a volunteer may be placed on “**Temporary Leave**” status until resolution of a conflict is resolved or may be terminated immediately. While attempts may be made to correct disqualifying behavior, resolution may lead to reinstatement, reassignment of volunteer duties, reinstatement with limitations, or termination from the program.