

Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement

We value your dedication to the Texas Master Gardener program and recognize the importance of your satisfaction and growth in this volunteer role. To ensure mutual understanding, please review the expectations outlined below and confirm your agreement by signing at the end of this form. This signed agreement must be submitted to the county Extension office and renewed every three years. Failure to adhere to the terms of this agreement may result in the loss of your Extension Master Gardener certification.

As a volunteer trained by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in the field of horticulture, I understand that I am responsible for sharing research-based information with the public on behalf of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. To become a certified Master Gardener, in exchange for receiving 50 hours of Master Gardener training from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, I commit to the following:

- Complete a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service supporting horticultural programming efforts in GUADALUPE COUNTY within one year.
- Maintain active status as a Master Gardener Volunteer by completing 20 (minimum 20) volunteer hours and 10 (minimum 10) continuing education hours annually after my intern year.
- Provide a record of my volunteer service as directed by the State Master Gardener Coordinator using the Volunteer Management System (VMS).
- Comply with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Background Check policy, renewing the background check every three years.

For further details on the Master Gardener program, volunteer expectations, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension policies, please review the Texas Master Gardener Management Guide.

As a Texas Master Gardener Volunteer, I Agree To:

1. **Exhibit Professionalism:**
 - Always demonstrate a positive, professional attitude toward the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Master Gardener Program, the State Master Gardener Office, fellow volunteers, employees, and clients.
2. **Fulfill Responsibilities:**
 - Perform duties responsibly and in a timely manner.
3. **Avoid Conflicts of Interest:**
 - Refrain from using my Master Gardener status to promote commercial activities or private businesses.
 - Volunteer efforts at my place of employment will not be considered as service hours for the program.

4. Provide Accurate Recommendations:

- Use only Texas A&M AgriLife-approved information and recommendations on pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, or cultural practices when functioning as a Master Gardener volunteer.

5. Handle Personal Expenses:

- Cover my transportation and related expenses for volunteer activities (tax deductions may apply with proper documentation). Check with the local CEA or Extension Master Gardener Coordinator for assistance policies.

6. Uphold Ethical Standards:

- Avoid harassment, abuse, unsafe behavior, or illegal activities.
- Dress appropriately and use respectful language.
- All work produced by a Master Gardener—whether text, written or spoken content, images, photos, or illustrations—should reflect the Master Gardener's own thought, research, and self-expression. Attribute external sources for any work (written, spoken, or visual) to avoid plagiarism or copyright infringement.

Regarding Extension Master Gardener Coordinators and County Extension Agents (CEAs):

- Acknowledge Extension's responsibility for establishing program standards, setting direction and priorities, and ensuring projects align with local needs.
- Refer commercial horticulture inquiries to the CEA or other Extension staff.

Regarding Fellow Volunteers:

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

Regarding Clients:

- Provide quality, unbiased service to the public, regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, gender identity, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

Extension Service Commitments:

I understand that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees are expected to uphold the highest standards of respect and ethical behavior toward all. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service holds its employees accountable for delivering the following:

- Provide training, supervision, and direction to Master Gardener volunteers through the local county Extension office.
- Communicate program expectations and responsibilities clearly.

- Match volunteer skills and interests with opportunities within the county.
- Support Master Gardener volunteers and the local Master Gardener Association.
- Offer continuing education and access to horticulture reference materials.
- Uphold and cultivate trust between staff and volunteers.
- Reassign or terminate volunteers if necessary to uphold program policies, procedures, guidelines, and values.

Grievance Policy:

In the event of a dispute or concern, volunteers should:

1. Communicate with their county agent who will consider all positions and determine what is best for the program.
2. 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.
3. If unresolved, contact Jayla Fry, Texas Master Gardener Coordinator, for further resolution. You will be contacted within two weeks.

Volunteer Disclaimer:

I understand that as a volunteer, I am not an employee of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, will not receive compensation or benefits, and am not covered by workers' compensation laws. I also acknowledge that either party may end the volunteer relationship at any time, for any reason, without prior notice.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understand the Texas Master Gardener Management Guide and agree to abide by its guidelines.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Agent Signature: Travis Franke

Date: _____

Agent Printed Name: Travis Franke

Information taken from: Purdue, Rutgers, Georgia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, California, & Texas (Montgomery Co. and Denton Co.) Master Gardener Programs.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.