

December 5, 2017

From: Ophelia Davis, Purdue Extension Educator, ANR, Lawrence County  
To: Lawrence County Master Gardeners and Interns  
Re: What Counts

There always seems to be discussion and a bit of confusion about what “counts” for the purposes of the Purdue Master Gardener program. While this simple document will not cover all possible scenarios, it is hoped that it will help clarify a few of the more common possibilities.

**Important note:** It is ALWAYS the purpose of the Purdue Master Gardener program in Lawrence County to help *OTHERS* grow as we grow ourselves. The ultimate purpose of the program is to educate others about consumer horticulture to support Purdue Extension, Lawrence County.

### Lawrence County Master Gardener Guidelines & Information

All Master Gardeners are representatives of Purdue University and must maintain an active status to be engaged in volunteer activities on behalf of the Purdue Master Gardener Program.

To remain in compliance with the Purdue Master Gardener Program Policy Guide (MG-5-W) each Master Gardener **are required to:**

- Complete and report at least 12 volunteer activity hours and 6 educational training hours each year ...these hours are due to the Purdue Extension-Lawrence County Office *prior* to September 1 of each year. You are encouraged to submit hours on a regular basis and not wait until the end of August. All of these hours can accrue towards ADVANCED levels. (Refer to pages 6-7 of the Purdue MG Program Policy Guide, MG-5-W)
- Submit an updated and signed copy of the Purdue Master Gardener Volunteer Application and Agreement form to Purdue Extension, Lawrence County Office via print or electronically in Purdue MG Manager online reporting website each year. (Refer to page 6 of the Purdue MG Program Policy Guide, MG-5-W.)
- Show evidence of government issued photo id to Purdue Extension staff (one-time requirement). (Refer to page 6 of the Purdue MG Program Policy Guide, MG-5-W.)
- Consent to annual screenings by Purdue Extension staff on (Refer to page 6 of the Purdue MG Program Policy Guide, MG-5-W.):
  - Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public website: [www.nsopw.gov](http://www.nsopw.gov)
  - Indiana Sex and Violent Offender Registry: [www.icrimewatch.net/indiana](http://www.icrimewatch.net/indiana)
- Purdue Master Gardener volunteers who work with minors (anyone under 18 years of age) in approved volunteer activities must also complete the working with minors online quizzes every 2 years. (Ophelia Davis will provide information about how to complete the quizzes. The average time for completion is 15 minutes.)

### The basic requirements for a volunteer activity to “count” are as follow...

1. The project MUST have been approved annually by the ANR Educator; some projects may require approval in writing with a project approval form that can be found soon at either in the Purdue Extension-Lawrence County Office or online at: <https://extension.purdue.edu/lawrence/Pages/article.aspx?intItemID=4365>.
2. The effort MUST truly be VOLUNTEER in nature-No payment except for reimbursement for mileage and/or expenses for program or presentation materials.
3. The project MUST be EDUCATIONAL in nature.

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4. The project **MUST** be of a PUBLIC nature and open to all.

**Acceptable examples for volunteer activity hours that may receive approval:**

- Planning and conducting an educational workshop for gardeners
- Developing a horticultural exhibit/educational demo garden for the public
- Writing a newspaper article, Purdue Extension, Lawrence County or Land of Limestone MG Facebook post or blog on a topic relevant to the role of a Purdue Master Gardener
- Presenting a session at a Master Gardener Class or meeting on a garden related topic
- Answering horticultural questions brought to the Extension Office
- Developing and conducting a youth related Gardening Program
- Time spent actively engaged during a regular business meeting of the Land of Limestone Master Gardener Association.
- Reasonable time in preparation for or travel to an approved educational program or presentation where you are **ACTIVELY** engaged (i.e. help with registration, set-up, or giving a presentation, etc.).

**UNACCEPTABLE EXAMPLES:**

- Answering questions or doing anything for which you are paid (if you are being paid...You are **NOT** to identify yourself as a Purdue Master Gardener in any way.)
- Attending a commercial horticultural trade show
- Working in your garden/flower beds at home or in a neighbor's garden/flower beds
- Doing physical labor with no educational value- cleaning up landscape beds at your church or for another organization, business, etc.
- Attendance to a Master Gardener Association business meeting where you did not have an active role in the meeting.
- Posts, articles, etc. for a personal Facebook or other social media is not appropriate as a Purdue MG activity.

*What about time driving to and from a program or project where you have volunteered as a Purdue Master Gardener?*  
You may report reasonable amounts of travel time for programs and projects where you have played an active role as a Purdue Master Gardener volunteer.

Purdue Master Gardeners are asked not to provide private consultation on gardening or horticulture topics or questions without the approval of Ophelia Davis, Lawrence County MG Coordinator.

**Educational training hours:**

There are a variety of opportunities for advanced training. Among these are:

- Attending **APPROVED** Master Gardener Advanced training programs sponsored by this or other counties.
- Attending a garden show **AND** attending educational sessions as part of the show. Please provide proof of attendance at educational programs for approval by the County MG Coordinator.
- Online webinars on topics relevant to Purdue Master Gardener volunteers.
- Attending any training which the Lawrence County MG Coordinator, Ophelia Davis, approves. The *Indiana Master Naturalist Program* and *Purdue Master Gardeners... Growing Through Leadership* programs are obvious

examples. There may be programs which I'm not aware of that qualify – seek approval prior to attending if wanting credit for hours. Please provide an agenda for review before any approval will be granted.

- The training offered during any regularly scheduled Lawrence County's Land of Limestone Master Gardener Association meeting will count for **one education hour for approved topics**.
- Time spent in travel to and from such an activity does NOT count toward advanced training hours.

### **For those currently participating in the Purdue MG Basic Training:**

It is expected that Purdue Master Gardener Basic Training participants will not begin their volunteer service until after they complete their training and pass the final exam. But, in limited cases, participants may begin to volunteer during one's training under the guidance and the direct supervision of a certified Purdue Master Gardener and with approval of the Extension Educator, ANR. The Extension Educator, ANR, will provide further information about specific activities approved for MG basic training participants. Participants in the Purdue Master Gardener Basic Training may also begin to attend approved advanced MG trainings or programs (see notes above concerning advanced educational training). Approval of volunteer and education hours for Purdue MG Basic training participants is at the discretion of the Extension Educator, ANR, who will place appropriate limits on hours that can be earned during the training. These hours can be reported by the participants and credited to them after they have completed the basic training and passed the final exam.

### **DEADLINES and other information for 2017 and 2018:**

- To allow for the individuals who have been active and participating, but have not been submitting hours to the office, they will have until 1/31/2018 to submit their prior unreported volunteer and education hours, signed Purdue MG Volunteer Application and Agreement Form, consent to screenings on the national and Indiana sex offender websites, and show evidence of government-issued photo id to be considered as an active Purdue Master Gardener volunteer.
  - After this 1/31/18 deadline,
    - Anyone who has not submitted hours since 12/31/2013 (greater than four years lapse in participation) will be required to retake the Purdue Master Gardener Basic Training and meet all other requirements outlined on page 8 of the Purdue Master Gardener Program Policy Guide for volunteers with a lapse of service greater than 4 years.
    - Anyone who has not submitted hours between 1/1/2014 and 12/31/2017 (four years or less lapse in participation) will be required to purchase the current Purdue Master Gardener Manual and meet all other requirements outlined on page 8 of the Purdue Master Gardener Program Policy Guide for volunteers with a lapse of service of 4 years or less.
- Only hours submitted on the official Volunteer Report form (same form as previously expected to use) will be accepted in hard copy. **No hours will be accepted via email, phone call, other hard copy forms, etc.**
  - Lawrence County MG Coordinator and Purdue Extension – Lawrence County Office Staff reserves the right to refuse acceptance of Volunteer Reports that are difficult to decipher or require extra time in sorting. If such 'difficult' documents are received, they will not be accepted and hours will remain uncounted.