



The Master Gardener Program... *the concept that evolved nationally*

The Master Gardener concept originated in the state of Washington in 1972. Overwhelmed by the numerous and continuous horticultural queries, Extension Agents David Gibby and Bill Scheer tested the viability of the volunteering concept and ultimately helped organize the initial Master Gardener training program. Early in 1973, they recruited gardeners who were willing to volunteer time at the local Extension Offices in exchange for formal research-based horticultural training.

Extension agents and specialists from Washington State University also played key roles in developing the successful training program. Since then, all 50 States have established effective and flourishing Master Gardener Program's within their Land Grant University systems.

Nationwide, there are approximately 100,000 Master Gardeners. These Extension volunteers and their horticultural outreach efforts impact over 5 million people annually. The estimated economic value of this volunteer time exceeds \$100 million to local communities.

The Master Gardener 'volunteer' concept has also gained world-wide appeal as evidenced by its evolution and spread into the Canadian Provinces, Europe and Asia.

Wyoming's Master Gardener Program... *over 30 years of volunteering & supporting 'grassroots' horticulture*

Wyoming Master Gardeners are university trained volunteers who serve as points of contact between UW Extension, agencies, organizations and residents interested in rural and urban horticulture. Further, they promote research-based information and provide locale specific advice about gardening to clientele across Wyoming.

Early in 1982, Rod Davis, Natrona County Horticultural Educator played a pivotal role in the formative years of the Wyoming Master Gardener program. He served as an Advisor and "unofficial" State Master Gardener Coordinator. His interactions between the University of Wyoming, Extension Agents and gardeners were significant and gave critical support to the new horticulture 'volunteering' concept.

In 1984, Mr. Davis held one of the first Master Gardener training sessions for Extension Agents from Natrona, Laramie and Campbell counties. For several years thereafter, County Agents from various counties attended a one day "build the program" Master Gardener training session in Casper. Those early training sessions were the genesis of the Wyoming Master Gardener program.

As the years passed by, the commitments of Master Gardeners in Casper, Cheyenne and Gillette were tested. Nonetheless, they remained steadfast in support of horticulture at the grass roots level. Some of those early undertakings, albeit arduous, served as examples for other counties in their deliberation of the new horticulture 'volunteering' concept. Subsequently, counties began scheduling training and organizing county Master Gardener programs.

By 2001, 8 of Wyoming's 23 counties had Master Gardener programs. Over the years, program appeal has remained steady but organizational performance has varied by county. Interest in Master Gardener activities continues to be strong across the state. Beginning in 2013, organized training intensified and as a consequence, 20 of Wyoming's 23 counties had varying degrees of Master Gardener activity in 2015.

Ending 2015, Wyoming had **217 approved Master Gardeners**. These Extension volunteers made **57,668 contacts** and contributed **8,020 hours of volunteer time** in their respective communities. Further, they augmented their horticultural knowledge and expertise by acquiring **3,254 hours of supplemental horticultural education**. The estimated economic value of this horticultural volunteer time to Wyoming is **\$188,069**.



Wyoming Master Gardener Association

Over 30 years of Volunteering & Supporting 'grassroots' Horticulture

Presently there is some degree of Master Gardener activity in **20** of Wyoming's **23** counties. Membership in the Wyoming Master Gardener Association (WMGA) is open to **All** Active UW Extension Master Gardener volunteers. The following provides a snapshot of who we are and what we do.

Mission

Providing leadership and support to Master Gardener Volunteers

Objectives

Serve as a communication network linking UW Extension and Wyoming's Master Gardeners.

Function as points of contact between Master Gardeners, agencies, organizations and residents interested in rural and urban horticulture.

Promote research-based information and provide region specific advice about gardening to clients throughout Wyoming.

Encourage establishment of Master Gardener programs where they do not exist.

Support existing and/or proposed Master Gardener education activities in all Wyoming counties.

Facilitate educational opportunities for all Master Gardeners.

Members of the WMGA must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Satisfactorily complete a Master Gardener education program;
2. Complete a county-specific service internship; **and**
3. Maintain 'yearly' Master Gardener certification.

Master Gardener members are represented at WMGA meetings by 'Voting Delegates' from their respective County organizations. Each County with a Master Gardener program may designate **two** delegates to serve on the WMGA Executive Committee. These delegates must be **active in their County programs** and must be members '**in good standing**'. Only Master Gardener delegates have voting authority... *they represent their county and their interests.*

In addition, WMGA meetings are open to Specialists, Educators, Program Associates and those persons, who by the nature of their employment within UW Extension, work to further the objectives and purposes of Wyoming Master Gardener volunteers. These meeting participants may aid the WMGA Leadership and Executive Committee; but do so in an advisory capacity only!

The Association meets **three** times a year on the **second Friday** in the months of **February, May and October**.

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Wyoming Master Gardener Association

~ Providing leadership and support to Master Gardener volunteers ~

⇒ There are **217** approved Master Gardener volunteers in **17** counties with program activity

⇒ There were **3** counties that completed Master Gardener Training

⇒ In **2015**, our UW Extension volunteers contributed the following:

- ♦ Made **57,668** contacts
- ♦ Acquired **3,254** hours of Continuing Education
- ♦ Contributed **8,020** hours of volunteer time in their respective communities

⇒ The economic value of this volunteer time to Wyoming is estimated at **\$188,069**

Bob Prchal... 2016

2001	2013	2014	2015
Core Master Gardener Counties	Counties with Program Activity	Master Gardener Training Completed	No Program Activity
Campbell *	Albany	Sheridan	Carbon
Goshen	Big Horn	Crook	Johnson
Laramie *	Campbell	Teton	Niobrara
Natrona *	Converse		
Park	Fremont		
	Goshen		
	Hot Springs		
	Laramie		
	Lincoln		
	Natrona		
	Park		
	Platte		
	Sublette		
	Sweetwater		
	Uinta		
	Weston		
* 1st Program Counties	Washakie		



Wyoming Master Gardener Association

Over 30 years of Volunteering & Supporting 'grassroots' Horticulture

Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Data

January 01 to December 31 reporting period

Reporting Year	Total Approved MG Volunteers	Total Contacts Made	Total Volunteer Hours	Total Continuing Education Hours
2015	217	57,668	8020	3254
2014	212	34,050	10,563	2552
2013*	242	37,081	12,166	2567

* 1st year of Wyoming Master Gardener Volunteer Reporting System



Wyoming Master Gardener Association

Adapted from 1997 State Steering Committee documents obtained from Joyce Johnston, Park County and updated in 2010 by Bob Prchal, Park County

Over 30 years of volunteering & supporting 'grassroots' horticulture

Importance of Volunteer Service

Expands the 'pool of resources' ... increased manpower

Permits the Horticulturalist more 'one-on-one' time with our client base

Redoubles the number of contacts... better service to the public

Increases 'staff work hours'... address more questions and/or yard calls

Allows more educational development time... materials and program prep

Extends the horticulture season... extra, available resources



Wyoming Master Gardener Association

Volunteer Service Opportunities

Adapted from 2004 State Steering Committee documents obtained from Janet Thompson, Campbell County and updated in 2010 by Bob Prchal, Park County

Volunteer activities that support our mission are divided into 3 major categories and may include projects benefiting individual County residents and your Master Gardener organization.

Educational Outreach... hours that enhance the public interest and fulfill the desire for more horticulture information and knowledge.

May include the following:

- Make horticultural presentations on local 'topical interests' to the public
- Involve yourself in writing Newspaper and or Newsletter articles
- Respond to plant health inquiries... make occasional home garden/yard calls
- Assist with Horticultural/Garden Tours and 'learning opportunity' activities
- Partake in public educational forums/workshops/clinics/seminars
- Assist with County Extension hot-line, phone assistance and UW Extension Office walk-ins
- Develop and promote Community/Demonstration gardens
- Staff horticultural exhibits and informational booths
- Man information tables at the Fair, local greenhouses and forums
- Participate in Arbor Day, Organized school and 4-H youth gardening activities
- Approved educational projects by the MG leadership and supported by the MG Program Coordinator
- Provide assistance to UW County Extension Offices and support general County Extension activities

Support Activity... hours that enhance or support the Master Gardener program.

May include the following:

- Attend Regional, State & General membership Master Gardener Meetings
- Attend Master Gardener Officer/Board/Committee Meetings
- Volunteer for Community/Demonstration Garden design & implementation; and beautification projects
- Partake in Arbor Days & Conservation District tree/shrub distribution activities
- Contribute in Newsletter Production & Publication
- Support Greenhouse operations & youth plant growth activities
- Participate in Master Gardener training & internship
- Be a mentor... provide assistance to trainees during training; and assist with youth projects

Continuing Education... hours that enhance the knowledge of Master Gardeners.

May include the following:

- Partake in Horticultural Conferences and Educational Forums
- Partake in 'refresher Master Gardener training sessions and 'Train the Trainer' workshops
- Attend and participate in Master Gardener meetings with an Educational Focus
- Attend and present Horticultural 'topical information' at Library 'brown bag' Seminars and Garden Clubs
- Attend UW Extension video tele-conferences
- Attend and partake in Horticultural related seminars sponsored by local Community Colleges

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