

# **UConn Extension Master Gardener Program**

## **Active Certification Agreement**

Thank you for electing to maintain your Master Gardener Active Certification. UConn Master Gardeners who maintain their Active Certification are highly valued associates, critical to the success of our volunteer-based program and important resources in the community. Active Certified Master Gardeners are representatives of the University of Connecticut, following university policies, and working under the supervision of a University of Connecticut staff member. In this capacity, they continue to provide free, unbiased research-based information consistent with the recommendations of the University of Connecticut and other land grant institutions. Active Certified Master Gardeners are insured by the University of Connecticut's liability policy when volunteering for authorized projects in the community, at local Extension Centers, the Bartlett Arboretum, and other University sites. Active Certified Master Gardeners may also be entitled to tax deductions for mileage associated with travel to and from UConn Master Gardener-sanctioned events. (Check with your tax advisor to see if you may be eligible for federal and/or state tax deductions for travel expenses.)

### **Annual Requirements for Active Certification**

- Complete 10 hours of office outreach in one of the eight (8) County Cooperative Extension Offices in Connecticut, the Bartlett Arboretum in Stamford, or the Home and Garden Center in Storrs.
- Complete 10 hours of community outreach in a Master Gardener project that meets program requirements and is approved by a Master Gardener program coordinator. This requirement can be substituted by an additional 10 hours volunteering in an extension office (above) for a total of 20 hours in the office.
- Return volunteer time reports each month.
- Attend one Hot Topics class (3 hours) per year. This class will be offered on multiple dates free of charge to Active Certified Master Gardeners to keep participants abreast of important new research information, University programs and policy updates.
- Return a signed Active Certification Agreement by September 30<sup>th</sup> each year to a program coordinator with documentation of the completion of the 20 required volunteer hours.

**Master Gardener Active Certification is valid for one year – expiring September 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. Individuals not renewing their certification become Alumni Master Gardeners and as such have no annual service requirement and are not covered under UConn liability insurance. They cannot refer to themselves as a Certified Master Gardener, but rather as Alumni.**

## **Reinstatement after a Lapse in Active Certification**

If a Master Gardener does not meet the requirements by September 30<sup>th</sup>, but completes them **the following year** and would like to be reinstated, the following requirements must be met:

- 10 office outreach hours
- 10 community outreach hours
- Attend of one Hot Topics class
- Recertification fee of \$10.00

If the lapse in Active Certification is **two or three years** and the Master Gardener would like to be reinstated, the following requirements must be met:

- 20 office outreach hours
- 20 community outreach hours
- Attend one Hot Topics class
- Recertification fee of \$25.00

If the lapse in Active Certification is **greater than three years**, recertification requirements will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## **Review of Key UConn Master Gardener Policies**

**In order to protect Active Certified Master Gardeners from liability issues in the course of their duties, the following policies must be followed:**

- Volunteers will perform duties without financial compensation or workers compensation coverage. Payment should not be requested for speaking engagements. In lieu of fees, donations to the Master Gardener Program may be accepted. Any monies collected during fundraising activities shall be turned over to the UConn Master Gardener Program.
- Site visits to a client's home are not a sanctioned activity and are not permitted.
- No recommendations or endorsements of specific products or businesses should be made. Volunteers are acting as representatives of the University of Connecticut and as unbiased resources.
- No oral recommendations for pesticides are made. If recommendations are requested, UConn factsheets or other approved research driven factsheets may be provided with appropriate recommendations. Clients can make their own decision on usage.
- Questions on chemical properties are referred to the National Pesticide Hotline.
- Master Gardeners should not identify ticks or spiders, or answer medical or legal questions.
- Master Gardeners should not identify mushrooms or try to determine if a plant or mushroom is edible.
- Possible poisoning cases should be immediately referred to the Poison Control Center at the UConn Health Center in Farmington or the National Poison Control Hotline.
- News articles, newsletters, etc., prepared by a volunteer should be reviewed and approved by a local Master Gardener program coordinator before publication. Articles submitted for print or publication must follow the UConn Master Gardener protocol.
- Requests for information by newspaper reporters or other media should be referred to a local Master Gardener program coordinator.
- Volunteers do not have the authority to sign contracts on behalf of the University of Connecticut or the UConn Extension Master Gardener Program.

**For a more complete discussion of policies concerning Master Gardeners and their roles in extension, contact your local or state program coordinator for clarification.**

**For a more complete discussion of policies concerning Master Gardeners and their roles in extension, contact your local or state program coordinator for clarification.**

We are proud of our program and its positive impact on the citizens of Connecticut. Thank you for your continued commitment to its excellence and your generous volunteerism!

---

I have read the above policies and requirements and agree to abide by them as a

**University of Connecticut Active Certified Master Gardener.**

I wish to be Active Certified for the year \_\_\_\_\_.

My Extension Office affiliation is \_\_\_\_\_.

I have attended a Hot Topics this year at the following location \_\_\_\_\_.

I have attached the appropriate documentation of the completion of my 20-outreach hours.

---

Master Gardener Signature

Date

---

Master Gardener Program Coordinator

Date



“An Equal Opportunity Employer and Program Provider”