

What Counts? Steuben County Master Gardener Program

Big Picture-Transfer of Knowledge

With any Extension event or program, the goal is for knowledge to be transferred. In the Purdue Master Gardener Program that can include interactions between:

- Campus to Master Gardeners
- County coordinator to Master Gardeners
- Guest speaker to Master Gardeners
- Master Gardener to Master Gardener
- Master Gardeners to the public

To differentiate between volunteer time from education time think about who was doing the learning. Was the Master Gardener learning how to prune grape vines at a workshop? That is educational time. Was the Master Gardener teaching their neighbor how and when to plant bulbs in the fall? That is volunteer time.

Master Gardener Interns- Interns begin collecting hours after you graduate from the Master Gardener training program. Education provided during the training does not count towards your hours as an intern. For the first two years after becoming an intern your focus should be on using what you learned in class to teach others and earn volunteer hours. You may still receive educational hours during this time, but the focus should be on volunteer efforts.

Master Gardener Meetings- Time spent planning or evaluating a volunteer event during a Master Gardener meeting can be counted towards volunteer hours. Time spent listening to a guest speaker or a fellow Master Gardener give a presentation during a meeting can be counted towards educational hours.

Travel Time- Time spent driving to and from Master Gardener events can be counted, *within reason*. If you are traveling five hours to see your sister in Illinois and take a 30 minute detour to go on an educational garden tour, I ask that you record the 30 minute detour, not the entire five hour trip. When you submit hours we want to see more education and volunteering than we do traveling. **Since Purdue Extension is a non-profit you might be able to report your miles traveled for Master Gardener activities and get a deduction on your taxes.*

Adding an Educational Component- If you participate in an activity that does not have a strong educational component please talk to the County Coordinator about ways to make the activity educational. If you do beautification around your church or neighborhood this can be as easy as writing a newspaper article for your church newsletter or local paper about why you planted what you did and how you will care for the plants. If you garden for another public entity then give a 20 minute talk at their next meeting about why you chose the plants you used and how you will care for them. The key to these projects is that they must be for the public. Doing gardening for an individual is not ideal for Master Gardener volunteer hours. Consultations are good ways to earn volunteer hours because you would be teaching another person. If you are simply doing work for that person, not much knowledge is going to be transferred.

"Work performed for Purdue Extension is voluntary, however, Purdue Master Gardeners may accept reimbursement of personal travel expenses and/or they may accept donations to their local Master Gardener association or group fund. Participants may not be paid for their volunteer work. If a volunteer provides services at his or her place of employment as a part of his or her job responsibilities, this will not be considered volunteer service to Purdue Extension."

"Purdue Master Gardener volunteers, especially newly trained interns, may have questions about what activities are approved for volunteer activity hours and educational training hours. Purdue Master Gardener volunteers should always consult their Master Gardener county coordinator before embarking on a new, time-consuming venture." MG-5-W Purdue Master Gardener Program Policy Guide <https://extension.purdue.edu/extmedia/mg/mg-5-w.pdf>