

April 14, 2020

Subject: Demo Garden Guidance

To: Master Gardeners and Interns of King County,

The following message is from Jennifer Marquis at WSU. She is the statewide MG Program Leader.

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Demonstration Garden Work

WSU Extension and WSU Extension Master Gardener Program recognize the efforts and time that all program coordinators and volunteers are giving to support WSU Extension's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. WSU Master Gardeners volunteer because they believe in the importance of what they do and are willing to give back to their communities. In this time of need around food production and distribution, WSU Extension Master Gardeners have stepped up and are engaged to help with this critical challenge.

The WSU Master Gardener Program has been granted a very limited exception to Governor Jay Inslee's Stay Home, Stay Healthy Order. Our essential status to work in shared greenhouses and shared gardens to support the food production and distribution chain is a privilege. We must honor the privilege we have been granted and show respect for our communities by operating within the essential status granted.

Warmer weather and the continuation of the Stay Home, Stay Healthy order dictates a need for further guidance around maintaining the health of our demonstration gardens. WSU Extension recognizes the concern and understands the need for more clarity. Gardening is being encouraged as a healthy activity. However, gardening in WSU Extension demonstration gardens involves groups of people and requires that people leave their homes for non-essential activities, which is not allowed in the current environment without an exemption.

To that end, WSU Master Gardener volunteers are permitted to perform limited maintenance in demonstration gardens that have a food gardening component under our essential status classification provided by the governor to support the food production and distribution chain only when all non-pharmaceutical interventions are adhered to.

Such non-pharmaceutical interventions include:

- There should be at least 2, but not more than 10 volunteers providing maintenance in a garden at any given time (at least two so one can respond in case of an emergency).
- All volunteers must be able to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between

workers-more is better.

- Volunteers should wear respiratory etiquette masks as recommended by the CDC.
- Shared surfaces, such as tools, hose spigots or hose handles must be sanitized using approved cleaners.

WSU Extension leadership understands our ornamental landscape demonstration gardens will suffer, our budgets will suffer and that each of us are personally struggling with navigating this pandemic. We must keep the potential loss or severe damage to our demonstration gardens in perspective. Current restrictions are in place to protect the health and wellness of Washington residents and of the populations around the world.

As representatives of WSU, we must learn to work within our restrictions. This is a situation where it is critical that we work together to have our collective best interests at heart. We must remember the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention **advises that everyone over the age of 60 should stay home and away from other people.** Because the majority of the WSU Master Gardener volunteers are over the age of 60, many have underlying health conditions, and because leadership knows many will go above and beyond the call of duty, WSU Master Gardener leadership is compelled to say that no volunteer should feel pressured or otherwise required to give during this time. Program coordinators will relax volunteer service hours and continuing education requirements as necessary to accommodate volunteer certification and recertification.

WSU Extension recognizes and appreciates the support that all volunteers provide. Thank you all for your patience and input into our response to this pandemic.

I hope you are all staying healthy.

Jennifer Marquis
WSU Master Gardener Program Leader
Washington State University Extension
College of Agriculture, Human and Natural Resources
400 Washington St.
Wenatchee, WA 98801
<http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/>
509-667-6540

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Mary Watts KCMG Program Coordinator
WSU Extension Master Gardener Program
King County
mary.watts@wsu.edu

