

May 29, 2020

To: Master Gardeners and Interns of King County,

Subject: A Call to Action

Hello Everyone,

This is a long email, I know. Please take the time to read it completely.

Our Master Gardener program exists because of the dedication of our volunteers contributing their time, horticulture knowledge, and for many, their leadership and technical skills. I will even go so far as to say that the program exists especially because of those who step up into leadership roles.

Many of you may not be aware of the reality that the time required to manage our program in King County far exceeds our current level of staffing. Historically, prior to budget cuts both from the county and the state, we had four full time staff. At one point we even had five staff. Currently we have 1.45 staff and we are both very new to our roles. Thankfully, dedicated MG's have stepped up over the years and taken on various roles to help run the program. One very successful example of this has been the Clinic Leadership Team which formed several years ago. More recently a Garden Leadership Team has formed.

Some of you may be thinking there isn't a lot to do within the program during the pandemic, but I assure you that is not the case. Many things have been moved online and there are ample ways to participate from the safety and comfort of your home.

In a prior communication I indicated that the volunteer service requirements were waived for 2020 (CE requirements are still in place). Let me elaborate a bit more as to why that decision was made. Whatever policy is established must be the same for everyone. For example, we cannot have one set of requirements for those MG's who fall within a demographic deemed by the CDC to be vulnerable to COVID-19 and another set of requirements for those who do not. Likewise, we cannot have one set of requirements for those who are technologically savvy enough to want to do a clinic online and another set of requirements for those who are not. The requirements were waived so that MG's do not feel pressured to participate in activities that could put their health at risk, not because we don't have activities that need to be done. This is all to say that if you are able to participate in our online activities please, please do. We need you.

All team/group meetings are being held virtually (Zoom and phone) so you can attend from the safety and comfort of your home. We want everyone in the

county to be able to participate in leadership groups not just those who live within reasonable commuting distance of the program office. Therefore, even after the pandemic restrictions are lifted and we can meet again in person, the virtual attendance options will remain in place. People will be able to choose to attend meetings in person or virtually. So, if you live far away from the program office please do not view that as a barrier to volunteering in leadership groups. We want full county participation. We need everyone's voices.

If you are currently in the workforce, you can include MG activities on your resume. Skills developed or utilized in the program can add to your marketability and can be listed in your skills summary.

If you are retired and spent a career honing skills, consider using them in an environment much more fun than work and where you get to hang out with people you enjoy and resonate with.

Listed below are areas where we need your participation and where activities can be done safely online. All opportunities are available to Veterans, Emeritus **AND Interns**. I would like everyone to do the first item on the list and then select one or more other items that you feel you would be suited for. If you really can't participate this year, that's ok. But if you can, please do.

### **Confirm MG Directory Phone #'s**

Our database is set up with the fields: Home and Work/Cell. However, the reapplication forms you filled out in December of last year asked you to enter your Primary and Secondary phone. Mapping the two has resulted in some errors of phone number placement. We are hoping to have this issue fixed before it is time to reapply for 2021.

In the meantime, please go to the Foundation website [www.mgfk.org](http://www.mgfk.org) and from the top menu click on "Member Area". If you are not currently a Foundation member click on "Register" at the bottom of the Member login page. Once logged in, view the document titled "King County Master Gardener Member Directory". Please confirm that your phone number(s) is 1) correct and 2) listed in the proper field. If you find any errors, please email [king.mg@wsu.edu](mailto:king.mg@wsu.edu) with the subject line "MG Directory Correction".

### **Clinics**

- *Email Clinic*: This clinic responds to questions from the public that were received by email. We need another 3-4 MG's plus Interns for this clinic. Emails are assigned, and responses sent anonymously. If you are interested in participating in the email clinic, please send an email to [king.mg@wsu.edu](mailto:king.mg@wsu.edu) with the subject line "Email Clinic Volunteer".

- *Virtual Online Clinic*: This clinic interacts live with clients on Zoom and is currently operating on Wednesday and Saturday, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. We expect to add additional clinics as public demand grows. If you are interested in participating in the virtual clinic please sign up at [Virtual Clinic Signup](#)

Interns will be paired with a Veteran or Emeritus MG. Participation in these clinics counts toward Intern clinic requirements. So, Interns - it is possible to complete your internship this calendar year after all!

You are welcome to participate in both clinics if you like. You do not necessarily need to choose one over the other.

### **Growing Groceries**

The very popular Growing Groceries educational series is wrapping up its third year of operation under the same leadership. They are seeking new volunteers to take the helm going forward as well as those interested in doing the

presentations. This educational series is very important to our program. During the pandemic all classes have been transitioned online. To learn more about it go to [GrowingGroceries](#). If you want to participate in this group send an email to [King.mg@wsu.edu](mailto:King.mg@wsu.edu) with the subject line "Growing Groceries Volunteer".

### **Homegrown, an Educational Series for Today's Gardener**

This is brand new! And is being launched at the state level in response to the significant surge of interest in growing food during this pandemic. The intent is to make available to the public short (2-4 minute) video clips demonstrating a science-based component of food production as part of our effort to help our communities during these difficult times. Topics will be pulled from the many WSU fact sheets pertaining to food crops. Topics are predetermined and sign-up in advance is required. The video clips can be recorded in your home garden or one of our demonstration gardens. The videographer can range from a spouse or housemate using a smart phone or someone outside your household using more sophisticated equipment. In the latter case measures need to be taken to ensure social distancing and sanitation. To see an example of what we are seeking to accomplish go here: [Homegrown Video Example](#). This video was recorded by the MG's husband using an iPhone. We are looking for: presenters, videographers, and video editors. If you want to participate in this group email [King.mg@wsu.edu](mailto:King.mg@wsu.edu) with the subject line "Homegrown Volunteer". More information will be provided to those expressing interest.

### **Education Team**

We are seeking to launch a county-wide Education Team to support the production of our many educational events (exclusive of Intern Training). Historically these events have been held in-person and will again in the future. Right now, however, the focus is online. This team would include a subcommittee for the Speaker's Bureau. It is possible it may include Growing Groceries and projects like Homegrown but that is TBD. Being part of this team does not mean you will be a presenter. There are many organizational activities involved in putting on these events. Given the low cost of online delivery of classes we have an opportunity here to make up some of the lost revenue from having to cancel our CUH plant sale. If you are interested in joining this team, please send an email to [King.mg@wsu.edu](mailto:King.mg@wsu.edu) with the subject line "Education Team Volunteer".

### **Garden Leadership Team**

The Garden Leadership Team formed earlier this year and is making good progress. Additional MG participation would be valued. They meet on the second Thursday of the month from 1-2:30pm via Zoom and phone. If you are interested in joining this team, please send an email to [King.mg@wsu.edu](mailto:King.mg@wsu.edu) with the subject line "Garden Leadership Team Volunteer".

### **Plant Sales Committee**

We expect to continue our various Foundation plant sales - online, live, or both depending on what is allowable at the time. These sales require a large number of leaders to organize and run the events, and several in our leadership team are planning to move on to other things. We're seeking additional MG's who will be mentored by these current leaders during this transition. If you are interested in joining this team, please send an email to [King.mg@wsu.edu](mailto:King.mg@wsu.edu) with the subject line "Plant Sales Committee Volunteer".

### **2021 Intern Training Team**

It is possible that we may not hold Intern Training in 2021. But my sense is that the odds of us doing it are greater than the odds of us not doing it. If we do have Intern Training in 2021 it is possible that much, if not all, of it will be online.

Assuming we do Intern Training, the support needed will vary depending on the format that it is held in. Having said that, I anticipate it is likely we will need the following roles: applicant reviewers (protocols will be provided), table mentors (virtual if held online), and Zoom chat box monitors if held online. If we can hold classes in person then we will need help with set up and break down before and after class. The location for 2021 if we can be in-person will be the WSU Extension King County office in Renton. More roles will be determined as we move forward and have a better understanding of the format. If you are interested in joining this team please send an email to [King.mg@wsu.edu](mailto:King.mg@wsu.edu) with the subject line "Intern Training Volunteer".

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the Master Gardeners who have stepped into leadership roles and participated in the program at a higher level than the minimum requirements. This program would not exist without you.

My hope is that more will join these ranks so we can continue to be a world-class program supporting the needs of our communities and having fun, rewarding experiences in the process. Please join the party!

Warm Regards,

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This email is being sent by the Master Gardener Foundation of King County on behalf the the [WSU Extension Master Gardener Program in King County](#).

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