



King County

Master Gardener Program

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

May 4, 2020

To: Master Gardeners of King County

Subject: MG Program Update re COVID-19

Hello Everyone,

New announcements were made by WA state Governor Jay Inslee Friday afternoon which influence the activities of our King County Master Gardener program this 2020 season. As the Governor and his advisors take steps toward reopening the economy in phases, the social distancing and sanitation mandates remain in place and likely will for several more months. So, while some program activities are restricted, others are expanding. Below are updates on the various parts of our program.

Clinics:

Thus far, we have been operating under the assumption that we would be opening clinics at some point this season. Given the Governor's recent announcements it seems unlikely we will be able to do so in 2020. Therefore, we are changing our assumption to the probability of not having in-person clinics this year. If COVID-19 quiets sooner than expected then we will assess, at that time, the viability of opening clinics for whatever remains of the season at that point. Given the circumstances, however, that seems like an unlikely scenario.

eClinic:

A small group of clinicians will be launching the eClinic later this week engaging with clients via email. Plans are still being worked out for other engagement platforms including phone or possibly doing virtual clinics via Zoom. We are also looking at ways to involve interns in the eClinic and/or virtual clinics. A lot of brainstorming is happening on this front so stay tuned. If you happen to have skills with virtual platforms and would like to get involved, please send an email to King.mg@wsu.edu with the subject line "Virtual Clinic".

Diagnostics Lab:

The Diagnostics Lab is not accepting plant or insect samples at this time.

Gardens:

WSU Master Gardener volunteers who do not fall within the Health Department definitions of vulnerable populations for COVID-19 may continue to support food bank gardens provided all non-pharmaceutical interventions such as hand washing, social distancing and sanitation are practiced. Please coordinate with garden leaders to arrange volunteer times in advance so that they can ensure the above protocols are met.

- **Demonstration Gardens:** In order to mitigate the risk of plant loss, WSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers may volunteer in outdoor demonstration gardens at a minimal level provided all non-pharmaceutical interventions are upheld and garden locations have not been closed under the Governor's Stay Home Stay Healthy order.
- **Community Food Bank Gardens:** In order to support community recovery, WSU

Extension Master Gardener volunteers may ready plants for community food bank gardens and teach community members how to grow their own food (via virtual means). All non-pharmaceutical interventions must be upheld.

- Greenhouses: In order to mitigate the loss of plant starts for plant sales and community food bank gardens, WSU Master Gardener volunteers may work in greenhouses, provided all non-pharmaceutical interventions can be upheld.

Education:

- Growing Groceries has transitioned online and has three remaining courses scheduled between now and July. Attending these online classes counts as CE. They are also open to the public so feel free to invite your friends and neighbors. To register: http://www.mgfk.org/education/growinggroceries?fbclid=IwAR2_UdtCbOVreMmBZP734Ybbq1XlxeL80Q5SJEuinpKbM_6l5d4_UAhhP-L
- A list of prerecorded, on demand online CE opportunities are posted on the Foundation website. You can find a list of them here: <http://www.mgfk.org/education/online-continuing-education>

Plant Sales:

Our online sales of food production plants are well underway. Initial reports are that while it has been logistically complex it has gone very smoothly, thanks to the dedication and expertise of the Plant Sale Committee and their behind the scenes accomplices. Thank you to everyone who organized the events and to those who purchased plants. A special thank you to those who made an additional donation to the Foundation as part of your plant purchase. In a year where our usual fundraising activities have been curtailed, everyone pitching in is a real help.

2020 Volunteer Hours Requirements:

- Service Hours: We know many of you are concerned about maintaining your MG status when the usual avenues to do service hours are limited. Because so many of us fall within the CDC definitions as being vulnerable to COVID-19, and the fact that the CDC and the Governor have set the expectation that resolution to the pandemic will take months not weeks, we are waiving service hours requirements for 2020. If you are not comfortable participating in any way you are free to sit this season out. My hope is that those of you who are comfortable doing so will continue to participate in the allowable activities. And, please, always put your health and safety first.
- Continuing Education Hours: We are still asking everyone to complete their Continuing Education hours this year. There are numerous online options to do this. You can find a list of them here: <http://www.mgfk.org/education/online-continuing-education>. If you do not have online access and/or would like to request to earn CE for reading a book and submitting a one-page book report you can send a request to king.mg@wsu.edu. Please include in your request the book title and author name. Your selection **must be approved in advance**. Once approved you will be provided a document outlining what is expected in the book report. Book reports submitted without prior approval will not be accepted for CE. For book ideas you can refer to the approved clinic resources list. To find this list log in to the member area of the Foundation website and look under "Clinic Resources". The top item listed is the 2020 Approved Clinic Reference Guide.
- Intern Hours: 2020 Interns will have the opportunity to extend the completion of their requirements into 2021 within the following parameters.
 - Must complete 40 service hours within two years with no fewer than 25 hours in the second year.
 - Must attend refresher training (reported as CE) to be held in early 2021. These hours are in addition to service hours listed above. Dates and duration are

Documentation of COVID-19 Program Impacts:

WSU has requested we document the impacts COVID-19 is having on our program activities and finances. Much of this can be done by program staff and the foundation however there are some things we need everyone to do.

Please document time you spend planning or communicating program activity changes resulting from COVID-19. In the WSU Volunteer Hours Database enter these hours as "Program Support" and for the "Specific Activity Title" please enter "COVID". Entering this data is critically important for accurate tracking. Also important is that everyone be consistent with the verbiage entered or we won't be able to easily pull the data. Please simply type "COVID", nothing more, nothing less.

CUH Closed to the Public:

CUH remains closed to the public. Most UW staff as well as myself and Mimi are working remotely so the building is locked. MG volunteers are considered agents of WSU Extension and therefore can have access to our office. If you need access to the MG program office, please make a request to King.mg@wsu.edu and we will make arrangements to get you what you need.

Where to find the latest MG Program Updates:

Latest copies of these communications will be posted on the Foundation homepage: <http://www.mgfkf.org/>

Additional COVID-19 Resources:

- Please familiarize yourself with and follow the King County Dept of Health recommendations. Here is that link: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus/protection.aspx>
- If you want to speak with someone about concerns you may have regarding COVID-19, you can call the King County COVID-19 Information Line at (206) 477-3977.
- Stay informed. Information is changing frequently. Check and subscribe to Public Health's website (www.kingcounty.gov/COVID) or blog (www.publichealthinsider.com).
- Washington State updates <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/>

Please do take care of yourselves, your families, and each other.

Warm Regards,

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

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](#).
