

Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners (VCE-MG) Of Loudoun County Program Area Work Descriptions

Member of the Children's Education Team (CET)

Place: Extension office for meetings, other locations such as schools, meeting rooms or outdoor locations for lessons and/or activities. Occasionally work from home.

Goal: Members volunteering for CET will be teaming up with government agencies to identify and provide gardening education to child populations which are under-served and would benefit most from the free volunteer education provided by VCE-MGs. This will increase our contacts and exposure within the eastern and southern parts of the county, along with educating children on approved gardening practices.

Qualifications:

- Interest in working with children of multiple ages
- Ability and manner to relate to children

Duties:

- Attend meetings
- Stay informed and up-to-date on projects CET is actively involved in during the year
- Help in writing lessons, giving presentations or assisting a leader with lessons
- Assist in CET sponsored events or activities
- Possible positions which may be available for a member desiring more responsibility are: accepting requests from the public, maintaining CET section of the website or Co-lead of the team

Time Required: Monthly meetings (1-2 hrs.); project hours vary depending on what member chooses to do

Benefits:

- VCE-MGs will have the ability to write, research and/or teach age appropriate material to age to children
- Opportunity to mentor children and provide a positive role model
- Opportunity to work within a classroom or outdoor setting

Supervisor: Team Leader and/or Co-Leader (if one)

Support Materials: VCE Master Gardener Handbook, VCE Pest Management Guide and other VCE or non-VCE publications as endorsed in writing by VT/VCE.

Member of the Demonstration Garden (DG) Team

Place: Master Gardener Demonstration Garden, Ida Lee Park. *Site location does not have immediate access to an enclosed structure, restrooms or potable water.* In addition, some work from home may occur while planning for garden activities particularly during the off season, along with attendance at planning meetings as necessary.

Goal: Provide a working demonstration of safe and sustainable gardening to community residents while providing a hands-on approach in teaching new interns. Allow existing MGs to practice and enhance their education and skills to become better community educators. Educate interns, MGs and visitors on the purpose and benefits of their garden bed while increasing their knowledge and skill of sustainable gardening.

Qualifications:

- Basic knowledge of plants and landscape techniques as learned in the classroom with a willingness to expand knowledge
- Good communication skills and a desire to learn in order to attain knowledge to be used for self, MG & community resident benefit

Duties:

- Maintain garden which includes planting, pruning, weeding, mulching and watering in accordance with standards established by DG or MG leadership, Loudoun Parks & Recreation Managers and/or VCE guidelines
- Maintain regular contact with DG Team Leads if volunteering to assist or lead a bed
- Submit plans for approval to DG Leadership beforehand regarding any deviations from established procedures or garden bed changes

Time Required: Work in 3 hour shifts on Tuesday and Thursday mornings on a rotating basis as time and circumstances allow during the growing season which begins in late March and continues thru late October. Leads and co-leads should coordinate so at least one or the other can be there in person at least once a week but not less than two times a month at a minimum.

Benefits:

- Working with knowledgeable volunteers and learning new information and skills
- Further education of this information to MGs and community residents on sustainable landscape practices, benefits all, and positively impacts the health and economic well-being of our community and watershed
- The MG Demonstration Garden is an award winning public garden in our community and people come from all over the county, state and other countries to benefit from the garden in different ways
- It is a static advertisement for the standards endorsed by our land grant universities and VCE

Supervisor: Demo Garden Team Leaders and/or Co-leaders; Individual Bed Leaders

Support Materials: VCE Master Gardener Handbook, VCE Pest Management Guide and other VCE or non-VCE publications as endorsed in writing by VT/VCE.

Member of Community Education for the Demo Garden - Garden to Table Group (G2T)

Place: Various locations throughout Loudoun County as requested by community groups, libraries and others.

Goal: Residents receive clear and accurate information on safe and sustainable fruit and vegetable gardening practices based on applied research. Volunteers will increase their knowledge and skills by participating and helping the community.

Qualifications:

- Strong knowledge of plants and growing techniques combined with experience as lead
- Good communication skills
- Willingness to learn and help others

Duties:

- Public speaking in various settings
- Arrange for and use A/V equipment when needed
- Lead as needed with unpacking and setting up for presentation, attendee sign in, distributing handouts, greeting and seating guests, repacking and take down
- Arrange for a replacement speaker if needed

Time Required: The length of the presentation is typically one to two hours with a yearly average of two per month, most occurring during the growing season. Additional time as needed for research and preparation of presentations and handouts. Volunteers are not required to present at every event but to rotate with other members to meet the community's needs.

Benefits:

- Working with other highly knowledgeable members and gaining additional information on gardening by researching and presenting
- Satisfaction of educating community residents in becoming successful gardeners

Supervisor: Garden to Table Coordinator or Group Leader

Support Materials: VCE Master Gardener Handbook, VCE Pest Management Guide and other VCE or non-VCE publications as endorsed in writing by VT/VCE.

Member of the Garden Clinic (GC) Team

Place: Various site locations in the county such as outdoor Farmers Markets and could also include indoor locations.

Goal: Community will receive research based information to solve their gardening problems. VCE-MG volunteers will increase their knowledge of insect pests, diseases, and cultural problems and strengthen diagnostic skills and techniques.

Qualifications:

- Interest in working with the community in solving their horticultural problems
- Good observational and interpersonal skills
- Interest in strengthening diagnostic skills

Duties:

- Be present and on time at the agreed location or arrange a substitute beforehand for the shift
- Accurately record contacts in addition to actions taken with client's problems diagnosed and recommendations given
- Neatly document and forward all problems to the Help Desk which cannot be diagnosed
- Assist with set-up and take-down of booth as well as staffing GCs for the scheduled time
- Wear name tag and present oneself as a professional of VCE
- Participate in any training or education if required of the GC

Time Required: Member of the Garden Clinics may participate in any GC, which are normally a 4 hour shift. The monthly volunteer time is dependent on how many GCs the member signs up to man. Garden Clinics run seasonally from April through September.

Benefits:

- Extensive development of diagnostic skills
- Increased knowledge of pests and diseases
- Engaging the public as a VCE MG, which provides community awareness of VCE and the MG program

Supervisor: Team Leader and/or Co-Leader (if one); Shift lead at the GC location

Support Materials: VCE Master Gardener Handbook, VCE Pest Management Guide and other VCE or non-VCE publications as endorsed in writing by VT/VCE.

Member of Help Desk (HD) Team

Place: Loudoun County Extension Office, Help Desk office area

Goal: Educate Loudoun County residents about safe, effective, and sustainable landscape management practices.

Qualifications:

- Ability to work independently and provide training/guidance to Team members
- Good interpersonal communication skills, both on the phone and in-person
- Inquisitive nature and critical-thinking ability preferred
- Basic computer skills necessary to perform research in addition to resolving inquiries sent via email

Duties:

- Arrive promptly; Arrange for substitute beforehand if unable to fulfill obligation
- Availability to work a 9 a.m. to 12 noon shift Monday thru Friday *except holidays* (no more than one day per month) or a 12 noon to 3 p.m. shift Mondays only during Garden Clinic season (no more than one day per month Apr-Sept)
- Be able to locate and become familiar with all webpages and forms on the Loudoun County Master Gardener website
- Be able to locate and become familiar with available online, hardcopy file and book resources
- Research and answer gardening questions submitted via phone, online or in person
- Attend annual team meeting (repeated in multiple sessions)

Time Required:

- 3 hours per HD session (no more than one day per month on average)

Benefits:

- Personal growth and increased knowledge of gardening in general
- Satisfaction of helping Loudoun County residents with their gardening questions & problems
- Providing awareness to residents of VCE and MG resources and programs

Supervisor: Team Leader and/or Co-leader (if one)

Support Materials: VCE Master Gardener Handbook, VCE Pest Management Guide and other VCE or non-VCE publications as endorsed in writing by VT/VCE.

Member of Healthy Virginia Lawns (HVL) Team

Place: Residential properties in Loudoun County, Loudoun County Extension Office and home

Goal: Educate Loudoun County residents about the benefits to the local watersheds of properly managing their home lawn.

Qualifications:

- Ability to work independently
- Good interpersonal communication skills, both on the phone and in-person
- Computer skills necessary to compose home visit reports

Duties:

- Schedule appointments with clients
- Conduct residential soil test visits (Apr-Oct)
- Deliver soil sample, required forms and customer payment to the Extension Office in a timely manner
- Complete and deliver the EEI form to the Team Lead
- Become familiar with all lawn-related publications on the VCE website
- Attend annual team meeting

Time Required:

- 2 hours per HVL visit (includes conducting visit, delivering sample and writing report)

Benefits:

- Increased knowledge of water quality issues
- Personal growth in gardening practices
- Satisfaction of helping Loudoun County residents improve their lawns
- Members of this team gain greater awareness of individual homeowner practices as the only project which involves home visits
- Flexibility with scheduling visits

Supervisor: Team Leader and/or Co-Leader (if one)

Support Materials: VCE Master Gardener Handbook, VCE Pest Management Guide and other VCE or non-VCE publications as endorsed in writing by VT/VCE.