

Master Gardener Online Hours Recording Procedure

All hours are recorded online on the LSU AgCenter's website at www.lsuagcenter.com. An easy short cut to the NWLA Master Gardeners site is www.lsuagcenter.com/NWLAMG.

Getting started:

On the right hand side of our page (www.lsuagcenter.com/NWLAMG) is a link called **Reporting Volunteer Hours**. Click there to get started. On that webpage, click on **LMG Service Hours Report**. Under the log-in is a link that says 'New users click **here** to register!'

When asked if you are a 4-H Master Volunteer, pull down and click NO.

On this page:

Create Username and Password:

You can create a username and password which will not be able to be integrated with the Master Volunteer application by clicking [here](#). Click on 'here'.

On the first line of the registration page, pull down the pull-down menu and select 'Northwest'. Fill in all of the rest of the blanks and select a password. Click **Submit**. If you've made any mistakes, the form will reappear with a tiny asterisk next to the line with the mistake. Fix it and submit again. You will receive an email confirmation.

If you do not have email or internet access:

Fill out the **Registration Form For Those Without Internet Access** (Melea has it) and hand or mail it to the Hours Administrator, Gary Northen. Your hours will be added into the website for you as you provide them.

Logging hours online:

Log in using your password. From the pull-down menu, select either Volunteer Service Hours or Education Hours to report. Fill in the blanks going down the page. You may not have information for all of the blanks, but do your best. There are 28 categories to attribute your hours to, such as Garden Show, Plant Sale, and Answer Telephone Calls. If you can't find a good fit for what you've done, simply choose LMG Parish Program.

Hours should only be recorded as follows: ".00" for whole hours, ".25" for 15 minutes, ".50" for 30 minutes, or ".75" for 45 minutes.

Problems using the system:

After you are registered, if you have trouble getting into the system, contact Gary Northen (northen@yahoo.com, 686-4438, 423-4438) or Melea Martin (mmartin@agcenter.lsu.edu, 698-0010), the administrators. Sometimes the system is down at LSU, and they can reassure you and help you with problems.

Enter your hours in a timely manner and keep a paper record at home. NWLA Master Gardeners' year runs from July 1 to June 30. The LSU AgCenter zeroes out the reporting system on January 1. While your hours may no longer show up, they are still in the system and the administrators can still see them. There is also a 'report' function onsite that will allow you to

print a report of hours for specific date periods. The administrators' job is made easier if you keep your hours up to date.

How the logged hours are used:

- The State Master Gardener program uses the hours to show the state what a wonderful job we are doing for our communities. The annual report is posted on the LA Master Gardener Program official site.
- Special pins are awarded annually to those with substantial hours of service: A gold pin for over 500 volunteer hours, a silver pin for over 250 volunteer hours, and a bronze pin for over 100 volunteer hours.

Required Volunteer Hours:

- First year after graduation: 40 hours of volunteer service (10 of which must be completed on the Master Gardener Hotline). New class members have the period from graduation until June 30th of the following year to fulfill their commitment (15 months). No continuing education is required for new class members.
- All succeeding years: 20 hours of volunteer service (5 of which must be completed on the Master Gardener Hotline) and 6 hours of continuing education.

Guidelines on how to fulfill your commitment:

Volunteer Service hours are spent on approved projects.

- Approved projects are listed on the Internet site at www.lsuagcenter.com/NWLAMG, may be found in the Seedling Supplement, obtained from the Projects Committee Chairperson, or on pg. 6 of this Volunteer Guide. Approvals are made by the Master Gardener Coordinator.
- 25 % of the commitment is used answering gardeners' telephone questions at the Horticulture/Master Gardener Office.
- Please include hours spent preparing for and presenting educational talks to civic clubs, garden clubs, professional organizations, school and college classes and other such entities, and for articles submitted for the Seedling or other approved media.
- You may include your travel time to and from an approved event site.
- Plant sale hours are restricted to either working at or preparing for the sale itself or time actually spent potting and preparing plants for the sale.
- Preparation and/or bringing refreshments to regular classes and meetings may be counted in both volunteer hours and money if purchased.
- Master Gardener Board meeting hours are to be turned in on an individual basis with travel time and any other miscellaneous time included.
- Volunteer hours are sent to the Master Gardener State Coordinator in Baton Rouge and monitored by the local MG Coordinator. Hours count towards a special pin award.
- Always show under the Activity Description/ Impact Block the activity attended under Volunteer Service.

Educational hours are spent for self-improvement (6 hours required).

- Report the entire Master Gardener Meeting as Education Hours.

- Other learning opportunities include attending horticulture seminars, gardening symposiums, garden club programs, college courses, horticulture field days, and similar learning opportunities to keep yourself on the cutting edge.
- Attending Master Gardener conventions will count for the time spent in class only.
- Travel time to learning sites does NOT count. However, mileage and unreimbursed expenses can be entered for both LSU AgCenter and your tax purposes.
- While required, these hours do not count toward the Volunteer Service hours commitment or awards.
- Always show under the Activity Description/ Impact Block the activity attended under Continuing Education.

Exceptions:

If any member cannot meet the hourly requirements due to full time employment, health problems, or unforeseen family situations, they should contact the MG coordinator. The circumstances will be considered for a decision on excusing that individual from part of their hour's requirements.