

## **Policies & Procedures – June 2010**

This document supersedes any and all previous  
Rutgers NJAES Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Policies and Procedures

### **I. Introduction**

The Rutgers Cooperative Extension (RCE) Master Gardener program is a volunteer program offered in New Jersey through Rutgers Cooperative Extension, NJ Agriculture Experiment Station (NJAES), and Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, in cooperation with the individual county government. The program is designed to increase the availability of University-based information to local communities and individuals through trained adult volunteers known as Rutgers Master Gardeners.

### **II. Program Objectives**

- ◆ Expand the research and educational capacity of RCE in order to provide research-based home grounds information through a network of trained volunteers.
- ◆ Develop and enhance community programs related to horticulture and environmental stewardship. These programs are educational in nature and may involve environmental improvements, horticultural therapy projects, community and school gardening projects, or other programs as determined by local need.
- ◆ The Rutgers Master Gardener Program is a volunteer network designed to assist RCE faculty and staff in managing local Master Gardener activities and programs.

### **III. Who is a Rutgers Master Gardener?**

A Master Gardener is an adult 18 and older who has a sincere desire to help others and a strong interest in home grounds, including gardening, horticulture, and the environment. He or she is a member of the local community interested in expanding his or her personal knowledge with a willingness and dedication to then serve as a volunteer for Rutgers Cooperative Extension. There are several steps necessary for interested residents to advance their knowledge and attain Rutgers Certified Master Gardener status:



**A. Rutgers Master Gardener Intern** - a participant from the time he/she is admitted into and completes the Rutgers Master Gardener Training program (with an average score of at least 80% on all assessments) through the completion of a minimum of 60 hours of approved volunteer service. This internship is normally completed within 12-18 months of the end of the training. However, situations may arise where interns may take longer to complete their internship. If so, an agreement with the local Rutgers Master Gardener coordinator must be reached. Anyone who fails to complete the volunteer service requirement does not attain status as a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener, and is not permitted to use the Rutgers Master Gardener title. County programs can set additional requirements (hours, specific volunteer efforts, etc) beyond the state minimum stated above.

**B. Rutgers Certified Master Gardener** - a Rutgers Master Gardener training program graduate who is an active volunteer and has completed his or her initial volunteer service requirement. To retain the Rutgers Certified Master Gardener status, a minimum of 25 hours of annual volunteer service and 10 hours of annual continuing education must be attained. Certification is valid for one year only; therefore, all Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners must be recertified every year. County programs can set additional requirements (hours, specific volunteer efforts, etc) beyond the state minimum stated above.

**C. Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educator** – a Certified Master Gardener, as defined in IIIB above, who has advanced training and who teaches within the Rutgers Master Gardener Program. To achieve this status following his or her annual certification, the Certified Master Gardener is required to (1) complete an additional 10 hours of specialized training annually, 5 of which must be in their specialty or field of expertise, and (2) complete an additional 10 volunteer hours as a teacher annually. The specialized training must be in a specific area of horticulture, environmental stewardship, youth education, leadership, or other approved category within the local Master Gardener program. Furthermore, a local county program coordinator may award this title to a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener who has consistently and repeatedly shown expertise and proficiency in a specific area of horticulture and/or has held a teaching or faculty position or has a teaching degree from an accredited university. Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educators are expected to annually volunteer an additional 10 hours (beyond the county program requirements) specifically as a teacher or lecturer. Volunteer opportunities for Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educators would include teaching current Rutgers Master Gardener training courses, providing distance education course materials, or others as deemed appropriate through the local program

coordinator. Recertification requirements for Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educators is a minimum of 35 hours: 25 volunteer hours, 10 of which must be in teaching (+ other hours the county program may require), and 10 hours of continuing education, 5 of which should be in their specialty or field of expertise. Failure to meet these additional requirements will only remove “Educator” from a current Certified Rutgers Master Gardener, unless they also fail to meet the program’s requirements as a whole.

**D. Rutgers Certified Master Gardener *Aurum insigne*** – is bestowed to an active Rutgers Certified Master Gardener who has accumulated 1,000 hours of volunteer effort. This recognition and status is valid within New Jersey, but transfers to other state programs are then subject to their new locale’s Master Gardener program requirements. To retain active status as a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener *Aurum insigne*, Master Gardeners must meet the same minimum hour requirements of volunteering and continuing education annually. Failure to meet these hourly requirements would result in the individual moving to alumnus status (see E. below) unless a leave of absence (see VIII. Volunteer Management) was granted during that same year.

**E. Rutgers Master Gardener Alumnus** - a previously Certified Rutgers Master Gardener or Master Gardener Educator who no longer maintains his/her annual active volunteer status, including service and/or education update requirements.

**F. Rutgers Master Gardener Alumnus - *Aurum Insigne Emeritus*** - a previously Certified Rutgers Master Gardener or Master Gardener Educator who, after attaining a minimum of 1,000 hours of volunteer service, no longer maintains his/her annual active volunteer status, including service and/or education update requirements.

**G. Honorary Master Gardener Status** – RCE faculty or program coordinators, in consultation with active Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners in their counties, may give honorary status to noteworthy municipal or county government officials, staff, or other county residents or volunteers who display exemplary support (as determined locally) for the success and expansion of the Rutgers Master Gardener program.

#### **IV. Training**

All prospective program participants must first complete and submit an application to the local Rutgers Cooperative Extension office offering the program for admission into the training program. Upon review, applicants may be invited in for a short interview. Not all applicants may be accepted

into the program. If there is no Master Gardener Training Program available in the prospective trainee's county of residence, they may contact a neighboring county for admission, subject to space availability and the approval by the local county program coordinator. If there is no available space, they should be encouraged to reapply the following year in their county of residence. In the event there may be more applicants than space allows in the classroom or than the local office can logistically handle, counties may develop waiting lists, which could be used first for determining participants in the following year's class.

**A. Application Procedures** - Recruitment of interns will be based on an established need for local Master Gardener volunteer activities. County offices will develop and implement a plan to achieve full representation of the community. Rutgers University and USDA Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action and program compliance policies must be followed. In-person interviews, references and application information will be used to determine a candidate's potential to fulfill the requirements of the program. Applicants will receive an explanation of volunteer requirements and opportunities, particularly those that the individual will commit to for the internship and certification. If these opportunities are not suitable to the candidate (conflicts with schedule, no interest in offered service program areas, etc.), then the candidate should be advised that without the volunteer component, they would not be eligible to attain the Rutgers Certified Master Gardener title. Those who agree to the complete Rutgers Master Gardener program and volunteer commitment have 2 months following the training portion to initiate their volunteer service component. Interns who fail to complete their Rutgers Master Gardener volunteer requirements within 18 months will not receive Rutgers Certified Master Gardener status. In order to obtain this certification, interns must then start over and retake the complete Rutgers training and volunteer hour requirement. The Rutgers Master Gardener Volunteer Application form is provided in Appendix A.

**B. Volunteer Training** – The Rutgers Master Gardener training program consists of both a core curriculum and selected horticultural and environmental electives. As prospective volunteers, Rutgers Master Gardener Interns must complete the Rutgers Master Gardener Core Curriculum training that consists of a minimum of 60 hours of classroom and/or field instruction:

**Core Curriculum**

1. Rutgers, NJAES and Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program Overview
2. Botany
3. Plant Identification

4. Soils and Fertilizers
5. Basic Entomology
6. Plant Pathology
7. Integrated Pest Management
8. Tree and Small Fruits
9. Vegetable and Flower Gardening
10. Turf and Weed Management
11. Shade Trees and Woody Ornamentals
12. Conifers and Broadleaf Evergreens
13. Household and Structural Pests
14. Composting
15. Principles of Pruning and Maintenance
16. Animal Damage Control/Wildlife Management
17. Pesticide Safety and Use
18. Volunteerism - Successfully Serving the Public and RCE
19. Specific County program topics

The Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educator curriculum consists of an additional 10 hours of elective classroom and/or field instruction. These electives should be based on local outreach efforts and public environmental education needs. These may include in-depth training within the core curriculum, topics as directed by the supervising County Agent and/or State Program Coordinator, from the following list:

**Elective Curriculum**

1. Organic Gardening
2. Beneficial Insects
3. Houseplants
4. Landscape Design Principles
5. Xeriscaping
6. Urban and Community Forestry
7. Birds and Wildlife in The Landscape
8. Working with Youth
9. Watershed Management
10. Horticultural Therapy
11. Specific County program topics
12. Perspectives in Regional Environmental Issues (Pinelands, Coastal Habitats, etc)

13. Public Health and The Environment (West Nile Virus, Lyme disease, etc)
14. Selected Topics in Horticulture (any other current / seasonal issues)

**C. Attendance** – Rutgers Master Gardener Interns are expected to attend all training sessions. Specific attendance rates and expectations for completion may be set by individual county programs. In the event a training session must be missed, it is the responsibility of the intern to complete a self-study of the presented information. This should be facilitated by the County Master Gardener Program Coordinator, and may include providing handouts, approved training videos, Internet education, or attendance at a similar class at a neighboring Rutgers Master Gardener training program, if space is available. Regional training agreements between county program coordinators should also be implemented to effectively reach Rutgers Master Gardener Interns desiring these training sessions and also to facilitate volunteer opportunities.

**D. Exams and Assessments** – A comprehensive final exam on all subject matter in the course will be given at the end of the training program. In addition, a mid-term exam and study guide reviews may also be given. Any exams and reviews will be provided by and submitted to the County Master Gardener Program Coordinator or designated representative for grading. Mid-term exams and reviews should be returned to the individuals with corrected answers, with time scheduled to review the questions and answers. Rutgers Master Gardener Interns who achieve 80 percent or higher cumulative average at the end of the training will continue on to the internship / volunteer portion of the program.

**E. Course fees** – The supervising RCE County Agent and/or Program Coordinator overseeing the Rutgers Master Gardener training will set course fees. Registration fees shall be based on a determination of cost recovery and program sustainability at the local program level. Each participant would then receive a training manual, RCE factsheets and other publications, and a RCE Soil Testing Lab mailer. Additional participation in applicable classes within the Rutgers Master Gardener training for NJDEP licensed pesticide applicators or other green industry professionals may also be available at the discretion of the supervising RCE County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

**F. Continuing Education** – To maintain Rutgers Certified Master Gardener status, as approved by the supervising County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator, continuing education opportunities may include:

1. In-depth core or elective curriculum presentations
2. RCE Master Gardener Spring Helpline Training Course
3. RCE Master Gardener Fall Conference educational presentations
4. County RCE sponsored continuing education sessions
5. RCE sponsored in-service training
6. Office of Continuing Professional Education short courses
7. Auditing or attending horticulture or environmental classes at the adult education or college-level, with the prior approved of the local Master Gardener coordinator
8. Educational opportunities outside of Rutgers University, as per the prior approval by the supervising County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator

#### **V. Use of the RCE Master Gardener Title**

In 2004, The Master Gardener logo (seen on the cover of this document) and title were service marked by Rutgers Cooperative Extension with the State of New Jersey. In addition, the titles ‘Rutgers Certified Master Gardener’ and ‘Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educator’ (and derivatives thereof) are to be used only and exclusively in the Rutgers Master Gardener program in which Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners conduct educational programs and participate in approved horticultural and environmental outreach projects. All Rutgers Master Gardeners are expected to identify themselves as such always and only when doing approved RCE volunteer service. The Rutgers Master Gardener status is valid only when the volunteer has annually maintained their certification. Certification as a Rutgers Master Gardener or Rutgers Master Gardener Educator is restrictive in that it is valid only when the individual is actively participating in a RCE sponsored or endorsed program for the coming year, and a signed current Rutgers Master Gardener volunteer agreement is on file. The “Rutgers Certified Master Gardener” and “Rutgers Master Gardener Educator” designations become void when an individual ceases to maintain their annual recertification status. Instead, he or she becomes a Rutgers Master Gardener Alumnus, and should be aware that they cannot represent Rutgers, RCE, or present themselves as a Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners. To do so would violate their original volunteer agreement and the state service mark.

**A. Volunteer Agreement** – All Rutgers Master Gardener volunteers must sign an official Rutgers Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement as part of their commitment to the program. A signed copy of this agreement must be on file in their respective RCE office. Supplemental Agreement forms may be required for volunteer efforts working with youth in school or formalized settings, mentoring or leadership positions in county programs, or other

specialized programming as deemed necessary by either the state or county program coordinator.

**B. Conflicts of Interest** - A Rutgers Master Gardener should not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Rutgers Master Gardener at a place of business for the sole purpose of increasing sales or product or service endorsement. It is improper to imply that Rutgers University, The NJ Agricultural Experiment Station, or Rutgers Cooperative Extension endorses any product or place of business. Rutgers Master Gardeners must not use their title in any form of commercial advertisement. The Rutgers Master Gardener program is a public service program established to provide unbiased research-based information. When Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners make public presentations, it is permissible to accept honoraria offered when they are used solely to support the local Rutgers Cooperative Extension office or Rutgers Master Gardener program. However, it is inappropriate to deposit these funds outside the RCE Master Gardener program or seek payment for speaking engagements or other volunteer efforts conducted as a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener - doing so will violate the original volunteer agreement and will void the current Rutgers Certified Master Gardener / Educator volunteer designation.

**C. Identification / Marketing** – Name badges indicative of the level of the Rutgers Master Gardener participant / volunteer may be used. Temporary name badges are appropriate for Rutgers Master Gardener Interns. All Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners and Master Gardener Educators should use official name badges to identify themselves as representatives of Rutgers while conducting RCE approved educational programs. All promotional publications, newsletters, Web sites, etc. must utilize and follow current Rutgers University Visual Identity protocols, including use of the Rutgers NJAES, county logos, and indicia, and must conform to appropriate RCE regulations.

**D. Apparel** – Official Rutgers Master Gardener name badges and apparel may be ordered through the MGANJ (i.e. award pins) or through the local county RCE office. Rutgers Master Gardener apparel must utilize the “Rutgers Master Gardener” logo whenever appropriate and must conform to appropriate county and RCE regulations.

## **VI. Volunteering in the Rutgers Master Gardener Program**

All Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners, Educators, and Master Gardener Interns are required to discuss with and have approval from their supervising County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator for all planned activities prior to conducting any program. This information is

essential for appropriateness to the program and liability coverage. Generally, volunteer work is done within the local Rutgers Cooperative Extension office and throughout the local community (county). Many projects may involve interaction with parks and recreation departments, nursing homes, schools, county or city or state agencies, and other civic organizations. When Rutgers Certified Master Gardener/Educator volunteer efforts focus on in-school programming or specifically with youth grades K-13, it is essential that additional training and supplemental agreements be completed as deemed necessary. After completing the additional training, the “*Supplemental Agreement for Working with Youth*” must be signed and filed with the supervising County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator prior to the Rutgers Certified Master Gardener / Educator volunteer initiating and participating in any school or youth-related activities.

**A. Educational Efforts** - Educational efforts are those activities or programs in which the Rutgers Certified Master Gardener educates the public. This includes answering questions through The Rutgers Master Gardener Volunteer Helpline; presentations at demonstration sites, county fairs, and other public events; participation in plant clinics; and educational presentations to identified audiences, such as garden clubs, school groups, homeowner associations, and faith-based groups. This also includes Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educators training of new volunteers, such as other Rutgers Master Gardener interns, civic groups, or another identified group of volunteers, to assist them in delivering a program. Work to construct or develop a site used for educational programming, such as a landscape demonstration garden, may qualify as educational efforts. Volunteer time in these educational efforts include the time spent planning and teaching. For compliance with Rutgers regulations, presentations to private associations or non-public groups will require the completion and filing of all necessary non-discrimination forms. The supervising County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator must review all educational programming to determine whether the activity is considered appropriate and qualifies for volunteer efforts.

**B. Administrative Efforts** - Administrative volunteer efforts that may count towards volunteer time include working on a Master Gardener newsletter; communication efforts, such as telephone trees, creating or managing a program Web site or electronic database; and any other activities that are deemed necessary to maintain and expand the local Rutgers Master Gardener Program.

**C. Non-educational Programming** – Pending local RCE program approval, the design, installation and maintenance of public, demonstration, or educational gardens or areas so

designated may meet program volunteer requirements. Bus trips, meetings, or other general program activities without the prior approval of the supervising County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator will not meet the volunteer requirements of the Rutgers Master Gardener program.

**D. Attending seminars** – Time when the Rutgers Certified Master Gardener is in the audience as a recipient of information or training, with the prior approval of the county program coordinator, will count toward the annual continuing education requirement and not toward the volunteer time commitment, with prior approval from the County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

**E. Reporting volunteer activities** – A regularly updated record of all volunteer activities is required – this could be quarterly or annually as required by the county program coordinator. It is essential to keep an up-to-date file of volunteer effort descriptions, contacts, letters, reports, newspaper clippings and pictures of events, exhibits and displays, etc. to be used in writing annual reports and impact statements. Individual Rutgers Master Gardener Volunteer Activity Reports should be kept current and are required of all current volunteers for each calendar year of volunteer activity. The County Agent or County Master Gardener coordinator is responsible for submitting the Annual Rutgers Master Gardener Program Summary Reports to the State Rutgers Master Gardener Coordinator by the end of February. As such, local Rutgers Master Gardener volunteer activity reports must be filed regularly with the county program (deadlines and information required will be set at the county level). A listing of all Rutgers Master Gardener volunteers who have signed all necessary Volunteer Agreements and kept current with program requirements is needed to properly re-certify Rutgers Master Gardener volunteers. Master Gardeners for whom Individual Master Gardener Activity Reports are not received and signed Volunteer Agreements are not on file will be removed from the Rutgers Certified Master Gardener rolls, will lose these titles, and be placed on the Rutgers Master Gardener Alumni list.

## **VII. Rutgers Master Gardener Transfers / Program Reciprocity**

**A. Within New Jersey** – Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners who have completed their training and internship anywhere in New Jersey, and have received a positive recommendation from their County Agent or local RCE Master Gardener Program Coordinator, will retain Rutgers Certified Master Gardener status in the locale of their new residency. However, they may be required to take additional course work required of all

local Master Gardener volunteers in the new locality. For example, New Jersey boasts a diverse environment, and certain electives may be extremely important in northern New Jersey, while a different set may be valid or relevant along coastal regions. Rutgers Master Gardener Interns who have not completed the course or volunteer efforts prior to relocating within NJ will be required to complete any remaining core and necessary electives prior to completing the volunteer internship and becoming Certified Master Gardeners in their new locale.

**B. Outside New Jersey** – Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners moving out-of-state as well Certified Master Gardeners from other states moving into NJ may be required to complete core and / or elective training prior to volunteering in their new state of residency, depending on their demonstrated knowledge and skills in this geographic area and a recommendation from their previous County Agent or local Master Gardener Program Coordinator. Records on current Rutgers Master Gardener volunteers should be kept to assist those leaving New Jersey to continue their volunteer efforts in their new home state.

## **VIII. Volunteer Management and Conflict Resolution**

**A. Leave of Absence** – requested by a Rutgers Master Gardener Intern, Certified Master Gardener, Master Gardener Educator, or Master Gardener *Aurum insigne* who is temporarily unable to fulfill RCE requirements for health, family or other personal reasons. Participants may be placed and remain on leave of absence upon the approval of his or her local coordinator. While unable to volunteer, serving on a ‘leave of absence’ also preclude the volunteer from attending general meetings, volunteer recognition programs, and other Master Gardener programs held for those on ‘active’ status. Returning to active status after more than two years of leave of absence will require re-training, as determined by the county program coordinator.

**B. Inactive Status** – assigned by the county coordinator to a Certified Master Gardener or Master Gardener Educator who has not maintained the hourly volunteer requirements, not met reporting or other program requirements, and has not maintained contact with the program. At the discretion of the county program coordinator, this may also preclude the volunteer from attending general meetings, volunteer recognition programs, and other Master Gardener programs held for those on ‘active’ status. Requests granted for returning to active status would include a ‘probationary period’ during which the volunteer completes the

requirements for recertification. Returning to active status after more than two years as 'inactive' may require additional re-training, as determined by the local program coordinator.

## **IX. Conflict Resolution**

Rutgers Certified Master Gardener volunteers may request or suggest new volunteer efforts that meet local needs and that adhere to current Rutgers Cooperative Extension program priorities. Similarly, supervising County Agents and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinators may redirect volunteer efforts to match abilities or to address changing program needs. In the event of a conflict regarding volunteer activities, performance, behavior, or other infractions as related to the Rutgers Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement, Rutgers Master Gardener volunteers are entitled to a performance review from their supervising County Agent and/or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator.

**A. Grounds for dismissal from Rutgers Master Gardener program** - In the event that a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener volunteer breaks the signed volunteer agreements or, following mentoring efforts, repeatedly demonstrates actions that are in conflict with the mission, purpose or objectives of Rutgers Cooperative Extension, may be relieved of the title and privileges at the discretion of the supervising County Agent and / or County Master Gardener Program Coordinator with the approval of the State Program Coordinator. Examples of conflict include, but are not limited to, discrimination, harassment, and failure to comply with the terms of any signed Volunteer Agreement or Rutgers Master Gardener program policies. The supervising County Agent should consult with the State Rutgers Master Gardener Program Coordinator and the Agriculture and Resource Management Agents (ARMA) Department Chair or other appropriate Rutgers Cooperative Extension administrators any time there is a serious incident involving a volunteer.

**B. Procedure for dismissal** - The following steps will be followed in dismissing a volunteer. The County Agent and/or designated program coordinator or supervisor will:

1. Notify the volunteer in writing listing specific concerns and/or policy infractions in question. The notice should also include the immediate and/or possible outcomes including possible removal from the volunteer role.
2. Provide an opportunity for the volunteer to respond within 10 days of this notice and provide any additional information pertinent to the situation.
3. Review the original complaint and any other information and, in consultation with the State Rutgers Master Gardener Program Coordinator and the ARMA Department

Chair, decide on the action to be taken. The decision will then be conveyed to the volunteer in writing within ten (10) days.

## **IX. Recognition and Awards**

**A. Rutgers Certificates** - Upon satisfactory completion of the training portion of the Rutgers Master Gardener program, a certificate of completion may be awarded to the participant. After completion of the initial volunteer internship, the Rutgers Master Gardener Intern becomes a Rutgers Certified Master Gardener and is awarded the appropriate certificate by Rutgers Cooperative Extension. In succeeding years, Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners who remain active by keeping their continuing education and volunteer service requirements current may receive a “Years of Service” Award. Rutgers Certified Master Gardener Educators will be recognized following completion of program requirements and annual volunteer service in a similar fashion.

**B. County Program Awards** - Local programs may develop their own awards in addition to those mentioned Section A. above.

**C. State Awards** – Rutgers Master Gardener State Program awards are given annually. Awards are based on nominations submitted by supervising County Agents, local Master Gardener Program Coordinators, or fellow Master Gardener volunteers to the ARMA Department, RCE, and/or the Master Gardener Association of NJ, respectively.

## **X. The Master Gardener Association of New Jersey (MGANJ)**

The purpose of MGANJ is to unite Master Gardener programs in a statewide group that will assist Rutgers Cooperative Extension in its basic mission to disseminate research-based information to the general public. It also provides a forum for developing activities in support of Certified Master Gardeners/Educators or current Master Gardener Interns. MGANJ consists of representatives from all current programs and designated RCE faculty and staff. The MGANJ goals include:

- ◆ To advise and assist RCE on Master Gardener issues of a statewide nature
- ◆ To enhance and supplement the basic RCE Master Gardener Program by assisting in developing, planning and organizing educational activities
- ◆ To assist county and local RCE Master Gardener programs by developing and exchanging information, communication, and resources throughout the state

## **XI. County Master Gardener Associations**

The purpose of County-based Master Gardener associations is to unite Master Gardener volunteers in a county- or program-wide group that will assist Rutgers Cooperative Extension in its basic mission to disseminate research-based information to the general public. It also provides a forum for developing activities in support of Rutgers Certified Master Gardeners / Educators or current Master Gardener Interns in the county program. These may be formalized associations or more broadly based advisory boards as deemed necessary by the county program coordinators.

## **XII. Program Compliance**

**A. Equal Opportunity Statement** - It is the policy of Rutgers NJ Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension, Rutgers University and the USDA to ensure that all equal opportunity, civil rights and affirmative action rules, regulations, and orders are complied with in conducting the program outreach and participation in the RCE Master Gardener Program.

### **B. Relationships of Rutgers Cooperative Extension Faculty/Staff with Various Groups and Organizations**

**1. Lay Advisory Groups** - Lay advisory groups function on county and state levels in an advisory capacity to Rutgers Cooperative Extension. The faculty member with lead responsibility for working with advisory groups should keep the members adequately trained to insure the most effective work toward meeting current needs and using available resources to achieve a meaningful program.

No faculty member, program professional staff, or paraprofessional shall be voting members or hold office on Rutgers Cooperative Extension advisory boards. They shall not hold office in any cooperative or commercial organization which may raise questions of conflict of interest. Faculty may serve as advisers to fund and membership campaigns, but will not actively solicit funds for an advisory group. In addition, all Rutgers Cooperative Extension faculty/staff are responsible for keeping advisory groups informed of program plans and activities as well as reporting results and evaluation.

## **XIII. Setting and Amending the Statewide RCE Master Gardener Policies**

Rutgers NJ Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension has final authority in setting statewide RCE Master Gardener policies. In addition, supervising County Agents will implement these Policies and Procedures in their local programs, and have final authority over programmatic

initiatives and activities at the county level. Recommendations for policy changes are welcome and encouraged, and are accepted from coordinating faculty and staff, current volunteers, and from local and statewide advisory groups.

## **Appendices**

- A RCE Master Gardener Application**
- B RCE Master Gardener Annual Volunteer Agreement**
- C RCE Master Gardener Intern and Volunteer Activity Reports (suggested examples)**

*Accepted, November 2003*

*Amended, April 2005*

*Amended, September 2007*

*Amended, June 2010*

## Appendix A.

*Please note that county programs are managed independently, and all program applications are not available throughout the year. This is an example of a basic application form, and county programs should be contacted for their specific application forms and registration requirements and deadlines.*

### RUTGERS NJAES COOPERATIVE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER APPLICATION

I wish to become a participant in the Rutgers Master Gardener training program and would like to be accepted for the next class. I understand that upon successful completion of the training, I must perform the required hours of volunteer service within the necessary timeframe to attain the title of Rutgers Certified Master Gardener. I also understand that there are annual recertification requirements to continue as a Rutgers NJAES Certified Master Gardener / Educator, and that there is a cost to cover course, administrative, and program expenses.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Application: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please print)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred NAME for Badge \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (H): \_\_\_\_\_ (W): \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ E – MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete the following:

1. Briefly describe your interest, experience and/or training in gardening / horticulture \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Please describe your level of expertise in gardening & horticulture:

\_\_\_\_ Beginner      \_\_\_\_ Intermediate      \_\_\_\_ Advanced      \_\_\_\_ Expert

3. Why do you wish to become a RCE Master Gardener volunteer?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you belong to a garden club or environmental group? If so, which one (s)? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Please list past volunteer experiences, community, or civic activities and positions held.

\_\_\_\_\_

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6. Please list your occupation and any skills in non-horticultural areas (writing, computers, graphics, art or photography, etc.) that might be relevant to your volunteer activities:

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7. Do you anticipate any circumstances that would keep you from attending class, fulfilling the minimum volunteer commitments or participating in other volunteer activities? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If so, please describe here: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Please note that three references on volunteerism may be requested by the local program.

Please return this application to RCE office in your \*county of residence (\* denotes Master Gardener program):

\*RCE of Atlantic County  
6260 Old Harding Highway  
Mays Landing, NJ 08330-1533

\*RCE of Gloucester County  
1200 N. Delsea Drive  
Clayton, NJ 08312-1095

\*RCE of Ocean County  
1623 Whitesville Road  
Toms River, NJ 08755-1199

\*RCE of Bergen County  
1 Bergen County Plaza, 4th Flr.  
Hackensack, NJ 07601-7076

RCE of Hudson County  
257 Cornelison Ave., Ste 2101  
Jersey City, NJ 07302

\*RCE of Passaic County  
1310 Rt. 23 North  
Wayne, NJ 07470-5825

\*RCE of Burlington County  
2 Academy Drive  
Westampton, NJ 08060-3826

\*RCE of Hunterdon County  
314 State Route 12, Bldg. 2  
PO Box 2900  
Flemington, NJ 08822-4102

RCE of Salem County  
51 Cheney Rd., Ste. 1  
Woodstown, NJ 08098-9982

\*RCE of Camden County  
1301 Park Boulevard  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08002-3752

\*RCE of Mercer County  
930 Spruce Street  
Trenton, NJ 08648-4584

\*RCE of Somerset County  
310 Milltown Road  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807-3587

\*RCE of Cape May County  
4 Moore Road  
Cape May Crt. House, NJ 08210-1601

\*RCE of Middlesex County  
42 Riva Avenue  
N. Brunswick, NJ 08902-4734

\*RCE of Sussex County  
129 Morris Turnpike  
Newton, NJ 07860-4913

\*RCE of Cumberland County  
291 Morton Avenue  
Millville, NJ 08332-9776

\*RCE of Monmouth County  
4000 Kozloski Rd.  
P.O. Box 5033  
Freehold, NJ 07728-5033

\*RCE of Union County  
300 North Avenue East  
Westfield, NJ 07090-1499

\*RCE of Essex County  
621A Eagle Rock Avenue  
Roseland, NJ 07068-1501

\*RCE of Morris County  
PO Box 900, Court House  
Morristown, NJ 07963-0900

RCE of Warren County  
165 County Rd. 519 South  
Belvidere, NJ 07823-1949





