

## Explanations of Volunteer Hours

All activities for which Master Gardener volunteer hours are claimed must be pre-approved. If activities are not listed on the sign-up sheets, either a discussion to obtain approval should be held with the Clinic Planner, or a 'Project Proposal Application' must be submitted to the Clinic Planner for approval. Our Master Gardeners are strongly encouraged to find ways in which to fulfil our mission to educate the public about sustainable gardening practices, so any project that appears to meet that goal should be presented for consideration.

The Clinic Planner maintains a record of all approved Master Gardener events during the year, collects the 'Record of Volunteer Hours' forms at the end of each reporting year, and is responsible for compiling that information for reporting to the Provincial Membership Chair for entry into the MGABC database. As any non-approved hours will be queried at chapter level, a complete understanding on the part of Master Gardeners of what constitutes eligible hours will ease the workload of the Clinic Planner.

Note that travel time to/from any event cannot be claimed as volunteer hours.

Also note that no volunteer advice hours outside British Columbia will be accepted; any self-education hours outside British Columbia require pre-approval by the Clinic Planner.

The required hours are divided into three categories: **Community Outreach, Administration, and Continuing Education.**

Details of these categories are given on the 'Record of Volunteer Hours' form. Explanations are provided below.

MG = qualified Master Gardener

MGiT = Master Gardener in Training (first two years after taking Basic Training Program course)

### **Community Outreach**

**Clinics:** in addition to the actual time spent there, MGs may claim ½ hour for orientation time, if taken. Clinic Coordinators can claim one (1) extra hour for their administrative duties. Time spent by MGs or MGITs in researching questions posed at clinics and delivering answers can be claimed; a copy of the answer(s) should be sent to the Clinic Coordinator. All Clinics should include at least one Qualified MG or 2<sup>nd</sup>-year MGIT.

Master Gardeners in Training must complete at least 25 clinic hours in their first year, and at least 15 hours in their second year. Hours in excess of 50 in Year 1 will not be carried over to Year 2.

**Writing:** the content must be consistent with the objectives of the MGABC and be of educational interest to the gardening community; a reasonable time for preparation and research is allowable, e.g. 3 hours.

**Research:** a reasonable time is allowable, depending on the extent of the project. If the time exceeds 5 hours, MGs and MGITs should contact the Clinic Planner.

**Public or MG Presentation:** the content must be consistent with the objectives of the MGABC and be of educational interest to the gardening community; a reasonable time for preparation is allowable, e.g. a maximum of 4 hours for a presentation of 1 hour.

**Miscellaneous Advice:** must be pre-approved by Clinic Planner.

For **Community Projects**, a 'Project Proposal Application' must be submitted and approved. You may be asked to present your findings or otherwise share your experiences with the Chapter. For **School Programs** and similar **Community Projects**, all recorded work must consist of advice or demonstrations. Time spent assisting a sponsoring organization in administrative work is not eligible. This includes time spent in meetings and drawing up work schedules, unless an MG or MGIT makes a specific presentation. It is assumed that another organization will be leading this activity, and that MGs or MGITs will be participating only as consultants. Time spent in maintenance, such as weeding, is not eligible. Only advice hours or teaching hours can be claimed.

#### **Administration**

**Clinic Administration:** A maximum of one (1) hour can be claimed to contact the venue host, confirm attendance by MGs or MGITs, thank-you's to all concerned, etc.

**MG Administration:** These hours are related to the work required to support and promote the activities of the Okanagan Master Gardeners, and include attending Okanagan MG Executive and MGABC Council meetings; activities associated with the Basic Program such as mentoring and marking exams; photocopying; meeting support and similar administrative duties.

***Attendance at Meetings:*** This includes attendance at the Business Meeting portion of chapter or MGABC meetings, or when representing Master Gardeners at other meetings (pre-approval may be required).

In total, MGITs must contribute 70 volunteer hours following completion of the Basic Training Program (maximum of 50 hours in Year 1; maximum of 20 hours in Year 2) to become a qualified Master Gardener.

***Continuing Education***

This category encompasses all that MGs and MGITs do to maintain their awareness and knowledge of current issues that affect the home gardener. As a minimum of 5 hours of Continuing Education is required by both 2<sup>nd</sup>-year MGITs and Qualified Master Gardeners, attendance at the annual Spring Seminar meets that need. Attendance at presentations by local or other gardening experts qualifies, but for other events, it is strongly advised that pre-approval as to eligibility be obtained from the Clinic Planner.