Master Gardener Volunteer Info (as of 2009)

Certified MG's (Alumni)

1. The total volunteer activity hours (excluding CEU hours) needed to remain active is 25 hours per year. It is recommended that certified MG's also get 10 CEU hours per year.
2. Allow the monthly meeting time to be counted as CEU for any educational portion and the remaining meeting time to be counted towards the volunteer activity time commitment. Drive time for monthly meetings is excluded - except for members who have a specific volunteer duty at the meeting: i.e., officers, committee member, presenter, refreshment committee, etc. (rationale: to encourage participation by giving extra reward to those who have various responsibilities - drive time hours are a bonus for those who get involved. Also, to discourage people from depending on the monthly meetings to get all their volunteer time without getting involved in other activities)
3. Drive time for **ALL** other approved activities counts as volunteer time.
4. Any activity accepted or approved by the Local MG Coordinator counts as volunteer hours.
5. Labor in your garden or someone else's in preparation for a program is volunteer time.
6. Time spent researching a subject in preparation for teaching/presenting that subject to an audience.

To give further credit for volunteer time dedication, CEU hours and volunteer activity hours should be combined for a **gross total of volunteer time** for the year (example: in 2009, Susie accomplished 20 CEU's and 180 volunteer activity hours for a total of 200 total volunteer hours – this total will be used in the "Reach for the Stars Award" program).

Drive time: All drive mileage still counts for any and all activities if using these numbers in an itemized IRS tax deduction. Mileage expense for volunteers, as defined by the IRS, is deducted as a direct expense OR at the mileage rate of 14 cents per mile (in 2008). Mileage is a deduction for the vehicle on the owner's itemized tax form (see IRS publication 526).

Intern MG's:

1. Total volunteer time for certification is 50 volunteer hours (10 of which must be for working on the Help Line) (rationale: the training time was always a training time match on an hour for hour basis. The training in most programs is now about 50 hours.)
2. Allow the entire monthly meeting time to be counted towards this commitment, but exclude drive time to monthly meeting **unless** the Intern has a specific responsibility at the meeting (rationale: to encourage interns to get involved in the local association activities).
3. Drive time for **ALL** other approved activities counts as volunteer time.
4. Any activity accepted or approved by the Local MG Coordinator counts as volunteer hours. An Extension agent may also request some of the Intern's time be done on a specific project or type of volunteer service.
5. Attendance at extramural educational meetings counts as volunteer hours.
6. Interns do not need CEUs. These are for certified Master Gardener volunteers.

All volunteer service must be accepted or approved by the Local Master Gardener Coordinator.

If you can answer yes to these four questions, then the activity meets the mission of the Master Gardener program and you should count it in your annual service report:
*   Will it benefit the community?
*   Is it associated with (or benefiting) a non-commercial group?
*   Is it related to gardening, the environment, or an Extension program?
*   Are you helping people learn?

Hours should be done through a variety of activities. You more effectively represent the program and its mission when considering a variety of audiences to interact with during activities. Examples: All documented hours relate only to business meetings, or all hours relate to writing a single article in the quarterly newsletter, or all hours are spent working an annual bed at the botanic garden – these are one sided and perhaps miss the mission of the MG Program.

Defining CEU's: Does the activity have a specific learning objective and is the speaker at the activity a recognized authority in the subject presented?