



NEWSLETTER FOR MG PROGRAM COORDINATORS

NOVEMBER 2011

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MG Program Coordinators' Webinar

Friday, November 7th 10 – 11 am.

Go to: breeze.wsu.edu/mg several minutes ahead of time and sign in as a guest. Plug your headset in and run the audio wizard to get your speakers and microphone set. Use the headset so you can participate in Q&A sessions. Please contact Brigitta (509 358-7968) or brigitta@wsu.edu if you have questions prior to the webinar time.

Research Working for You Webinar

Wednesday, November 2nd, 10:00 a.m.

http://breeze.wsu.edu/research_that_works_for_you/

Speaker: Preston Andrews, PhD; Associate Professor, Horticulture and Landscape Architecture

Title: Can we grow more nutritious fruits and vegetables using organic farming methods?

Abstract: Organic farmers have claimed for years that better quality soils produce more nutritious foods, but until recently scientific evidence for such claims has been wanting. Recent research of organic farming systems provides some evidence that this claim may be true under certain circumstances. Detractors of organic farming claim that the only reason why organic crops may at times have more phytonutrients than conventional crops is that organic crops are exposed to more stresses. This may be because of the lower nutrient availability of organically approved fertilizers or injury caused by pests and pathogens because of limitations on the pesticides that can be used. To evaluate the claims both for and against, research comparing organic and conventional farming systems will be presented, along with a discussion of ways in which more nutritious fruits and vegetables can be grown.

Climate Change Webinars

Join WSU soil scientist Craig Cogger for a two part series to cut through the confusion and understand the science of climate change. This webinar is intended for the WSU community and beyond. Please share the URL with your constituents, volunteers, students and others who would value straight talk about the science of climate change. Qualifies for Continuing Education credit for MG Volunteers.

Webinar URL: http://breeze.wsu.edu/csanr_series/

Part One – Nov 10th at 10am **Climate Change: What does the science really tell us about past and current climate trends?**

Part Two – Nov 17th at 10am **Climate Change: Climate models, skepticism, and our response to climate disruption.**

MG Volunteer Certificates and Pins

To review, the state WSU MG office (Tonie and Brigitta) provides Year-in-Service pins at no cost to you for MG volunteers when they remain certified in your county for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, etc. years. We also can print certificates for newly certified MGs if your county is unable to print them from <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/MasterGardenerTrainingEvaluation.html>

Two weeks before your recognition event, please send Brigitta the names and number of years of service (5-year increments only) of volunteer being recognized and she will prepare Recognition certificates and pins and send them to your office.

Please do not order more pins than you need for that year's event. Brigitta is keeping database of MGs recognized each year which allows for budgeting and forecasting for future year purchases.

Focus Groups for the WSU MG Campaign

The Master Gardener Program is one of the WSU programs that will benefit from a fundraising campaign led by the WSU Foundation in cooperation with the MGFWS in 2012. You may remember last year that MGFWS did a survey of all MG volunteers to identify the most important needs for sustaining the WSU MG program. In November I will be traveling with WSU Foundation's Melissa Bean to focus group meetings around the state for input regarding the written materials that describe the statewide needs to potential donors. Meetings are scheduled for Wenatchee on Nov 1st, Seattle and Olympia on Nov 3rd, Bellingham on Nov 7th and Spokane sometime later.

Strategic Planning for Counties

As many of you know, some counties are no longer able to support paid program coordinators for volunteer programs. In those cases, WSU policy is that if there is a faculty person in the county who is willing to assume leadership for the MG Program, a certified volunteer (or two) may accept responsibility for the day to day management of the MG Program. Grant, Kittitas, Grays Harbor, Pacific, Okanogan, Jefferson, Island and Yakima Counties are all faced with this situation and more counties may be operating like this until our economic situation changes.

I have been helping to develop strategic plans in counties where volunteers are assuming leadership for program management. We start with reviewing the mission of WSU Extension and the WSU MG Volunteer Program. Then we look at the educational needs in the county that the Extension office is trying to meet and decide what MG projects or events can help meet those needs. Then we look at how many volunteers are needed to work in those educational projects. (Some counties are deciding that a new class of interns may not be necessary every year. They have decided to train a new class every OTHER year and focus on supporting the existing volunteers on alternate years.) In counties that are gearing up to train a new class in 2012, we look at what needs to be done to recruit and select the kind of volunteers needed, how to get them enrolled in the online training, how to organize the face-to-face classes, how to support volunteers as they engage in plant clinics and/or community projects, how to certify new people and offer continuing education for veterans and, finally, how to report what's being done.

That is the *minimum* that needs to be done for local program management. It is no small feat to manage a local WSU Master Gardener Program and I deeply appreciate the paid and volunteer program coordinators who serve in this capacity.