



A GUIDE FOR COUNTIES TO HOST ADVANCED MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

The Advanced Training Project of County 76 has developed the following important information to assist a host county to plan an Advanced Training (AT) for Master Gardeners (MG).

Class Requisites

The class must contain a minimum of six hours of content that is based on Extension research that goes beyond the *Arkansas Master Gardener Handbook*. (Depending on the training location, you may want to offer a two day class [example: first day, start in early afternoon and second day, end at noon] since many MGs travel several hours each way.)

Content

The subject should be specific, appropriate for the season and of general interest. Narrow the focus of training to a specific topic such as propagation, hydrangeas, prairie grass, organic gardening or shade gardens.

Some topics will be more popular than others. Ideally, you should strive for a minimum of 50 participants; however, a few topics may attract less interest.

Facilities

All classes should accommodate as many eligible MGs as a facility will allow with a suggested minimum of 50 participants. The facility should have handicap accessible toilet facilities, adequate parking, adequate seating, and audiovisual capabilities. If outdoor classroom facilities are used, have a backup plan in case of inclement weather. Provide some shade in hot weather.

County Committee & Assignments

The county should form an Advanced Training Host Committee with members assigned specific responsibilities in the planning and execution of the class. All committee members should be familiar with this guide. The committee should designate one member to serve as contact with the Advanced Training Project Chairperson (ATPC). Don't forget to assign post training responsibilities such as mailing thank you letters. Follow through is as important as the planning.

Preparing a Budget

Prepare a cost estimating plan, which includes food and beverages. Every situation will be different. However, here are some ideas to consider in preparing a budget.

Cost to the participants should be based on what it actually costs to put on the training. There are fixed expenses, such as cost of the meeting place and there are per person expenses, such as lunch. Meals and refreshments may be incorporated into the cost, but you are not required to provide meals if there are facilities near the training site. The following are examples of fixed and per person costs:

Fixed Costs

Facility charges
Speaker fees (honoraria)
Speaker expenses (lodging, mileage, etc.)

Per Person Costs

Materials for individuals
Copying (handouts)
Meals & Refreshments
Fee to County 76 - \$5 (badge, folders, etc.)

If you are on a tight time schedule, you may want to offer a box lunch. If you are providing a meal, remember that many MGs like to be offered the choice of a vegetarian meal and the choice of bottled water. The host county is responsible for paying all costs from its collected charges. The number the facility will accommodate or the size of your lunch facility will determine the maximum number you can train.

It is imperative that the host committee work closely with a staff member in the host county office who is knowledgeable about Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service financial guidelines which are contained in a handbook, *Financial Guidelines for 4-H and Master Gardeners*, on the U of A website. To access the financial guidelines, search the uaex.edu website: Financial Guidelines for 4-H and Master Gardener Groups or go to [Financial Guidelines for 4-H & Master Gardener Groups](#).

Breaking Even

You should arrive at a break-even figure based on expenses, especially your fixed expenses. This figure represents the minimum number of trainees needed to cover the fixed costs of the event. Some topics will be more popular than others, so have realistic expectations. If you do not have the required minimum number by the registration deadline, the training should be canceled and monies refunded. This break-even number could be 35 for some topics and locations, or it could be 75 or more for others.

The goal is to make AT classes break-even projects and not fund raisers. However, if attendance is greater than anticipated, there could be extra funds. All profits over \$500 will go to County 76.

It is very important that Julie Treat, Master Gardener Advanced Training Coordinator (MGATC) be informed of all actions and business of the advanced training program. The coordinator shall be emailed or copied on all correspondence regarding an AT.

Twelve Steps for Hosting an Advanced Training

1. Scheduling an Advanced Training

The first step to host an AT is to contact Julie Treat, MGATC to schedule the training. When it has been scheduled the MGATC informs the ATPC who emails the host county contact the Application for Advanced Training Class, Part One and the Application for Advanced Training Class, Part Two and sends other documents which will be helpful in planning the AT. He/she also assigns a member of the ATP to serve as mentor to the host county.

The mentor will be involved in the process of planning the event. He or she will contact the county contact person and follow the Mentor Check List which outlines the steps to a successful AT. The mentor will assist the host county to prepare the budget for the Application, Part Two. This joint effort will insure the proposal is approved.

2. The Application, Part One

Ninety days prior to the planned event, the host county sends the Application, Part One to Julie Treat, MGATC (at 2301 South University, Little Rock, AR 72204 or jtreat@uaex.edu) with date, time, location, topic, purpose of the training, estimated number of participants and the name of the county contact person. The earlier the process is started the better. The class outline or tentative agenda should be sent with the Application, Part One. The MGATC forwards the Application, Part One to the ATPC who sends it to the ATP members for review and approval. When the Application, Part One is approved, the ATPC will inform the host county.

3. The Application, Part Two

At least 60 days prior to the proposed training, the Application, Part Two should be completed and sent to the MCATC who will forward it to the ATPC. Part Two includes topic, basic course outline with speakers and brief description of course material, budget for fixed expenses and per person expenses, along with the maximum number of participants. Speakers may be agents, specialists, Master Gardeners who are experts on the topic or

industry professionals. Out-of-state speakers should be limited as the goal is to educate on gardening in Arkansas and this can be done by utilizing experts within the state. The ATPC sends the Application, Part Two to the ATP members for review and approval and informs the host county of the decision of the ATP members.

4. Speakers

Once the proposal is approved by the ATP members, the host county is responsible for confirming speakers.

Potential speakers should be provided with an explanation of the advanced nature of the training through an outline of material covered in MG Basic Training on the proposed topic. This will serve to insure that speakers fully understand the audience and subject matter expected. An AT must have at least two presenters or more. A presenter may do no more than four of the six hours required for training.

As soon as a topic is approved with an outline or agenda and speakers are lined up, send the speakers a written confirmation. Ask your speakers to provide you with handout materials before the day of training so copies can be made in advance. Any honorarium or travel expense must have appropriate authorization.

Honorarium information – page 9 of [Financial Guidelines for 4-H & Master Gardener Groups](#). Travel expenses information – page 7 of [Financial Guidelines for 4-H & Master Gardener Groups](#).

5. Eligibility

Advanced classes must be offered statewide to all MGs who are in good standing and have fulfilled all requirements for three years. (This program uses the calendar year. For example, if the MG trained in 2003, he/she is eligible for advanced classes in 2006.)

Participants should understand they must attend the entire class and personally receive their Certificate of Completion at the end of the session in order to receive advanced training credit.

6. Advertising

All Advanced classes must be advertised simultaneously statewide so that everyone has an equal chance to apply. Direct email to all county extension offices and county MG contacts will be handled by the MGATC. Other methods of advertising are MG newsletters, MG web page, Arkansas Master Gardener Coordinator, flyers and county MG organizations.

7. Registration

The host county should use the Advanced MG Training Registration Form which includes all pertinent information as well as the following:

Participants must

1. have fulfilled all requirements for three years and,
2. attend the entire training class to receive certification and credit.

The registration packet should contain the registration form, a course agenda with speakers, a list of restaurants, places of interest (optional) and a list of hotel/motel accommodations, including addresses, reservation phone numbers, and, if possible, rates.

8. Roster of Registrants

Two weeks prior to the class, the host county will send a roster of registrants (the participant's name, address, email, county, year participant completed MG basic training and telephone number) to Julie Treat, MGATC (2301 South University Avenue, Little Rock, AR 72204 or jtreat@uaex.edu). The MGATC will email this roster to all county agents and county contacts to be helpful for carpooling to trainings. The MGATC will use the roster to prepare the Certificates of Completion which will be distributed at the end of the class.

9. Packets & Handouts

Class packets should be assembled before the day of training. Packet covers and suggestions for inclusion can be provided by the MGATC. Also consider including a list of gardens and garden shops within the area.

10. Signing In

When the training begins, have sign in sheets at a registration desk. Distribute class packets with trainee names affixed as a double check of attendance. Participants will also sign in after lunch or on the second day if the AT is held on two days.

11. Certificates of Completion & Evaluation

The certificates will be provided by the MGATC. At the end of the class, the certificates should be distributed to the participants in an efficient alphabetical process. All certificates not distributed at the class will be returned to the MGATC.

The ATPC will email or designate a project member to email the evaluation form to participants within 5 days after the AT. The data will be tabulated and results sent to the ATPC who will forward the data summary to the MGATC, the host county contact person and Cooperative Extension Agent who is the host county MG advisor.

12. Follow Up

Within **two weeks** of the training, the host county shall send the MGATC:

- a. A list of the persons who completed the class. The list should contain the participant's name, address, email, county, year participant completed MG basic training and telephone number.
- b. An invoice should be created by the County Extension Office to support the checks noted below.
- c. A check made payable to CES for the amount of \$5 per registrant and for any profit over \$500 to:

Julie Treat, Master Gardener Advanced Training Coordinator
2301 South University Avenue
Little Rock AR 72204

Names of participants who received certificates will be entered into the Advanced Master Gardener database by a member of the ATP. When participants have completed five training classes, an Advanced Master Gardener certificate will be generated for Level I, and, also at Levels II, III, IV and V as required Advanced Training classes are completed and requirements for those levels are earned.

Send thank you notes to speakers along with honoraria, if applicable. Relax and give yourselves a pat on the back!

For additional information please contact the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service at 501-671-2237.