

NEWSLETTERS, LOGOS, AND MATERIAL PRESENTED TO THE PUBLIC

Revised 10-03

PROMOTION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Promotion of the Master Gardener program is essential to creating a thriving organization. Promotion and public relations will affect how a county Master Gardener group grows, what projects it takes on, how these projects are funded, and who in the community benefits from these projects. Projects and accomplishments of the Master Gardeners should be promoted regularly to increase interest in and respect for the program.

It is important to keep in mind the goals of the Master Gardener program when promoting it. These are to increase the availability of horticultural information and improve quality of life with horticultural projects. Master Gardeners should highlight ways in which they have met these goals when promoting the program.

The association between the University of Arkansas and the Master Gardener program often lends respect to the program. At the same time, the Master Gardener program and its members are a reflection of the University of Arkansas, the Division of Agriculture, and the liaison between the Cooperative Extension Service and the community. When promoting the Master Gardener program, the Cooperative Extension Service should always be acknowledged for coordinating the program and Master Gardeners should strive to represent the University of Arkansas well.

Promotion of the Master Gardener program can benefit Master Gardeners in several ways. First, promotion will serve as one of the main recruitment strategies. Expanding the Master Gardener program and attracting new members is important to creating a thriving and vital organization. By constantly making the public aware of Master Gardener projects and events, individuals with an interest in public service and gardening will learn about and be more likely to apply to the program.

Promotion will also assist in developing resources for the program. With increased public awareness, other groups become interested and willing to work with Master Gardeners toward common goals. Community businesses and organizations may be more willing to assist Master Gardeners with supplies, services, and funding if they have an understanding of Master Gardener activities. Promotion and marketing of Master Gardener activities also offer a perfect opportunity to publicly recognize supporters. This strengthens the Master Gardeners' relationship with community.

Finally, promotion of the Master Gardener program can help accomplish the goal of increasing the availability of horticultural information in the community. Master Gardener activity that is open to or visible to the public is a form of promotion. Master Gardeners can use the media to distribute horticultural information through newsletters, seminars, radio programs, fair booths, personal contacts, and news releases to the local media. Some tips for preparing news releases follow.

Nitty-gritty Details of Working with Media

- Appoint one group member to be in charge of media contacts.
- Try to develop a relationship with one person on the staff at each station or newspaper you work with.
- Never contact more than one person at the same station or newspaper with the same information.
- Always schedule an appointment before going to any media office. Media personnel are very busy people.
- Remember that the media are not obligated to devote free airtime or newspaper space to an organization. There are certain times when other news will be deemed more important.
- Double-or triple-space information on good quality paper, 8 ½ X 11 inches, one side only.
- Use a laser printer to insure clear copy.
- If the information is more than one page, mark (more) on the bottom of the first page and each subsequent page. On the second and subsequent pages, identify the page number at the top. At the conclusion, put the symbol ### to denote end.
- Always keep a copy of information submitted and provide extra or duplicate copies when requested.
- Be sure that the name of the Master Gardener organization and the name, address, e-mail, phone and Fax number of the group contact are at the top left of each page of information.
- Make sure to indicate at the top of the first page when the information is to be released. Example: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or RELEASE AFTER 4pm, DECEMBER 10, 20__.
- You may also need to indicate for how long an item should be run as a PSA or in calendar of events. Example: “For use Sunday, December 20, through Sunday, December 27, 20__.”
- Always give the exact day and date of an event.
- Spell out numbers below 10; use numerals for 10 and above. Never begin a sentence with numerals.
- Keep a record of all media contacts made by Master Gardeners (include the name, organization, phone and FAX number, and e-mail information of the group contact). Record whether the information submitted was used by the media or not. Review this record to determine to whom information should be submitted.
- Make a “Public Relations Plan” at the beginning of the year similar to a proposed budget. Plan a calendar of events and determine how and when to advertise each.

THE MASTER GARDENER LOGO

The official Master Gardener logo consists of the Master Gardener tree along with the University of Arkansas logo. Individual county programs may have their own logos, but these should be used in conjunction with the official Master Gardener logo. An electronic file containing the official logo can be obtained on the Cooperative Extension Service Intranet through County Extension offices.

NEWSLETTERS

Newsletters can be a very important tool for management of the Master Gardener program. Particularly when groups become large, the newsletters may serve as the main form of communication between the Executive Committee, Project Committees, the County Agent, and all other Master Gardeners. Newsletters can update those who were unable to attend the monthly meeting. They also serve as a tool to acknowledge members' achievements, notify individuals of upcoming events, share gardening tips and advice, report accomplishments, recognize donations from other organizations or businesses, and much more. However, a newsletter is only effective if members read it. Newsletters should be engaging, organized, and easy to read. Included here are some tips for writing good newsletters.

Be sure to include the Master Gardener U of A logo, EEO and cooperating statement. The current EEO and cooperating statements can be found at the following link.

<http://division.uaex.edu/Logos/default.htm>

EEO

The Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, disability, marital or veteran status, or any other legally protected status, and is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Cooperating Statement

University of Arkansas, United States Department of Agriculture and County Governments Cooperating.

10 Steps to Success

If design were governed by a set of hard and fast rules, computer programs would replace publication designers and every newsletters, brochure, etc., would look the same. It cannot be reduced to a science of "if this, then that" statements. Tools and techniques that work in one situation will not necessarily work in another. Here are some tips to keep in mind as you begin to design a newsletter, brochure, flyer or other printed piece.

1. Understand your message

Before you start a project, ask yourself these questions:

- Who is the intended audience?
- What is the message you are trying to communicate?
- What format would work best?

2. Know your limits

This includes time, money, knowledge of software/hardware, availability of equipment, etc.

3. Plan, plan, plan

Before you begin your project, plan:

- Number of colors to use

- Duplication method
- Art, photos needed and who will furnish or take them
- Who will do design

4. Experiment/Have fun

Before you get on the computer and start laying out your newsletter, take out a piece of paper and a pencil and sketch out how you envision your publication. If you cannot draw a straight line, use stick people and boxes for your photos and clip art. Use squiggly lines for your sentences and paragraphs.

5. Seek inspiration

Maintain a “future ideas” file. Look at it frequently. Most good ideas have been done before. Steal them.

6. Make it relevant

It is great to use clip art and photos, but make sure they pertain to your subject.

7. Make it attractive

This is a bit difficult because it is so subjective. Some thoughts to consider, though:

- Limit your font to two or three (maximum). You can use the bold or italic versions of these (within limits), but resist the urge to spice up your document with so many different fonts that it is distracting.
- Remember to use white space as a design element. Don’t try to fill up every section of your page with art and text.

8. Make it easy to read

Do not try to advertise your large vocabulary in every issue. When a simpler word will fit, use it. Use all capital letters sparingly. Use ragged right/flush left formatting, not justified. Most importantly, put your key article in the top left corner of the page. Most eyes follow a Z pattern on a page. Keep this in mind as you lay out your page.

9. Keep it timely

In planning your newsletter, allow time for editing, design, proofing, printing, mailing, delivery, etc.

10. Relax and enjoy

You did it. Until the next one, at least!

Mapping for the Quick Read: The Microwave Rule

Most of us share at least one common trait. We are all in a hurry to get where we are going or finish what we have started. We are all looking for the quickest, easiest way to get there. When we travel, we want to get to our destination along the quickest, safest, simplest route. When we eat, we are looking for more of the same—quick, easy, inexpensive. We do not always like that life is this way, but for most of us it is. This is the microwave phenomenon: we live in a microwave world. The microwave rule carries over to all parts of our lives. It is the key in writing. Your number one goal when preparing a publication is getting it read. The journey to

getting it read should make it as easy on your audience as possible.

Grab Their Attention

Unless you get this, nothing else will matter. Your newsletter may be attractive and filled with information, but no one will know it unless you get him or her to stop and read it. Here are some tips for grabbing their attention:

1. Know your audience and their approximate reading level.
2. Make captions brief, but try to make them tell the whole story. Presume that this is all the reader will see. Most of the time it is.
3. Try to make your headlines and subheads snappy. Play with word spellings, use alliteration. Draw the reader by using catchy, bright titles. Some examples: Size for Sore Eyes, The Grapes of Roth, Slab-happy, The Big Chipper, Dill Power.
4. Capture the reader's attention by using numbers on the "in this issue" portion of your newsletter or on the cover of your booklet. "20 ways to save money on your child's education." "10 tips for losing the last 10." Studies have consistently shown the more blurbs on the cover of a magazine, the more magazines will be sold. The same goes for your newsletter.
5. Remember that the use of graphics is the key. Use art and photos where you can, and make sure they are relevant.

Writing Tight, Bright and Easy-to-Read Copy

1. Write tight copy. Be brief. Especially when you are editing your own copy, cut every word that adds nothing to the meaning. Examples: Change "during the course of" to "during" and "few in number: to "few". Use short sentences when you can. Use bullets if possible. Use one-syllable words.
2. Write bright copy. Watch your tone and style. Make sure your words sound as if they come from a human being, not an institution. Example: In a business letter, you might say, "will keep you posted" instead of writing "further notification will follow". Make sentences in your newsletter sound similar. Be less formal and stuffy.
3. Write easy-to-read copy. If you are writing for the general public, make your writing at the 6th grade level or below. Make your purpose immediately clear in an article. Do not force your reader to wade through several paragraphs before understanding why you wrote the piece. Also, watch your font usage and size. In general it is best to use a 12-point type, especially for lower literacy readers or elderly eyes. Try to use serif font for the body of your newsletter. Use a sans serif for your headlines, cut lines, and pull-quotes. And, try to avoid using all capital letters. All caps slow the reader down; they make it harder to read.

Most Importantly

Always have someone else read your work (thoroughly). None of us can spot our own errors, so ask for help.