

# Introduction to Online Master Gardener Training

## WHAT

Each MG online training module includes:

- Topic overview and learning objectives
- Training manual chapters and supplemental readings
- Chapter quizzes that are computer-graded
- Narrated PowerPoint presentations by Extension Specialists and Educators
- Videos illustrating important topic points
- Recommended resources for additional education
- A variety of interactive learning exercises
- Supplemental classroom activities

## WHY

MG Online Basic Training has been developed to accomplish a variety of goals:

- Make the expertise of Extension faculty and specialist across WA State available to all trainees and certified MGs, regardless of their location.
- Ensure that consistent, WSU-approved training in core competencies is available to all counties.
- Reduce the large time commitment that training requires from MG staff, including classroom hours and the time spent scheduling speakers, organizing materials, setting up classrooms, grading quizzes, etc. Less time spent in routine training frees staff to engage in more productive work.
- Reduce class time and travel requirements for potential volunteers. In counties that cover a wide geographical area, or where two or more counties train together, the required travel time and expense can be substantial.
- Expand the pool of available volunteers. Because online training can be accessed at any time, not just during scheduled classroom sessions, MG training is available to those who have schedules that may prohibit them from attending hours of classroom training but can accommodate volunteer requirements. .

## HOW

There are a variety of ways online training can be incorporated with classroom training. For specific suggestions, see the [How to Use Online MG Training in Your County](#) section.

- In counties where trainees travel long distances to a central class facility, MG staff may choose to have a minimum of classroom time. Trainees can review the online material individually or in small groups. Class interaction can be accomplished a variety of ways within the online system. Face-to-face classes at the beginning and end of training, and periodically as needed, can supplement online training. MG staff can use some of the time normally spent in class to provide more individual attention online.

- In other counties, once trainees have reviewed the online material, shorter and/or less frequent classes can be held to engage trainees in hands-on learning activities, discuss local climate conditions, review plant and pest issues, and hear from community horticulturists. Again, trainees may meet to study online material in small groups or participate on their own schedule.
- Many counties already have a mentoring program in place. For online training, the role of the mentor could be changed or expanded by asking computer-savvy certified MGs to assist trainees who are less comfortable in an online learning environment.

**Use online training in a way that works for your county, to make MG basic training more efficient, more flexible, and more fun.**

[Using Online MG Training](#) is a narrated PowerPoint that is available to introduce trainees to the program and help them go through the modules. It can be reviewed during an orientation class and/or trainees may view it on their own.

**Computer Experience and Equipment Requirements**

Trainees should have at least some previous computer experience and feel comfortable navigating the Internet and using email. They also need access to a computer for extended periods. Some trainees may be more comfortable working together in small groups during the first few modules while becoming familiar with the program. MG staff might consider assigning computer-savvy mentors to assist trainees who are less familiar with computers.

MG Online Training can be accessed with a 56 kbps dial-up modem (using a phone line). However, a high-speed connection such as cable broadband or DSL is recommended for faster downloading and navigation.

**Hardware System Requirements**

	Microsoft Windows		Apple Macintosh		
Operating System	XP	Vista	Mac 10.3	Mac 10.4	Mac 10.5
Processor Speed/Type	Intel Pentium/Celeron family;AMD K6/Athlon/Duron	1 GHz 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor	Power PC G3, G4, G5; some models of iMac & iBook; Powerbook G3 & G4	Power PC G3, G4, or G5 p	Intel, Power PC G5, Power PC G4
CPU Memory	128 MB RAM	1 GB RAM	128 MB RAM	256 MB	512 MB

(minimum)				RAM	RAM
<b>Monitor Resolution</b>	1024 x 768	1024 x 768	1024 x 768	1024 x 768	1024 x 768
<b>Free Hard Disk Space (minimum)</b>	1.5 GB free disk space	40 GB hard drive with min. 15 GB free space	1.5 GB free disk space	3 GB free disk space	9 GB free disk space

## Software System Requirements

Users should be aware of software issues that can interfere with the operation of various components. The following upgrades are necessary before the first use of the program. In addition, users should check for upgrades on a regular basis.

- Use Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox (you can download a free version of the Firefox browser at <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/ie.html>)
- Download the latest version of Adobe Reader at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>
- Download the latest version of Java at <http://java.com>
- Download the latest version of Flash Player at <http://www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer>

If you have problems viewing videos within the presentations, you should download the free software at

- <http://www.videolan.org/>

If security software is installed on a computer, users may experience difficulties with some Blackboard features and may need to temporarily disable the following programs. Assistance is available through [Technical Support](#).

- Internet firewalls
- spyware detection software
- spam blockers
- pop-up blockers