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NATIONAL MG BLOG

The first **national** blog for EMG (Extension Master Gardener) volunteers on Monday, May 3, 2010. Blog posts can be found directly at <http://blogs.extension.org/mastergardener> or through the new national Extension Master Gardener website at <http://extension.org/mastergardener>.

With over 94,000 master gardeners contributing an annual service value of over \$100 million nationwide, the EMG program is hoping to take its program to a new level by increasing the interaction of its participants.

Monica David, Illinois EMG coordinator and Consumer Horticulture National Committee chair, said the blog can be a place for EMGs to interact around blog post topics that may highlight many master gardener activities.

“While we don’t all grow the same plants or have all the same program needs, there is much to learn from each state,” said Rick Durham, Kentucky EMG Coordinator and current leader of the eXtension Consumer Horticulture Community of Practice.

WSU EXTENSION MG MANUAL

By Rob Stout, Asst. Director of Extension Publications and Printing

The Master Gardener Manual which was initially scheduled to be released December of 2009 has been delayed once again. Several chapters were received well past their due date last summer. The chapters were written by a dozen or more authors who all wrote in different voices and styles. Another issue is the redundancy and/or conflicting information among the chapters. All of these need to be fixed and adjusted. We underestimated the time it would take for an editing process of this scope.

Extension Publishing and Printing is working directly with Tonie on the editing and is anticipating the completion of the Master Gardener Manual to be September 1, 2010. This delay will insure that this is a quality publication. My apologies for the delay and any issues this may cause you.

ONLINE MG TRAINING DVDs

DVDs of the 2010 MG Online Training Course have been distributed to interns who enrolled in the 2010 MG program. These DVDs still contain chapters from the Sustainable Gardening Handbook which will be

in use through 2010. The new WSU Extension MG manual (see above) will become part of the 2011 MG online Training Course and will be included in DVDs produced for that class. Veterans may wish to wait until 2011 to purchase DVDs of the Online Training.

COLLABORATION AMONG MG, 4-H AND FOOD\$ENSE

by Penny Simonson, MG Coordinator in Spokane County

We were recently contacted by a schoolteacher in Spokane who, having received some grant money, wanted to start a school garden. She had a greenhouse, a promise of some continued financing and no clue how to begin. It seemed like an ideal time to engage both our 4H Program and Food\$ense Programs - as the school was already one in which they had a presence. The teacher and I put together a meeting for staff from 4-H, Food\$ense, and MG volunteers to meet with the teacher, her principal, some PTO parents and some kids.

The idea is that Master Gardeners will get the gardening end handled; 4H can provide a group to do initial labor and maintenance as a project; and Food\$ense will step in the following Fall when the children return to school, and teach about healthy food choices and preparing fresh vegetables for eating.

This project will most likely not happen this year, as the teacher was woefully unprepared to begin a garden this season, but there will definitely be an educational opportunity for all involved in the future.

SUDDEN OAK DEATH POSTERS

Posters are available that show best management practices for keeping plant diseases and pests out of nurseries and public gardens in Washington. The poster has been adapted from one used by The National Trust in the UK and is nicely illustrated. Master Gardeners can take these to nurseries or garden centers where they do plant clinics, where it can be posted in a break room or other common area to educate workers, volunteers, and others.

View the poster on the WSU Puyallup SOD website here:

<http://www.puyallup.wsu.edu/ppo/sod/extension/gardens/index.htm>

English and Spanish versions are available.

Email Marianne Elliott (melliott2@wsu.edu) to get copies of the free poster.

WSU MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER WEEK

Governor Gregoire has set May 9-15th as WSU Master Gardener Volunteer Week in Washington state.

See the proclamation by clicking the link on the home page of the MG website

<http://mastergardener.wsu.edu> and use it in any news releases or communication about the MG Program with your local officials.

BEST PRACTICES FOR E-NEWSLETTERS

Excerpted from PD Notes <http://ext.wsu.edu/pd/>

Social media and mobile technology have fundamentally changed the way organizations communicate with their members. Below is a list of e-Newsletter Best Practices to consider.

1. Keep your e-Newsletter design simple.

Five years ago three-column e-Newsletters loaded with graphics and 4-5 stories were the standard best practice. Not anymore. People are inundated with information all day long from a variety of sources and too much content can be both a visual and mental distraction. If you want to get the attention of your

readers, keep your e-Newsletter design simple. Single column, black text on white, with a bright, colorful header at the top.

2. Keep paragraphs short and easy to skim.

Keep paragraphs short. Put line breaks between paragraphs. Color your hyperlinks to make them stand out. Use bold headlines to make your e-newsletter easy to skim. People need to be able to get the gist of your e-newsletter in 5-10 seconds and understand quickly what they need to click on to take action, learn more, make a donation, etc.

3. Publish e-Newsletters that are 500 words or less that focus on 1-3 stories.

Too much information in your e-Newsletter will overwhelm your readers. Keep it on the shorter side. Focus on one to three stories in 500 words or less. (I will strive for brevity in June. TJF)

Tonie Fitzgerald

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