



TENNESSEE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Coordinator Handbook

STATEWIDE GUIDELINES &
PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATORS

MASTERGARDENER.TENNESSEE.EDU



Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program Guide — Coordinators

University Administrative Endorsement of the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program...	2
Purpose of this Publication	3
Section 1: The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program.....	5
Introduction.....	5
Defining the Program	5
Program Objectives	5
Mission, Vision and Values.....	6
Section 1: Where to Begin: Perspectives on New and Existing County TEMG Programs.....	7
Beginning a New County TEMG Program	7
Assuming the Leadership of an Established County TEMG Program	9
Section 2: Roles and Skills of EMG Coordinators	11
Role of the Local TEMG Coordinator.....	11
Role of the State TEMG Coordinator.....	12
Section 3: Practical Use of the ISOTURE Model of Volunteer Management in Leading Local TEMG Programs.....	14
What is the ISOTURE Model and How Can It Support Our Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program?	14
I-Identification	14
S-Selection.....	16
O-Orientation.....	18
T-Training.....	19
U-Utilization	23
R- Recognition.....	24
E- Evaluation	25
Appendix A: Find It Fast Factsheet.....	27
Appendix B: Managing TEMG Volunteer Records in SUPER and the TEMG Database.....	28
Appendix C: Program Policies for Graduating Interns and Certifying EMG Volunteers.....	32
Appendix D: Dealing with Issues and Managing Conflict in the Local TEMG Program.....	34
Appendix E: Fund Management in the County TEMG Program	38

University Administrative Endorsement of the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program

The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program is an organized educational outreach program of the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture.

Tennessee Extension Master Gardener is University of Tennessee Extension's volunteer training program that enables the state's land-grant universities to implement their mission of outreach and education to local communities in residential and consumer horticulture. Volunteers are trained and certified to serve the university as volunteer educators in non-commercial horticulture.

The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener volunteer certification program is developed and managed by UT Extension, a division of the UT Institute of Agriculture (UTIA). To attain certification, volunteers must commit to a required amount of training in plant and soil sciences, horticultural crop production and allied soil science, entomology, and plant pathology fields. This training is concurrent with volunteer service in accordance with standards defining the program. In the effort to continually establish, maintain, and promote the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener program, UTIA recognizes, supports and enforces the state Tennessee Extension Master Gardener program guidelines.

The activities of certified volunteers using the title "Tennessee Extension Master Gardener" are conducted as official university business. Therefore, every Extension Master Gardener must adhere to the same code of conduct as paid university employees. The UTIA intends to protect programs and volunteers by acknowledging the rules that govern them.

Contributors:

UT Extension Master Gardener Workgroup: Alan Bruhin, Anna Duncan, Rachel Painter, Melody Rose, Lee Sammons, Celeste Scott, Gregg Upchurch

Natalie Bumgarner, Tennessee Extension Master Gardener State Coordinator

Robert Burns, Dean of Extension, University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture

Tim Fawver, Chief Business Officer to the Sennior Vice President and Senior Vice Chancellor of UTIA

Purpose of this Publication

The purpose of this manual is to provide county Tennessee Extension personnel information they need to start or lead a local Tennessee Extension Master Gardener (TEMG) program. The survival, success, and impact of the local TEMG program is built upon the leadership skills and investment of the county coordinator in the program. Volunteers will never reach their maximum impact in the local area without the leadership and engagement of their county coordinator.

This publication provides information for successful Extension Master Gardener volunteer program leadership in two ways. First, the ISOTURE model is presented and explained to help provide an established and widely used pathway of starting or leading EMG programs (page 15-26). Secondly, key administrative information is found in the appendices at the back of this document (pages 27-38).

We hope you find this manual useful in planning and conducting a successful TEMG program. Keep in mind that the other crucial resources are your county director, regional program leader, the state TEMG coordinator and colleagues currently leading TEMG programs. The best decisions about program initiation and coordination will always be made with the combination of accurate needs assessment, clear guidelines and advice from those with experience in the program.

TEMG FAQ QUICK REFERENCE LIST

Where can I find ___ resources?
Check out page 27 for our TEMG
Resource Reference

How do I decide if I should start a
TEMG program?
Pages 7-8

Where do I begin in taking over an
established TEMG program?
Pages 9-10

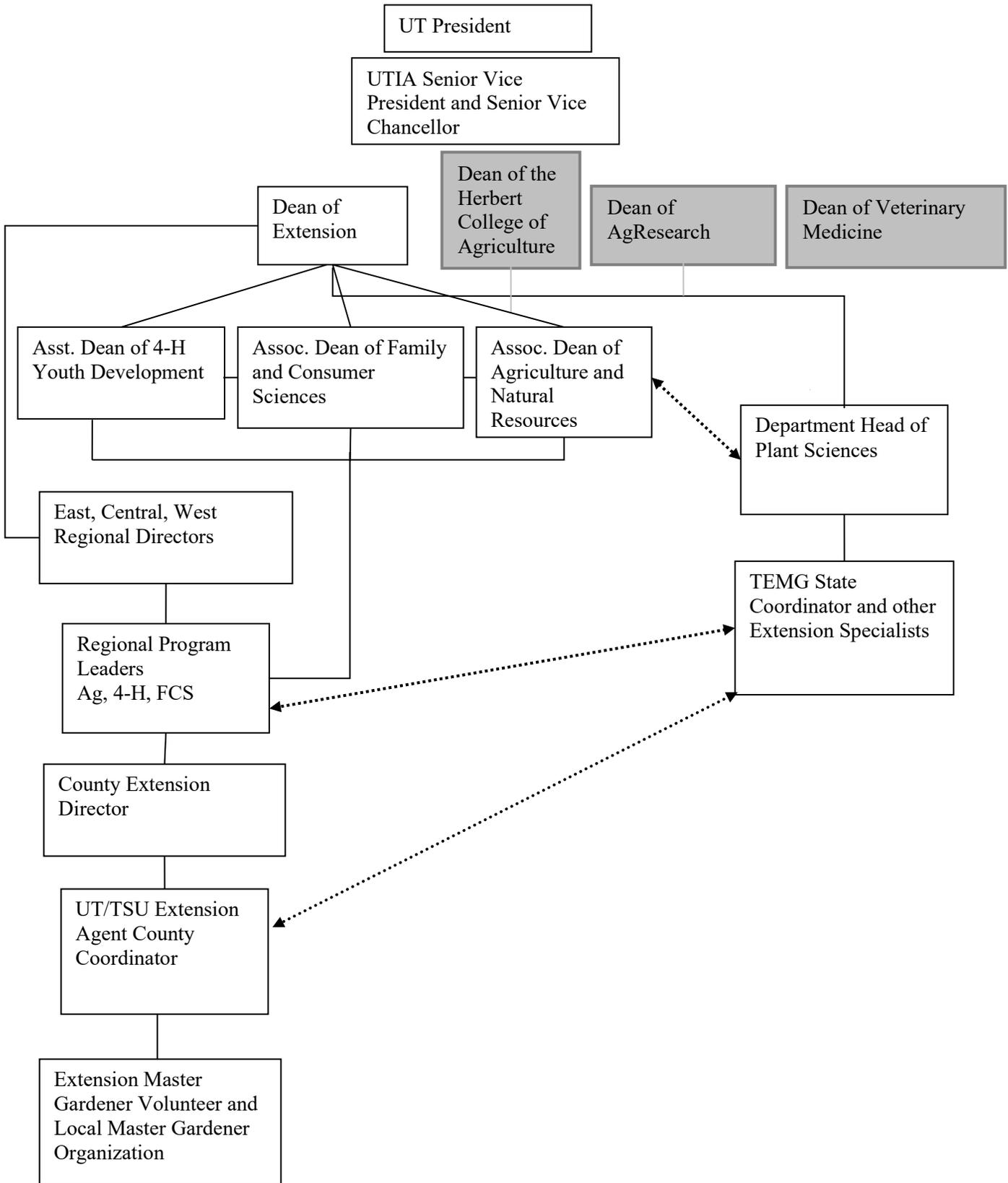
How do I know whether something is
a local or state responsibility?
Pages 11-13

How do I register a volunteer to be
able to report hours on the database?
Pages 28-30

How do I know what to teach in intern
classes and what speakers to ask?
Pages 21-22

How do we deal with our funds
in the local group?
Pages 37-38

What is the process for dealing with
issues or conflicts with volunteers?
Pages 33-35



Section 1: The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program

Introduction

The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener (TEMG) Program is a University of Tennessee Extension volunteer program designed to serve the public with high-quality residential and consumer horticulture information through educational programs, outreach, and demonstrations. TEMG volunteers are a diverse group of devoted volunteers with a varied suite of talents and abilities, which enables them to provide dynamic education and community service across the state of Tennessee. Volunteers are trained with 40 hours of horticultural classes and, in return, provide 40 hours of service with their local TEMG program in the first year. To remain active in following years, volunteers continue to provide community education and service while also adding to their own horticultural knowledge. Volunteers are required to remain connected to their local TEMG program to complete initial and ongoing service in order to maintain certification.

Defining the Program

UT Extension directs and supports the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener program at the state level. It is designed to extend the impact of Tennessee Extension, which includes both University of Tennessee and Tennessee State University Extension employees at the county level, by increasing the availability of horticultural information across the state and improving Tennesseans' quality of life. These goals are achieved through the recruitment, training, and utilization of local volunteers. These volunteers, known as Certified Tennessee Extension Master Gardeners, aid Tennessee Extension by running plant clinics, teaching workshops, giving presentations on horticultural topics, answering phone and email requests for horticultural information, establishing and maintaining demonstration gardens, working with youth and those with special needs, designing and implementing community involvement projects, leading county TEMG programs and supporting local UT Extension offices.

Program Objectives

The purpose of the TEMG Program is to train citizens as horticulture education volunteers of UT Extension who work with their respective county Extension offices to expand educational outreach by providing residents and consumers with research-based horticultural information and training.

- To expand the capabilities of Tennessee Extension to provide accessible residential and consumer horticultural information to individuals and groups in the community.
- To develop a Tennessee Extension Master Gardener volunteer network that works in close and synergistic collaboration with local Extension personnel to meet local needs.

- To develop community programs related to horticulture. Depending on the needs of the community, these programs might include providing speakers for horticultural presentations, sustainable landscape demonstrations, therapeutic horticulture projects, or food gardens designed to improve access to gardening teaching and produce.
- To recruit and train volunteers interested in helping a diverse stakeholder audience solve their gardening problems either by working with the residents directly, or through educational outreach tools.
- To identify the administrative positions necessary to maintain the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program and fill these positions with capable, willing, and engaged volunteers who will carry out the activities of the program in accordance with the mission.

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission

The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program seeks to improve the lives of Tennesseans by delivering research-based consumer horticulture education through a trained, skilled, and dedicated volunteer network that promotes individual and community health and well-being and environmental stewardship.

Vision

To provide innovative, research-based, and practical horticulture information to all Tennessee residents and communities.

Values

Providing research-based residential and consumer horticulture education in a responsive and timely manner to augment and extend Tennessee Extension programs and achieve the Extension mission.

Collaborating with Tennessee Extension personnel, local municipal and nonprofit groups to offer educational leadership for better horticulture practices and programs in communities across Tennessee.

Fostering a vibrant and effective learning environment that supports committed and engaged volunteers and attracts new Tennessee Extension Master Gardener volunteers to the program.

Encouraging environmental stewardship, noncommercial food production and youth education in communities and cities across Tennessee through engaging education and outreach programs.

Investing in educational tools and events that provide information to meet present needs while laying the foundation to serve Tennessee residents and communities in the future.

Section 1: Where to Begin: Perspectives on New and Existing County TEMG Programs

Beginning a New County TEMG Program

Perspectives on Beginning an Extension Master Gardener Group in Your County

The TEMG program is designed to train volunteers to assist with county Extension programs in residential and consumer horticulture that support human health, well-being and environmental stewardship for the individual and the community. The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program is designed neither to train superstar gardeners nor to develop substitute county agents. Successful outreach in the local community in the area of horticulture will be a dynamic collaboration between you as the agent and your volunteers. It will result in considerable demands on your time due to the investment in leading and guiding a successful volunteer program (you will become the local Extension Master Gardener County Coordinator). Broadened outreach for residential and consumer horticulture information as well as greater community recognition of Extension programs are some of the key benefits.

Initial Horticulture Needs Assessment

A needs assessment is the first crucial step in determining whether outreach in residential and consumer horticulture in your county would be benefited by starting a TEMG program. County needs and Extension personnel and resources are all important components of this decision, and a program should never be started solely because of requests from potential volunteers.

- Determine the education needs in your community by consulting with stakeholders. Each county Extension program in Tennessee is required to engage key community members and leaders in areas of agriculture, family and consumer sciences, and resource development to aid in the determination of programming best suited to meet the needs of the area.
- Identify resources (staff time, trainers, community partners) before beginning to select and train volunteers. Ensure that a new Tennessee Extension Master Gardener program has buy-in from the community and will not create unnecessary burdens on county Extension personnel.
- Consider space for materials and supplies (including reference books, plant clinic supplies, a phone, computer and office space for volunteers) to ensure that the county has the space and materials to support a TEMG program.
- Prior to starting a program, consult your county director, regional program leader and the state TEMG coordinator.
- Before initiating a program, you are encouraged to complete a narrative for a five-year plan for residential and consumer horticulture programming. In your plan for horticulture programming in the county, include a list of the horticulture education needs in the county and ideas on how to address those needs with volunteers. This narrative and consultation should help you identify the scope of the program and how it can be used effectively in your county.

Considerations Before and During This Initial Horticulture Needs Assessment

- Local TEMG programs require engaged coordinators. While the TEMG program is dependent upon active, enthusiastic and effective volunteers, engaged leadership from the county coordinator is the cornerstone of successful local programs. Leading volunteer programs can be very rewarding, but it does require initial and ongoing investments of time and energy that will be unlike other types of educational programming. The heart of volunteer programs is in the personal connections and relationships between volunteers, coordinators and the community.
- Volunteers should understand that they are representing your county as TEMG ambassadors for Tennessee Extension. Recruit interns who are able to help the Extension office implement Extension programs in the county. Ask applicants to describe their horticultural experiences, previous job or community service experiences, related skills, customer service philosophy, or other appropriate skills needed in a successful program.
- The TEMG program is designed to produce competent volunteers who help the Extension program and office and provide horticultural information to the public. It is *not* designed to be a course available to anyone with no obligations on the part of the recipients.
- Volunteer service is the most important component of the TEMG program. A successful program requires ongoing community assessment, development of volunteer opportunities, volunteer support and management, continued education, and program evaluation. Once trained, volunteers should be considered another “Extension audience” with a need for ongoing education, supervision, management and evaluation.
- Hosting a training program for TEMG volunteers does not constitute a TEMG program. A TEMG program is a long-term investment in volunteers to expand the horticultural education of the community further than possible through Extension personnel alone.

Checklist to Start a County Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program

Determine educational needs of county in conjunction with county director.
Contact Regional Program Leader and State Extension Master Gardener Coordinator.
Determine if those needs can be well met through a TEMG program.
Identify resources (people — volunteers, staff, community partners, space, time).
Plan an initial intern training class that fits your schedule and local needs.
Advertise and promote the intern training class through many methods and sign up participants.
Lead orientation class to explain objectives of the program.
Follow guidelines for basic training and curriculum requirements.
Introduce interns to county TEMG projects to establish integration.
Organize a schedule of future meetings and events.
Become familiar with conferences, meetings and other events at the regional and state level to connect your local group to the broader TEMG program.
Continue to assess local needs and select projects that engage volunteers.

Assuming the Leadership of an Established County TEMG Program

Perspectives on Taking Over an Extension Master Gardener Group in Your County

The TEMG program is designed to enhance outreach in the area of residential and consumer horticulture. These volunteers active in the program are your stakeholders but they are also a very valuable resource in reaching additional horticulture stakeholders. Assuming leadership of an established program is not always simple and there are many different methods to carry out a successful leadership transition. The keys to leading local MG programs are actually more about establishing and maintaining good relationships with volunteers than they are about horticulture knowledge. Volunteers will be understanding with you as you learn new programs and horticulture information, but their patience for coordinators who have poor interpersonal skills is much more limited. Focus on the people and the program will follow.

Considerations during the Leadership Transition of a Local EMG Group

- Understand that there is often a gap in county coordinator leadership that required volunteers to take on additional leadership responsibilities. Reassuming these responsibilities from engaged volunteers may take time and should be done respectfully.
- Connect with other MG coordinators in your area and with the state program coordinator. While each local TEMG program is unique, there are great people and effective programs and resources to support you in being successful in your new position.
- Focus on the future and not on the past if at all possible. Be considerate of perspectives on past leaders and successes, but focus your attention, language, and leadership on the opportunities for the future.
- Don't feel as if you need to lead or operate in exactly the same manner as the previous coordinator. Each agent leader brings different perspectives and skills sets that can benefit the local MG group, so be willing to discuss with volunteers how your ideas and skills can be an asset in new ways.
- If you have led EMG groups in the past, that experience is very valuable. But, be cautious in how you utilize it because each local group functions differently, so don't feel as if your new MG group needs to function just as your previous one did.
- Be willing to observe the local group for a period of time as you begin and don't feel as if there is a need for change to happen too quickly. Get to know the people and the program before formulating or implementing lots of new plans. Build relationships first and plan projects and programs second.

Checklist for Assuming Leadership of a County Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program

Visit with your county director, the regional program leader and the state Master Gardener Coordinator to become familiar with the program and the horticulture needs of the area.
Consider conducting a horticulture needs assessment to better understand what questions or opportunities there are in the horticulture area.
Connect with other horticulture/agriculture agents in the area and visit with other EMG county coordinators nearby.
Meet with the local leadership and volunteer base to become familiar with their group, processes and plans.
Visit their current outreach projects to better understand the educational role they play in the community.
Observe how the local group functions in meetings, planning and outreach.
Become familiar with the MG volunteer records in SUPER and the MG reporting database (see pages 29-32) to ensure that volunteer records are in order.
Become familiar with conferences, meetings and other events at the regional and state levels to connect your local group to the broader TEMG program.
Together with the local group, decide when would be the best time to plan an intern training class.
Plan and lead an intern training class.
Consider developing a new outreach or education program to connect with the intern class.
Understand that assuming all the leadership roles in an established group may take time. Be open to sharing some roles but also honest about the roles that need to be filled by the Extension agent coordinator (see Section 2 below).

Section 2: Roles and Skills of TEMG Coordinators

Role of the Local TEMG Coordinator

The TEMG county agent coordinator assesses community needs, determines program direction, and directs the TEMG Program to best meet the needs of the county. In addition to adhering to Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program and University of Tennessee policies, a MG local coordinator's duties and responsibilities include the following:

1. Assess county needs and high-priority impact areas for the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program.
 - Determine the most critical areas of need in your county based on advisory group feedback and your own Extension plan of work.
 - Determine if adding the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program will strengthen residential and consumer horticulture programs and provide a benefit to you and the county in delivering horticultural education and outreach.
 - If already present, determine how Tennessee Extension Master Gardener volunteers can best provide outreach and education that will strengthen residential and consumer horticulture education in your county.
2. Coordinate intern training.
 - Recruit, screen and register those interested in TEMG training (yearly or as needed in the county/area).
 - Plan training schedule and contact speakers needed to provide the necessary 40 hours of initial intern training.
3. Manage volunteer roster in SUPER and the TEMG database.
 - All incoming and current volunteers must have UT Extension volunteer applications on file as a part of the completed SUPER profile. It is essential for these applications and profiles to accurately represent the volunteer level (1, 2, 3) in accordance with our minor policy.
 - For our TEMG program, we consider volunteers working with all vulnerable populations to be designated as level 3 volunteers.
 - All volunteers should be entered in SUPER as Extension Master Gardeners and checked as active to be covered under the UT liability policy. Please ensure active volunteers are reactivated in SUPER after the rollover and that all elements of the profile are kept up to date.
 - Train and assist volunteers as needed to support their use of the TEMG volunteer database for reporting service hours and continuing education hours as well as contacts.

4. Provide suggestions and structure for local service projects.
 - Service projects may be suggested by volunteers, the county coordinator, or requests from community members. Typically, a project oversight committee or board considers and approves projects. However, the county coordinator should have final approval to direct projects toward needs of the area and goals of their county residential and consumer horticulture program.
5. Interact with the county association to maintain connection with UT and the Extension mission.
 - County coordinators all have a slightly different working relationship with the county association, but a positive working relationship is essential in maximizing impact. To strengthen this relationship, coordinators should attend meetings and functions as time allows and serve as a link with Tennessee Extension programming, policies and resources.
 - Manage conflicts between volunteers and community members to protect the integrity of the TEMG program locally and statewide.
6. Connect your county volunteers to other associations through regional and statewide TEMG events.
7. Promote the local TEMG program and its impact locally and statewide.
8. Oversee required volunteer recordkeeping for annual certification.
 - The state TEMG database serves as the portal for volunteer service and education records. This database provides needed information for local and state impact and activity reporting.
9. Provide aggregate county data for state impact reports and project valuation and assessments.
 - This data is provided through SUPER, which provides records of TEMG and residential and consumer horticulture contacts (these are managed through the TEMG database and reported through SUPER).
10. Provide feedback to regional and state personnel to improve the TEMG program.
 - The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Workgroup as well as regional program leaders and the state TEMG coordinator are all appropriate contacts for feedback, new ideas, and suggestions for changes. The entire goal of the program is to strengthen impact in the local area, so please communicate both your successes and thoughts on increasing the value of the program to your area.

Role of the State TEMG Coordinator

The state coordinator for the TEMG Program is also the residential and consumer horticulture Extension specialist who is a faculty member in the Department of Plant Sciences. The position is housed on the UTIA campus in Knoxville. The purpose of the position is to develop, train, deliver, and evaluate educational programming for residential and consumer horticulture throughout the state through the TEMG program. The state coordinator works with appropriate county, regional and state staff and administrators to address the needs of the program, including the following:

1. Assess and describe main areas of residential and consumer horticulture needs in Tennessee Extension.
 - Continually work with local, regional, state and national colleagues in Extension to assess needs and tailor the program to fill needs in residential and consumer horticulture education in Tennessee.
 - Assist regional and county Extension personnel in beginning and implementing TEMG programs that address local needs.
 - Help connect TEMG programs that meet local needs with the statewide impact areas of residential and consumer horticulture.
2. Support education and training through materials development and implementation.
 - Support and guide development of the TEMG handbook to serve as an outline for consistent and thorough intern training.
 - Develop, collect and oversee editing of presentations for intern training.
 - Assist in intern training by personally speaking at and supporting county or regional trainings and/or aiding in expert speaker selection and contacts.
 - Support the development and/or editing and updating of guidance documents for coordinators and volunteers in TEMG.
3. Provide support as needed for county association projects and educational events.
 - Examples of supporting county association service projects include attending and speaking at events. Additionally, if grant funds are being sought, the state coordinator may be of assistance in grant applications, helping to find granting agencies or connecting associations with other members of UT who may be of assistance.
4. Interact with TEMG volunteers and coordinators at the county and regional levels to maintain focus on the Extension mission and connection with UT Extension.
 - As time allows, travel to county association events and meetings to formally and informally present the goals, achievements and plans of TEMG to volunteers.
5. Support planning for regional and state training events to help achieve the Tennessee Extension mission.
 - Provide the opportunity for training at both statewide conferences and regional events to support, educate and connect TEMG volunteers.
6. Assist as needed in conflict resolution to support Tennessee Extension personnel and protect the integrity of the TEMG program.
7. Serve as a point of connection between TEMG and UTIA, UT Department of Plant Sciences and allied Extension specialists in other departments.
 - Collaborate with agents, other specialists and administrators through leadership teams and work groups to develop goals, resources and evaluation metrics that help integrate TEMG with the larger Tennessee Extension mission and planning.

- Collaborate on research teams that provide resources, carry out research or evaluation involving residential and consumer horticulture or TEMG programs.
8. Oversee the TEMG website and database for collection of Tennessee Extension Master Gardener volunteer service records.
 9. Provide outreach, impact and contact data for state impact reports and project valuation and assessments.
 10. Provide feedback to UTIA and UT Extension administration to improve the TEMG program.

Section 3: Practical Use of the ISOTURE Model of Volunteer Management in Leading Local TEMG Programs

What is the ISOTURE Model and How Can It Support Our Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program?

While our EMG programs are unique in many ways, there are also many foundational similarities between Extension volunteer programs. The ISOTURE model was developed by Extension leadership at NC State University in the early 70's and has been used since that time to train and guide volunteer administrators throughout Extension. The 7 basic steps in the ISOTURE model can provide a systematic framework for those who lead volunteers. Our discussion of the ISOTURE model here will be in the context of the specifics of our TEMG program to provide the conceptual framework but also the practical tasks that make up a successful local TEMG group.

I-Identification

Identification, quite simply, is finding the right people to fill volunteer positions. In many ways, the EMG program is unique in that our program provides very valuable horticulture information while being focused on volunteerism in our communities. This balance between recruiting those who are interested in content and those who are interested in volunteering can vary by county, and each local coordinator has some leeway in this area. Historically, there have been many trained in TN through the EMG program who gained the information without an intent on volunteering. As our program grows and matures, we are focusing more and more on recruiting from the perspective of active and ongoing volunteer engagement rather than just education. However, we do not want to discount the fact that many current volunteers came to the program without the intent of active volunteerism and became engaged and excited about service through the intern training program. We also realize that there is no one size fits all approach to recruitment because many rural counties and small TEMG program do not have the wide population to recruit from, so methods may differ across our rural to urban gradient.

ISOTURE Model of Volunteer Management

- I- Identification
- S- Selection
- O- Orientation
- T- Training
- U- Utilization
- R- Recognition
- E- Evaluation

Laying the Groundwork for Identifying and Recruiting Future TEMG Volunteers

- Market widely and focus on methods that engage new or underserved audiences. Use a mix of traditional print and newer digital methods.
- Our current volunteers are generally our best recruiters, so engage your group in finding ways to connect the program with their communities.
- Our outreach in the community is the foundation for our growth. Our engagement with our communities and serve a wide audience is the best publicity we can have. This recognition and the value we provide to our communities showcases our program and connects us with valuable future volunteers.
- Develop position descriptions so that you can share with those interested what volunteerism with a local TEMG program really looks like.
- As generations change, the younger audience will want to know what is expected of them and how their time can tangibly impact their community. This perspective means that we may need slightly different methods to reach different generations.

Application Process

The application process can include a simple interest form or you can provide volunteers with the entire Tennessee Extension volunteer application from the outset. How much of the volunteer application needs to be completed depends on how much the volunteer will interact with minors or vulnerable populations. There is a decision tree at the volunteerism site to assist you in determining volunteer levels.

Volunteerism site with all forms and guidelines:

extension.tennessee.edu/eesd/Pages/Volunteerism.aspx

All Extension volunteers are required to use the same volunteer form and the Master Gardener program no longer has a separate application form. We do have a publication that can be used in conjunction with volunteer form to provide information about our program (link below).

extension.tennessee.edu/MasterGardener/Documents/SP-%20635.pdf

Completed UT Extension volunteer applications should be gathered prior to training or at the orientation. These forms are required to be able to enter the volunteer in SUPER (see Appendix C for specifics).

In general, the application process should help gather the information necessary to determine if a person could be an effective member of your county's TEMG Program. Applications should not be used to determine how much prior horticultural knowledge a person has but should be used to: 1) See if a person understands the requirements of the program; 2) See if a person has made a time commitment to participate in the training; and 3) Ensure that the volunteer is receptive to Extension teaching/training and will positively represent the mission of the program.

Ensuring Access to our Program

Our Extension programs are open and accessible to all (see EEO statement below), and we are required to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure that interested stakeholders can access our Master Gardener program. Here are a few guidelines to use in ensuring access.

- Market and recruit widely to ensure that a wide audience is aware of our programs
- Use EEO statements and display Justice for All materials to adequately communicate our commitment to residents
- Communicate during the application process and ask questions about whether additional accommodations may be needed for participation. This will provide the opportunity for those who may need assistance with a hearing or visual impairment to share what would enable them to participate.
- There is not a clear list of what accommodations we can provide, and our actions need to be in response to needs that are often rather individual. Once you understand what a potential participant needs, then work with your county director and potentially UTIA human resources to determine if we can fulfill that need and how best to accomplish it. An open line of communication is the most essential element of ensuring access to our programs.

Programs in agriculture and natural resources,
4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences,
and resource development.

University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture,
U.S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating.
UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

S-Selection

Selection is the process of interacting with potential volunteers to determine their suitability for our volunteer program while motivating them to take the program. These early stage conversations will provide the first opportunity to share the mission of TEMG and Extension and share how they can optimally engage with our program to provide benefit for the volunteer and for Extension. This foundation will be built upon with orientation but it is important to begin explaining volunteer roles and organization goals during selection. This selection process is also an ideal opportunity to get to know potential volunteers and begin building the trust and respect that will be essential as you lead the local TEMG group.

Screening and Interviewing Applicants

All applicants should be screened to protect the quality of each program. Our primary focus is to develop quality volunteer educators, not a given quantity of volunteers. The county coordinator should review each application or interest form, and a committee of current TEMG volunteers can also be used to review applications. Interviews may also be a part of this screening process conducted by the coordinator or by volunteers currently in the group. Determine the number of applications accepted based on program goals and needs. You may also decide that a certain

number of seats be available for accepting special cases. For example, if you have capacity for 60, you may allow the committee to choose 55 applicants, leaving 5 for margin or allowing “borderline” applicants to be reconsidered.).

Rejecting Applicants

Sometimes, TEMG programs are so successful that there is simply not enough space to accept all the eligible applicants or there are not enough volunteer jobs to be done. Some applicants may also be turned away because the screening committee sensed that the applicant did not have a desire to volunteer or had a desire to volunteer but was unable to fulfill the 40-hour commitment. A letter must be sent to those who have not been accepted (see *Sample Rejection Letter*).

Accepting Applicants

Once an applicant is selected you should notify that individual by mail or email. The letter should include information on the following: class time, location, absentee policy, office contact information, deposit deadline information (amount due and due date) and class schedule. This selection email may be the time to include the Extension volunteer form as well as the *Memorandum of Agreement* in this communication to provide applicants more information on the requirements of the program.

All application, interview, and MOA forms can be found at this link:

extension.tennessee.edu/MasterGardener/Pages/Extension-Agent-Resources-Forms-Logos.aspx

Successful applicants to the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program must:

1. Understand and share the mission of Tennessee Extension.
2. Demonstrate a strong volunteer ethic.
3. Complete Tennessee Extension volunteer application and complete requirements appropriate for their volunteer level.
4. Read, sign and abide by the TEMG program *Memorandum of Agreement*.
5. Agree to donate a specific number of hours to UT Extension after completing the TEMG training program. (The county coordinator determines this number, with a minimum of 40 hours in the first year.)
6. Be available to perform volunteer work at times needed by the local UT Extension program.
7. Commit to attend the county TEMG training course and complete all assignments and exams.
8. Have a strong interest and/or experience in gardening, environmental stewardship or noncommercial food production.
9. Commit to becoming a volunteer educator and ambassador in their community for UT Extension.

O-Orientation

Orientation is the process of helping volunteers understand our Extension and TEMG program by introducing them to our mission and goals as well as how they personally can fit their interests and skills into our program. It is essential that the initial orientation set a positive tone and accurately represent your local group and you as a leader. It should be the goal to portray a professional and organized program that values personal connection.

Program Orientation

All programs will provide a basic orientation for new volunteers. The timing of the orientation in relationship to screening or basic training activities is the discretion of the local coordinators. When possible, invite a few veteran TEMG volunteers to help you welcome new recruits and begin the process of integrating new volunteers into the service and educational projects of the group. Focus on connecting them with your local group while making sure they understand the TEMG program is statewide and the EMG program in national. You also may want to introduce interns to other members of the county Extension staff.

Orientation Topics and Considerations

You may wish to include an introduction to the TEMG program resources including our state website, the UThort.com resource website as well as the TEMG volunteer database. However, keep in mind that all of these record keeping and policy discussions can be a bit overwhelming in the first class, so consider spreading out some of this overview material. The same could be said for some requirements of our minor policy and some of those specific trainings. Just be sure that you are fulfilling volunteer management guidelines if you choose to sequence or spread out such administrative trainings or paperwork. Any volunteers who are working in any service or outreach should be a registered volunteer in SUPER and have completed necessary requirements for their volunteer level.

T-Training

Training is generally described in the ISOTURE model as providing the information and opportunity to develop skills that is needed for volunteers to successfully engage in the Extension volunteer program. This is certainly true for our TEMG program, but it is essential to understand and share with new and experienced volunteers that learning information and skills are a continual process in our program and that intern training simply provides an introduction and beginning to their training.

Conducting TEMG Intern Training

The TEMG intern training program must include 40 hours of classroom instruction and/or hands-on experience in residential and consumer horticulture practices. Coordinators can provide these hours through a variety of training events. Some have 10 four-hour sessions, or 13 to 14 three-hour sessions, while others have 5 eight-hour sessions. The length of individual sessions varies as needed, provided adequate time is given for instruction in each component of the core curriculum (listed below). Additional sessions included in the training program, such as communications, field trips and elective subjects, may also be conducted.

While it has been common for local intern trainings to take place over a period of 6-12 weeks in the spring or the fall, this is not required. Some local groups now undertake training as a 6-12 month process with monthly trainings that can encompass a range of seasons and educational opportunities (like TEMG conferences and UT Field Days). You as the coordinator have the ability to develop a training schedule that works for your area and for your workload balance.

Materials and Training Fees

Training fees for the Master Gardener class are the sole means of support for local and the statewide Extension Master Gardener program. A set fee is required to order the intern training kit, and these funds provide for development of new TEMG materials, printing of materials, order of supplies and supporting trainings, conferences, online resources, and outreach efforts of the TEMG program statewide. The registration fees are required at the time of handbook orders and is subject to change over time with the cost of materials and shipping charges. Any changes will be communicated as far in advance as possible by the state coordinator. You may ask selected participants to place a deposit to hold their class seat.

In addition to the registration fee charged for training materials ordered from the state TEMG program, county TEMG training programs often require extra fees to cover speaker travel, materials, concessions, room rental, etc. As the county coordinator, you will have to determine the amount to charge over the state required registration fee (county TEMG fees vary slightly throughout Tennessee). Registration fees are used at the discretion of the county coordinator. Possible uses include the cost of hosting the class, managing TEMG volunteers, and travel for regional, state and national TEMG functions.

Ordering Materials

All orders for the TEMG program are processed through the Supplies page under the Admin tab on the TEMG database. This admin tab is available to all Extension employees, so it is not limited to agent coordinators.

<https://temg.tennessee.edu/Supplies/Index>

Program registration fees include the printed TEMG Handbook and associated materials in the intern training kit. The certified name badge is not included in the initial kit and must be ordered from the Supplies area when the participant meets the certification requirements, not following the training. Orders must be placed two to three weeks prior to the date needed to allow for shipping and handling by the UTIA Publications and Supplies Department. Current materials available for order:

- TEMG Poster SP 637
- How Do I Become a Tennessee Extension Master Gardener? Tri-fold Brochure SP 636
- What is the TEMG Program? SP 744
- Certified TEMG name badge
- Lost TEMG name badge (fee required)
- 10, 15, 20, and 25 year name badge (fee required)

The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Handbook is not for sale to the public and may be obtained only by enrolled TEMG interns, certified TEMGs and TEMG county coordinators. Instructor copies of specific chapters are available in the MG Coordinator Resources files at our Google Drive. Because of these digital resources, printed copies for trainers other than county coordinators are no longer available.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0AMImbg-tYIJYUk9PVA>

Instructors for Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Training

TEMG training courses may be taught by local Extension personnel, Extension specialists, authorities in the field or experienced and knowledgeable TEMGs. Scheduling speakers will be the responsibility of the local TEMG coordinator. When beginning to plan and schedule an intern class, consider if there is an opportunity to combine with a nearby county. This coordination can be an asset for smaller counties in filling classes and being able to hold trainings and it also helps connect volunteers to nearby groups while being efficient in the use of limited personnel time and travel funds.

The material taught must meet the core competency standards of the TEMG curriculum in the handbook. Also utilize the study guides and supplemental materials available for chapters in the Coordinator Google Drive (link above). Each chapter has a PowerPoint file for instructors as well. While it is not possible to provide exactly the same teaching experience for all interns, a cohesive and high quality intern training course is our goal and these materials can help us all achieve that goal. A speaker's lesson may be used to supplement the information in the handbook but must follow Tennessee Extension recommendations.

Audience

Speakers should be aware of their audience. Gently remind them that this is a group of citizens who will act as residential and consumer horticulture educators to the community. The speaker's program should be related to the home garden and landscape. For example, if the speaker uses tobacco plants as disease examples, Tennessee Extension Master Gardeners need to understand how this example's issues could affect and relate to residential landscapes.

Specialists

When requesting a specialist as an instructor for TEMG training, the TEMG county coordinator should make contact by telephone and/or correspondence three months in advance of the date needed. A follow-up email to the specialist(s) requested is highly recommended. Please be aware of the time and expense of travel for state specialists in supporting our TEMG program as you make requests. One of our goals for the future is to continue to build our distance teaching capacity so that local TEMG intern trainings can log on to a presentation by a subject matter specialist that is shared across the state. This will support connection among groups as well as a being efficient in our requests on specialist time.

Extension Agents

Agents in surrounding counties often serve as instructors. If asking another agent to teach a section of your TEMG training, offer to teach a section of their training course. Extension employees may not be paid out of county accounts for travel. Travel reimbursement should follow UT Policy and Procedures.

Outside Speakers

When local instructors/resource persons not associated with Tennessee Extension are used to train TEMGs, they should clearly understand the objectives and operating procedures of the program. Provide a copy of the corresponding chapter of the TEMG Handbook (or any other UT Extension materials) for the speaker ahead of time.

TEMG Training and Registration on SUPER

All TEMG trainings should be entered as a Course/Event in SUPER Training and Registration. Be sure to include details that will help your staff answer questions such as location, instructors/class schedule, requirements for acceptance (acceptance dependent on completed application, successful interview and payment of fees), directions and accommodations for those with disabilities. This course is being taught to meet core competency standards from the TEMG Handbook curriculum and needs assessment.

All application inquiries should be entered into the SUPER system Enrollment. Enrollees who

are just inquiring about TEMG should have the interest added to their enrollment information (Interest tab in SUPER Enrollment). Intern and certified TEMGs would be enrolled in the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener club/group (Contact info tab of SUPER Enrollment).

TEMG Intern Training Course Curriculum

The following core competency standards have been established to standardize the intern experience for volunteers. Each TEMG intern training class should include teaching all 10 core curriculum areas, reviewing the learning objectives, and formally assessing curriculum understanding with the TEMG intern evaluation (digital copy found in Google Drive).

These core curriculum requirements take into account three important objectives:

1. Provide common standards and a minimum level of quality in the TEMG training.
2. Balance the need for common statewide standards with the need to tailor the training locally.
3. Allow time and opportunity for elective subjects to meet local needs.

There are 10 core curriculum courses for the training program (minimum number of hours devoted to each subject):

- Overview of the TEMG State and Local Program (2 hours)
- Plant Anatomy, Physiology and Taxonomy (2 hours)
- Soils, Plant Nutrition and Soil Management (2 hours)
- Environmental Stewardship in Residential Landscapes (2 hours)
- Ornamental Plants (woody and/or herbaceous) (2 hours)
- Edible Crops (vegetables and/or tree and small fruits) (2 hours)
- Turfgrass (2 hours)
- Plant Pathology and Plant Diagnostics (2 hours)
- Entomology, Integrated Pest Management and Pesticide Safety (2 hours)
- Weed Science, Weed Control and/or Invasive Plants (2 hours)

Subject matter areas do not have to be covered exactly in the order indicated above. However, when dealing with interns with little plant knowledge, introductory material is likely needed to provide a foundation for later material. It is important that each subject is allotted ample course time and that no core curriculum subject is omitted. Other courses in the TEMG Handbook or training materials should be taught to fulfill the 40 hours of required training for certification.

The core training program may be supplemented with field trips, workshops, seminars and hands-on training. The assignment of homework at the end of each session is encouraged to promote more in- depth study of the subject matter by the student. Keep in mind that you may add features to the program, but you should not omit or substitute for anything within the core program.

Training Attendance and Course Completion

Since each session covers a specific subject matter area, it is vitally important that students attend all sessions, including the orientation class. If a candidate must miss a session, he/she is responsible for all material covered in that session. A candidate must attend 80 percent of training to complete the program.

Completion of course exams with an average passing score are required for certification. As a TEMG coordinator, you can develop a final exam to fit your needs. Please feel free to use questions for the study guides for each chapter as a test bank that covers key learning objectives and content across the training.

U-Utilization

Utilizing volunteers is the heart of our program, so certainly it encompasses much more than can be written in this section. The most vital element of utilization to keep in mind in planning is that the impressive local impact of our TEMG program is the direct result of engaged local volunteers and agents seeing needs in their communities and meeting them. Quite simply, the best projects will engage volunteers and benefit local stakeholders. Your vision as the coordinator and leader will be crucial in selecting projects that balance the needs of the local community with the capacity and interests of your local group.

Utilizing Volunteers

Because TEMG volunteers were selected to increase the diversity of skills, talents and interests in the county program, each will be suited for certain roles within it. Not all volunteers are going to feel comfortable doing every service or education project, so each should be encouraged to engage in areas best suiting their abilities and talents. The local TEMG coordinator is responsible for approving volunteer activities, and these opportunities should be communicated clearly to the volunteers. For a list of suggested activities and the overview of policies related to hours and volunteer, consult the TEMG Volunteer Handbook (W 099).

TEMG volunteers are considered unpaid employees of the University of Tennessee and are held to a code of conduct and University grievance policy. Consult the TEMG Volunteer Handbook (W 099) for details and descriptions of the policies.

Perspectives on Local TEMG Projects

- As the coordinator and leader, there is a balance between guiding project selection and empowering volunteers to serve and teach in areas of their own interest. Each local group has a slightly different balance here. But, keep in mind that volunteers are most impactful in projects that they are passionate about. As coordinator, you need to guide projects to meet local goals and the overall Extension and TEMG mission, but be cautious about making these decisions or commitments alone.
- One of the most challenging areas of project selection is being appropriately cautious about committing to ongoing projects that are labor intensive. Historically, our TEMG program has had a higher than ideal number of landscape maintenance projects that are heavy on labor but low on educational outreach. We want to continually focus on our role as educators. This does not mean that we never take on labor intensive projects, but we do

commit to them very cautiously. We want our volunteers to be known and recognized for their teaching rather than their digging and weeding.

R- Recognition

Recognition is the ongoing process of showing and clearly speaking the high value that you as the leader locally and our whole Extension system places on volunteers. Recognition begins with intern graduation and certification, but it should be an ongoing process that recognizes the passion, skill and dedication of our volunteers and fits the individuals as much as possible.

Graduation

Graduation ceremonies are important to motivate and offer closure to the rewarding but challenging experience of TEMG intern training. There are two possible graduation suggestions: Graduation from the training course (not yet a Certified Tennessee Extension Master Gardener — but a volunteer intern) or graduation as a Certified Tennessee Extension Master Gardener after completing both volunteer hours and coursework. Separate certificates are available as printable pdfs for each of these graduation options.

Training Course Graduation:

An intern training graduation can close the training class on a positive note and motivate interns to participate in county TEMG projects. There are many creative ways to motivate your new volunteers. One suggestion is to have the certified TEMGs and mentors host a party and share some of their projects with the group. Project sign-up sheets could be passed out and committee chairs could be available to discuss specific projects. A challenge could be posed to the new group to start their own class project.

Certification Graduation:

Certification is the reward for the 40 hours of volunteer work and the training. This gives closure to the volunteer year and the opportunity to recognize individual interns and any special volunteers in the group. The county TEMG group should host this graduation as an opportunity to thank the new class of certified TEMGs for their service. Special speakers should be invited to congratulate the group. Ask your county commissioners, special organization leaders, university officials and others to attend as a way to support the new volunteers and gain publicity as to the impact that TEMG volunteers have on the community.

Motivating Volunteers through Ongoing Recognition

Successful TEMG programs require matching the needs of the county office with the needs of the community. This coordinator role requires working with other staff in the agency to analyze the program's needs, evaluate what can be done by part-time volunteer workers, and recognize what will be attractive enough to motivate those volunteers. As a TEMG coordinator, the volunteer manager must focus on meeting the needs of both staff and volunteers. Volunteer management is a process, not a product, and is necessary for the success of the TEMG program. Retaining valuable volunteers requires attentive orientation, training, deployment, recognition, support and appraisal. An engaged volunteer can recruit many more valuable volunteers to the program.

Provide an annual TEMG awards ceremony along with the intern graduation ceremony. Invite a prominent public official or a garden speaker to help hand out the awards and graduation certificates. Be creative with the awards and try to recognize special actions in the group. Below are a few examples of what other agents reward in their counties:

- Most number of hours for an intern and certified TEMGs
- Most number of CE hours
- Most number of service hours
- Most involved spouse
- Outstanding mentor
- Outstanding intern
- The Extra Mile Award
- Youth Service Award
- Inspire Change Award

Service Hour Pins — Each year, you have the opportunity to recognize levels of service hours donated by your volunteers. The state TEMG program purchases and distributes TN tulip popular leaf pins in recognition of those who give more than 100 hours in service (service alone, not combined service and CEU). Pins are available in the denominations of 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 750, and 1000 hours. Please email nbumgarn@utk.edu or wfmccall@utk.edu to request these pins when you have an accurate count of how many of each denomination you need.

E- Evaluation

Evaluation is the determination of the result of our efforts for and with volunteers and it is integrally linked to program planning and development. While evaluation is never the most exciting aspect of our volunteer program, it is essential in an age of increasing funding pressures at the local, state and federal level to demonstrate well our value and impact.

In the TEMG program, evaluation comes in two key areas. The first is the evaluation of our teaching and training programs and their value to volunteers or citizens. We use these types of evaluations to continually improve the methods we use in delivering information. Examples of these types of evaluation are:

- Intern Training Evaluation — online evaluation in the Google Drive that provides a summary of information gained over the entire intern training. This online survey provides a method to accurately answer Master Gardener outcome indicators in SUPER.
- Individual Educational Program/Series Evaluation — online or paper evaluation that provides an assessment of information gained and practices changed as a result of educational programming. These evaluations can be used to improve teaching but also report to agent outcome indicators in SUPER. Online version of these evaluations are available in the Consumer Horticulture Google Drive.

The second type of evaluation in our TEMG program is tailored to document impact and value of our outreach and programming efforts. Examples include:

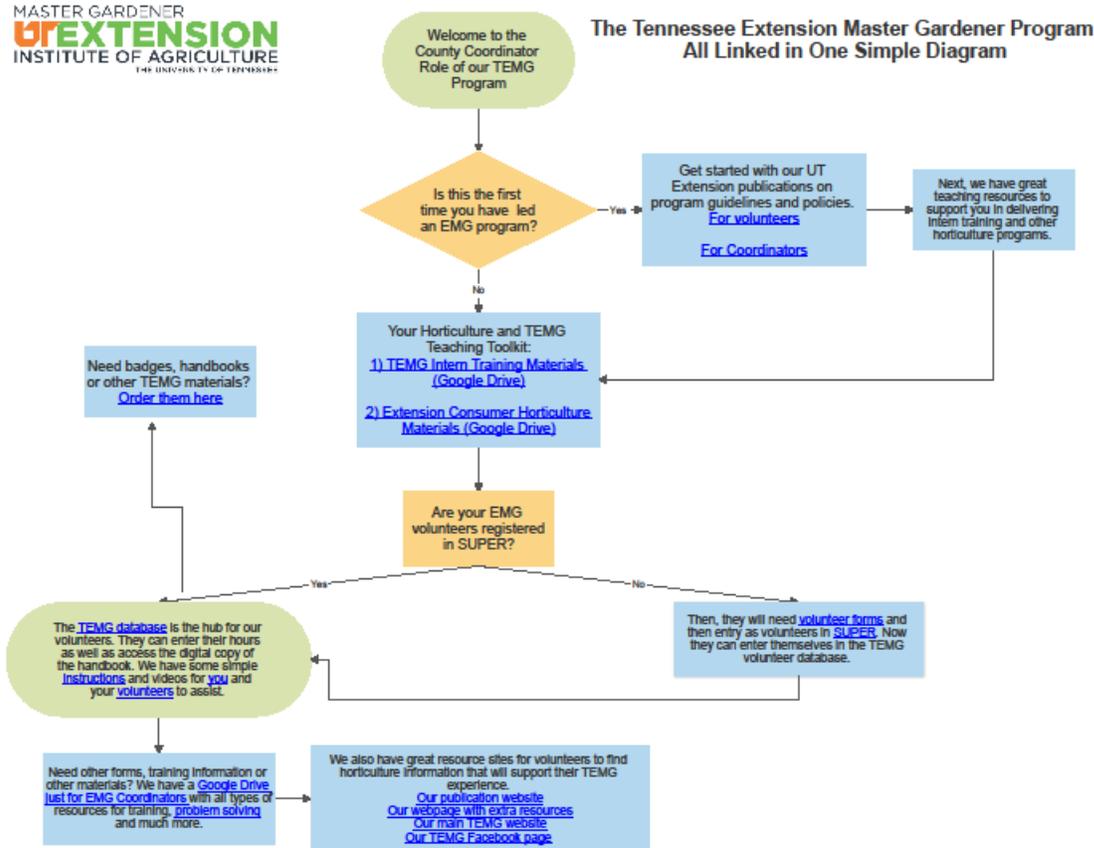
- Year-end TEMG Local Group Impact Summary — this report that is turned in to the state TEMG coordinator collects activity and impact data across an entire year of a local TEMG program for reporting to local, state and federal funders.
- Year-end Horticulture Impact Evaluation — these are typically online surveys sent to MGs as well as other horticulture stakeholders to assess knowledge gained, practices implemented and the economic impact of our consumer horticulture programming. Digital surveys are available as Google Forms in the Consumer Horticulture Google Drive.

Appendix A: Find it Fast Factsheet (Available as a Separate PDF in the Google Drive)

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1QTfjp-fs3qEQ-nolcMoRvawud6mGJHVn>



**The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program
All Linked in One Simple Diagram**



Appendix B: Managing TEMG Volunteer Records in SUPER and the TEMG Database

There are two essential record-keeping programs and systems for MG coordinators to manage- SUPER and the TEMG database.

SUPER

The first is your volunteer records in SUPER. These are the critical volunteer records that every agent is required to keep to maintain liability coverage for volunteers and fulfill our minors on campus policy. Each MG coordinator should have all volunteers enrolled in an MG club- both interns and active volunteers. Detailed instructions on SUPER enrollment and volunteerism can be found within the SUPER program. Here are some quick instructions specific for MG management.

Enrollment

Enroll Tab (for New Members)

Fill out all information

Make sure status is ACTIVE

Save

Then continue to Club/Group Instructions below

Search Tab (for Members already in SUPER)

Search by Name

Click on name-this will take you to their profile page

Make sure status is ACTIVE

If not, click on Edit to make necessary changes and click Save

Club/Group (box at bottom of profile page)

Add Master Gardener

Save

Updating Volunteerism for Members

Volunteerism Tab on left hand side of member's profile page

Volunteerism Box- Edit

Volunteer: select YES

Volunteer Level: Select volunteer level that is appropriate for this individual volunteer

Save (This will assign them a volunteer #)

Base Program Box-Edit

Select Base Program as ANR

Save

(This is very important. If ANR not selected, you will not be able to pull these volunteers up together as a group)

Child Protection Box- Edit

(For level 2 and 3 volunteers only)

Fill out information

Save

Application & Initial Training Box- Edit

Date Type: Approved Application

Volunteer Level: Select Level as appropriate

Calendar: Chose date as today's date

Upload Application:

Click blue link 'upload application'

Click choose file

Find file saved on computer, click open

Save

Save (again) (if upload is successful, The Volunteer Level and date will be in green text in the 'Application & Initial Training' Box)

Certifications Box-Edit

Date Type: Certification

Certification: Master Gardener

Select Date as today's date

Save

The TEMG Database

This database serves as the reporting portal for all MG volunteers statewide as well as a source of volunteer service data that can be directly pulled into SUPER for agents.

<https://temg.tennessee.edu/>

A brief instructional video for agent coordinators and other database administrators can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31NdIabtDQ0&t=52s>

Key MG Coordinator Responsibilities:

- You will not need to register, all Extension employees should be recognized and able to directly sign in. Use your full UT ID (do not use an alias if you have one for your email) and current password.
- Maintain records in SUPER for volunteers (active and in MG club with a valid email address). This step is vital to enable volunteers to register for the database.
- Assist volunteers with registration, but do not share or designate passwords. The new database follows UT policy in that agents or other employees should not know individual volunteer passwords.
- Load projects for volunteers to record their service hours.
- Utilize database to submit year-end local summary to state coordinator.

Key Items Under the Home Tab County Dashboard:

- County Roster- this roster with names, address, and images (if uploaded by volunteer) can function as a replacement for printed rosters. All volunteers are visible here unless they request to be hidden for privacy purposes in their profile.
- County Admin roster- this is your main screen for viewing volunteer records and hours to date. The date range can be set to whatever is needed. This table can also be exported to excel. Volunteer managers will have access to this table when given that role.
- Project participation- this is a report that can be run for an individual project to see which volunteers are reporting to that project as well as how many hours they report.
- County report- this is a county summary with graphical representation for projects along with valuation calculations. Graphs can be right click selected and copied for pasting elsewhere and simple reporting to local funders. Date ranges can be selected. All volunteers also have access to this report screen.
- Individual report- this is a report for a given date range for an individual that shows all service.
- Category data- this corresponds to areas of service in the main statewide categories

Key Items Under the Admin Tab:

- Manage archived volunteers- this enables you to update addresses in the old database to sync records and align email address to allow records to be pulled from the old database.
- Update volunteer- this enables you to update volunteer's training county and training date. It also enables you to update their county of current activity. If you cannot find a volunteer in your county records and suspect they are registered in the wrong county, this is the location to switch county designation and essentially transfer a volunteer. Their hours will stay with previous projects reported to in other counties.
- Service dashboard- this site enables you to manually enter records for those volunteers who have received 3 or 5 year pins as well as metallic badges for 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of service. It also allows you to run reports to see which volunteers have hours in which years to maintain activity.
- Project management dashboard- enables you to create and edit projects. Volunteer managers also have the ability to create projects. Projects that have hours will not be allowed to be deleted, but they can go inactive by date.
- Supplies- here you can order intern kits for training, new green badges, replacement green badges, metallic badges for 10, 15, 20 and 25 year awards, as well as brochures and printed Extension material. The only thing you cannot order on this screen are the 100 hour pins which are managed through the state TEMG program and mailed from the Plant Sciences Department in Knoxville.

Key MG Volunteer Responsibilities:

- Tennessee Extension Master Gardeners (and TEMG interns) are responsible for entering their volunteer hours on the TEMG database. As long as they are entered as a volunteer in SUPER and have an accurate and up to date email address, they will be able to register themselves. Some may need assistance entering hours, so it is recommended that they find a person in the group to help them or that the group have an official recordkeeper or certification officer. There is a volunteer manager level that can be requested for one or more experienced volunteers in your group to enable them to report hours for other MGs.
- TEMG volunteers are able to send password resets to their email (the one used in the database), so there is not the need or the ability for agents or Extension administrators to look up passwords.

Appendix C: Program Policies for Graduating Interns and Certifying EMG Volunteers

Minimum Standards

Students with a passing grade who meet the attendance 40 hour class work requirement **and** complete a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service will be awarded a certificate. Eight continued education hours are commonly required at the county level, but coordinators have discretion as to this requirement in the first year. These students have earned the honorary title of *Certified Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Volunteer*.

Volunteer Service

Intern TEMG volunteers will be required to serve a minimum of 40 hours in return for the 40 hours of training. All volunteer service and CE should be logged into the TEMG database. This is the volunteer's responsibility.

Memorandum of Agreement

A *Memorandum of Agreement* must be signed by the TEMG intern at the TEMG program orientation (first training session or prior) and by the local TEMG county coordinator. The original copy is to be kept on file in the county Extension office.

Testing

Local TEMG coordinators certifying individuals as TEMG volunteers should make every reasonable effort to see that the TEMG is adequately qualified for any assignment he/she may take under the supervision and sponsorship of Tennessee Extension. A consistent post-training evaluation is provided to enable consistent reporting across the state.

Recertifying Volunteers

Once a TEMG completes the first year of training and a year of certification, the volunteer must give a minimum of 25 hours of volunteer service and eight hours of education annually to maintain certification. These activities should be entered into the TEMG website to complete certification. A *Memorandum of Agreement* is available for yearly volunteer recertification.

Continued Education

The county TEMG coordinator is responsible for approving continued education opportunities. Continued education should be training that can enhance the volunteers' contribution to the county program. This approval is left up to the discretion of the managing county coordinator and may not always be horticultural in nature. For instance, a treasurer may wish to take a course on Excel spreadsheets or bookkeeping, or a TEMG who teaches frequently may wish to take a course on public speaking. Every TEMG volunteer must receive and report a minimum of eight hours of continued education for certification. Continued education can support attendance at monthly TEMG meetings.

Certified 10, 15, 20 or 25-year Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Volunteer —

These requirements replace the previous Lifetime designation which is no longer used in the TEMG program. A Certified TEMG who has provided 10 years of active service to the program is eligible for recognition based on their years of service. Name badges will reflect years of service and recognition will be given for every additional five years of certified service. Service statuses of 10, 15, 20 and 25 years require an annual 15 hours combined of volunteer and/or continued education, and signing of the annual TEMG volunteer MOA. To be eligible for these advanced service statuses, records of service must be accurate for recommendation and approval by the appropriate county coordinator. All records must be in line with the guidelines of the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program. Out-of-state years may be eligible for 10, 15, 20 or 25 year status if records are complete and meet the above criteria.

Name Badges

Official TEMG name badges should only be ordered or worn by certified TEMGs. The first name badge for an individual volunteer should not be ordered until after the volunteer completes the requirements for certification. Double check the online order form prior to sending to avoid sending mistakes or misspelled names; you will be responsible for the fees for a reordered name badge. If the printing company made a mistake on the name badge, you should notify the state coordinator. If a name badge is lost or broken, individuals will be charged a \$10 replacement fee.

Accepting Out-of-state or County Transfers

To accept an out-of-state/county transfer, use the TEMG volunteer transfer form located on the TEMG website to confirm that the volunteer is considered in good standing and determine the number of years of service. The number of years can be added to the TEMG total of hours for VIP or five-year, 10-year, 15-year, 20-year and 25-year status.

Accepting certified TEMG volunteers from other states is encouraged using the following criteria:

- Volunteers must provide proof of enrollment in an out-of-state program — either a letter from their former Master Gardener coordinator or their certificate.
- Volunteers must audit the local TEMG intern training course and are allowed to miss a maximum of two classes.
- Volunteers are exempt from taking class exams.
- Volunteers must volunteer a minimum of 25 hours of recommended volunteer service activities within one year of finishing the intern course.
- Upon completing these requirements, out-of-state EMG volunteers receive TEMG volunteer certificates and may purchase a TEMG name badge.

Leave of Absence

Tennessee Extension Master Gardener volunteers may join this category if they are unable to complete the above annual requirements but would like the opportunity to return to active service in the future. A *Leave of Absence Form* must be completed for TEMG county coordinator approval. This request is valid for one year. This time on leave of absence will not count toward VIP or yearly service award statuses.

Appendix D: Dealing with Issues and Managing Conflict in the Local TEMG Program

Conflict Resolution Process

(This is printed in W 099 for review by volunteers, additional information for agent coordinators is found in the MG Coordinator Google Drive. Please do not hesitate to contact the state TEMG coordinator with questions.)

In the local TEMG program, conflicts do sometimes occur as they do in any organization. These often arise from personality differences or communication or expectation issues, but can also encompass more serious policy, legal or safety issues. Our commitment to creating and maintaining a positive environment for Extension personnel and volunteers to collaborate and support the UT Extension and TEMG mission necessitates that conflicts are resolved in a timely and appropriate manner. However, because of the range of conflicts that can occur, we have outlined policies to deal with different types of issues. If issues arise between EMG volunteers that do not relate to EMG program goals or policies and do not involve members of Extension or the public, these matters can often be solved within the local MG association board or leadership (see Grievances of Individual volunteers section 1 below). Because of the importance of our program in local communities and the state, it is necessary to include the county coordinator if the issue involves the program itself or its policies, members of Extension, or members of the community.

The process below is provided to outline the general manner in which conflicts are resolved in our TEMG program. It also provides the range of steps that may be taken to address conflict and deal with volunteers involved in these conflicts. However, it should be stated that the seriousness or time sensitivity of some issues may require action not outlined below.

As representatives of University of Tennessee Extension, volunteers agree to abide by UT's policies and expectations as detailed above. If a volunteer's behavior is not acceptable or in the best interest of UT Extension, the volunteer program, or program clientele, a range of actions can be taken to correct the issue that can include reassignment, leave of absence or removal from the program.

Phases of Conflict Resolution

Resolution of an issue or conflict that involves the TEMG program, its policies or the community can only begin when the Extension agent coordinating the TEMG program in the county or local area is informed of an issue and initiates action. Keep in mind that this process is designed to address issues and conflicts that are related to the TEMG program and does not serve to settle individual issues between volunteers unrelated to the TEMG program (see the Grievances section below).

1. The first phase of conflict resolution focuses on verbal communication between the county coordinator and volunteer(s) to clearly explain the issue and needed steps to correct the situation. While it is common for some initial or follow-up conversation to take place by phone or email, it is important that the main conflict resolution conversation take place in person. A volunteer leader or other UT personnel or administrators may be included if this is deemed necessary by the county coordinator. This communication should take place as soon as possible after seeing or hearing of an issue. Communication can be informal, but it needs to be clear and direct. A timeline for taking these corrective steps will be provided (in print or verbally as agreed upon by those involved). This conversation should always be conducted with the tone and intent of respectfully solving the situation. A clear first conversation is the best opportunity to correct issues with minimal disturbances.
2. The second phase of conflict resolution will only take place if corrective action was not completed in the timeline provided in the initial conversation addressing the issue. In these instances of issues that continue after being clearly addressed, the county coordinator (often in conjunction with other UT Extension personnel) may initiate a second verbal conversation or written communication. If written, the communication will come from the UT Extension dean and will once again state the issue, necessary steps for correction and a timeline. Retraining, reassignment, mediation or a leave of absence for the volunteer(s) are all available as tools for resolution in this phase.
3. If the first and second phases of conflict resolution were unsuccessful, volunteer dismissal may be initiated. This step is not taken lightly by UT Extension and will be undertaken only after consultation of the county coordinator with the TEMG state coordinator and UT Extension administration up to and including the UT Dean of Extension. If deemed necessary by county, regional and state Extension personnel involved, the volunteer will be contacted personally by certified letter from the UT Extension dean outlining the reason(s) for dismissal and effective date of termination of certification and involvement with the TEMG program.

Grievances of Individual Volunteers

The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program is a volunteer organization. As with most volunteer organizations, individuals are expected to work amicably together in accomplishing the mission of the program. If conflicts arise between an individual and the local organization, disputes should be settled within the organization by good faith discussion (with *all* involved parties) keeping in mind the goal of resolving the dispute. Extension personnel should be consulted if issues arise, and they may resolve the issues according to the mission and policies governing the university. All grievances should be resolved at the closest level of the complaint. The University of Tennessee/Tennessee State University will not attempt to resolve interpersonal disputes among volunteers that are not related to the TEMG program or university policy.

1. Volunteer concerns and grievances should be clarified at the earliest possible time and at the Master Gardener Executive Board (local) level and at the county Tennessee Extension office closest to the nature of the complaint. Every effort should be made to resolve such matters informally before official grievance procedures are initiated. The university is committed to the concept that volunteers are entitled to pursue their grievances without fear, restraint, interference, discrimination or reprisal.
2. For the purpose of this policy, "grievance" means a volunteer's complaint about one or more of the following matters, which he or she has been unable to resolve with his or her managing county coordinator.
 - a. Work assignments or conditions of work which the volunteer claims violate a statute or university policy other than those prohibiting discrimination.
 - b. Unlawful discrimination (including claims of racial and sexual harassment).
3. Process for filing a grievance.
 - a. Grievance must be documented and filed with the county Tennessee Extension office within 15 working days of the incident.
 - b. Following documentation, a face-to-face meeting should be scheduled no more than 15 working days after the filing of the grievance.
 - c. The county director or regional director of the UT Extension office should then consult formal university human resources grievance policies and follow procedure.

Reporting Accidents

University volunteers should promptly report accidents, occupational illnesses and incidents of workplace violence to the TEMG county coordinator for evaluation and possible investigation. County coordinators are responsible for properly documenting and reporting incidents according to UT policies.

UT Risk Management Policy for Volunteers:

As stated from the UT Office of Risk Management, <https://riskmanagement.tennessee.edu/> The University of Tennessee recognizes the valuable contributions of those persons giving freely of their time and talents for the benefit of the University without compensation. These persons are "VOLUNTEERS" in every sense of the word. The state legislature in the enactment of the Tennessee Claims Commission Act of 1984 recognized the need for protection of volunteers from legal actions while performing their service on behalf of the University. As such, the volunteers who are registered with the University receive the same civil immunity from liability as does an employee of the University under the Act. Volunteers under the Claims Commission Act are not covered for Worker's Compensation.

The term "Registered Volunteer" means those persons who are not employees of the University who provide service to the University in an approved program that are listed and reported to the Division of Claims Administration, State of Tennessee.

Risk Management and Liability

TEMG volunteers are unpaid “staff” of the University of Tennessee. As a state agency, UT self-insures its general liability exposure. State statute provides that the state may provide a defense for any agent of UT, including a volunteer, against whom claims are filed. However, individuals are only eligible for defense if they can prove they were acting within the scope of UT Extension duties and in good faith.

To be acting in an official capacity of a UT Extension volunteer, you must be:

1. Currently enrolled as an active volunteer on the TEMG program website.
2. Properly enrolled in SUPER (as outlined above).
3. Acting in good faith and in accordance with TEMG guidelines.
4. Engaged in activities that are planned, approved and carried out through Tennessee Extension.

For a general understanding of risk, visit the Nonprofit Risk Management Center website regarding safety issues for volunteers: nonprofitrisk.org.

NOTE: For those departments within the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture — to become a “Registered Volunteer,” the department having the volunteer must report (register) the volunteer through the SUPER database.

A report will be sent from the University of Tennessee Office of Risk Management to the Division of Claims Administration on a quarterly basis. In the event a volunteer is not properly registered and a claim is made against that person for his/her University service, the Claims Commission will accept the claim as though the volunteer was registered. However, the University of Tennessee will be charged for any expenses or payments made rather than these costs being paid from the Liability Claim Fund. The department failing to register/report their volunteer would be charged for these costs, up to the limit of \$300,000.00.

UT Risk Policy for Public Events:

Events organized and hosted for the public by the Extension office or TEMG group should have event insurance. Contact the UT Office of Risk Management for this insurance (UT Office of Risk Management, <https://riskmanagement.tennessee.edu/>).

Appendix E: Fund Management in the County TEMG Program

General Suggestions

Tennessee Extension Master Gardeners should follow the financial policies outlined in the TEMG Volunteer Handbook. The county should handle money accepted for the training registration. Group fundraising should provide money for a certain purpose or project and should be accepted and spent according to IRS and TEMG financial guidelines. The suggestions below were developed specifically for county coordinators.

1. What types of funds will be commonly managed in county TEMG programs?
 - Commonly, there are two types of funds that the county coordinator of a TEMG program will manage. First, there are program funds commonly used to buy intern training materials as well as other badges and pins that are awarded for long-term volunteers. These funds are typically provided by intern training fees. Second, there are association funds that are commonly derived from dues, fundraisers and grants. These funds are typically monitored/managed by the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener county association officers and the elected treasurer in conjunction with the county coordinator.
2. What is the preferred location for these funds?
 - To maintain financial liability protection and ensure compliance with UT accounting procedures, the preferred location for both of the above types of funds are in UT accounts.
3. What kinds of UT accounts can be used to manage these funds?
 - Quicken accounts are the most easily accessible of the UT accounts. These funds can be paid out if invoices are received, or checks can be written for materials or reimbursements (with receipts). Checks must be signed by appropriate Extension personnel. Quicken accounts are the most common location for program funds. However, they can also be used for county association funds. It is suggested that county association funds not exceed \$5,000 in Quicken accounts.
 - R accounts can also be designated for either county program funds or county association funds. These accounts cannot be used to write checks. All money expended from an R account must be invoiced or charged from a vendor in the UT system. Sites of frequent purchases (such as Lowe's, etc.) can be set up as a vendor to simplify payment from an R account. If county association funds exceed the recommended levels of Quicken accounts, an R account is the suggested location for funds. It would be common for long-established groups to have an R and/or funding in the Quicken account. The R could be used for larger and planned expenditures from vendors, and the Quicken account could support smaller purchases and reimbursements.
 - UT endowments are also available to TEMG county associations. Endowments are not for funds that require access. They can be used to support the long-term efforts of an association. Once fully funded (\$25,000 within 10 years), interest will be paid out annually. Once placed in an endowment, principal funds are not accessible, only

interest. This interest can be transferred to an R account for expenditures or it can be returned to the endowment.

4. What are the main benefits of maintaining county TEMG association funds in a UT account?
 - If Tennessee Extension Master Gardener association funds are maintained in the University of Tennessee financial system, then they are managed in a way that protects associations and members from tax liability and from legal action through liability lawsuits.
 - If Tennessee Extension Master Gardener funds are held and managed outside of the University of Tennessee financial system, then association funds may have no guaranteed protection from taxation, penalties from improper tax filings, or protection from lawsuits arising from association programs and events. Outside bank accounts and/or 501c3 organizations are not protected or judgments limited by the Tennessee Claims Commission Act. Members and associates of these groups may be held personally liable or responsible for any judgment or tax liability of the group. In addition, the University of Tennessee and its employees cannot advise on the level of organizational or personal liability present.

Major Gifts and Donations

The TEMG program has set up a University of Tennessee Foundation account to allow donors the benefits of the UT Gift Credit. Donations of gifts, annuities, endowments and real estate may be considered for the support of the UT Foundation. Donors need to specify that they would like their gift to support the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program. The TEMG Foundation gift fund was developed to support the TEMG program. Gift funds will be used specifically to support development of intern training programs, advanced training and educator opportunities, and other TEMG events. If an individual has interest in giving to the TEMG program, please contact Natalie Bumgarner (865-974- 7308, nbumgarn@utk.edu) or Tom Looney (865-974-8622, tlooney@utfi.org) for more information.



AG.TENNESSEE.EDU