WHEN IS IT OKAY FOR MASTER GARDENERS TO “PASS THE BUCK”?

In life we occasionally come across situations where we have no idea how to help someone or how to answer a question. Has that ever happened to you while working on the hotline or at a Farmer’s Market booth? Well no matter how much you would like to help your client (and appear to know the answer to their question)- sometimes it is best just to PUNT! There are certain circumstances in your Master Gardener career when the best practice is to “pass the buck”, “steer clear”, “cop out” or “sidestep”. Here are some examples:

1. Possible spray drift problems- If a client comes to you with a problem which may be caused by pesticide drift- “pass the buck”! You should refer all such questions to your Coordinator and/or educator or the Plant Clinic. Investigation of these potential legal issues is done by the IL. Department of Agriculture.

2. A commercial greenhouse comes to you with a question. My response is “Punt!” Turn this question over to your Coordinator or educator. Master Gardeners should ONLY answer questions from home gardeners. One incorrect recommendation to a commercial grower might destroy an entire crop or planting for a nursery or greenhouse.

3. A client wants an ID of a mushroom. “Steer clear!” Pass this question on to your coordinator/educator who will consult an expert in the field. An incorrect answer could have disastrous (or even fatal) consequences! Master Gardeners in most cases do not have the knowledge to correctly distinguish poisonous from nonpoisonous mushrooms.

4. A question you do not know the answer to or can’t find an answer through research. “Cop out!” This type of questions needs to be referred to an educator, the plant clinic or a state specialist. It is much better to pass this question on than to answer it incorrectly. It is not a sign of weakness to admit that you do not know an answer. And remember that it may take several years to feel comfortable answering horticulture questions on the Help Desk. So if one of these situations arises during your volunteer work, “punting” the question up the line is the correct way to go.

ILLINOIS MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM TO CELEBRATE 40 YEARS IN 2015

Did you know that 2015 marks the 40th anniversary of the Illinois Master Gardener program? The state MG advisory committee has decided that it is time to celebrate and let the public know about our 40 years of success! Volunteers -- we are asking you to come up with the perfect way to celebrate 40 years of the Master Gardener program.

Here are some suggestions:

- Plant 40 plants- maybe 40 trees, shrubs or vegetable varieties or plant them in the shape of “40”
- Choose 40 of your favorite gardening books
- Layout 40 great garden tools in the shape of a “40”
- Have a project for 40 new youth
- List your top 40 favorite annuals or perennials
- Line your volunteers up in the shape of a “40” and take a photo
- Design 40 “shoe” planters or container gardens

Snap a picture of your “40 year” celebration and send them to Monica David at modavid@illinois.edu (no files bigger than 1 MB). We will display your pictures in a PowerPoint or on a display board at state conference in September in O’Fallon IL.

Monica David, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Coordinator
STATE MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE- REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Join the Madison, St. Clair and Monroe County Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists for 3 days of tours and classes. The conference runs September 17-19 at the Regency Conference Center in O’Fallon, IL. Conference registration is now open! Register soon as tours and classes are filling quickly.

The deadline to register for conference is September 1. No late or onsite registrations will be accepted. A block of rooms is being held at the adjacent Hilton Garden Inn until August 23rd at the rate of $112 per night for a King or 2 Queen beds. A full cooked to order breakfast for two is included in the room rate.

Keynote Speaker: The keynote speaker is the internationally known garden, food writer, speaker and landscape designer Rosalind Creasy. Rosalind’s first book The Complete Book of Edible Landscaping won the Garden Writers Quill and Trowel award and coined the term ‘edible landscaping’. Ms. Creasy will talk on Edible Landscaping and Heirlooms.

Classes: The classes will feature topics which will interest BOTH Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. The Saturday general session will feature a presentation by Mike Jeffords on Exploring Nature in Illinois. The breakout sessions on Friday and Saturday will feature four strands of education- plant materials, natives, elements of design and edibles. The Plant Materials tract will feature talks including “Hostas” by Mark Zilas; Grafting Fruit and Nut Trees by KSU Extension Specialist William Reid; Roses by David Gunn and Amaryllis by Jason Delaney, both from the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Natives tract will be highlighted by talks on Garden Invasives by Chris Evans from IDNR; Dragonflies, Native Landscaping and more. The Edible tract will feature talks on Horse-radish; Culinary Herbs; Fruit Trees; Heirloom Seeds and more.

Tours: Full Day Tour 1 features six Master Gardener and Master Naturalist projects.
Half Day Tour 1 features Gordon Moore Park (Hosta Garden and Rose Garden) and the Riverlands Audubon Center.
Half Day Tour 2 features Eckerts family orchard; St. Louis Composting and Heimos Nursery.

Make-it and Take-it: These hands-on classes will be offered at the same time as the tours. Choose from Papercrete: A Hypertufa Alternative; Fairy Garden Terrariums; Personalized Leather Pruner Holder or Terra Cotta Birdbath classes.

Registration: Register at https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?registrationID=12221
See our website for complete information: https://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/conference2015/index.cfm

SILENT AUCTION
Illinois Master Gardeners are asked to donate items for the 11th annual silent auction. We are looking for donations of artwork, sculpture, paintings, photographs, books, garden tools, garden gifts etc. Profits from the silent auctions will be used to fund the annual Master Gardener mini-grant program. You may bring your items to the conference or to the Madison County Extension Office. Contact Julie Farris at juliecfarris@hotmail.com BEFORE THE CONFERENCE to let her know what you will be donating.

Volunteers in the Madison-Monroe-St. Clair Unit have donated many great items for the State Conference Silent Auction. Our current “Oh Wow” item is a refurbished wooden park bench. We challenge other Units to donate similar unique and desirable items. Remember to leave some room in your car to take some goodies home with you!
ADVANCED TRAINING
Advanced training was begun several years ago to recognize currently active Master Gardeners who complete 20 or more hours in a certain area of study. This designation signals that the volunteer has become more proficient and better able to answer questions in these areas.

1. Advanced Ecology - Volunteers who participate in the training for Master Naturalist will receive advanced training credit. Volunteers who do not complete MN training but who complete 20 hours of ecology related classes are also eligible for this certification.

2. Sustainable Landscaping - A minimum of 20 hours of training is required. Classes such as Master Composter training, rain barrel or rain garden classes or other sustainable landscaping classes would be eligible.

3. Advanced IPM - A minimum of 20 hours of training is required. Training could include commercial PSEP training sessions (such as insects, weeds or diseases); the NCIPM module on Diagnostics; the IPM online modules from the state office; classes on invasive species, First Detector Training; conference workshops on invasive species, weeds, insects or diseases.

4. Advanced Local Foods - A minimum of 20 hours of training is required. Training could include local foods training; local food or specialty crop conference sessions; GAP training or organic gardening classes.

Advanced Master Gardener Training classes may be taken over a period of up to two years. This training is open only to active Master Gardeners. Interns must first complete their internship before beginning an Advanced Master Gardener certification. Master Gardeners who wish to complete an advanced training should check with their local Master Gardener Coordinators BEFORE taking a class to make sure it will count for that certification. Upon successful completion participants will be awarded a pin and certificate.

2015 INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE
Join Master Gardeners from around the U.S. and Canada at the International Conference to be held September 22-25 at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The conference will feature pre, post and conference tours, a vendor trade show, several excellent keynote speakers and lots of class sessions.

The conference tracts include:
- **Midwest Flavor** (prairie plants, local foods)
- **Horizons** (technology, QR codes, trends)
- **From the Ground Up** (composting, propagation, grafting)
- **Professional Development** (program management, volunteer retention, conflict resolution)
- **Design** (floral, landscape, container)
- **Working with Community** (youth, elderly)

Registration is now open at [http://mastergardener.unl.edu/imgc2015](http://mastergardener.unl.edu/imgc2015)

Late registration (July 1 to August 31) $440
Single day registration is also available.

Rooms are being held at Harrahs in Council Bluffs and at the Embassy Suites Omaha.

IMPORTANT DATES
**July 11**: Garden Walk, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. $12 until July 3, then $17. The walk starts at the McHenry County College- Master Gardener Demonstration Garden. Sponsored by the McHenry County Master Gardeners and McHenry County College. 815-455-8588 or visit www.mchenry.edu/gardenwalk

**September 1**: Green Industry Field Day, Rotary Botanical Gardens, 1455 Palmer Drive, Janesville, WI. Keynote presentation by Mark Dwyer is “Trends in the Landscape”. Breakout sessions on Insects/Disease Updates; Sustainable Landscape Design; Arboriculture; Turf Update; Landscaping Basics and Garden Tour with Q&A. This workshop is intended for Master Gardeners, Landscape Designers, Landscapers, Home Gardeners and Ground Maintenance Professionals. Registration is $55 until August 1; $65 August 1-24. Register at [https://goo.gl/6Yu7EL](https://goo.gl/6Yu7EL)
MAKING PESTICIDE RECOMMENDATIONS IN SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY GARDENS
Here is a reminder on the regulations about applying pesticides on public property. These guidelines were written in 2013 and may be found on the PSEP website shown below.

Do I Need a License?
If you are applying pesticides on land that you do NOT own such as a school or park, you must have a license. If you own the land or if you rent/lease the land such as a community garden plot, you need a license only if the pesticide you apply is a Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP). Restricted Use Pesticides will be clearly marked at the top of the product label on the container; you must be licensed to buy RUP products.

General Use Pesticides (GUP’s) such as most of the products sold in garden centers or home improvement stores do not require a license unless they are applied to someone else’s property.

Organic pest killers are still classified as pesticides by the US-EPA. If a product makes pesticidal claims, it needs to be registered with the EPA and will have a registration number on the label. Certain minimum risk pesticides do not require Federal registration. EPA’s “25b list”, which includes garlic and garlic oil, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/biopesticides/registools/25b_list.htm. Illinois has the right to require registration of these products regardless of whether the US-EPA has required registration. If it does, you may still need a license to apply depending on where it is applied. You can search for active ingredient registration at http://www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/Pesticide/productsearch.php or call the Illinois Department of Agriculture (numbers given below).

While home remedies may sometimes work, many have not been tested for effectiveness or safety. They commonly cost more than labeled, registered pesticides which have been tested for human health and environmental safety. To avoid potential problems, stick to approved pesticide products and do not recommend home remedies to clients.

Fertilizers are not pesticides and do not require any type of license to be applied. Keep in mind that weed and feed products contain herbicides which are pesticides.

What type of license is needed?
Below are some situations:
*If you own the land, a Private license is needed only if you apply a restricted use product.
*If you do not own the land and pesticides are applied for hire (the exchange of money), a Commercial license is needed.
*Where no money is exchanged for application, a Commercial “not-for-hire” license is needed; this probably is the case for most community gardens.

Licenses are tied to a specific type of application, or category. For example, someone could have a Commercial not-for-hire license to apply pesticides to vegetable crops.

How do I get licensed?
You will need to take the General Standards exam (100 multiple-choice questions) and score at least a 70%. This will qualify you to become licensed as a pesticide “operator”. Once you qualify, you must submit a completed license application form along with the appropriate licensing fee. However, at least one person from your school or community garden will need to go one step further and become licensed as a pesticide “applicator”. Operators work under the direct supervision of the applicator. An operator can become an applicator by scoring at least a 70% on an appropriate category exam (50 multiple-choice questions) and applying for licensure. There are various categories including Turfgrass, Ornamentals, Fruit, and Vegetables, and Rights-of-Way; each is a separate exam. Because your entire range of pesticide use must be covered by the categories on the applicator’s license, this could mean taking several exams. There is no charge to take any exam, however study materials and training clinics which can aid in passing the exams, are offered by University of Illinois Extension for a fee. There are fees for the actual license. For more information, please visit http://web.extension.illinois.edu/psep/ or call 877-626-1650. To view the entire guidelines go to http://web.extension.illinois.edu/psep/facts/?PageID=15281
FARMING FOR LIFE: AN INSPIRING STORY FROM HONDURAS

Have you ever met someone who truly inspired you? Someone that made you believe that it is actually possible to make the world a better place? Here is the story of one such person… Melecio Cantoral Gonzalez is a 30 year old farmer in rural Honduras who lives in a mountainous part of the country, three hours from the closest paved road.

As Melecio talks about his farm, his smile is infectious, “I walk about 30 minutes to get to the land I farm, which is on a steep slope. I used to grow mainly corn, red beans, and coffee but a few years ago I started to plant other crops because of training I had received. I learned that I can’t support my family with just corn and beans and I learned other things, too, like how to use worms to make compost and how to better care for my livestock. Today my parcel looks like the Garden of Eden.”

Although Melecio loves farming and he hopes that his children will also be farmers someday, he wasn’t always a successful farmer. In fact he wasn’t a farmer at all. Just four years ago, Melecio worked in a sweatshop producing cheap clothes for American stores. He worked 11 1/2 hour days, 6 days a week for less than 50 cents an hour. Most of Melecio’s siblings had already immigrated to the U.S. to try to get better jobs, but Melecio wanted to stay home to care for his aging parents. As Melecio wrestled with what to do, he heard that the farmers in his home village were producing more and better crops and that people had enough to eat and save for their families. He was intrigued. He quit the sweatshop, moved home, got married and built a little adobe house on his family’s 4 acre farm. Melecio spent his first few years planting corn, beans, and coffee, but the yields were not enough to make it through the year, and low coffee prices meant that he wasn’t able to purchase the food his family needed in between harvests.

Thankfully, Melecio’s village was one of 14 communities participating in the Foods Resource Bank (FRB) Honduras-Nueva Frontera program. Local staff members visited his farm and together, they created a plan to help Melecio diversify his crops and increase production. Through trainings and workshops, Melecio also learned the importance of nutrition, how to make compost for his vegetable garden and the benefits of intercropping.

Today he grows 27 crops. These include corn, beans, squash, lettuce, Swiss chard, mustard greens, onions, garlic, cabbage, lemons, cherries, oranges, plantains, bananas, sugar cane, tomatoes, carrots, radishes, and more. Thanks to the diversity of crops and improved yields, Melecio is able to feed his family and save the money from his coffee harvest to spend on things like school fees, medicine, and a metal roof for their home.

The Honduras-Nueva Frontera program is one of 50 currently being supported by Foods Resource Bank. Foods Resource Bank is a small humanitarian organization dedicated to ending world hunger through agricultural development. They raise resources and awareness to support small-scale farmers like Melecio in becoming food secure. Since its founding, FRB has supported over 1 million small-holder farmers in growing lasting solutions to hunger. They hope to reach the next 1 million by 2022. You can help farmers like Meleicio break cycles of poverty and hunger. Please visit http://www.foodsresourcebank.org/ to learn how you can get involved or donate. You can also email admin@foodsresourcebank.org or call (888)276-4FRB.
NEW JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER™ CURRICULUM RELEASED

The National Junior Master Gardener office has just released a new curriculum Learn, Grow, Eat & Go! This curriculum was the result of a 5 year school garden, nutrition and physical activity intervention study targeting childhood obesity among third-grade students in 28 Title 1 schools in Texas.

About half of the lessons are garden or horticulture based (Know and Show Sombrero; Growing Potatoes; Paper Towel Gardening and more) and the other half emphasizes nutrition principles such as Veggie Research; My Plate Food Groups; Meal Planning; Fruit Taste Testing and Greasy Grid Evaluation for French fries.

Children will taste test and evaluate a new vegetable each week. There are recipe demos and food sampling instructions. Also included are weekly physical activities to include with the lessons. Several lessons incorporate outstanding youth literature that correlate with the lessons. An example is Tops and Bottoms by Janet Stevens which teaches kids about plant parts. The curriculum also stresses creation of a garden and includes a school garden kit and other resources for leaders/teachers. Lastly kids should be involved in service learning projects and suggestions and plans may be found in the manual.

The curriculum is designed to be used for a 10 week period with 2 lessons per week. This might work for a school classroom, 4-H Spin Club or an after school club. The curriculum was written to be done sequentially, however you could buy the curriculum and pick and choose lessons and resources. The manual cost is $52. For more information about this curriculum, the Junior Master Gardener program or to order a manual visit:
http://jmgkids.us/lgeg/

AMERICAN COMMUNITY GARDENING SURVEY

The Mission of the American Community Gardening Association (ACGA) is to build community by increasing and enhancing community gardening and greening across the United States and Canada. The Association supports community gardening by facilitating the formation and expansion of state and regional community gardening networks; developing resources in support of community gardening; and encouraging research and conducting educational programs. The ACGA offers workshops and educational events as well as providing online resources. Members have access to training workshops, online resources, a listserv and fundraising opportunities. Check out the website at:
https://communitygarden.org/resources/

In order to better serve the gardening public, the ACGA needs to know what’s important for your garden community and how they can help to improve your work. They are asking the public and gardeners to complete a survey about their garden work. They appreciate that it is a long survey, so to help get folks to participate they are offering some incentives:

Enter to win:

• Give them your feedback before July 20th to be entered into a raffle for free admission to the 2015 ACGA conference in Denver, August 14-16.
• All non-members completing the survey will be entered into a raffle for a free 1-year membership to ACGA.
• All people completing the survey will also be entered into a raffle for a $50 gift certificate to Gardener Supply, one of our sponsors.

Complete the survey by clicking on the following link:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DFCDKLR

Thank you very much,
ACGA Advocacy/Policy/Research Committee