

Dear Master Gardener Coordinators and Volunteers,

I would like to update you about what the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Master Gardener program is doing to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

This fall, the Iowa Master Gardener program will be delivered virtually. Participating ISU Extension and Outreach county offices will offer 10 virtual sessions to Master Gardener trainees. The Master Gardener training class on campus is cancelled and will be replaced by four webinars from Iowa State University faculty in late September and early October.

The Master Gardener program has been an important part of ISU Extension and Outreach for 40 years. Our primary concern is your health and safety, as well as the health and safety of your communities.

### **Number of Master Gardener Volunteer Hours**

- While many of you have found ways to volunteer while socially distanced, Master Gardener volunteers will NOT be required to volunteer or participate in continuing education in 2020. If you are able to volunteer or complete continuing education hours, you are welcome to record your hours in the [Volunteer Reporting System](#).
- Master Gardener interns (people who completed the Master Gardener Training in 2019) will have until December 31, 2021, to complete 40 hours of volunteer service. They will not be required to volunteer in 2020.

### **Meetings and Events**

- Individuals 65 years and older should avoid contact with other people (CDC).
- Find ways to continue to connect with your fellow Master Gardener volunteers by phone and online.
- Consider offering an educational event for your community virtually.

### **Volunteer Projects**

- As you consider whether to maintain a Master Gardener volunteer project, please consider the safety of the Master Gardener volunteers, extension staff, and the public. In some cases, projects will not be maintained, or will be scaled back this year.
- All projects must continue to follow guidelines consistent with CDC recommendations:
  1. Make sure that people are socially distanced (more than 6 feet apart) and outdoors.
  2. Practice frequent handwashing. Wash garden tools and shared surfaces with approved cleaners.

3. Stay home if you have symptoms of COVID-19.

Thank you for all that you do to beautify public spaces, donate fresh vegetables to neighbors in need, and build partnerships to increase pollinator habitat.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John D. Lawrence". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

John D. Lawrence  
Vice President for Extension and Outreach