

Guadalupe County Master Gardeners

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Serving Texas' Needs

Subject: 14-A1 Continuing Education Hours

Introduction

Continuing Education Units (CEs) are an essential component of the Master Gardener program, ensuring that participants stay up to date with the latest horticultural practices and knowledge. Documenting these hours accurately in the Volunteer Management System (VMS) is crucial for maintaining certification and tracking educational progress. This guide will walk you through the process of obtaining and documenting CE hours in VMS, from selecting in-person to virtual, to logging in to submitting the hours for approval. Currently every 2nd Wednesday of the month is the Lunch and Learn program, you can attend in person or using the link provided do a virtual. The same applies for the monthly meeting which is held every 3rd Thursday of the month, either in person or virtual via the link. This provides 24 opportunities to earn 10 hours of education.

Step-by-Step Process

1. Logging into VMS

To begin, navigate to the Volunteer Management System's login page. Enter your username and password to access your account. If you have forgotten your login credentials, use the 'Forgot Password' link to reset your password or contact your program VMS coordinator for assistance.

2. Accessing the CE Entry Page

Once you have logged in, you will be directed to the VMS dashboard. Look for your Information Tab and mouse over it, select and add new hours. In the Project drop down menu select (b) 'Continuing Education' section.

3. Entering the Details

After selecting the activity, you will need to enter specific details about the CE hours. This typically includes:

- **Date of Activity:** Enter the date when the educational activity took place.
- **CE Hours:** Indicate the number of CE hours earned from the activity. Ensure that the hours are accurately calculated and match the duration of the educational event.
- **Miles:** Any miles driven for the event

- **Description:** Write a brief description of the activity, highlighting the main topics covered. This is a required field. These hours may not be counted towards your minimum requirements unless a description of your volunteer or educational activity is included.

4. Uploading Supporting Documents

Some VMS platforms may require or allow you to upload supporting documents, such as certificates of completion, event flyers, or other proof of attendance. If this option is available, ensure that you upload clear and readable copies of these documents. Check with your VMS Director for clarification. This step helps verify the CE hours and provides a record for future reference.

5. Submitting for Approval

Once you have entered all the necessary details and uploaded any supporting documents, review the information for accuracy. Make any necessary corrections before submitting the CE hours for approval. Click the 'Submit' button to send the entry to your program VMS coordinator.

6. Tracking the Status

After submission, you can track the status of your CE hours in the VMS. The system may provide updates on whether the hours have been approved, are pending review, or have been rejected. If any issues arise, such as missing information or discrepancies, you may be contacted for clarification or additional documentation.

Best Practices for Documenting CE Hours

1. Timely Documentation

It is best to document your CE hours as soon as possible after completing the educational activity. Prompt documentation ensures that details are fresh in your mind and reduces the risk of forgetting important information.

2. Accurate and Complete Entries

Ensure that all entries are accurate and complete. Double-check dates, titles, descriptions, and the number of hours before submitting. Inaccurate entries can lead to delays in approval or rejection of the documented hours.

3. Keep Personal Records

In addition to documenting CE hours in VMS, maintain personal records of your educational activities. Keep copies of certificates, event programs, and any other relevant documents. This practice provides a backup in case of any discrepancies or technical issues with the VMS.

4. Understand CEU Requirements

Familiarize yourself with the specific CE requirements of your Master Gardener program. Different programs may have varying rules regarding the types of activities that qualify for CE and the number of hours required for certification renewal. Understanding these requirements helps ensure that you meet your program's expectations. In our ppm dated October 2024, see chapter 7 item c. approved continuing education hours, and Chapter 14A Education Director (B).

5. Links for Continuing Education Hours

When you click into the links you will be taken to the recording of both the Lunch and Learn and Monthly Meetings. You can select from that list a watch the video presentation. Once complete log your hours and tell us what video you watched. For the AgriLife on-line programs some of these are at cost, some are free you will have to choose. As your Education Director I would stick with the videos we produce in the first link.

- GCMG Lunch & Learns/Monthly Meetings- Virtual
https://gcmgtx.org/LL_MM_Videos/index.html
- On-line Programs Via Texas A&M AgriLife Extension website
<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>

Conclusion

Documenting CE hours in the Volunteer Management System is a straightforward process that requires diligence and timely entries. By following the steps outlined in this guide and adhering to best practices, Master Gardeners can efficiently track their continuing education and maintain their certification. Staying current with CEs not only enhances your horticultural knowledge but also contributes to the overall success and credibility of the Master Gardener program.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. The Texas A&M University system, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts Cooperating. Persons with disabilities needing accommodations for effective participation in the program should contact the County Extension Office at least one week prior to the program or event to request mobility, hearing, visual or other assistance.

