Oregon Master Gardener™ Association Fall 2026

The Gardener's Pen

News for Oregon's Master Gardener Volunteers

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WE NEED YOU
Share your gifts with OMGA. See page 2 and 4. .

FINAL CALL
MG of the year and other nominations due soon. See below.

READ ALL ABOUT IT!
MG programs cover a lot of ground. See stories below.

EXTENDING OUR REACH AROUND THE STATE

This summer, OSU Extension's News and Public Affairs team published an exceptional collection of stories showcasing the breadth, creativity and community impact of Master Gardener programs across Oregon:

- Tribal Roots blends gardening, culture and recovery—Douglas County
- Veterans build farming skills and kinship in Douglas County—Douglas County. The Boots on the Ground, Hands in the Soil program began with the vision of a Master Gardener volunteer.
- 4-H Junior Master Gardener programs introduce Oregon youths to horticulture—Douglas County
- Klamath County re-envisions Master Gardener volunteer training—Klamath County
- Refreshed Master Gardener summer series earns recognition—Wasco County
- Master Gardener volunteer brings plant advice to the airwaves—Multnomah County
- Josephine County Master Gardeners provide practical guidance—Josephine County
- Joy of Gardening celebrates 50 years of OSU Extension Master Gardener Program

Who inspires you?

One of the best parts of being an MG volunteer is working with people who generously share their time, knowledge and passion with others.

Maybe it's someone who welcomes new volunteers, builds partnerships, creates new workshops or classes for local gardeners, or always steps up when something needs to be done—even if no one sees them doing it.

The statewide awards are open to all certified volunteers, even those who are not OMGA members. Look for people who demonstrate leadership, community impact, educational excellence and dedication to strengthening the program.

Nominations for statewide awards will be accepted through October 31.

Many deserving volunteers never seek recognition for themselves. If someone comes to mind, the OSU Master Gardener Program office encourages you to submit their name today!

Calling All Master Gardeners!

Do you know your local state legislators? If not, would you like to meet them? Are you interested in helping OSU Extension Services advocate for resources to support Master Gardener programs? The 2027 legislative session begins in January, and we need your help!

There are several ways to get involved in your local community:
- Attend and speak at local town hall events
- Attend or testify at legislative budget "road shows"
- Write letters to your state legislators

Additionally, OSU will host an advocacy day in Salem, offering the opportunity to walk the halls of the Capitol and share the impact of the Master Gardener program. If you are interested in legislative advocacy for the 2027 session, please complete this *short interest form.*

To learn more, you can also attend the **Zoom Master Gardener Legislative Learning Session on November 12, 2026,** from 3:30 to 4:30 PM. Please sign up using the interest form link above.

For additional information, feel free to contact OMGA Advocacy Chair Lee McKenzie at 503-510-9728 or leolamckenzie@gmail.com.

50 years ~ 50 tons!

That is our food donation goal for 2026! 1 in 6 people and 1 in 5 children face food insecurity in Oregon. Make sure your hard and helpful work is recorded through VRS or your program office before November.

Have you ordered aprons or totes?

Get your gear here! Maybe a sticker, magnet or water bottle for your new Master Gardeners graduates? Help share our mission—order today!

The OMGA Growing and Belonging Work Group

Aims to create a statewide resource for chapters highlighting work that fosters a culturally competent, inclusive, and accessible environment for all members and the communities we serve, focusing on these categories:

- Outreach and Partnerships
- Inclusive Practices
- Education

Examples of strategies that **our chapters are currently doing:** Seed libraries, injury prevention for elderly gardeners, senior living communities, schools, Head Start, focusing on community gardens, garden clubs, Tribes, organizations serving underrepresented populations; museums, churches, Seed to Supper, Grow Your Own on a Budget, distributed plant starts, container-friendly plants, bilingual and kid-friendly educational materials at food pantries, improved physical access for annual plant sale and demo gardens.

Seed to Supper - A Program That Changes Lives

Seed to Supper is a free, comprehensive, six-week beginning gardening course, designed to give adult gardeners the tools they need to successfully grow a portion of their own food on a limited budget.

The program was co-created by the Oregon Food Bank and OSU Extension. For many years, Oregon Food Bank oversaw administration, and OSU Master Gardeners served as program educators. Today, the program is entirely run and administered as an OSU Extension project. We are grateful for Oregon Food Bank's generosity and former partnership for Seed to Supper, and have pledged to maintain a focus for those who are low income and most likely to experience food insecurity.

It is taught in partnership with many different community organizations, from food pantries and food banks, to places of worship and prisons.

Newly updated course books will be available later this fall. The curriculum is available in English and Spanish (Siembra la Cena). To receive updates, please register each Seed to Supper course you are offering.

What is included:

- Access to the digital PDF copies of the Seed to Supper program course book;
- Access to digital presentations (Powerpoint files) to teach Seed to Supper;
- Access to digital templates for customizing and promoting the course;
- A digital library of activities to customize courses to students' interests and needs.

The program previously had funding that allowed us to distribute free printed course books. That funding is no longer available, so chapters and other providers will need to order course books at cost.

Your OMGA awarded $8,000 in grants this year for the following projects around the state:

Enhancing the learning garden for a Junior Master Gardener Program and the Boots on the Ground veterans' program; strengthening two cornerstone community horticulture programs; Seed to Supper and Youth Garden programs; low water turf and turf alternatives trial in demonstration garden; new educational signage for demonstration garden; Permaculture Garden-Food Forest; seed library initiative; create an outdoor learning center, an outdoor educational space for community education; bilingual educational signs for demonstration gardens.

The 2026 Joy of Gardening conference was once again a valuable and worthy event for Master Gardeners and friends from around the state. Engaging presenters, timely topics and energetic participants. Good job everyone!

Please enjoy this song written by Rhonda Frick-Wright, a Clackamas County Master Gardener volunteer. It was sung by all at their annual chapter picnic where the atmosphere stayed jovial despite the impending threat of rain. After all, what more do you need than lifelong friends, tasty food, a raffle and trivia, music and merriment, and good memories to win the day?

Happy 50th Birthday Master Gardeners

(To the tune of Clementine, Key of C) ©Rhonda Frick-Wright 2026

1. Extension agents, couldn't answer, all the questions—that they got,
So in nineteen, seventy six, Gray Thompson—had a thought,
What if he could, train a group of, dedica—ted gardeners?
They could help with, all those clients, give advice— and ease their fears.

Chorus: Master Gardeners, Master Gardeners,
Working hard, throughout the years
It's been fifty, pretty nifty,
Many changes brought us here.

2. Linn and Clackamas, were the first two, counties trai—ning volunteers,
Thirty six signed, on to learn of, plants and in—sects with their peers.
Then in nineteen, eighty five a, 'nother hel—per came along,
O. M. G. A., incorporated, county pro—grams could belong. **Chorus**

3. Mini College, Seed to Supper, demo gar—dens and much more,
Educating, and supporting, public skills—and garden lore.
(slower) Twenty twenty, Covid hit and, programs shut—tered right and left,
Had to slip in, and out of gardens, learned to zoom—but felt bereft. **Chorus**

4. Now we're back and, pushing boundaries, Belong and Gro—wing every day,
Call or text us, we'll find answers, our best know—ledge comes your way.
Master Gardeners, Master Gardeners, working hard—throughout the years,
It's been fifty, pretty nifty, through the changes... WE'RE STILL HERE!

HELP WANTED: TREASURER

OMGA is currently in need of a treasurer to manage our funds, as well as assist chapter treasurers in their roles, including managing IRS reporting forms. If this is a skill you've enjoyed in your life and you can share that gift with us, please let Chris know: crusch3837@gmail.com. And encourage your fellow volunteers to join the OMGA team - you won't regret it!

OMGA
OREGON MASTER GARDENER™ ASSOCIATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

[More events at the OSU Extension calendar]

Continuing Ed credit? See calendar.

Sept. 14 Seed to Supper begins, Grants Pass and Merlin
Sept. 26 Gardening for Birds, Independence
Oct. 9 Veteran Farmer Coffee + Chat, Albany
Oct. 20 Cut Flower Garden Basics, Eugene
Oct. 24 Fire Resistant Plants, Siletz
Nov. 14 Plant propagation by hardwood and softwood stem cuttings, Portland

Oregon State University Extension Service Master Gardener™

The Oregon Master Gardener™ Association is a statewide, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose purpose is to enhance and support the OSU Master Gardener™ program. Oregon State University Extension Service offers educational programs, activities, and materials without discrimination based on age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran's status.