

May, 26, 2020

Hi EMG Coordinators,

I wanted to share some updates with you concerning the Purdue Extension Master Gardener Program (EMG) and EMG Association sponsored meetings and events. Please, once again, remember guidelines and restrictions often change during this fluid situation.

IMPORTANT: Regarding the attached Covid Safety Plan form you received on May 15, 2020, I talked with Dr. Henderson and want to clarify that you DO NOT need to submit Covid Safety Plans for face-to-face EMG events where the local EMG association is the sponsor and/or the registration and budget is administered through a non-Purdue account (i.e. an EMG association checking account).

Now through June 30, 2020

- All face-to-face Purdue EMG meetings and events are to be postponed or cancelled.
- Demo garden work and virtual plant sales may continue following the guidelines sent in previous emails.
- EMG Associations should continue to meet virtually.

Starting July 1, 2020

- Face-to-face EMG meetings and events where Purdue Extension is the sponsor and/or the registration and budget are administered through a Purdue account **DO REQUIRE a Covid Safety Plan approved by Dr. Henderson**. Refer to the email sent to Extension Educators by Dr. Henderson on May 15, 2020 for policies regarding these events.
- Face-to-face EMG meetings and events where the local EMG association is the sponsor and/or the registration and budget are administered through a non-Purdue account (i.e. an EMG association checking account), **DO NOT require a Covid Safety Plan approved by Dr. Henderson**.
- Face-to-face EMG association meetings and events will be required to follow the Back on Track Indiana guidelines (<https://backontrack.in.gov/>) for the County's stage at the time of the meeting or event.
- Some venues and/or local governments may have more stringent requirements than Back on Track Indiana, EMG associations will need to follow those requirements.
- EMG Coordinators will want to advise EMG associations to consider event budgets that address the financial implications of lower attendance (25% lower than previous years) or possible cancellation. EMG associations are also advised to ask their insurance provider about Covid-19 coverage.

Each EMG association will need to thoughtfully consider how they will implement the Back on Track Indiana requirements. Ideally, the needs of the membership should be considered with sensitivity. As decisions are made concerning whether to hold face-to-face meetings or events, clear communication is important so that individuals can determine how and whether to participate based on their own needs. It would be beneficial to think about options that would allow at-risk individuals to participate at whatever level possible.

If you need further assistance or have questions about planning in-person meetings or events related to Purdue EMG Program, please feel free to contact me.

May 5, 2020

Hi Coordinators,

I trust this email finds you well! I know this has been a challenging time for us all! I want to say that I've been so blown away by your resilience and creativity as you have continued to support the Purdue EMG volunteers in your county! Good job everyone!

Here are a few updates for you:

Fall 2020 Purdue EMG Basic Trainings

As you know, this spring (2020) coordinators hosting EMG basic trainings had to convert the delivery of their training to a virtual method very quickly. Many of you hosted these sessions by WebEx or Zoom, made use of our archived training video page, and utilized BaseCamp, email, or other platforms to facilitate discussion with participants and share resources. Again, great job! We also converted the post-program survey, post-test, and final exam to Qualtrics.

For Fall 2020, we are not sure what to expect. But, we'll need to be ready to offer the training virtually, if needed. The [Purdue EMG State Advisory Committee](#) has formed a sub-committee to investigate virtual EMG Basic training options to fulfill this need. We'll keep you informed as we learn more. If you are planning to host an EMG Basic Training in Fall 2020, please complete the training request

survey: https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8iSYwpEb6SyCCcR

2019 Purdue EMG Program Impact Flyer

I have been able to work with Ag Communications to update the 2019 Purdue EMG Program Impacts flyer.

You can find the statewide version here: <https://tinyurl.com/2019purdueemgimpacts>. Feel free to share this resource!

I've attached a fillable pdf version that Coordinators can use to report local impacts of their local program. Remember, MG Manager has some great reports features in SuperAdmin to assist you with gathering county EMG data. I would be happy to help you with questions about how to build those reports. This is an important time to celebrate these program impacts!
[16-37 Impact Flyer blank 2019](#)

EMG Certificates Updated

We have also worked with Ag Communications to update the branding and text on all fillable pdf Purdue EMG Program certificates. These should be available on the t drive and Coordinators only page very soon!

April 21, 2020

Hi EMG Coordinators,

I hope this email finds you and your family well!

Here are some items for you regarding the Purdue EMG Program:

Suspension of minimum volunteer hours requirement for the remainder of 2020

Due to cancelations and restrictions associated with Covid-19, the Purdue Extension Master Gardener (EMG) minimum volunteer hours requirement is suspended for the remainder of 2020. This means that Purdue Extension Master Gardeners will be able to report less than 12 volunteer hours and still maintain active status. Purdue EMG volunteers should not jeopardize their health or safety through their participation in the program. If Purdue Extension Master Gardeners are able to safely volunteer, they should continue to report these hours in MG Manager. Information reported in MG Manager is extremely important for communicating the impacts of the program to funding agencies and stakeholders. There are many opportunities for education hours – EMG volunteers should continue to report these as well. If EMG volunteers are unable to find sufficient educational opportunities, they should contact their EMG county coordinator.

For volunteer activity and continued training ideas for Purdue EMG's while at home, visit the web pages below:

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/volunteerideas-at-home/>

<https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/continuedhours/>

Cancelation or postponement of all Purdue Extension Events through June 30

- All Purdue EMG events scheduled through June 30 should be postponed or canceled.
- Purdue EMG associations should continue to meet virtually.
- Educational demo/community/food garden work may continue as long as EMG volunteers adhere to sanitation guidelines, social distancing and travel restrictions. (Resource: *GARDENING: A Guide for Community Gardens During the COVID-19 Pandemic* - <https://extension.purdue.edu/article/36666>)
- Online plant sales with scheduled remote pickup, sanitation and social distancing procedures may continue. Please follow travel restrictions where they apply. (See email sent on April 10 for a possible plant sale model and here is a resource written for the green industry that may be helpful: <https://www.purduelandscapereport.org/article/green-industry-businesses-share-protocols-to-maximize-the-health-and-safety-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>)

National Volunteer Week, April 19-25, 2020

- More information found at: <https://www.pointsoflight.org/nvw/>

Board member training needs

- Please refer to the email sent by Carla Kidwell regarding board member training needs assessment. You may share this email with current Purdue EMG board members. It is voluntary and anonymous. Thanks!

Dear Volunteer Board Members,

A group of Extension staff have convened to develop training resources for Extension boards and committees. Could you take the brief survey below to help us identify your individual and group training needs of the various boards and committees you serve on. Please complete the survey by May 11.

Survey link: https://purdue.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_71k2pTPzDFqIXOt

EMG Basic Training video archive

- *Fruit Gardening* was added to the archived video page and a MP4 of the video to the T drive. Thank you to Amanda Mosiman for providing this presentation and video!

April 10, 2020

HI EMG Coordinators,

I hope this email finds you and your family well and enjoying Spring!

Here are a few quick updates for you:

Southwestern Indiana MG Association (SWIMGA) Plant Sale Information (From Andrew Smith, Extension Educator, Vanderburgh County)

- Plant list online where people can choose and pay for their plants 100% online.
- SWIMGA is working on a method (using their website and the application described below) for each customer to be given a time slot to pick up their plants. Spreading out customer pickup is a priority to maintain social distancing guidelines.
- EMG volunteers will prepack and box orders for pickup by customers.
- Upon arrival at the pickup location, the customer will call to notify an EMG volunteer, pull up, pop their trunk, and an EMG, wearing proper personal protective equipment (PPE), will place the box in their trunk, and send them on their way. There will be no direct contact between EMGs and the customers. No exchanging of money.
- There will be 10 or less people at the pickup location at all times and all will practice social distancing.
- SWIMGA is using [WooCommerce](#). It will interface with the [SWIMGA website](#) which is powered by WordPress. The WooCommerce application "hosting" fee is charged through Word Press; the WooCommerce app is free. There is not an additional charge for using the WooCommerce application. WooCommerce allows the customer to do all the searching, buying, etc. of the plants. The application will connect to SWIMGA's existing [SQUARE](#) account for customers to pay for the plants using their credit cards.
- Contact Andrew Smith (smit3744@purdue.edu) with additional questions.

Resources and Programs

- (NEW!) [Suggestions for Extension Professionals when Engaging with Volunteers Virtually](#) (also available on the Purdue Extension Hub)
- (NEW!) [Volunteer Ideas for Purdue EMG's while at Home](#)
- (NEW!) [Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Lunch and Learn/Happy Hour Series](#) (I am speaking on *Spring Lawn Care* on April 16 and so the OSUE MG State Coordinator, Pam Bennett invited Purdue EMG volunteers to participate too!)
- [Web-based Education Hours Opportunities for EMG volunteers](#) (updated often)
- [Purdue Online Gardening Resources](#) (updated often)
- [Covid-19 Resources for Purdue EMG Programs](#) (updated often)

Check out the attached photo provided by Jeff Burbrink... the Elkhart Co EMG Hotline team posted this sign at the Goshen Farmer's Market... Purdue EMG's and Coordinators are so

resilient! I love that! I'm sure there are lots of other examples of this throughout the state! Thank you!

Stay safe and thank you for all you're doing during this time to engage with Purdue EMG volunteers!



March 25, 2020

Hi EMG Coordinators,

Volunteers working in gardens that grow produce for food banks during the Indiana stay-at-home order.

- EMG Coordinators have asked whether volunteers working in gardens that grow produce for food banks is considered an essential activity during the Indiana stay-at-home order. I highly recommend that you READ this article, ***GARDENING: A Guide for Community Gardens During the COVID-19 Pandemic***<https://extension.purdue.edu/article/36666> by Purdue Extension. It gives excellent guidance on working in and with community/education gardens during the COVID-19 crisis.
- From the article above: ***“To make decisions on garden availability and access, Purdue Extension advises that community garden leadership consult with local government leaders to determine if their space is considered essential.”***
- Other Purdue Extension COVID-19 response articles can be found here: <https://extension.purdue.edu/label/44>
- Virtual meeting resources and other resources for EMG programs: <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/virtual-meeting-resources-for-purdue-extension-master-gardener-programs/>

Sharing ideas for coordinating Purdue EMG Programs

- I wanted to invite you to join the **#purduemgcoordinators** Slack channel... This is a great place to share ideas, questions, etc. related coordinating a Purdue EMG Program...
- Follow this link to join: https://join.slack.com/t/purdueextension/shared_invite/zt-d1ve28xc-YmOHVQEVE~3LMbVFRDUF_w
- Let's keep the conversations going....

[Example Plant Sale Order Form](#) (courtesy of Amanda Mosiman)

[Example Plant Sale Order Form](#) (courtesy of Michele Jones)

[Plant Photos Sheet for Remote Sales](#) (courtesy of Michele Jones)

MG Manager Update

- Officer/Committee member title was added to the volunteer profile page. Coordinators or EMG's can add their committee/officer title to their profile information which will also be visible on the county directory page.
- Purdue branding was updated to the site.

March 20, 2020

Hi Purdue EMG Coordinators,

After further guidance from Rick Foster and the Purdue Extension Leadership Team, I wanted to make some revisions and clarifications to the Coordinator update sent yesterday, March 19.

“Meetings” vs. “Events” clarification:

- “Events” – all face-to-face Purdue Extension events where the public are invited to attend are to be postponed or cancelled through May 17.
- “Meetings” – Face-to-face meetings of less than 10 people may be held, when absolutely needed and when the people involved observe social distancing guidelines (no physical contact and stay at least 6 feet away from another person). However, I would encourage you and EMG volunteers to meet virtually through May 17. Keep in mind that this date may be extended.

Demo garden workdays:

- Given the “meeting” guidelines above, EMG volunteers may hold work days in demo gardens (at the same physical address), if there are less than 10 people working in the garden and they observe the social distancing guidelines (remain 6ft apart and no physical contact).
- Again, please ask volunteers to bring their own garden tools to avoid contamination.
- But, please consider local health department guidance and restrictions on travel before organizing small crew work days in gardens.

Plant sales:

- Given the “meeting” guidelines above, ask EMG volunteers to be creative with plant sales options such as online or phone ordering, remote pick-up location(s) that minimize face-to-face contact, etc.. For example, they could set up an unstaffed pickup location

for plant pickup by customers or if there is a need for an EMG volunteer to monitor the pickup location, observe all social distancing and “meeting” guidelines mentioned above.

- Once again, consider local ordinances, health department guidance, and restrictions on travel before organizing plants with online/phone orders and remote pick-up locations or delivery.

I apologize for any confusion this may have caused. We are all trying to adjust and offer guidance that protects Extension staff, volunteers, and the public.

March 19, 2020

Dear Purdue EMG Coordinators,

I’m sure most of you have read Dr. Karen Plaut’s email (sent on 3/18/20) with further Covid-19 updates for the College of Ag. In her email, **she mentions the extended no face-to-face date until May 17th for all Purdue Extension related meetings and events. All Purdue Extension related meetings and events (including all Purdue EMG association meetings and events) from now through May 17, are to be canceled or postponed.** This is effective immediately. I would continue to prepare our valuable Purdue EMG volunteers that this situation is changing rapidly. This no face-to-face contact date may be extended further as the situation evolves. I wanted to give you some more updates on resources and guidance on some questions I’ve received from our colleagues:

How should we handle Purdue EMG demo garden work days?

- Demo garden work days are considered face-to-face meetings and should be canceled or postponed through May 17th when they involve more than 1 person per garden location with the exception of 2 people who live in the same household.
- An option would be to allow only 1 volunteer per garden location (at a physical address) to work in the garden alone (except when 2 people who live in the same household). If you elect to do this, ask the volunteers to bring their own garden tools in order to avoid possible contamination of shared tools. You could use [Doodle Poll](#) or some other scheduling tool to schedule the work times for volunteers.
- But, please consider local health department guidance and restrictions on travel before organizing lone workers in gardens.

What can we do with plants ordered for a plant sale that is now postponed or canceled?

- You should cancel or postpone any plant sale that is scheduled between now and May 17th. Keep in mind that this date may be extended.
- If you don’t have any plant material on order or in the possession of the EMG association, I would advise the group to just cancel the plant sale. This situation is too fluid to allow for adequate planning. If your volunteers have not dug plants for the sale, I would advise them not to dig and pot plants.
- Some EMG associations have ordered plants that are to be delivered soon or have already been grown for their sale. What can they do with the plant material? Here are some options:
 - Investigate whether you can sell most of the order to another organization, municipality, or business. Consider selling them at cost or lower to cut the losses.

- Donate the plants to the local park or another organization, plant them in a demo garden (see guidelines above for working in demo gardens), etc.
- Investigate setting up a remote sales station and take orders online or by phone. I've done just a little research on this option and have found it to be a bit complicated.
 - Here are some items to consider when thinking about organizing a remote plant sale:
 - **Maintain NO face-to-face contact throughout the process.**- No one should be stationed at the pickup location, only one person working with the plants at a time, etc.
 - **Taking orders** - If the EMG association has an online method of taking payment (not one that runs through a personal account), then they may be able to take orders online using this method. If they do not have an online method of taking payments, then it would be acceptable to take payments/orders using a mail in order form and check payment to the association not an individual. I would advise against any unsecured payment or order method, like a payment box at the pickup site or accepting cash.
 - **Getting orders to customers** – Prepare a un-staffed pick-up location where people pick-up orders labelled with their name. You may also be able to do a NO face-to-face delivery of the plants to people's homes.
 - **Nonprofits are limited to no more than 30 selling days in a calendar year to avoid collecting sales tax.** Orders should be limited to a timeframe of less than 30 days. No orders taken or accepted before or after a specified date range. There may be some restrictions on out of state sales as well. Refer to <https://www.in.gov/dor/5761.htm> or an attorney for more information.
 - **EMG organizations should consult local ordinances and advisories such as non-essential travel restrictions that might affect their eligibility to conduct remote sales.**
 - **The following article written by the DFFS team for commercial businesses may be helpful:** <https://extension.purdue.edu/article/36549>
 - **Once again, please consider local health department guidance and restrictions before moving forward**

For those in the middle of a EMG Basic Training, what if participants don't prefer to take the remaining classes virtually or don't have internet access?

- I would recommend that participants finish the training virtually now, if they are able. Coordinators could offer free attendance at a future in-person EMG Basic Training hosted by your county. Their attendance could be approved toward their continuing education hours requirement. They will get the training twice!
- Currently, we don't have another method of providing the video recordings for those without internet. If they don't have internet capability, Coordinators could allow these participants to finish their training free of charge at a future in-person EMG Basic training. Coordinators could also schedule special makeup sessions using live instructors, recordings, or other virtual methods after the face-to-face meeting restrictions have lifted.

Video Resources Added!

- I added Invasive Species to the archive! Thank you to Phil Woolery! <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/purdue-emg-basic-training-core-topics-recorded-archives/>
- And, additional web-based resources were added to: <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/continuedhours/>

Please don't hesitate to call or email me with any questions you may have!

March 17, 2020

Dear Purdue EMG Coordinators,

Like all of you, I've never dealt with this situation before. I feel as though I've been trying to catch up and wrap my head around this for the last few days. I'm sure many of you feel this way too. I have also been so blown away by yours and our volunteers' cooperation and patience! Here is some information and a few updates to help you finish out your Purdue EMG Basic Trainings and work with existing volunteers through this crisis:

- **Supporting Purdue EMG Basic Trainings currently in progress**
 - Thank you to Amy Thompson for her leadership to gather an inventory of recorded training sessions and to Karen Mitchell, Phil Woolery, Valerie Clingerman, and others for sharing videos. You can find them here: <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/purdue-emg-basic-training-core-topics-recorded-archives/>.
 - The archived video page above should NOT be shared with the public but with current EMG Basic Training participants. Coordinators can choose to use these to provide training or use a live virtual method like WebEx.
 - You may also use these for "make-up" classes for those participants that miss a class due to illness or some other reason.
 - There are multiple versions of some topics. I wanted to give you some choices.
 - I will encourage all coordinators to record their upcoming WebEx trainings for future use. We will continue to update this archive with new recordings as they are made available.
 - Recordings for Plant Nutrition, Invasive Species and Fruit Gardening are coming soon.
 - Please visit the T drive for quizzes and handouts for each topic. Keep in mind that they may not completely match the video presentation on this page but that's the best we can do for now.
 - What if participants don't have internet access to access to watch videos or WebEx to finish their training?
 - After the face-to-face shutdown, I would allow those participants to come to their respective county Extension offices to finish their training by watching recordings of the missed classes.
 - What do we do if the shut-down extends past the final exam? Here are some options:

- Send a printed copy of exam and the instructions page to each participant by mail. (found on the T drive)
 - Postpone final exams to a later date when face-to-face meetings resume.
 - We are working on developing a Qualtrics version of the final exam. I will send it out when its ready.
- What if the shut-down extends past the time to administer the post-test and post-program survey. I am waiving the requirement for the post-test and post-program survey. If you can get it done, fine. If not, please don't worry about it.
- **Providing continuing education opportunities for Purdue EMG Volunteers.**
 - Here are some web-based options: <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/continuededhours/>
 - Are there others we can add? Please send those to me.
- **Providing virtual volunteer opportunities to Purdue EMG's. Some ideas...**
 - Writing home horticulture articles for websites, social media, etc. Purdue EMGs should be sure to follow all pesticide information policies and have coordinators review the articles.
 - Continue with association and committee meetings using virtual meeting options.
 - Virtual home gardening question hotline via email for the public. (supervised by coordinators)
 - You might have other ideas to share?
- **I have prepared a Purdue EMG Program Virtual Resources Page here: <https://www.purdue.edu/hla/sites/master-gardener/virtual-meeting-resources-for-purdue-extension-master-gardener-programs/>**
- **Canceled or postponed events.**
 - I have removed all EMG events between March 16 and May 2 from our website.