

Guidelines and Resources for SJC WSU Master Gardener Authors

Master Gardeners have the education and credibility to provide science-based best gardening practices to meet the need for readily available safe and effective gardening advice. Master Gardeners can research and present this information in an accessible way. By developing and publishing an article we educate ourselves and our fellow gardeners. We also have the opportunity to share the joy, sadness, and surprise we experience in our gardens. Outlets for published articles include neighborhood, Master Gardener, and garden club newsletters.

The following guidelines are for the SJC WSU Master Gardener newsletter. That newsletter goes to fellow Master Gardeners as well as to community gardeners. Content should be of interest to both groups.

Topic/content ideas

- SJC WSU program news, including upcoming events and reports (with photos) of completed events
- Featured plants: many possibilities
- Gardening tips: many possibilities
- Insects/pollinators: many possibilities
- Volunteer spotlight: generally written by a newsletter team member in consultation with the MG volunteer being acknowledged – we welcome input from others.
- Master Gardeners in action: let us know what you and other SJC WSU MGs are doing. This can vary from a photo with a caption to a complete article.
- Book review: many possibilities
- News from county garden clubs
- And much more – The Washington State University Extension Master Gardener program handbook includes a list of *Program Priorities* with a short description of the role MGs have in addressing these issues (p.5 of the 2020 revision). The priorities are horticultural skills, clean water, water conservation, wildfire preparedness, local food, pollinators, climate change, plant biodiversity, soil health, and nearby nature. All would be good topics for articles.

Guidelines for authors

- Format for submissions:
 - Submit articles in a Word document or in a format the newsletter team can save as a Word document.
 - Photos enhance articles. Do include photos with captions to support the text of the article. JPEGs only please.
 - Do not embed photos in Word documents. Do attach photos separately as JPEGs in high resolution format (1 to 4 MB ideally).
 - Fliers or announcements of events are welcome in JPEG or PDF format.
 - Articles of various lengths from a few sentences up to 700 words are welcome.
- Protecting the intellectual property of others:

- Photo credits and permissions must be provided. Include names and permissions of people in the photo and the photographer.
- Include complete references for sources you referred to or synthesized in the article. It may be helpful to include additional resources for readers.
- Publication and Submission schedule:
 - Newsletters are published at the beginning of February, May, August, and November
 - Submission should be submitted at least a month earlier, by the beginning of January, April, July, and October.
- Editing:
 - Members of the newsletter team may edit or ask the author to edit for clarity, length, punctuation, spelling, and grammar. Except for very minor edits, if a newsletter team member makes changes to an article the team member will confirm with the author that the changes are acceptable
- Sometimes it is helpful to mention commercial products or businesses in an article. In that case the newsletter team will add the following statement:
 - *Disclaimer: References to commercial products or businesses do not imply an endorsement by Washington State University and are provided for educational purposes only.*
- More about photos:
 - When possible, use your own or photos from others who give you permission.
 - There are free photos on the following websites. If you use them give credit to the photographer and site.
 - If you use a photo from a photographer or site and you are not sure about the copyright restrictions, you must ask for permission from the individual or the publication and state that the photo is being used with permission.
 - Sites where you may find free photos to accompany your article (note that restrictions on use may vary from photo to photo within a site, check carefully & provide accurate information):
 - <https://www.bugwood.org/plants.cfm>
 - <https://www.flickr.com/>
 - <https://www.pexels.com/creative-commons-images/>
 - <https://pixabay.com/>
 - <https://unsplash.com/images/stock>
 - <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Images>