**2020 UC Master Gardener Program Annual Coordinator Meeting**

Mini-Round Table: Demo Gardens

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**Best Management Practices for Education and Outreach in an Outdoor Setting**

* PICTURES! Take pictures – they will help you use the garden to teach inside and outside of the garden
* Have printed materials on hand for attendees to take away
* Restrooms
* Clarity about what we want to demonstrate – focused theme
* Vary the day/time of workshops
* Practice IPM
* Informal signage that speaks to the audience – non-experts, 4th grade reading level
* Ask how the garden increases/enhances learning, if it doesn’t change it until it does … work in progress always
* Garden info in multiple languages
* Workshop times: weekends, summer evenings
* Interactive signage (if that fits into your budget)
* Connecting outreach to UC goals
* Broad advertising/marketing plans to advertise classes
* Video record the presentations
* Shaded areas for MGs and guests to share info and ask questions
* Training volunteers to present LIVE (i.e. without PowerPoint)
* Clear guidelines and instructions about who can use the space and how
* Alternative areas to go in case of inclement weather
* Good advertising of activities
* Signs for low vision guests and MGs
* Create community amongst the volunteers who are volunteering
* Highlight the good and the bad – the garden doesn’t have to be perfect, just needs to be a good teaching tool
* Connect to community in formal and informal ways
* Consider a sound system
* Ways to educate when MGs are not present – signage!
* Focused theme and goal
* Think about how the garden can be a collaboration between other groups/agencies
* Change in the garden can be good think, mistakes are learning tools

**Demo Garden ‘Must-haves’**

* Handouts about the MGP or garden
* Bilingual signage
* Restroom
* Somewhere to sit
* Tool storage area, locks
* Sensory gardens (lambs ear, rosemary, sage, etc.)
* Children’s area
* Message board
* Signage
* Benches
* Wide paths for wheels (strollers, wheel chairs, wheelbarrows, carts)
* All paths 4 ft. wide – at least
* Hand washing station
* Safety (personal safety)
* ADA signs, paths, multilingual, space for teaching, ADA compliant raised beds
* Our logo!
* SHADE
* Brochures
* Raised beds, ADA compliant
* Location Location Location
* Where is the garden located in the county?
* Type of material used in path
* Plant materials that are appropriate to the area
* Location – ease of access for community members, public transit?
* Contemplation, wellness garden
* Water access

**Demo gardens are places where …**

* Visitors can have a restorative experiences
* People go to relax
* Plant sale
* Hands-on workshops
* Scavenger hunts
* The public comes to learn how to grow their own food
* Interact with public and park staff; good garden practices; share knowledge and skills; casual teaching one-on-one (rather than lectures)
* Teach multiple things (low water, beneficial plants, mulch benefits, composting)
* To get kids to fall in low with the outdoors and gardening
* Self-guided learning
* MGs teach each other and the public
* Host community events, collaborative events; a place to interact with the public in a positive environment
* MGs can get hours
* Field trips
* We promote what UC does for the public
* People can be inspired
* Volunteer recognition celebration
* Use the garden as part of MG training

**Volunteer Management Tips for the Demo Garden Context**

* Put in place structure that eliminates the possibility for one person to have too much decision making power
* Remind that the garden is public facing
* Multiple purposes: education, fundraising, research
* Communication with section leads is VITAL
* MGs think they are helping but end up doing things that the lead may not have wanted done (digging up a plant that looks dead but isn’t)
* Make sure that where all things are stored is clear to all; irrigation lines; water turn on/off; etc.
* Docent training
* Have a volunteer or two oversee the daily activities of the garden
* Decision for sections still need to be approved by the coordinator/advisor
* Be careful about language – referring to a bed as “Marisa’s” would make other vols feel that they don’t have the power to make changes; The demo garden belongs to no one and everyone
* Delegate responsibility – find strengths within the program (irrigation pro, people interested in native plants); Assign lead to sections and develop a team for that section
* Create job descriptions – make sure vols understand the processes
* Store demo garden info a highly visible spot
* Be vigilant that the garden isn’t exclusive within the program, make it inclusive for all MGs (not just a small group of MGs)
* Appropriate number of MGs and public so that you don’t have over crowding
* Invest in good demo garden training in the beginning so you don’t have to retrain which is hard
* Train all MGs so everyone knows what the garden is about, what is the garden (low water, irrigation toys, etc.)
* Make sure they know safety tips are available (like heat stress)
* Positive work relationship with site management staff
* Be mindful of perceptions of ‘cliques’ with those who work in demo gardens – inclusive not exclusive
* Recognition
* Journal of Extension Article: Use of Demo Gardens in Extension