

All Sonoma County Master Gardeners who have Internet access are required to use VMS for reporting hours. **During the transition to VMS, do not enter any hours into VMS that you have already reported on an hours report form.**

VMS is designed to report each time you volunteer or attend an educational event. You can enter hours once a month or once a quarter if you want (see Event Date, below), but it's probably easier to report your hours immediately than to keep notes and total hours for a month or more.

Do not report the same hours more than once.

If you forget to report hours, you may report them (with the applicable date) at any time, with this exception: The last fiscal year (July through June) is closed as of August 1. **Nothing you add or edit after August 1 for dates before July will be counted towards intern requirements, total hours for awards, etc.**

Interns who have completed the required hours and want to receive their badges at the next membership meeting must report their hours no later than Thursday of the week before the meeting.

You can get to VMS from the MG web site using the same link you use to get the newsletter or go directly to <https://ucanr.org/mg/>. Once you have logged in to VMS, you can choose either "Add New Hours" or "View Your Hours" from the menu on the left-hand side of the screen headed "Your Information".

Note that in Sonoma County we are using the project name to identify both project and location, for example, "Information Table, County Fair" or "Farmers Market, Petaluma", to allow us to summarize hours and contacts on that basis. We are using Event Description to identify specialty topics for which separate reports of hours and contacts are required. Currently the only specialty topic is SOD.

When reporting your hours for a project, include all activities that you do to support the project – coordination, training specifically for the project (such as speaker training or SOD), attending meetings, as well as working at an event.

The VMS allows reporting of both volunteer service hours and continuing education hours on the same page. In Sonoma County we separate these hours. If you have both volunteer service and continuing education hours for one event, report these on separate "Add Hours" pages. For example, if you host at a library workshop, report your hosting as "Speaker/Workshops, Petaluma Library" and the time you spent listening to the program as "Continuing Education, All".

To add hours that have not been reported before, click on "Add New Hours", which will take you to a page that allows you to enter hours for one project at a time. Fill in the following fields:

Event Description

For workshops and demonstrations on specialty topics, use the 3-letter specialty (e.g., SOD) identifier as the first 3 characters of Event. and then select from the names in "apply to project" to show where the workshop took place (e.g., a library workshop). Otherwise, you may use this Event Description to identify different activities for one project, such as coordinating, or training, or whatever. VMS requires this field to be filled with something – unless you are reporting a specialty topic such as SOD, you may hit the space bar if you wish.

Event Date

If you want to report for more than one day, enter a date in the last month for which you are reporting. (Example: If you worked at the desk on Apr 2, Apr 9, and May 4 and have not already reported those dates separately, you may report the total hours for that project and use the date May 4.) Dates may be chosen from the pop-up calendar or entered using one of several formats: m/d/y, d m y, or d-m-y (any of these examples will work: 7/4/76, 7/4/1776, 4-Jul-1776, 4-Jul-76, 4 Jul 1776, 4 Jul 76).

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Apply to Project

Select from the dropdown list. To go quickly to your project, type the first few letters of the project name as used in this list.

All approved projects are in this list. If you cannot find your project, please read all project names in the list in case the name in the list uses different words than you might use. If you are working on a project that has recently been approved by the Board, please wait to report your hours until the list has been updated.

Report workshops and information tables held at garden projects such as Harvest for the Hungry and Sonoma Garden Park separately from other activities at those locations (for example, use “Speaker/Workshop, Sonoma Garden Park” rather than “Sonoma Garden Park” or “Info Table, Harvest for the Hungry” rather than “Harvest for the Hungry”).

Plant and craft sales for such projects as the County Fair Demo Garden and Bloomin’ Backyards are to be reported as part of those projects.

Volunteer Hours

Report anything that is not Continuing Education. Do not include travel time. Note that attending workshops and classes that are not specific training for a particular project counts as Continuing Education, not Volunteer hours. Do not report Volunteer Hours and Continuing Education hours on the same page.

Continuing Education Hours

Report attending monthly membership meetings, workshops and classes; garden tours; reading material such as UC gardening and pest-management publications and horticultural books and periodicals of high standard.

Population Served (Contacts)

Report contacts only if you are a project leader or the only Master Gardener involved in the event (for example, speaking at a garden club for the Speakers Bureau). VMS requires reporting contacts by ethnicity and gender. Please make sure that the total will add up to the total contacts for the event.

When you have filled the above fields, click on the “Save Hours” box at the bottom of the page. The program will take you to your volunteer hours history page. Click on “Add Hours” to add hours for another project or click on one of the other menu options or exit.

To view or edit hours that have been entered into VMS, choose “View Your Hours” from the menu on the left-hand side of the screen headed “Your Information”. All hours that you have entered into VMS (or that have been carried over from the Master data base for you) will be displayed in date order. To see only the reports for a specified period (perhaps the most recent month or two), fill the start date and end date at the top of the page and click on “Submit”.

If you wish to edit a report on the Volunteer Hours History page, click on the activity name for that report. That will take you to a page that looks like the “Add Hours” page. Either click on the “Delete Hours” box at the bottom of the page or make the desired changes and click on the “Save Hours” box.

Remember that after August 1 nothing you edit or add for dates before July will be counted towards intern requirements, total hours for awards, etc.