



Master Gardener Program

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Safety Guidelines for Essential Demonstration Garden Maintenance

Essential Maintenance

WSU Master Gardener volunteers and staff may participate in limited maintenance in demonstration gardens. Maintenance must be performed in compliance with the rules and regulations of the landowner. All work is voluntary. Limit garden maintenance to only activities required to ensure survival of plants and infrastructure, including water systems and fences and safe ingress and egress for passersby and volunteers. WSU Master Gardener volunteers age 65 years or older or at a high risk for complications related to Covid-19, should consider their own personal situation and CDC recommendations when they make the decision to participate in demo garden maintenance. The CDC advises people in vulnerable populations to stay home and to only go out for essential purposes.

Working in Shifts

Work in the garden must be coordinated and staggered between volunteers to allow for required physical distancing. At least two, but not more than ten volunteers are allowed in the garden at one time. Shifts shall be scheduled in advance.

Health and Safety

Non-pharmaceutical interventions must always be followed. Physical distancing requires six feet or more between individuals. When physical distancing is not feasible or when there is opportunity for interaction with less than six feet of distance, volunteers must wear face coverings. Individuals showing symptoms of illness including coughing, sneezing, or fever shall not work. If symptoms begin while on shift, the volunteer must go home and call their local program coordinator. The program coordinator will alert the county director. The county director will follow Health Department protocols for notification. In addition, any volunteers or staff that have household members showing symptoms of illness or have been notified that they have been in contact with someone that is suspected of having contracted or tested positive for COVID-19 must follow public health guidelines for self-isolating prior to returning to the garden.

Tool Use

Volunteers will bring their own hand tools and should not share hand tools. Personal work gloves must be worn when using larger tools and equipment housed at the garden – shovels, wheelbarrows, mowers, weedwhackers, hoses, irrigation equipment, etc. All shared tools must be sanitized between people and after use.

Hygiene

Handwashing requires rubbing hands together with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, followed by rinsing and drying with a clean, disposable towel. More info: [cdc.gov/handwashing](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing). Individuals will wash their hands when arriving at the garden before beginning any work, and before leaving the garden. If handwashing is not an option, individuals must use hand-sanitizer immediately upon arriving at the garden and before leaving the garden.

Non-approved Visitors

No other persons are allowed into the garden, including friends and relatives of WSU Master Gardener volunteers and staff.

Food Supply and Distribution

Growing and harvesting produce from the garden and for delivery to food banks is essential work. Volunteers must follow protocols set by the food bank and local or state Public Health guidelines. Disposable gloves must be worn when harvesting fresh produce. Refrain from touching the face, hair or clothing with the gloves. Social distancing must be exercised when delivering to the food bank, and hands must be washed after making a delivery.

Phased Re-Opening

This guidance supersedes all previous guidance and applies to all phases of Safe Start. All activities must be conducted in compliance with the provisions of any plan promulgated by the appropriate local authority where those provisions are more restrictive than WSU guidance.

Questions

Direct questions to the local program coordinator or county director.

WSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of non-compliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office.