



Volunteer Job Description – Garden Coach Volunteer

To discuss this position or apply to be a volunteer at the GDMBG, please contact Susan Cory, Volunteer Manager, 515-323-6293, scory@dmbotanicalgarden.com

Position: Garden Coach Volunteer

Garden Coach volunteers further the Botanical Garden's mission of explaining the world of plants by acting as a resource for Des Moines metro non-profit organizations that have gardens and want to learn more about gardening. This program may work with projects identified under the Corteva Grows program (Corteva Agriscience is a partner and supporter of the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden) or may come in independent of their program.

Garden Coach volunteers work with and report to the Garden Coach Program Coordinator, which is a volunteer position under the education team.

Time Commitment:

Volunteers are expected to be involved on a regular basis to retain skills and knowledge to best support their role. It is anticipated that a Garden Coach will spend several hours coaching each month, plus time to update the Project Sheet as questions are received and answers given and to prepare the brief Monthly Status Report. It is also anticipated that the time required will vary based on the point in the growing season.

Activities:

Garden Coaches will act as a resource for Des Moines metro non-profit organizations that have gardens and want to learn more about gardening. This may be accomplished through:

- Virtual Visits: If a garden is in the planning stage or if specific questions arise about the garden, the Garden Coach may meet with the gardeners virtually (i.e. Zoom).
- In Person Visits: At the beginning of the growing season, Garden Coaches will meet with the gardeners in person to identify existing problems or opportunities for the upcoming growing season. Such visits will be scheduled with the primary contact person at the non-profit organization.
- Phone or Email: On an on-going basis during the growing season, questions from gardeners may be sent to the Garden Coaches directly or via an email or phone message system hosted by the Botanical Garden and forwarded to the Garden Coaches to address.

Garden Coaches will be assigned in teams to work with each of our pilot gardens. Initially, we anticipate teams of two Garden Coaches. Drawing on a Garden Coach's experience, the virtual resource library, and input from other Garden Coaches with specialized knowledge in a specific area, the Garden Coach will answer the gardener's question or work with the gardener to identify possible solutions to the identified problems. The

Garden Coach may follow up by providing gardeners with written materials, video or other learning opportunities.

The Garden Coach will reply to questions in a timely manner (within five days) or let the gardener with the question know that there will be delay in the response. The Garden Coach may discuss the question with the other Garden Coach team member or the Garden Coach Coordinator as needed.

The Garden Coach shall briefly document the question or problem identified and the answer or recommendation given on the Project Sheet for that garden.

The Garden Coach shall reach out to their project's assigned gardeners weekly or every other week, depending on the assigned garden, to check-in on the status of the garden, including getting an update on existing problems and identifying any new challenges.

At the end of each month, the Garden Coach shall complete the brief Monthly Status Report regarding their assigned garden and will forward the Monthly Status Report to the Garden Coach Coordinator. The Garden Coach shall also track and report their volunteer service hours given to the assigned gardeners in the Monthly Report.

During this initial year of the pilot project, the Garden Coach will meet with the Garden Coach Coordinator monthly to provide feedback on the Garden Coach program.

When working with an organization participating in the Corteva Grows program, Garden Coaches may be assigned to a project to give input on initial project concepts and then follow-up as a resource for questions after installation, at the end of season and in future years.

Track and promptly report volunteer service hours.

Requirements:

- An interest in serving the public, and a friendly, patient and welcoming attitude.
- Strong communications skills (both verbal and in writing), including the ability to effectively listen to and communicate with audiences using terminology that less experienced gardeners can understand. A Garden Coach volunteer should be comfortable working with gardeners who have diverse backgrounds or experiences.
- Extensive experience in gardening, horticulture and/or landscaping and be knowledgeable about well-respected gardening practices, either with Master Gardener certification or training and experience commensurate with such certification. If the Garden Coach has an expertise in a specific area (i.e. vegetable gardening, landscaping, insect control), such expertise will be noted in the resource library.
- Ability to evaluate gardening problems, formulate solutions and communicate solutions to the gardeners.
- Attend Garden Coach training session before beginning coaching responsibilities, including becoming knowledgeable about the resources available in the virtual Garden Coach resource library.
- Volunteers will need use of a computer to use the library and to complete reporting requirements.
- Complete a background check.

Attire:

A Botanical Garden logoed t-shirt or polo should be worn when visiting a garden in person or interacting with gardeners via video conferencing (i.e. Zoom). A volunteer nametag will be provided and should be worn at all times when visiting a garden in person.

(updated 3/5/21)