

Responses to Clients – More Details

Master Gardeners do the following:

- **Identify** weeds, arthropods or plant problems for home gardeners/owners.
- **Provide** regionally accurate, unbiased, research-based management suggestions for home use based on recommendations in the PNW Handbooks and OSU Extension publications.

Additional guidelines:

- **Don't recommend any pesticide(s) if you are unsure of the identity of the disease, insect pest, or host plant.** Instead, first use the in-office referral forms to convey the problem to the next shift of Master Gardeners for verification.
- **Don't answer questions about pastures.** Instead for:
 - Multnomah & Washington Counties – refer client to Chip Bubl, Columbia County Agent (1-503-397-3462)
 - Clackamas County – refer to Nick Andrews, Small Farms agent, 503-678-1264 x149 or to Soil & Water Conservation District (503-655-3144)
- **Don't address poisonous plant ingestion questions.** Instead, refer client to Poison Control 1-800-222-1222.
- **Don't answer legal questions,** such as when someone seeks a legal opinion in a neighborhood dispute. Instead, you might say “OSU Master Gardeners provide general home horticulture information. You may wish to consult a qualified attorney or your community's Arbitration or Mediation Board.” (See MG Resource Book)
- **Don't endorse specific products or services.** Master Gardeners don't endorse any particular product, business or service. You might mention a product by its trade-name in addition to the active ingredient stated in the PNW Handbooks. That is, if the active ingredient is glyphosate, you could mention products from several companies (e.g.: Roundup and Kleen-up) to clarify the recommendation. Such statements don't imply endorsement.
- **Don't answer questions about how to make or use home remedies.** Home remedies aren't based on research. Further, some combinations are toxic.
- **Don't identify mushrooms.** Some poisonous mushrooms look like edible mushrooms. Refer these questions to the Oregon Mycological Society. (Contact information is in the MG Resource Book).
- **Don't identify, or suggest, plants for medicinal use.** Master Gardeners don't provide health-care information.
- **Don't provide remedies for personal health and hygiene** such as lice, scabies, etc. Master Gardeners don't provide health-care information.
- **Don't suggest a diagnosis of delusionary parasitosis** (an unshakeable false belief that live organisms are present in or on the skin). Instead, refer the client to a health-care professional or to the Extension Agent, Weston Miller. Master Gardeners don't provide health-care information or diagnosis even if you are a health-care professional in your “real life.”
- **Don't answer questions from commercial, government or industrial entities** such as nursery/garden centers, growers, spray services, landscapers, pest control companies, ODOT, etc. Instead, refer these questions to an appropriate Extension agent.
- **Don't answer inquiries from the media** (e.g. TV, radio, newspaper, etc.) Refer these inquiries to Weston Miller or Jordis Yost.