

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.
- **Provide management recommendations only after the diagnosis is firm.**
 - Master Gardeners are objective in their recommendations, and thus inform the client of *all* research-supported options: Cultural, biological, *and* chemical (synthetic and organic). Recommend the least toxic effective approach first.
 - Even if you do not use synthetic chemicals in your own garden, *you may not exclude this option* - so long as it is research-based - when making recommendations to the client.
- **If your shift is stymied by a tough question**, complete the appropriate in-office referral form, and upload the information to the MG Referral Forum. (See Tab E)

Additional guidelines:

- **Commercial, government or industrial questions:** Refer to an appropriate Extension agent (e.g.: Questions from nursery/garden centers; wholesale growers; spray services; landscapers; pest control companies; governmental agencies; ODOT; etc.)
- **Compost tea:** Master Gardeners don't recommend compost tea for plant disease control.
- **Health:** Refer client to his/her health-care professional or to the Extension Agent. Such questions include lice, scabies, or delusionary parasitosis, the latter an unshakeable false belief that live organisms are present in or on the skin.
Note: A Master Gardener doesn't provide health-care information or diagnosis even if s/he is a health-care professional in "real life."
- **Home remedies, how to make or use:** Home remedies aren't scientifically research-based. Further, some combinations are toxic. **Caution:** Some university statements/publications aren't based on scientific research.
- **Legal questions and/or disputes**, such as when someone seeks an opinion in a neighborhood dispute. Instead, you might say "OSU Master Gardeners only provide general home horticulture information. You may wish to consult a qualified attorney or your community's Arbitration or Mediation Board."
- **Marijuana/Hemp:** MGs don't provide advice or referrals on the culture, care and/or use of marijuana/hemp, including medical Marijuana.
- **Media inquiries** (e.g. TV, radio, newspaper, etc.): Refer to Weston Miller or Jordis Yost.
- **Mushroom identification:** MGs do not identify mushrooms. The Oregon Mycological Society also doesn't offer assistance in the identification of mushrooms to the public anymore. For identification- Steve Carpenter, mycologist- microbe@pioneer.net . Instructions for sending him pictures/samples: <http://bit.ly/1aTSaH>
- **Pastures/small farms and/or livestock:** Refer client to the following:
 - Pastures/small farms – Nick Andrews, Small Farms agent, 503-678-1264 x149 *or* to Clackamas County Soil and Water Conservation District 503-210-6000 (Weed ID only)
 - Livestock – Chip Bubl, Extension Agent, Columbia County, 1-503-397-3462 or Gene Pirelli, Extension Agent, Polk County, 1-503-623-8395.
- **Plants/herbs for medicinal use:** Refer client to his/her health-care professional. **Note:** A Master Gardener doesn't provide health-care information or diagnosis even if s/he is a health-care professional in "real life."
- **Poisonous plant ingestion:** Refer client to **Poison Control, 1-800-222-1222**.
- **Products:** Don't endorse product unless stated in a PNW Handbook. If the PNW Insect Handbook suggests an active ingredient, you could suggest several widely available products which contain it. For instance, if the active ingredient is glyphosate, you could mention products from several different companies (e.g.: Roundup and Kleen-up). Such statements don't imply endorsement.
- **Services and/or businesses:** Suggest generic services, not specific businesses. (e.g.: to locate a Certified Arborist, see Yellow Pages, heading trees, or the International Society of Arboriculture, <http://www.isa-arbor.com/> : search- 'public outreach'. For a pest control company, see Yellow pages or the internet.