

Colorado State University Extension
2010 NATIVE PLANT MASTER™ PROGRAM GUIDELINES

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Courses and Classes

Two types of educational experiences are offered by the Native Plant Master (NPM) Program: credit courses and special classes. Both are open to anyone but may have prerequisites. Credit courses are all held outdoors. For accepted NPM volunteers, credit courses may be used to fulfill the 3-course requirement. Credit courses and requirements for NPM volunteers are described in more detail below.

Special classes are also open to anyone but do not count toward the 3-course requirement for accepted NPM volunteers. Special classes are offered on a variety of topics and may be held in the classroom, outdoors or a combination of both sites.

NPM Credit Courses

Each Native Plant Master credit course is made up of three sessions held three successive weeks although there occasionally, courses may be offered that differ from this model. The session themes for each course are listed below. Depending on what plants are present and blooming, some subjects may be covered in a prior or later session than shown.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| First Session: | Botanical characteristics of plant families and species, identification using a botanical key, scientific names, and stewardship of native plants. Session evaluation. |
| Second Session: | Ecological relationships including non-native species, noxious weeds, relationships with wildlife, pollinators, other plants etc. |
| Third Session: | Written field exam on material from first and second sessions.
Human uses including use of natives for sustainable landscaping, ethnobotanical and other human uses. Course survey. |

All course sessions will be held entirely in the field. Please check the directions and be sure to arrive at the first session by 8:15 a.m. as your trainer will have materials to distribute. The group will leave on the trail at 8:30 a.m. and will return to the trailhead by 12:30 p.m. All sessions start promptly, so please plan ahead to arrive by the designated time. Meet at the parking location for each session with the course materials shown in the materials checklist beginning on page 2. Participants may not attend other course sessions for which they are not enrolled.

Please Note: All class participants must bring *Colorado Flora Eastern Slope*, 3rd Edition, Weber and Wittmann to each class session. We recommend purchasing this book at area bookstores, online or through the Colorado Native Plant Society (<http://www.conps.org/conps.html>) as soon as possible as it can sometimes be difficult to find. Plant identification with an emphasis on scientific names and families and keying using this text is a significant focus of the course.

Each course will cover 40 - 50 plants, 9 to 15 of which will be keyed using *Colorado Flora Eastern Slope*, 3rd Edition. An optional classroom session on basic botany will be offered in April to assist individuals not familiar with botanical terms and keying or to act as a refresher course for those wishing to brush up on their botanical skills. Please call the Jefferson County Extension office at (303) 271-6620 if you are interested in attending this class.

The instructor will be present at 8:00 a.m. on each course session day so participants may ask questions before the session begins. Please take advantage of this time to ask questions so that as much time as possible is available for

course activities.

Course Evaluation

In order to successfully complete each course, you will be asked to complete a Final Exam which is a written field exam at the beginning of the third session of each course. For this reason, attendance at the third session is required. Attendance at the first and second sessions is not required, but is recommended.

The exam will cover only material from the first and second sessions. You may use your required textbook *Colorado Flora Eastern Slope, 3rd Edition, Weber and Wittmann, to complete the exam.* No other books (including the NPM Manual) and no glued or pasted items such as tabs or loose notes will be allowed during the exam. It is recommended that you take notes in your *Colorado Flora* textbook so they are available during the exam. Because the exam is “open book”, spelling of technical terms does count.

The exam is conducted on the trail where you will be asked to identify living specimens and provide additional information. Scientific names should be those from *Colorado Flora, Eastern Slope, 3rd Edition.*

Participants are asked to evaluate the course after the first and last sessions. This feedback is very important and will be used to modify future courses so they best serve participants’ needs.

Course Conditions

Courses can be moderately strenuous and may require walking on steep inclines for up to 2 miles on wet, rough and/or slippery footing during windy, cold, hot or rainy weather. Wildlife such as a rattlesnake, bear or mountain lion may be encountered. Please bring appropriate clothing, equipment, footwear etc. so that you will be comfortable in a variety of weather and trail conditions. Please note that restrooms will be available at the trailhead, but will not be present anywhere else on the trail. Please plan accordingly. See materials check list that follows.

Sessions will be held in almost any weather. Only in the event of extremely unusual weather (for example, a foot of snow or hazardous lightning) will class be canceled. If you suspect weather conditions warrant cancellation, call the Native Plant Master Program at (303) 271-6646 after 7:00 a.m. the day of the session to see if class will be canceled. If a session were to be canceled, no make-up session will be held due to potential scheduling conflicts.

Materials Checklist - Please bring the items on the following checklist to each session:

Required Items:

_____ **COURSE TEXTBOOK.** *Colorado Flora, Eastern Slope, 3rd Edition, Weber and Wittmann.* We recommend ordering the text as soon as possible as it can be difficult to find. The text is available from the Colorado Native Plant Society at <http://www.conps.org/bookstore.html> as well as at area bookstores and elsewhere online.

This text is the only reference to be consulted during the course exam and may include handwritten notes but may not include any loose notes or items pasted or taped into the book including tabs, plant lists, photos, notes on separate pieces of paper etc. The reason for this guideline is that a goal of the course is for participants to know how to use Weber to look up a plant they know. We also want participants to create a future reference for themselves so they know where and when they saw a plant and an eco-fact about it to help them remember it.

_____ **NATIVE PLANT MASTER MANUAL.** This manual will be distributed at the first session. The *Manual* is designed to give you space to list the plants studied and to take notes and/or make sketches in the field. For your convenience, much of the data presented in the course is available at the Colorado Plant Database website at <http://coloradoplants.jeffco.us> and we recommend your

using this site for review and study.

- _____ **HAND LENS.** A 10X-magnification hand lens can be purchased online or at area nature stores.
- _____ **WATER AND A SNACK.** We will typically have a brief break for evaluation and/or a snack mid-session at a designated site, but you may want to bring snacks to eat along the trail. Be sure to bring plenty of water, as weather may be hot and dry.
- _____ **PERSONAL GEAR** such as warm clothing, sun protection, waterproof rain gear, sturdy footwear.
- _____ **DAY PACK** to carry your gear on the trail and any personal items you may need as we will not return to the parking lot once we leave in the morning and there are no restrooms on the trail. Let your instructor know if you need to leave the trail for this purpose.

Suggested Items:

- _____ Optional texts. *Rocky Mountain Flower Finder*, *Wingate*, and *A Guide to Colorado Wildflowers*, Guennel. These optional texts can be valuable tools for learning keying and terms.
- _____ Pencil for taking notes and/or making field sketches in your manual.

Course Refund Policy

Because all registration fees are due April 15th, it is understandable that a conflict might arise before Native Plant Master courses start. Therefore, Colorado State University Extension (CSUE) will allow for refunds (minus a \$15 processing fee to cover administrative costs) using the following guidelines:

- 1) A full refund less a \$15 processing fee will be given to individuals that notify CSUE at least 30 days prior to the date of the first course session for which you are enrolled.
- 2) If CSUE is given at least two weeks notice, 50% of the amount owed will be refunded.
- 3) If less than two weeks notice or no notice is given there will be NO REFUND of course fees.

COURSE ONLY PARTICIPANTS

There is no educational contact requirement for those successfully completing a Native Plant Master Course under the course only option. Additional information below is for Native Plant Master participants who are required to make educational contacts.

NPM VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS

Educational Contact Requirement

Volunteers for the Native Plant Master Program must teach at least 20 people per course taken about native plants using information learned in the Native Plant Master course(s). For example, if three courses are taken, a total of 60 educational contacts are required in order to become a certified Native Plant Master. The course educational contact requirement must be met by November 15 in the year the course is taken. The cost per course is reduced for those that fulfill the volunteer requirements. If the contact requirement is not met by November 15 in the same calendar year as course completion, the participant will be billed for the difference between the volunteer and non-volunteer rate.

For your convenience, we will send you educational contact record forms quarterly to report your educational contacts. We ask that you return the forms to help us document that the Native Plant Master program has impact on the public which helps ensure continued funding for the program. If you forget to include contacts on the current quarterly report or would rather group your contacts, simply include those contacts on the next quarterly report.

You may begin counting educational contacts on the attached form after the first session of the first course you take. Educational programs may be team-taught with another volunteer or staff member and each person may count *one half* of the total program participants towards their fulfillment of the educational contact requirement. Educational contacts from programs taught for agencies other your own also may be counted.

In order to get credit for educational contacts, the title of the program given does not need to be specifically about native plants as long as some information learned from the Native Plant Master courses is used in the program. For example, educational contacts can be counted if the program is about noxious weeds using information from a Native Plant Master course.

You may also count individual educational contacts that you make outside of formal public programs. Examples of these are educational contacts about plants that you make while roving on the trail or at the front desk of your agency. You may also count individual contacts made that were not public, for example, wildflower walks or educational information you provide for your friends or neighbors.

We encourage volunteers to report educational contacts made through published articles, but these do not count toward the certification requirement of 60 educational contacts. All articles must be previewed by the NPM staff prior to publication and become the property of Colorado State University Extension.

Certification as a Native Plant Master

Certification as a Native Plant Master, including a special pin, will be awarded upon successful completion of three Native Plant Master courses including passing exams with a grade of C or better and completion of the educational contact requirement of 60 contacts. Three different courses must be taken (i.e. held in different months or locations with different habitat types) in order to minimize overlap of plants covered. For example, if you already completed a course in June at one site, you may not take another June course at that site to earn your Certificate. Courses may be taken in any year. Some courses may have a prerequisite.

Someone who wants to become a certified Native Plant Master may take courses in any county but must select a home county to report contacts. This county will be the one verifying that the person has passed those courses by contacting the other county. In no case should the individual report the same contacts to more than one county as this would be double counting.

Biannual certification in future years may be maintained by: 1) teaching at least 120 people about Colorado plants during the two-year recertification period; and 2) reporting at least annually on those educational contacts for as long as you wish to remain certified as a Native Plant Master.

Native Plant Master Status

Certified Native Plant Masters can go on sabbatical status by contacting the Jefferson County Extension office (303) 271-6620. Sabbatical status means that you temporarily suspend your Native Plant Master Certification and are not required to make any public contacts. During sabbatical status you will receive only very important mailings (e.g. annual Impact Survey and notification of next year's courses). Certification can be reactivated at any time by contacting the Extension office and by fulfilling the annual teaching requirement. You do not need to retake the courses to be reactivated. Those who wish to be dropped from the program (permanently forfeit certified status and receive no mailings) can only be reactivated by repeating the required coursework and educational contacts.

For More Information

For more information about the Native Plant Master Program, please visit www.conativeplantmaster.org or contact Colorado State University Extension in Jefferson County at 15200 West Sixth Avenue, Golden, CO 80401, phone:

(303)271-6620, fax: (303) 271-6644, email: NPMAssistant@jeffco.us. Telephone messages and faxes may be left 24 hours a day, but are only retrieved Monday - Friday during the day when staff members are present. NPM staff members are part-time, so please be patient if you need to contact the program.