

Colorado State University Extension  
**2011 NATIVE PLANT MASTER<sup>®</sup> PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

**REFUND POLICY**

Refunds will be processed according to the following guidelines:

- 1) Cancellation at least four weeks prior - full refund less a 15% processing fee.
- 2) Cancellation at least two weeks prior - 50% refund.
- 3) Cancellation less than two weeks prior - no refund.

**COURSES AND CLASSES**

Two types of educational experiences are offered by the Native Plant Master (NPM) Program: NPM courses and special classes. Both are open to anyone on a space available basis. Early registration is recommended as space is limited in these popular offerings. Courses or classes may have prerequisites. NPM courses are all held outdoors while special classes may be held in the classroom, outdoors or a combination of both sites. Smoking is prohibited in all courses and classes except in areas designated by the trainer.

**Native Plant Master Courses**

NPM courses are open to anyone on a space available basis. Each Native Plant Master course is made up of three sessions held three successive weeks although courses may be offered that differ from this model. NPM courses are the only courses that count toward certification as a Native Plant Master for accepted volunteers.

**Special Classes**

Special classes are open anyone. These special classes are offered on a variety of topics that may vary from year-to-year such as Basic Botany, native plant landscaping, invasive weeds, grasses and subalpine/alpine ecosystem. Special classes do not count toward certification as a Native Plant Master for accepted volunteers.

**Native Plant Master Course Themes**

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.

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|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First Session:  | Botanical characteristics of plant families and species, identification using a botanical key, scientific and common 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.<br>Human uses including use of natives for sustainable landscaping, ethnobotanical and other human uses. Course survey. |

**Native Plant Master Course Details**

All course sessions will be held entirely in the field. Please check the directions and be sure to arrive at the first session 15 minutes prior to the scheduled start time as your trainer will have materials to distribute. All sessions start promptly, so please plan ahead to arrive by the designated time. Participants may not attend other course sessions for which they are not enrolled. Carpooling is encouraged and the Extension office will send the contact

information for any participants wishing to do so to other participants. Any liability arising from such arrangements are the participants' sole responsibility.

Please Note: All class participants must bring *Colorado Flora*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, (Eastern Slope or Western Slope, depending on your course location), Weber and Wittmann, to each class session. 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*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. An optional classroom session on basic botany may be offered in the spring 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.

The instructor will be present 20 minutes in advance 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.

Courses held outdoors may require strenuous walking for extended periods on steep inclines for two or more miles on wet, rough, and/or slippery footing during windy, cold, hot, rainy or snowy days. Courses include risks, hazards and dangers that are integral to natural areas. 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 may be available at the trailhead, but will not be present anywhere else on the trail so plan accordingly.

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 (Jefferson County (303) 271-6621) 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.

### **Native Plant Master Course Evaluation**

Non-volunteer participants are not required to take the final exam, though they may wish to do so as a personal test of their knowledge. Those taking Native Plant Master course in fulfillment of volunteer requirements must pass a Final Exam which is a written field exam at the beginning of the third session of each course. Passing grade is an A, B or C. Volunteers are required to take the exam, but are not required to attend any other part of the course.

The exam covers only material from the first and second sessions. You may use your required textbook *Colorado Flora*, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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*, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

## **NPM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

### **Non-Volunteers**

There is no educational contact requirement for those successfully completing a Native Plant Master Course who are not volunteering for the NPM Program. Non-volunteer participants also are not required to take the field exam,

though they may wish to do so as a personal test of their knowledge.

### **Accepted NPM Volunteers**

Recruitment for apprentice Native Plant Master volunteers may be held on an annual or less frequent basis. Acceptance into the NPM volunteer program is a competitive process and is based on a demonstrated ability to make educational contacts. Apprentice Native Plant Masters who are working to become certified must pass three NPM courses in order to be certified as a Native Plant Master (grade of C or higher). NPM apprentices must teach at least 20 people per course taken about native plants using information learned in the Native Plant Master course(s). The course educational contact requirement of 20 per course must be met by November 15 in the year the course is taken. A cumulative total of 60 educational contacts must be made in order to become a certified Native Plant Master. Contacts are cumulative and do not expire while an apprentice is working to be certified. Accumulating three courses and 60 contacts may take more than one year.

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 educational contact 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.

The cumulative educational contact requirement for certification or the biannual requirement to maintain certification can also be met by any one of the following: an actively maintained website or blog, published article or an aired TV show, radio or video program. CSU Extension volunteers who report educational contacts to another Extension program, (e.g. Master Gardener, Energy Master etc.) need to select the program to report contacts to on a case-by-case basis in order to avoid double reporting.

### **Certification as a Native Plant Master**

Certification as a Native Plant Master, including a special pin, window sticker (and patch on request), will be awarded upon successful completion of three Native Plant Master courses including passing exams with a grade of C or better and cumulating a total of 60 educational contacts. The certification process is normally completed once a year in December/January. Certified NPM volunteers are eligible for a course/class fee discount.

Apprentice Native Plant Masters must take three different courses (i.e. held in different months and/or lifezones) 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. There is no time limit on when the three

course requirement must be completed. Some courses may have prerequisites.

Apprentice Native Plant Masters 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; 2) reporting at least annually on those educational contacts for as long as you wish to remain certified as a Native Plant Master, and 3) taking at least one NPM course or special class or an outside course or class on a related topic every two years.

### **Native Plant Master Status**

Certified Native Plant Masters can go on sabbatical status by contacting the County Extension office. 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.

### **NPM Trainers**

Certified Native Plant Masters may apply to become a trainer mentee who will work with an existing mentor trainer to observe and co-teach a small portion of a Native Plant Master course. The mentee application process is normally a competitive process, but county agents may waive this requirement depending on local conditions. At the discretion of the county agent, individuals with significant plant expertise may become trainers without being certified Native Plant Masters, but they must take at least one Native Plant Master course as a student before becoming a mentee. All mentee applicants will be required to undergo the Colorado State University Extension background check process.

Current trainers may use the contacts they make from teaching NPM courses and classes to fulfill the educational contact requirement. Current trainers may also register in NPM courses or classes in any county at no cost on a space available basis. Formal course/class registration through the applicable county is required.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information about the Native Plant Master Program, please visit [www.conativeplantmaster.org](http://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: [yhuang@jeffco.us](mailto:yhuang@jeffco.us). Telephone messages and faxes may be left 24 hours a day.