

BudSprout Sponsor Suggestions for Success

BudSprout Program Purpose:

To improve Intern retention and certification through the first year by matching Interns with interested certified MGs after MG training has been completed.

BudSprout Program Description:

This is a voluntary program in which certified Master Gardeners act as sponsors for new interns to help make sure interns are aware of MGHC activities and attain certification. The sponsors are matched with interns based on interests or geography or both. Sponsors and interns will sign up for the Program early in the MG Training process to help provide adequate time for matching and Sponsor training. The Sponsorship Program will begin after Interns have graduated.

BudSprout Sponsor Steps in Communication:

Step One: Attend BudSprout Sponsor training session

- Learn about the recommended procedures for contacting Sprouts/Interns.
- Gain and maintain familiarity with current MG volunteer programs, website contents, policies and procedures so that you can be a resource for the Intern.
- Be in a position to answer the Intern's questions and troubleshoot problems the Intern may be encountering.
- Make it as easy as possible for the Intern to become involved in one or more MG projects. Become a Master Gardener Ambassador.

Initial Contact with your Sprout(s)

After receiving your Sprout assignments, contact each Intern personally by phone to introduce yourself. This contact should be made within the first week after assignment. Make sure you have called at a convenient time; if not, schedule a time to connect. If initial phone contact is unsuccessful, email contact can be attempted. Establish an open channel of communication with each Intern by discussing some/all of the following:

1. Inquire about the MG training. Was it interesting? Helpful? What was favorite part?
2. Ask if the Intern has gotten any volunteer hours. If so, where? How has the volunteer experience been? Help troubleshoot any problems.
3. Find out what kinds of MG volunteer projects are of interest to the Intern. Once this has been determined, suggest projects that may be of interest. Give the Intern the names and contact information for appropriate Project Leaders. If you are involved in one of these activities, invite the Intern to join you.
4. Find out if the Intern has entered their hours on the MG website. If not, offer to assist them.
5. Find out if the Intern has been receiving Yahoo Group emails. If not, offer to assist them.

Please keep a dated call/contact log with notes from your conversation, so that you can report to the BudSprout Committee about Intern involvement, Program process improvement, and so that you can follow up with your Intern again later.

Within the First Two Weeks: Meet your Sprout(s)

If possible in your initial phone call, arrange to meet your Intern personally. Invite the Intern to join you for an upcoming MG monthly meeting, volunteer activity, educational program, or other activity that you think may be of interest. Consider carpooling to MG volunteer activities and meetings. Introduce the Intern to Project Leaders and other MGs who are involved in projects of interest. **Maintain your dated call/contact log.**

Continuing Contact with your Sprout(s)

If you have had no further contact with your Intern after the initial phone conversation, call and make contact again in 3-4 weeks. Follow up regarding any of the topics above. Again, invite the Intern to join you for a MG monthly meeting, volunteer activity, educational program, or other activity that you think may be of interest. It may take several times for a new Intern to feel comfortable taking initiative to become involved. Make sure the Intern feels welcome. During this time, if you learn of an activity or program that you think may be of interest to your Intern, call or email him/her to encourage participation. **Maintain your dated call/contact log.**

Communicate with the Program Coordinator

Report on your successes and challenges. Offer suggestions to other Sponsors who may be having difficulty engaging their Interns.

Additional Contact with your Sprout(s)

Contact the Intern again 7-8 weeks into the program for additional follow up to see how many ACT hours the Intern has achieved. Offer suggestions to help get to required level for MG certification. **Maintain your dated call/contact log.**

Ongoing Intern contact

Maintain contact with your Intern, as you are comfortable, ideally at least once each month. Continue to offer suggestions to help get to required level for MG certification. If your Intern becomes certified, coordinate with Certification Officer and make the presentation of MG badge to your Intern at a MG event or meeting. **Maintain your dated call/contact log.**

BudSprout Sponsor Wrap-up Meeting

Turn in your call/contact logs at this final meeting. Offer assessment of and suggested improvements for the BudSprout Program for 2012.