

**NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
VALENCIA COUNTY MASTER GARDENER CODE OF CONDUCT**

Policies and Procedures

Conflict management is the responsibility of the Agent in coordination with the State Coordinator and University administration. Individual(s) exhibiting unprofessional behavior as described below will be warned one (1) time and a written reprimand will be documented by the Valencia County Extension office. Subsequent inappropriate action(s) or behavior(s) will not be tolerated, and will result in decertification. Once decertified, former Master Gardeners may not represent themselves as NMSU Master Gardeners. Reinstatement may occur after the agent and the former Master Gardener resolve the problems underlying the conflict. Such reinstated Master Gardeners may be required to pay initial fees and take training courses as a new Master Gardener.

Volunteers accused of serious offenses shall be placed on inactive status while the charges are being investigated. If criminal charges are brought, charges will be investigated by the appropriate civil authorities. If the charges are internal to the Master Gardener program and do not involve criminal activity, the charges will be investigated by the Agent in coordination with the NMSU Master Gardener Program Coordinator and appropriate University administrators. While on inactive status, Master Gardeners will not be penalized for failure to perform volunteer activities. If the charges are determined to be without merit, the Master Gardener may return to active status without loss of status (even if volunteer hours are not completed). The person claiming the charges may be subject to investigation, if there is reason to believe the charges were maliciously brought. Any Master Gardener determined guilty will be decertified and removed from the roll of Master Gardener.

Conduct Unbecoming a VCEMG include:

- Creating continued discord among other volunteers
- Refusal/repeated failure to do assigned tasks or follow directions from the County Agent
- Behavior that results in damage to the reputation of Master Gardeners
- Illegal Activities
- The use or display of the NMSU Master Gardener title while working in a professional (i.e. paid) capacity
- Any form of gossip, threats, or perceived threats
- Any form of physical, mental, sexual and/or emotional abuse
- The use/possession/or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol at VCEMG events

Initials: _____

As a volunteer of the VCEMG Program, I, _____
(NAME)

- will be courteous and respectful to each other and to the community members we serve at all times. I will conduct myself in a professional and responsible manner
- will abstain from conduct that is or could be perceived to constitute harassment or behavior that seeks to intimidate, control, threaten, or instill fear in (1) any member of the VCEMG, (2) any employee of the NMSU Cooperative Extension Service, and/ or (3) the General Public in which we serve.
- will represent the Cooperative Extension Service in a professional and responsible manner
- understand that I will be held fully accountable for my behavior
- will abide to the NMSU Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener Code of Conduct and Policies and Procedures
- will take any problems or concerns to the County Extension Agent first, and will not vocalize problems or issues at public events
- will disseminate approved research-based information ONLY

VCEMG Volunteer Signature

Date _____

Valencia County Agriculture Extension Agent

Date _____