

# Master Gardener

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## Missouri Master Gardener Program Policies and Procedures

Welcome to the Missouri Master Gardener program. In this program, you will receive classroom training to become a Master Gardener volunteer in partnership with University of Missouri Extension. More than 2,000 active Missouri Master Gardeners are serving as Extension volunteers in towns and cities throughout Missouri. Thus, you are about to become part of an active program that is “helping others learn to grow.” The next few pages provide an overview of the program and explain the responsibilities you will have as a Master Gardener.

### The Master Gardener mission

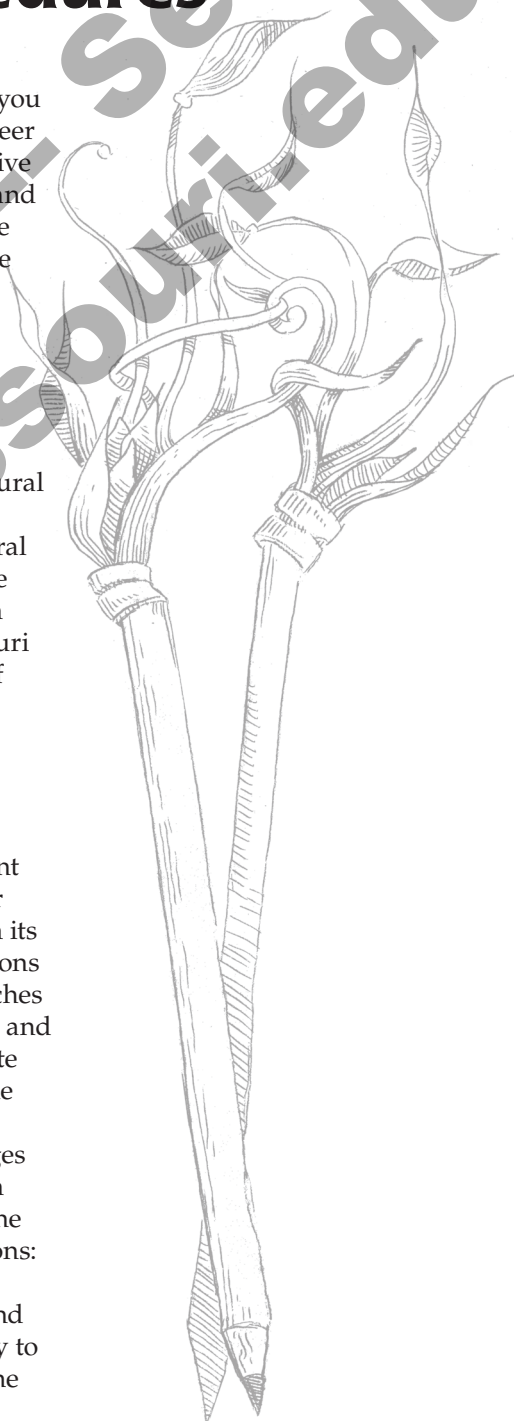
The mission of the Missouri Master Gardener program is to train volunteers to educate others about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes and communities. The Missouri Master Gardener program strives to provide in-depth horticultural training to individuals throughout Missouri who then volunteer their time applying what they have learned to help others in their communities learn about gardening and environmental stewardship. Additionally, the Missouri Master Gardener program raises public awareness throughout Missouri of University of Missouri Extension as a source of unbiased, research-based gardening information.

### History

The Morrill Act of 1862 established what are commonly called land-grant colleges. This congressional action set aside 30,000 acres of federal land for each member of congress in eligible states. This land, or the proceeds from its sale, was to be used toward establishing and funding educational institutions whose purpose is: “To teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts ... in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes.” The University of Missouri is one of 106 land-grant colleges in the United States and the only one in Missouri. As a land-grant institution, the University of Missouri has three missions: teaching, research and extension. Early in our nation’s history, universities found that the delivery of information directly to farmers and other workers did not fit the

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### Core course topics

The core course of instruction for Missouri Master Gardeners includes the following topics:

- Plants and their environment
- Plant propagation
- Soils, plant nutrition and nutrient management
- Vegetable gardening
- Fruit production
- Establishment and care of woody ornamentals
- Pruning ornamental trees and shrubs
- Herbaceous ornamentals
- Managing lawns and turfgrass
- Landscaping your front yard
- Insects
- Preventing and managing plant diseases
- Using pesticides safely around the home and garden

Additional topics may be included with approval of a local, regional or state coordinator.

The Missouri Master Gardener Core Manual is published by University of Missouri Extension.

traditional classroom model. The Cooperative Extension Service resulted from the effort to reach more people on their home territory and was authorized by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. This act allowed land-grant universities, such as the University of Missouri, and county commissions to form offices that develop educational programs that meet local needs.

University of Missouri Extension is a partnership between the University of Missouri and the United States Department of Agriculture in cooperation with local governments and local people. The Board of Curators of the University established the Extension Division in 1910. Ever since then, University of Missouri Extension has been helping people make their lives better. Initially, the Extension program concentrated on working with farmers and their families, which comprised a significant portion of the state's population. The goal was to improve their quality of life and standard of living. Extension professionals, often called county agents, demonstrated how to produce more and better varieties of agricultural commodities; how to benefit from better nutrition, clothing and housing; and how to work together to bring about major community improvements.

As the population shifted to the cities, Missouri's Extension programs expanded to include programs for urban and suburban populations. Examples of these programs include business and workforce development, community development, nutritional education and healthy eating, and housing and financial education.

The Master Gardener program began in the early 1970s, when the Washington State University Extension Service sought to respond to the many gardening questions that resulted from the rapidly increasing level of interest in home gardening. The concept they originated was to train knowledgeable gardener volunteers to help the university Extension staff deliver home gardening information to the public. From the first group of Seattle area Master Gardeners in 1972, the program has spread nationwide. All 50 states and several Canadian provinces now have Master Gardener programs.

The Master Gardener Program has a long, proud history as part of University of Missouri Extension. Missouri's program was established in 1983 by the Department of Horticulture and was fashioned after the Master Gardener program model created by Washington State. To date, nearly 10,000 Missourians have gone through Master Gardener training.

Currently, Missouri has more than 2,000 active Master Gardeners organized in nearly 50 local affiliations or chapters. In 2011, the Missouri Master Gardener Association was formed to better organize local affiliations and allow them to function as 503c3 tax-exempt organizations.

Missouri citizens have come to depend on MU Extension and Master Gardener volunteers for nonbiased, research-based information and assistance to learn best horticultural practices and solve home landscape problems. Nearly all Missouri counties have Master Gardeners, making the Master Gardener program one of the most recognized and visible Extension programs in the state.

## How the program works

The mission of the University of Missouri Extension Master Gardener program is to support Extension by providing trained volunteers to educate the public using research-based information on the best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship. The Master Gardener program strives to provide a friendly, supportive environment for its volunteers so their training, experience and enthusiasm will produce maximum benefits for their communities.

The Missouri Master Gardener program is administered by the University of Missouri Extension Master Gardener Leadership Team either through the regional coordinator, where one exists, or directly to local programs. Local program coordination may vary, depending on initial structure and size. Master Gardeners may be guided directly by an advisory or steering committee or through a local or regional coordinator.

## Training

### **Recruitment, application and selection**

Recruitment of Master Gardener Trainees is based on a local team action plan and an established need for local Master Gardener volunteer activities. Applicants to the program must be at least 16 years old and must complete and submit the standardized Master Gardener application form. Additionally, applicants must complete and sign the Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement and Exchange of Services Agreement (*see pages 7 and 8*). These agreements lay the groundwork for volunteer involvement in the Master Gardener program. They ensure that participants have a clear understanding of the program's goals. Copies of the signed agreements are to be kept by the local or regional program coordinator and the trainee.

Before individuals may become Master Gardener Trainees, they must first receive orientation to the program, including a review of University of Missouri Extension policies and volunteer opportunities at the local program level.

All completed forms are considered confidential. The forms will be reviewed by the local or regional program coordinator and kept at the local extension center. Applications and in-person interviews may be used to determine if candidates are appropriate for the program.

Final decisions for acceptance into the program will be made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or status as a protected veteran.

### **Training fees**

To ensure that all Master Gardeners receive the basic resources they need for the job, the state Master Gardener office requires a fee for core course training. For this fee, each Master Gardener Trainee will receive the following:

- Enrollment in the statewide program
- Missouri Master Gardener Core Manual
- Official name badge
- Certificate upon completion of the core course and initial volunteer requirement

Local training sites may increase the training fee if additional expenses for facilities, copying, mailings, press releases, refreshments, etc. are incurred. Copies of *Grounds for Gardening* will be available through the state Master Gardener office, and a discount will be given for bulk orders.

No fee will be required of Certified Master Gardeners and Master Gardeners Emeritus who attend core course sessions for review.

### **Absenteeism**

No more than three classes may be missed from core course training, and all missed classes must be made up. Narrated PowerPoint presentations of topics contained in the core course manual for class makeup are available from the state Master Gardener office.

## **Master Gardener classifications**

### **Master Gardener Trainee**

An individual accepted into the Master Gardener core course program who is currently attending classroom or online training sessions and is in the process of completing the first-year volunteer requirement of at least 30 hours.

### **Certified Master Gardener**

A Master Gardener who annually completes at least 20 hours of volunteer service in regionally approved programs and at least six additional hours of continuing education within that calendar year.

### **Advanced Master Gardener**

An Active Master Gardener who has completed an additional 30 hours of research-based training beyond basic core training (see "continuing education and advanced training" section).

### **Master Gardener Emeritus**

An individual who has been an Active Master Gardener for a total of 10 years will be granted emeritus status upon request to the local or regional program coordinator or the Master Gardener Leadership Team. Master Gardeners Emeritus have no volunteer requirements. However, they are encouraged to continue to participate in Master Gardener programs. Master Gardeners Emeritus will receive Master Gardener mailings and may attend any continuing education programs offered to Master Gardeners.

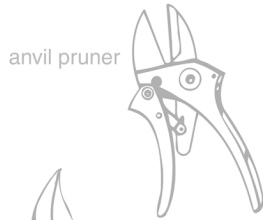
### **Master Gardener Mentor**

An Active or Emeritus Master Gardener who is paired with a Master Gardener Trainee to guide that person through a successful Missouri Master Gardener experience.

## ***Continuing education and advanced training***

Active Master Gardeners are required to complete six hours of continuing education yearly. The nature of what may be counted as continuing education will be at the discretion of the local or regional program coordinator or the Master Gardener Leadership Team. The basic guideline is that continuing education should augment and reinforce the Master Gardener core course training.

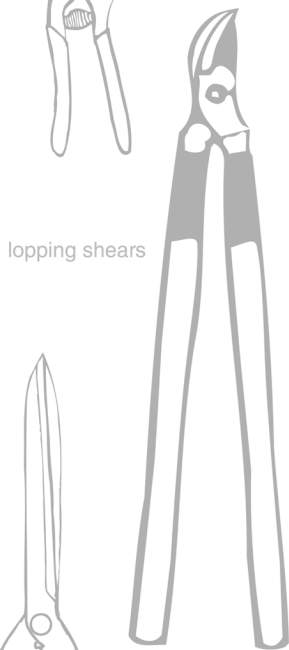
Additionally, Master Gardeners are encouraged to undergo advanced training. This training is considered more formal than continuing education and must be taught by an approved instructor. The instructor must be a qualified horticulturist or well-known speaker in the field of horticulture. Thirty hours of advanced training covering at least three horticulture disciplines and completed within five years are required to earn the title of Advanced Master Gardener. No more than 10 hours per discipline can be applied to the 30-hour total, and hands-on advanced training experiences are preferred.



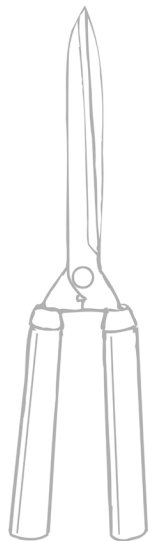
anvil pruner



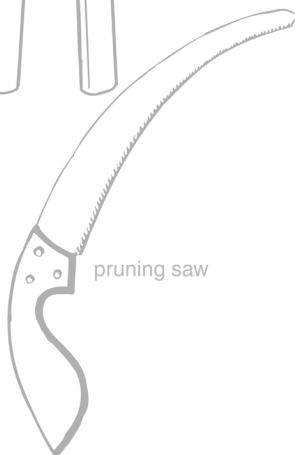
bypass pruner



lopping shears



hedge shears



pruning saw

## **Volunteer service**

The Missouri Master Gardener program trains volunteers to educate others about safe, effective and sustainable horticultural practices that build healthy gardens, landscapes and communities. Master Gardener Trainees are expected to volunteer for the number of hours equal to the number of hours of classroom training they received. Typically, this is 30 hours, although additional volunteer hours might be required by certain areas. Most trainees find this volunteer component rewarding, and sometimes even more educational than time spent in the classroom. Trainees have one year following the completion of core training to complete their initial volunteer service.

Upon completion of their initial volunteer commitment, trainees become certified as Missouri Master Gardeners. To maintain active status, a Missouri Master Gardener must provide at least 20 hours of volunteer service each year.

Volunteering as a Master Gardener is a benevolent act but certain guidelines should be followed. Adherence to these guidelines will help to maintain the integrity of the program as well as public trust. Missouri Master Gardener volunteers are representatives of University of Missouri Extension. Master Gardeners are to represent both MU Extension and the Master Gardener program with dignity and pride. They are to perform their duties in a professional and timely manner. They should at all times be courteous and respectful to others, dress appropriately, be responsible and accountable for personal actions, and abstain from the use of alcohol when representing MU Extension. Additionally, Missouri Master Gardener volunteer service activities must adhere to University of Missouri Extension's nondiscrimination policy, which states that equal opportunity is extended to all participants in Extension programs and activities without discrimination on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, disability or status as a protected veteran. Special accommodations because of a disability will be provided to Extension program participants whenever possible.

## ***Approved service activities***

Activities that may be counted toward the required number of volunteer service hours are determined at the discretion of local or regional program coordinators, working in accordance with MU Extension's volunteer conduct policy. All service activities must contribute to the goals and mission of local Extension programs, and no Master Gardener may gain financially from



volunteer service. This topic will be covered in greater detail in the “Avoiding conflicts of interest” section below.

Individual consultation with friends and neighbors can be counted as volunteer time if proper documentation is given. Local coordinators may limit the amount of individual consultation hours.

Volunteer service may be done in a dual capacity. For example, a Master Gardener may also be a member of a garden club or other civic group that requires service activity. As long as individuals identify themselves as Missouri Master Gardeners and have the local coordinator’s approval, the volunteer activity may count for both organizations.

An example of activity that does not count as volunteer Master Gardener time is that of a garden center employee being paid by her or his employer to conduct a plant clinic. Even though the employee may be a Missouri Master Gardener or trainee, the paid time does not qualify as volunteer service.

### ***Recovering personal expenses***

Missouri Master Gardeners may collect fees or honoraria to cover expenses and operating costs associated with approved service activities, but they are not to profit from these activities. For example, an individual Master Gardener may collect mileage for travel to approved programs, be reimbursed for supplies used in a service project, or be reimbursed for telephone expenses and postage related to Master Gardener programs. Honoraria or other gratuities beyond personal expenses received for speaking engagements shall be turned over to the local Master Gardener group. Failure to do so disqualifies the activity as Master Gardener volunteer service.

### ***Reporting volunteer hours***

Missouri Master Gardeners are responsible for documenting and reporting their volunteer hours. Volunteer hours for approved programs should be reported online at <http://report.missourimastergardener.com>. Individuals without Internet access should take their hours to their county extension office for entry into the system.

Volunteer reports are important in assessing the value of the Missouri Master Gardener program to the state and to MU Extension. The value of an individual Master Gardener’s volunteer time may seem insignificant, but when the efforts of the thousands of Master Gardeners statewide are totaled, the value of the donated service is worth over \$1 million annually.

The federal government requires Extension to keep track of client ethnicity to document nondiscrimination in delivery of programs. Master Gardener volunteers have the same responsibility as regular Extension employees for maintaining program standards.

### **Avoiding conflict of interest**

The Master Gardener program is a University of Missouri Extension outreach program aimed at providing unbiased, research-based horticultural information and education. Master Gardener training and volunteer projects must be Extension-related, educational activities that represent the interests of University of Missouri Extension. Service activities or projects that compete with the private sector should be avoided. At no time should Master Gardener activities be associated with commercial activities or products. Additionally, Master Gardener activities do not imply University endorsement of any product or place of business.

The title Missouri Master Gardener and its associated logo are to be used exclusively by Master Gardeners trained and certified under the auspices of University of Missouri Extension. Only those individuals certified in the





### **Master Gardener code of conduct**

Key points of the Missouri Master Gardener code of conduct include that volunteers will do the following:

- Represent University of Missouri Extension and the Master Gardener program with dignity and pride
- Perform duties in a responsible, professional and timely manner
- Be courteous, civil and respectful
- Dress appropriately
- Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies
- Be responsible and accountable for personal actions
- Abstain from the use or the influence of alcohol or controlled substances
- Promote and support the Master Gardener program and support peer Master Gardeners

program after completing the core instruction may call themselves Missouri Master Gardeners. Certified individuals are not to advertise themselves as Missouri Master Gardeners in their names or places of business, nor to be listed as such in business advertising. Association with commercial activities or products, or implying University endorsement of any product or place of business, is a violation of Missouri Master Gardener program policies.

## **Fundraising**

Fundraising is a necessity for many volunteer programs, and the Master Gardener Program is no exception. Master Gardener groups often generate revenue for their program through plant sales, garden tours, speaker fees, horticulture days, grant writing and donations from area residents and businesses. Money generated is used to fund local projects, to cover expenses associated with meetings and special events, to provide scholarships for core course training, and to work with schools and other organizations to promote gardening by young people.

Although fundraising might be a necessity, it is not part of the Missouri Master Gardener mission. Thus, time spent fundraising should not represent an excessive amount of a Master Gardener's volunteer effort. Additionally, fundraising activities, such as plant sales, often compete with the private or business sector. Therefore, discretion should be used relative to the scope of fundraising activities and the transparency with which the money raised is used to benefit the community.

## **Relocation**

Missouri Master Gardeners who have completed both core course training and the initial volunteer requirement in Missouri are eligible to become Master Gardener volunteers in the locale of their new residency. They will be subject to the guidelines of the new locale and may be required to take additional core course work as required in their new locality.

Master Gardener Trainees who have not completed their volunteer service before moving may be required to pass a local examination and to complete additional course work before becoming volunteers in their new locale.

Master Gardeners moving into Missouri from another state may be required to complete the entire Master Gardener training before volunteering in Missouri. Local program coordinators, in consultation with the state Master Gardener office, will determine whether a transferring Master Gardener needs further training. In addition, a transfer fee may be required.

## **Dismissal**

Individuals may be dismissed from the Missouri Master Gardener program for failure to complete educational training, volunteer service hours or required reports. Additionally, individuals who fail to represent the University of Missouri Extension in a professional and positive manner during the course of Master Gardener activities are subject to dismissal.

## Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement

This agreement is intended to indicate the seriousness with which we treat our volunteers. The intent of the agreement is to assure you of our deep appreciation of your services and to indicate our commitment to do the very best we can to make your volunteer experience a productive and rewarding one. This Volunteer Contract ensures that you are officially recognized as a University of Missouri Extension volunteer for insurance purposes. As a University of Missouri Extension volunteer, you are provided with liability insurance coverage. Volunteers are immune from personal liability for any act or omission resulting in damage or injury to any person intended to receive benefit from the volunteer's service.

The mission of the Master Gardener Program is to provide horticultural information and training to the gardening public, based on University of Missouri research specific to the local climate, soils and plants.

The mission of University of Missouri Extension is to serve the citizens of Missouri by extending research-based knowledge and problem-solving resources to people throughout the state.

### ***Missouri Master Gardener contract***

In the capacity of a certified Missouri Master Gardener volunteer, I understand and agree:

- to disseminate University of Missouri horticultural information to all who request it.
- to provide, when available, horticultural information endorsed and sanctioned by University of Missouri Extension.
- to comply with training, documentation, certification and recertification requirements, as delineated in Master Gardener Program policies.
- to provide my own transportation and pay my own expenses incurred as part of official volunteer activities. Expenses may be tax deductible with proper documentation. Actual out-of-pocket expenses for supplies and materials provided by volunteers may also be recovered through program or class fees charged to participants.
- to refrain from using alcohol or illegal drugs while participating in volunteer activities, volunteering while intoxicated, or possessing any weapons during volunteer activities.
- to cooperate with and support staff members to jointly further the missions and objectives of the Master Gardener Program.
- to consistently exhibit a professional manner to staff, other volunteers and the public.
- to use the title of Master Gardener as intended to signify a highly trained individual actively volunteering in the University of Missouri Extension Master Gardener Program. Master Gardeners should not associate themselves with commercial products or give implied endorsements of any product or place of business.
- to abide by the spirit of the above rules and follow current Missouri Master Gardener program policy guidelines in order to maintain my certification as a Master Gardener.

I further understand that the University of Missouri Extension will:

- disseminate research-based horticultural information to all who request it.
- support the Master Gardener volunteers.
- provide equipment, training, supervision and direction to volunteers.
- communicate expectations and responsibilities of the program to volunteers.
- reassign and/or terminate, if necessary, any volunteer who does not uphold Missouri Master Gardener policies and procedures.
- uphold and cultivate a trustful relationship between staff and volunteers.
- provide defense and protection against loss, damage or expense for any duly authorized Master Gardener volunteer of the University in connection with any claim or suit allegedly arising out of the performance of duties of volunteer service for the University or the performance of duties as a member of a University committee to which the volunteer has been appointed by or requested to provide the services by a duly authorized University administrative officer if:
  1. The Master Gardener submits a request to the President of the University containing a brief description of the circumstances surrounding the incident giving rise to the legal action; documentation to verify that the named volunteer was acting within the scope of his or her official volunteer duties at the time of the incident giving rise to legal action; and a copy of the summons or petition served upon the named Master Gardener;
  2. The President of the University determines that the named Master Gardener was acting in good faith and within the scope of his/her official volunteer duties;
  3. Such defense is legally permissible; and
  4. There has been no judicial determination that the action arose out of malfeasance in office, or willful or wanton conduct, or neglect of duty.

Regarding claims arising from the use of personal vehicles for official business, University-provided defense and protection is excess to any other auto liability insurance maintained by the owner or operator of the vehicle.

I have read and understand this volunteer contract and further agree to abide by the provisions of this contract. Further, I recognize that this contract may be terminated immediately by written notice by the Master Gardener and/or the University.

**Master Gardener participant:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

Current mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_

County \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**University of Missouri Extension representative:** \_\_\_\_\_

Name (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Exchange of Services Agreement

In exchange for the Master Gardener Training provided by University of Missouri Extension, I will devote a minimum of 30 hours of volunteer assistance to the horticultural programming efforts in \_\_\_\_\_ County. This assistance may include answering horticultural telephone requests, developing demonstration gardens, conducting home horticulture research, teaching garden classes, directing gardening programs, assisting with community projects such as Habitat for Humanity or Community Gardens, or other activities as approved by the local or regional University of Missouri Extension Master Gardener Coordinator.

I understand that if I do not satisfy the requirements as stated above, I will not receive certification as a Missouri Master Gardener.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name (*please print*) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### For further information

If you have questions that this publication or other references do not answer, contact your local extension center.

Individual chapters in the **Missouri Master Gardener Core Manual**, publications MG1 through MG14, are available at <http://extension.missouri.edu/cb19>.

### Related publication

*Missouri Environment and Garden* newsletter – online at <http://ipm.missouri.edu/meg>