ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Kerry Smith, State Extension Master Gardener Program Coordinator
Alabama Cooperative Extension System at Auburn University

Service Report Update developed by Jack LeCroy, Lyn Webb, Skip Coulter, Kerry Smith

(August 2022 – August 2023)

Presentation created by Lyn Webb, Calhoun & Chilton MGAs

Reviewed by Don Lassiter, Wiregrass MGA



UPDATES TO ALABAMA EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS SERVICE REPORT

- Starting January 2024 -

Why Update the Service Report?

- Today's Extension Administration needs more than numbers
  - The question is, "So what?"
  - What happened as a RESULT of your efforts and WHO BENEFITED?
  - A better annual report was priority #1
- We also need more MGs reporting their hours
  - Make it easier to understand. This was priority #2
- The Glossary defining each category was removed in 2021
  - The effects of this were not considered and led to increased randomness
  - Reviving a meaningful glossary was priority #3

A Better Report Helps Tell a Better Story

Feedback from Focus Groups and Surveys agreed – We need to tell our Extension Master Gardener Story, everywhere, every year, and clearly



The New Service Report

For Alabama Extension Master Gardeners

https://www.acesagmg.site/login.php

ALABAMA EXTENSION

Master

Login

First Visit? Cl

Email

Password

Same URL = https://www.acesagmg.site

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https://www.acesagmg.site/index.php

Kerry Smith - Extension (ACES)

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Welcome!

Master Gardeners are Extension-trained volunteer educators. Under the direction of the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, this program has a two-fold purpose: to increase the availability of home horticulture information through qualified volunteers and to extend the land grant mission across Alabama.

- Reliable: Our gardening advice and programs are science-based.
- Relevant: Our information is timely.
- Reachable: The Master Gardener Helpline: 877-252-4769



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8/24/2023

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https://www.acesagmg.site/hours.php

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HOME | STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT | DIRECTO



Add New Hours | 2023 YTD

Your Volunteer Hours Summary - 202

Entries can be edited or deleted up to 90 days after date
To edit click the Project title.
* LBS = Food Donations; ** Txp = Vegetable Transplants

It appears you have no Volunteer Hours reported for the

Click the "Enter Hours" button above to start the proces

NOTE: A few words about record keeping. We at Master
to keep your data safe and secure. This includes making
copies of your hours as you earn them, as you enter ther
program!

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https://www.acesagmg.site/hours_form.php?action=add



OLD REPORT LAYOUT

<< Return to Hours Report 2023

Enter New Hours

Use the form below to submit either your Volunteer Hours or Educational Hours.

1. DATE OF VOLUNTEER ACTIVITY

Enter Date
Mo 8 / Date 24 / Year 2023

2. ENTER CATEGORY AND HOURS

Select Vol Category

Enter Vol Hours

Select Edu Category

Enter Edu. Hours

Type here to search

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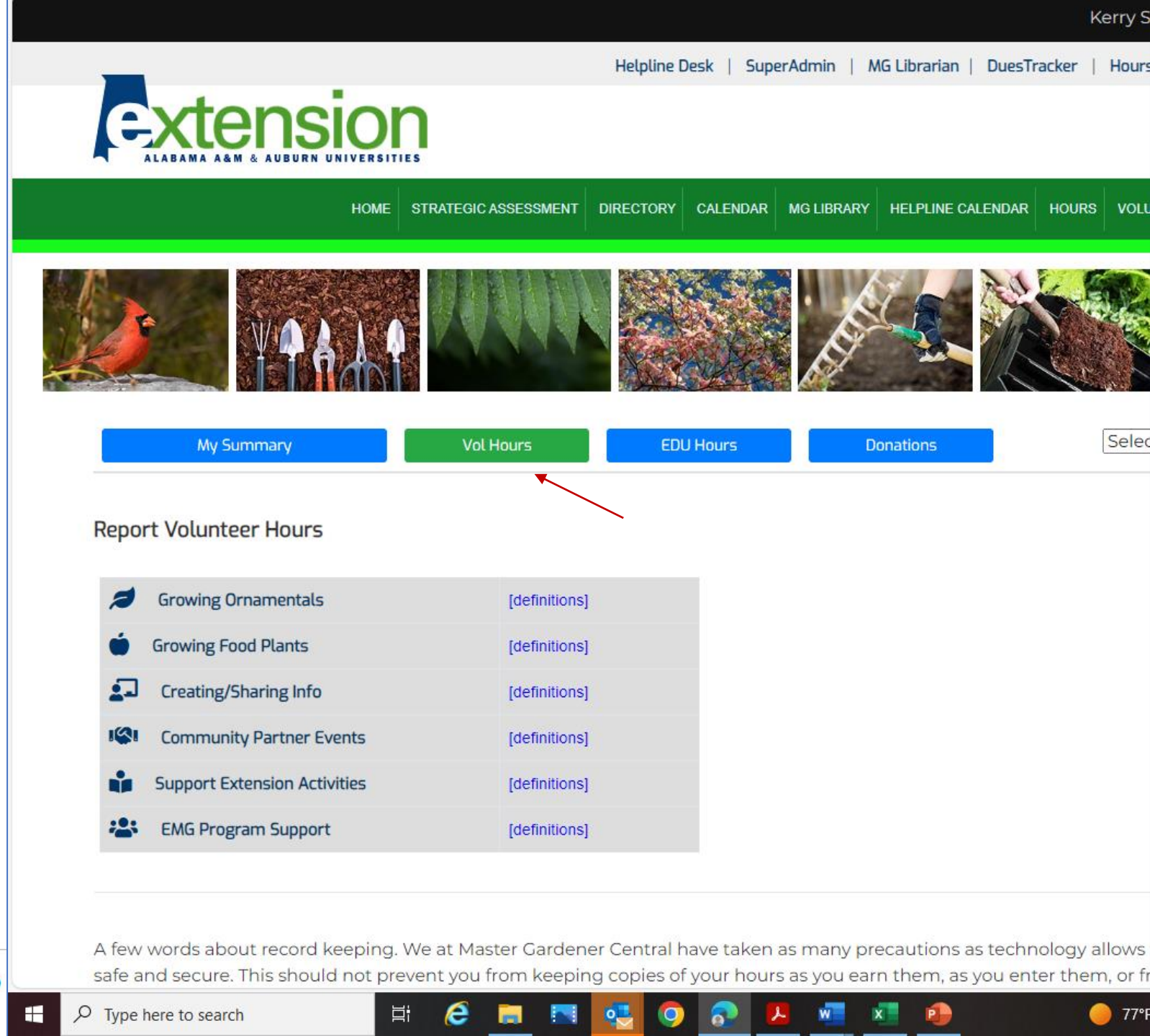
8/24/2023

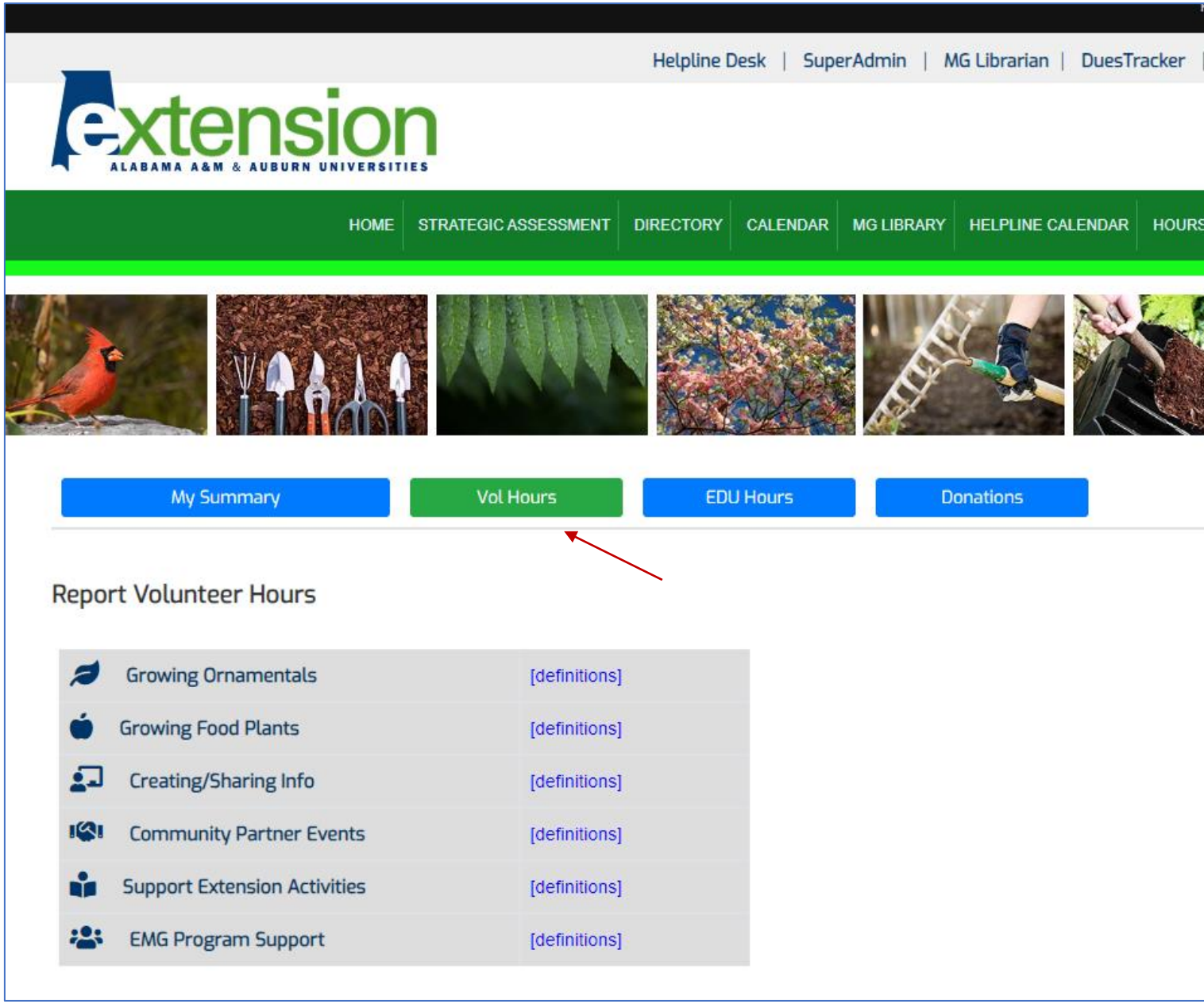
NEW Report Layout

- Entry point is the same
- BUT the Hours Report page will look very different
- See glossary definitions to the right of each category



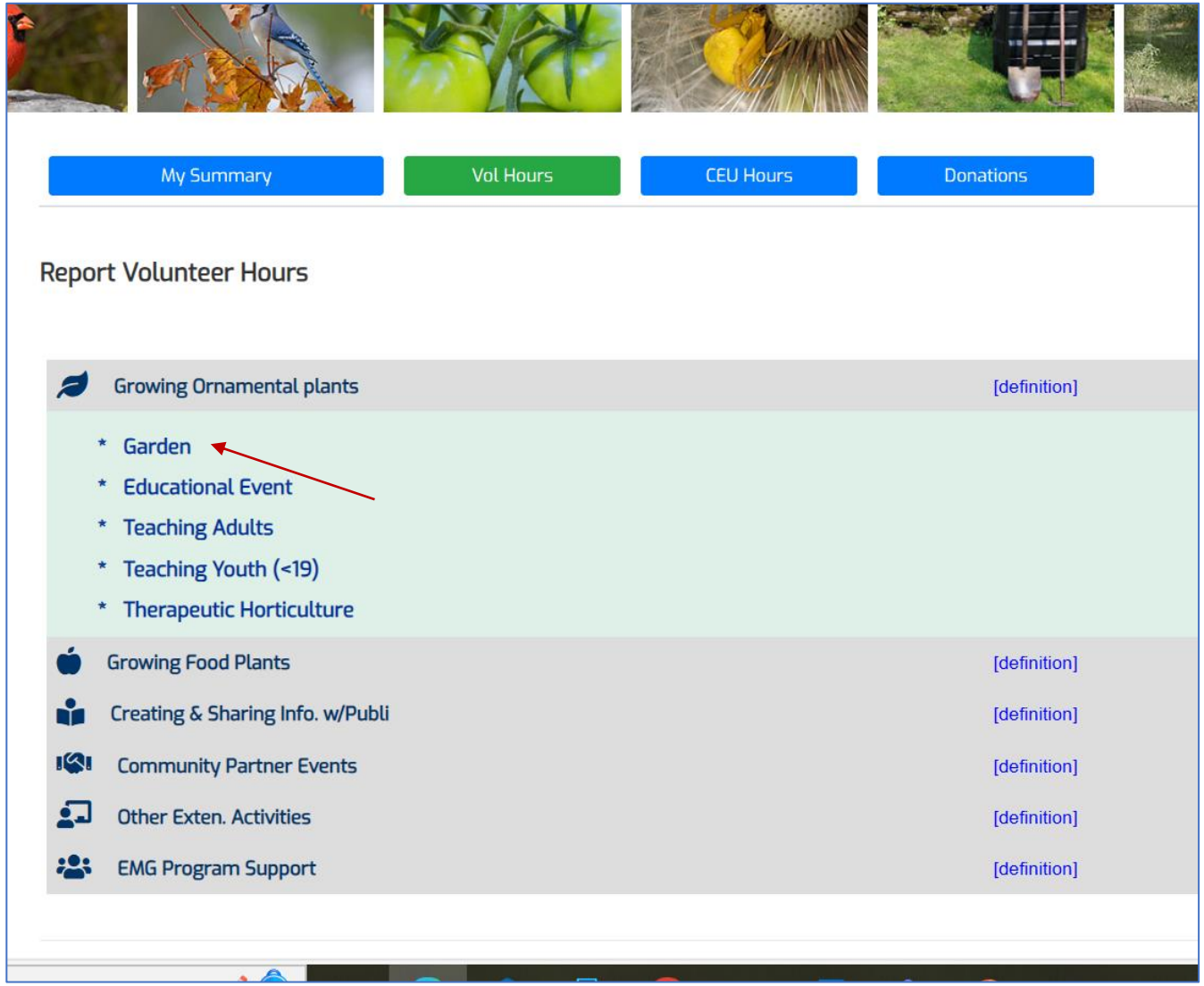
Top-Tier

- Two category tiers
- Broad topics that are clearly separated
  - **Growing Ornamental plants**
  - **Growing Food plants**
  - **Creating/Sharing Info.**
  - **Community Partner Events**
  - **Support Extension Activities**
  - **EMG Program Support**



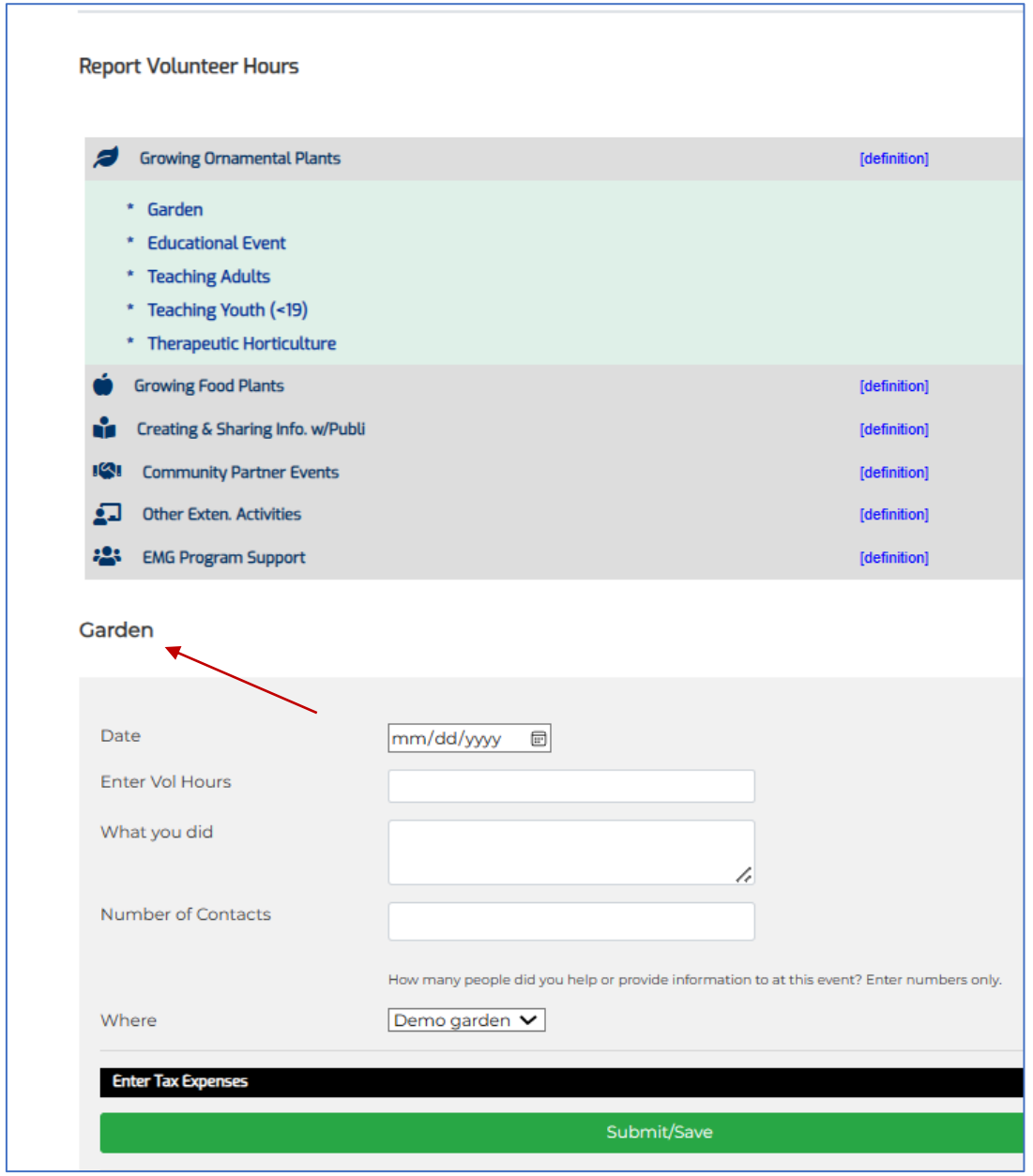
Second Tier

- Specific activities
- The volunteer activity is reported here
- Example – Growing Ornamental plants
  - Report under 1 of these…….
  - **Plan/Establish/Maintain Garden**
  - **Event Prep/Support/Hospitality**
  - **Teaching Adults**
  - **Teaching Youth**
  - **Therapeutic Horticulture** (special and specific audiences)



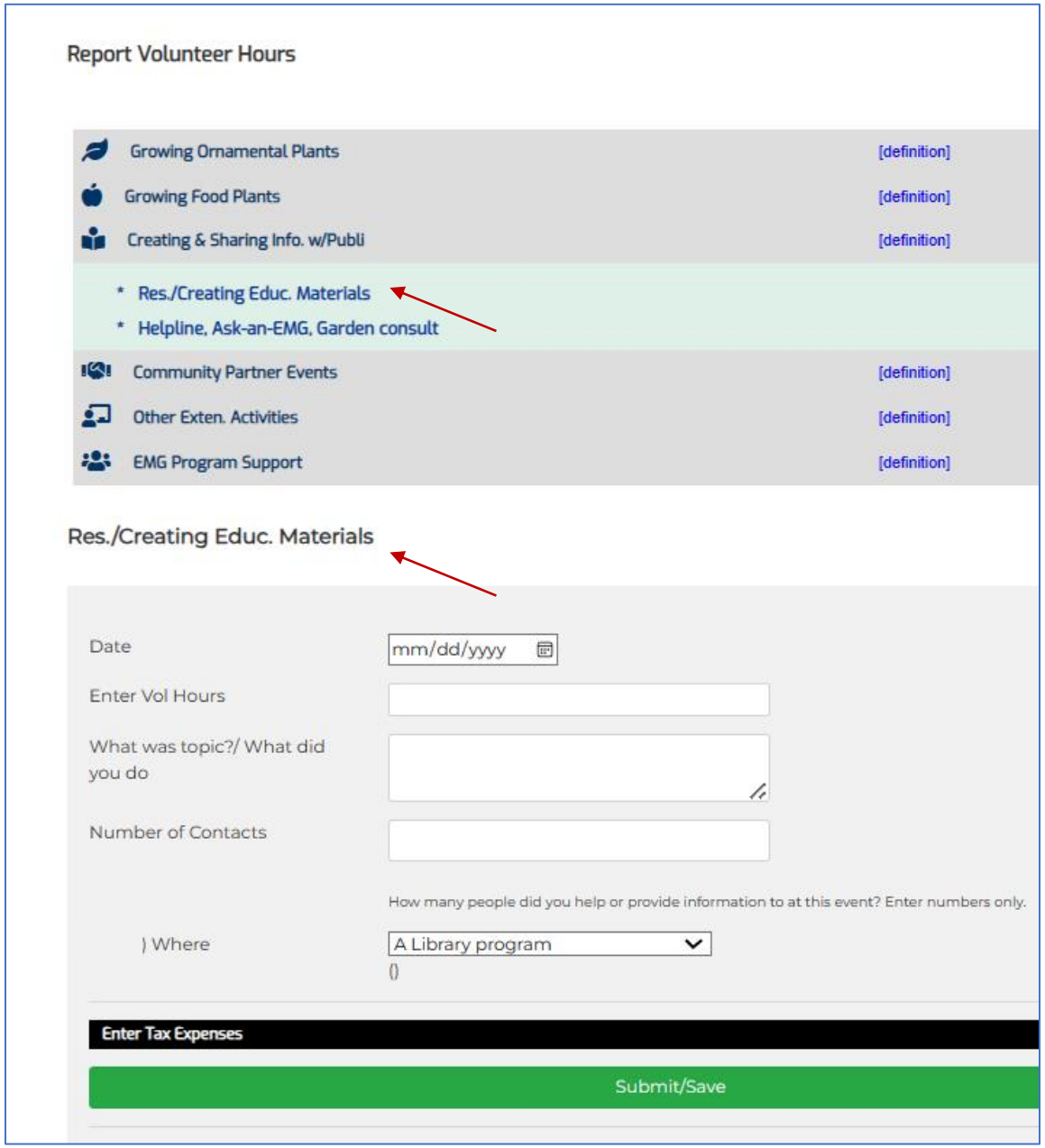
The Report: Growing Ornamental & Growing Food Plants

- Most top-tier categories have slightly different reports
- These are the exception
  - **Growing Ornamental plants**
    - Date, hours, what you did, number of contacts, where was activity
    - "Where" is a dropdown list written by your Agent and Hours Manager
    - If the activity's location is NOT listed, discuss with your ACES Agent and EMG Hours Manager
  - **Growing Food plants** (same)



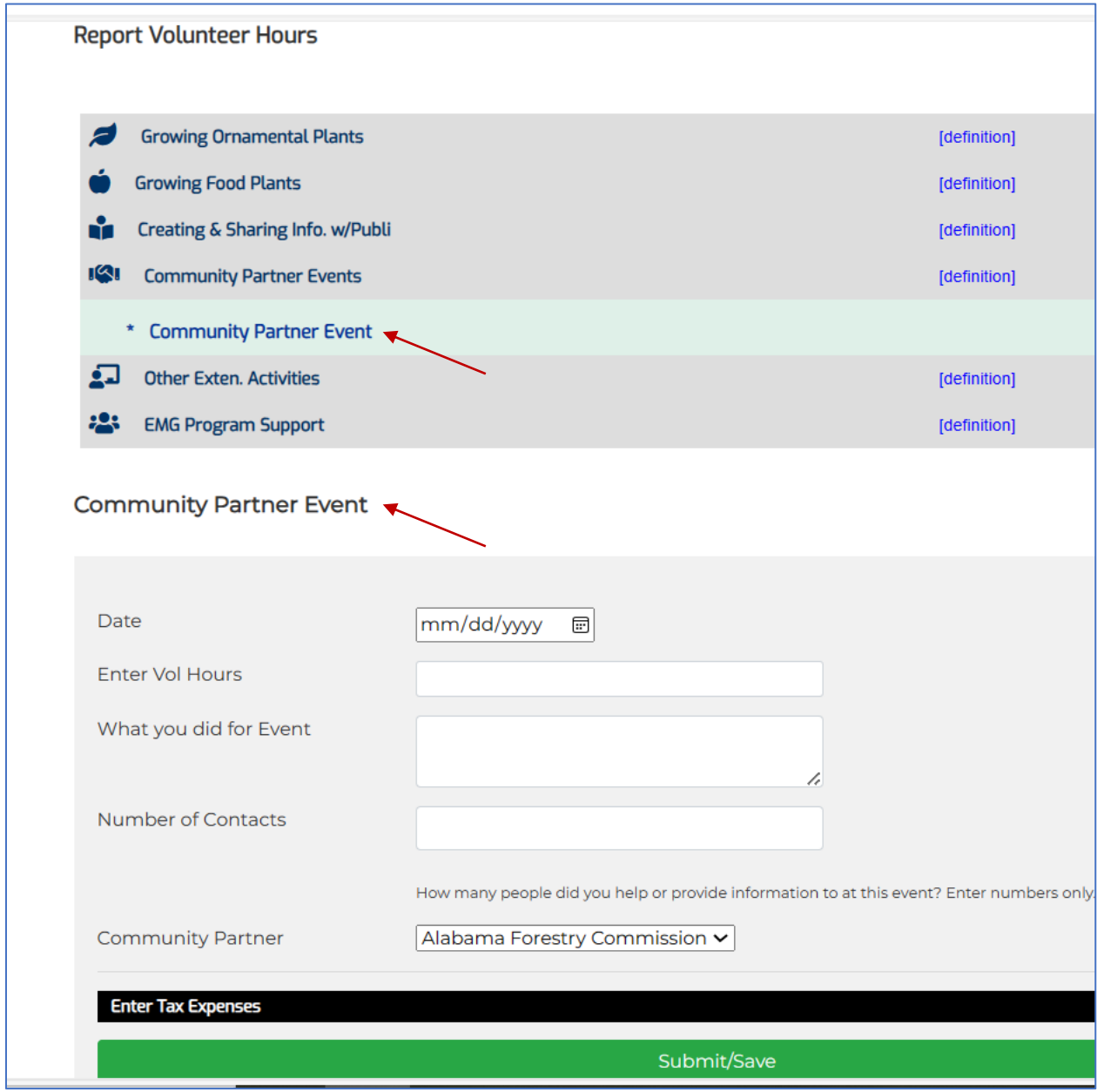
The Report: Creating & Sharing Information

- Each top-tier category has a slightly different report
  - **Creating & Sharing Info. with Public**
    - Date, hours, what was topic/ or what did you do?, number of contacts, where was the information shared
    - "Where" is a statewide dropdown list written by Kerry Smith, EMG Program State Coordinator
    - If the activity's location is NOT listed, discuss with your ACES Agent and EMG Hours Manager



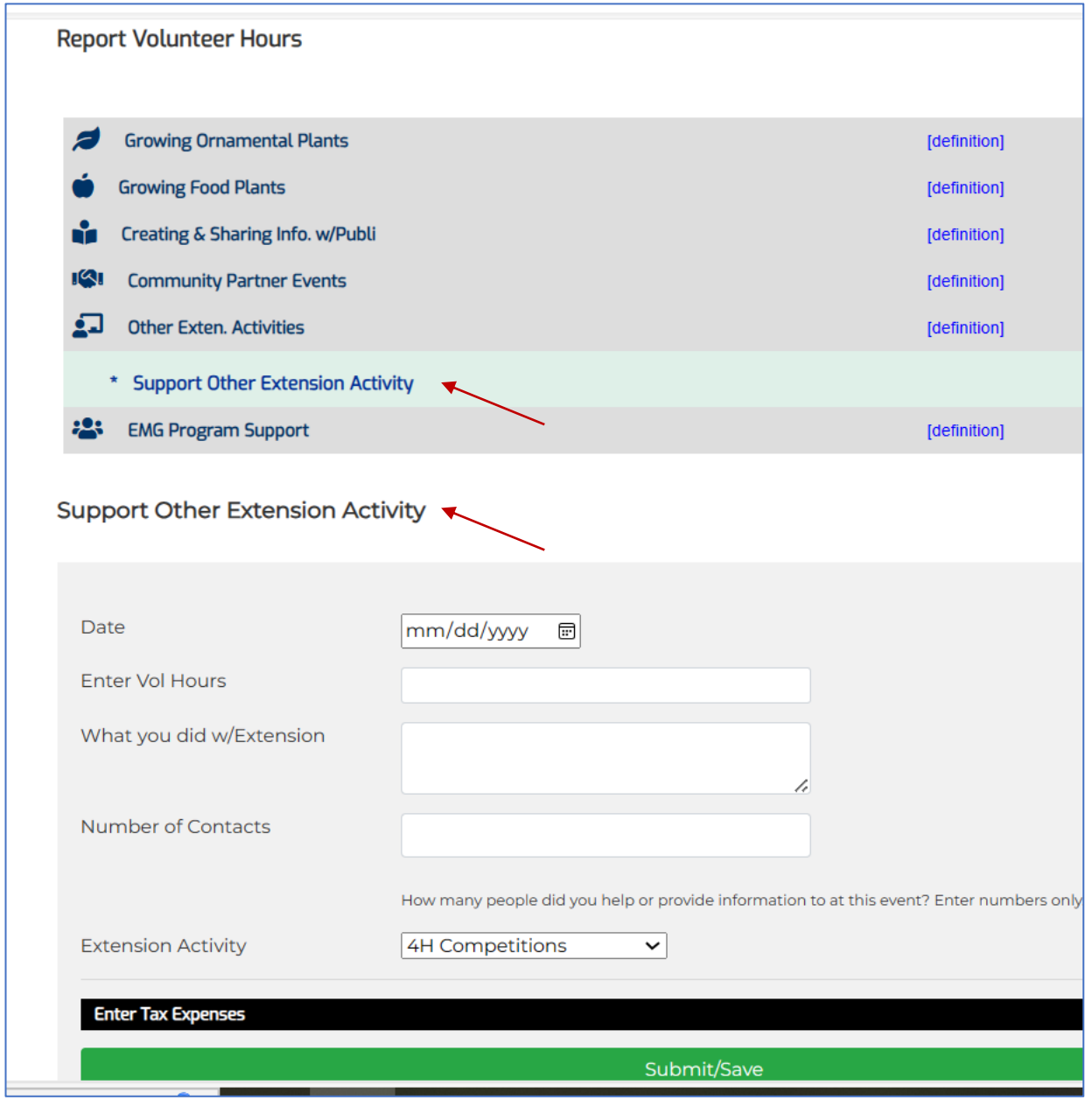
The Report: Community Partner Events

- Each top-tier category has a slightly different report
  - **Community Partner Events**
    - Date, hours, what you did for Event, number of contacts, name of Community Partner
    - “Community Partner” is a dropdown list written by your Agent and Hours Manager
    - If the “Partner” is NOT listed, discuss with your ACES Agent and EMG Hours Manager



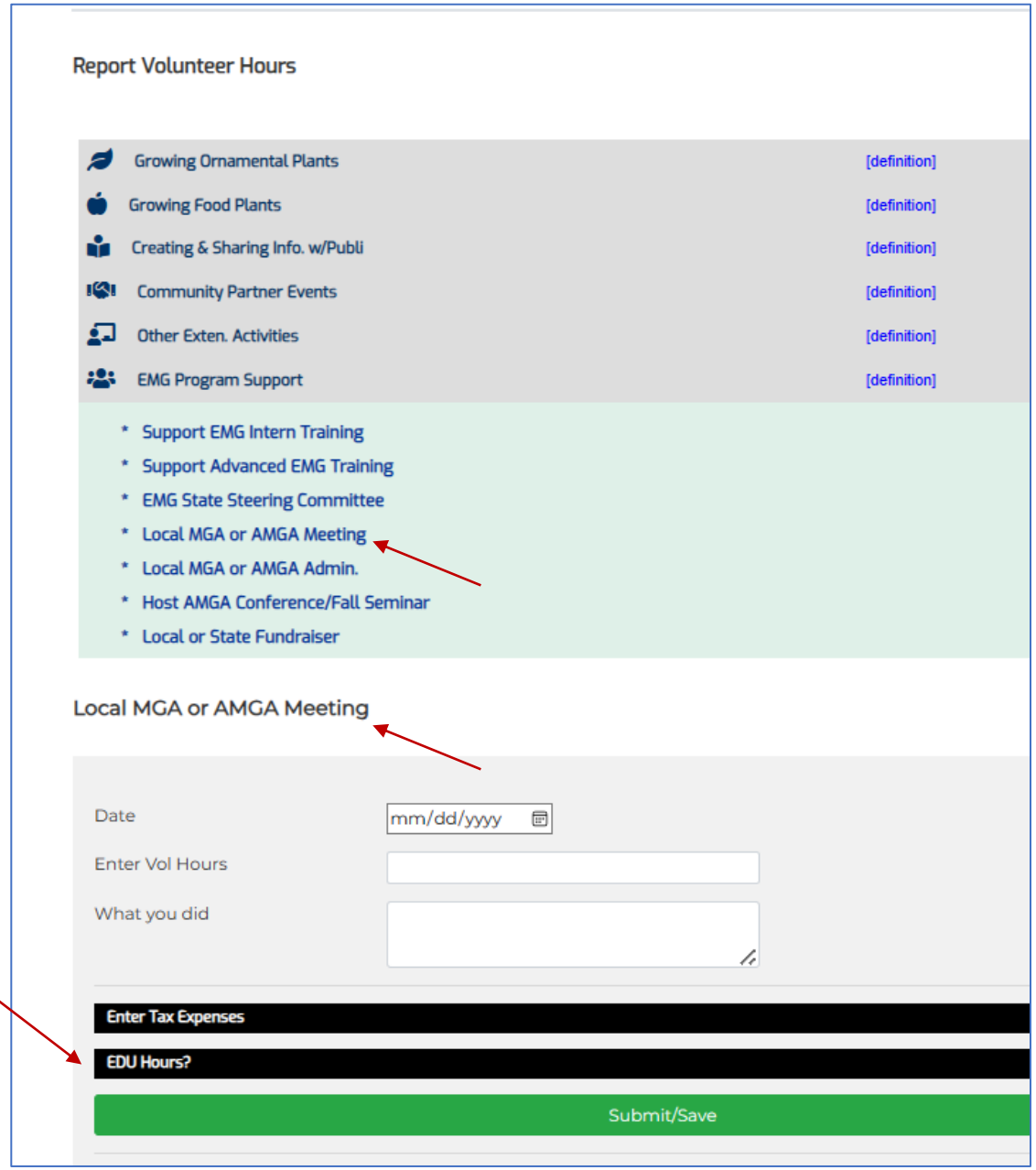
The Report: Support Other Extension Activities

- Each top-tier category has a slightly different report
  - **Support other Extension Activities** (other than Home Grounds)
    - Date, hours, what you did with Extension, number of contacts, name of Extension Activity
    - "Extension Activity" is a dropdown list written by your Agent and Hours Manager
    - If the "Activity" is NOT listed, discuss with your ACES Agent and EMG Hours Manager



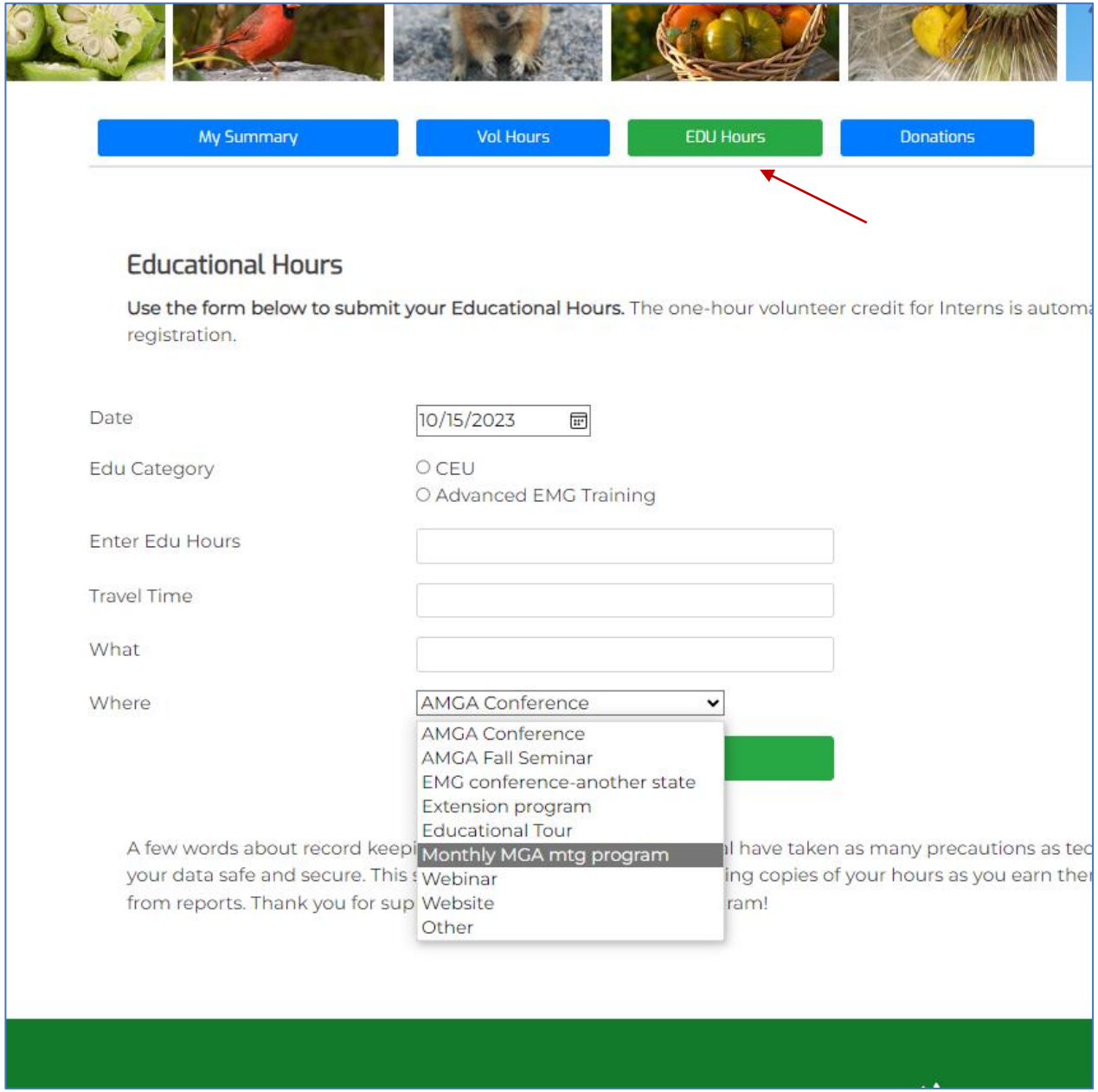
The Report: EMG Program Support

- Each top tier category has slightly different report
  - **EMG Program Support**
    - Date, hours, what you did
    - "Where" is not included here
    - "CEU Hours" has a quick link at the bottom near "Submit/Save"
    - Another "CEU" link (button) is at the top too
      - Use this link when CEU's are attended separately from the monthly meeting



The Report: CEUs

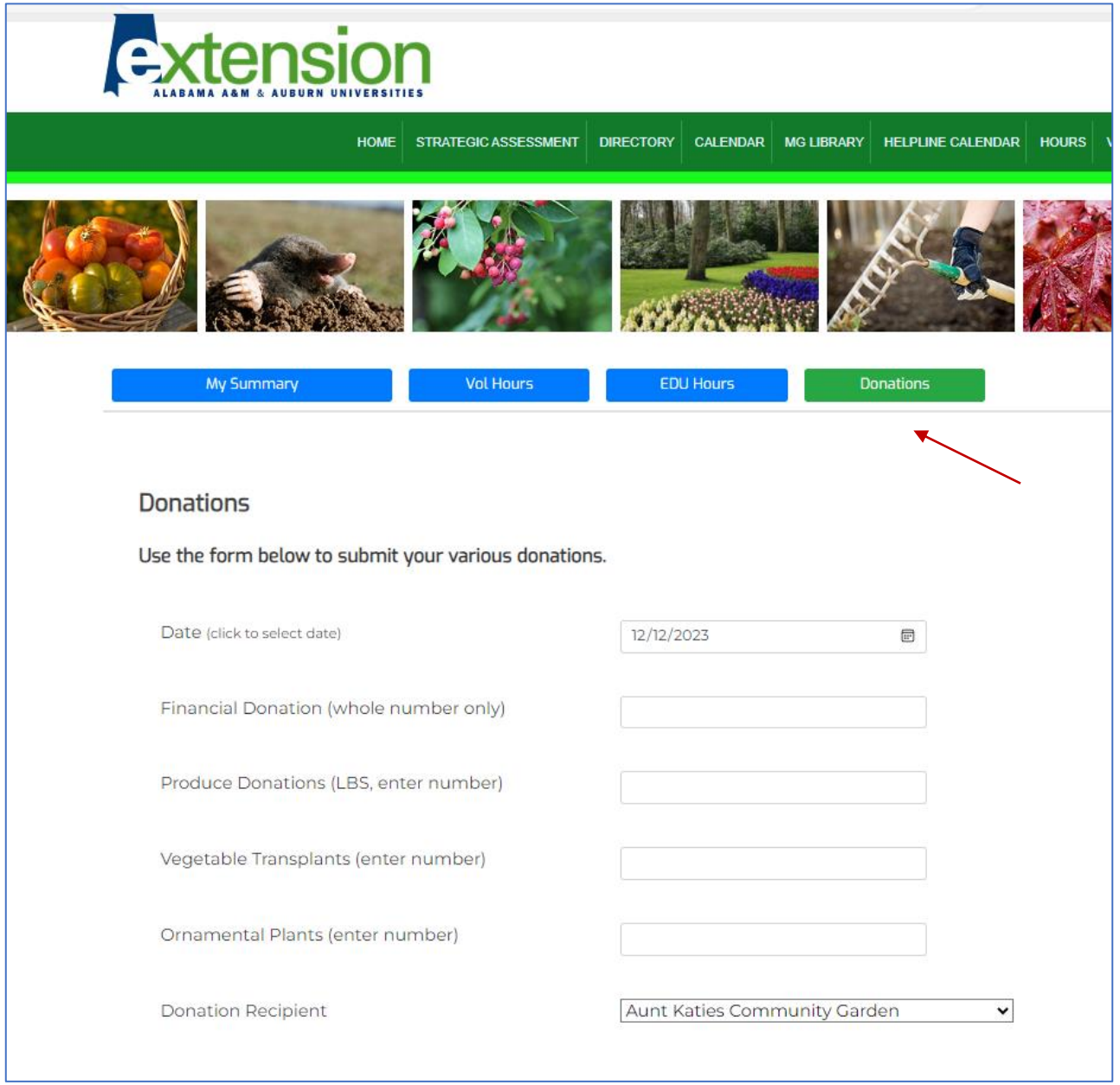
- **Extension Master Gardener Intern** graded assignment.
  - An automatic report with new account registration
  - Does NOT appear on report list
  - Default report = 1 hour
- **Extension Master Gardener Continuing Education**
  - Report Date, hours, travel time, what was CEU topic, and location of CEU event
  - “Where” is a statewide dropdown list written by Kerry Smith, EMG Program State Coordinator



The Report: Donations

(This is a brand-new in 2024!)

- It is unlikely….
  - That all fields will be used for every report
  - That “Donations” will be reported with every volunteer activity report
- This is to report your personal donations
  - Monetary – GMGM produce – GMGM transplants – ornamental plants
- “Donation Recipient” is a dropdown list written by your Agent and Hours Manager
- If the “Recipient” is NOT listed, discuss with your ACES Agent and EMG Hours Manager



Glossary Definitions

Alabama Extension Master Gardener

2024 Service Report Categories

SERVICE REPORT CATEGORIES (January 1, 2024)

1. GROWING ORNAMENTAL PLANTS
2. GROWING FOOD PLANTS
3. CREATING & SHARING INFORMATION
4. COMMUNITY PARTNER EVENTS
5. SUPPORT OTHER EXTENSION ACTIVITIES
6. EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER EDUCATION (CEUs)
7. EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM SUPPORT

GROWING ORNAMENTALS (a) (standard definitions)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

These activities include working with or teaching about plants NOT grown specifically for consumption (flowers, shrubs, trees, etc.). All these activities represent Extension and/or the Extension Master Gardener Program.

- Some activities are designed to impact the entire community (broad audience).
  - **Plan, establish, or maintain gardens:** These include school gardens, demonstration gardens, public green spaces, botanical gardens, parks, public buildings, city street planters, historical sites, welcome signs, and similar.
  - **Educational event:** Lunch & Learn, school programs, programs at demonstration gardens, workshops, and similar. Volunteers might be involved in event preparations, support, hospitality, or as instructors. Instructors will report their general audience as **Adults** or **Youth**.
- **Therapeutic horticulture:** These activities are for specific groups such as military Veterans, habilitation and rehabilitation centers, seniors at activity centers or residential facilities, and Hospice patients or family members. We use horticulture as a therapeutic tool, with the emphasis on gardening affecting participants mental and physical health.

GROWING ORNAMENTALS (b) (standard definitions)

HOME
CLICK FOR REPORT

These activities include working with or teaching about plants NOT grown specifically for consumption (flowers, shrubs, trees, etc.). All these activities represent Extension and/or the Extension Master Gardener Program.

Note-1: These activities support Extension Home Grounds' Alabama Smart Yards Program. (weblink).

Note-2: Time spent researching and preparing a presentation is reported under "Creating & Sharing Information".

GROWING ORNAMENTAL PLANTS

HOME

Choose ONE of the 5 activity types:

- ❑ **Plan/ establish/ maintain a garden or planting**
- ❑ **Event prep/ support/ hospitality**
- ❑ **Teaching adults**
- ❑ **Teaching youth** (age 18 and younger)
- ❑ **Therapeutic horticulture**

(report)

- Date_____
- # hours_____ (including round-trip travel time)
- Where_____ (drop-down)
- What_____ (free-form field)
- # contacts_____ (sometimes = 0)

OPTIONAL REPORT (click button)

- ❑ **My donation**
  - Financial $_____
  - Num. plants _____
  - Where _____ (drop-down)

GROWING FOOD PLANTS (a) (standard definitions)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

These activities include working with or teaching about plants grown specifically for consumption, such as fruits, vegetables, culinary herbs, etc. All these represent Extension and/or the Extension Master Gardener Program.

- Some activities are designed to impact the entire community (broad audience).
  - **Plan, establish, or maintain gardens:** These include school gardens, demonstration gardens, community gardens, botanical gardens, historical sites, garden harvest donations to food pantry/soup kitchen, and similar.
  - **Educational event:** Lunch & Learn, school programs, programs at demonstration gardens, workshops, and similar. Volunteers might be involved in event preparations, support, hospitality, or as instructors. Instructors will report their general audience as **Adults** or **Youth**.
- **Therapeutic horticulture:** These activities are for specific groups such as military Veterans, habilitation and rehabilitation centers, seniors at activity centers or residential facilities, and Hospice patients or family members. We use horticulture as a therapeutic tool, with the emphasis on gardening affecting participants mental and physical health.

GROWING FOOD PLANTS (b) (standard definitions)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

These activities include working with or teaching about plants grown specifically for consumption, such as fruits, vegetables, culinary herbs, etc. All these represent Extension and/or the Extension Master Gardener Program.

Note-1: These activities support Extension Home Grounds' Grow More, Give More Program. (weblink).

Note-2: Time spent researching and preparing a presentation is reported under "Creating & Sharing Information".

GROWING FOOD PLANTS

HOME

CHOOSE ONE ACTIVITY TYPE

- ❑ **Plan/ establish/ maintain a garden or planting**
- ❑ **Event prep/ support/ hospitality**
- ❑ **Teaching adults**
- ❑ **Teaching youth** (age 18 and younger)
- ❑ **Therapeutic horticulture**

(report)

- Date_____
- # hours_____ (including round-trip travel time)
- Where_____ (drop-down)
- What_____ (free-form field)
- # contacts_____ (sometimes = 0)

OPTIONAL REPORT (click button)

- ❑ **My donation**
  - Financial $_____
  - Num. plants _____
  - Lbs. produce _____
  - Where _____
    (drop-down)

CREATE & SHARE INFO. WITH PUBLIC (a)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

(standard definitions)

These activities represent Extension and / or the Extension Master Gardener Program. They are designed to impact the entire community (e.g., social media) or a specific audience (e.g., Helpline). All of these activities are to educate the general public.

- **Researching and creating educational materials:** Researching information to create a PowerPoint, writing an article for print, updating Extension publications, authors or editors for newsletter/magazine articles with public readership, managing social media, or similar activities that educate or share Extension and/or EMG Program information with the public.
- **Extension Master Gardener Helpline, Ask-a-Master Gardener, and garden consult:** Sharing educational information directly (face to face) and indirectly (non-face to face), or sometimes in small groups (Ask-a-MG).

CREATING & SHARING INFO. (a) (standard definitions)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

- **Note-1:** Time spent giving a presentation is reported under “Ornamentals” or “Food Plants”, relative to the workshop’s or presentation’s content.
- **Note-2:** All public-facing materials must be referenced from research-based information.
- **Note-3:** Newsletters and articles prepared for public readership are reported here.
- **Note-4:** Newsletters and articles prepared for the local MG association are reported under “EMG Program Support” + “MGA/AMGA Administration”.

CREATING & SHARING INFORMATION

HOME

CHOOSE ONE ACTIVITY TYPE

❑ **Researching and/or Creating materials that educate**

(report)

- Date_____
- # hours_____
- # contacts _____
- What is topic_____ (free-form)
- Where _____ (drop-down)

❑ **Helpline, Ask-a-MG, or garden consult**

(report)

- Date_____
- # hours_____ (including round-trip travel time)
- # contacts_____ (sometimes = 0)
- What _____ (free-form)
- Where_____ (drop-down)

Questions? – Take a Break?

COMMUNITY PARTNER EVENTS (a) (standard definitions)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

Community Partner events connect Extension and/or the Extension Master Gardener Program with a community partner. These are not led by and do not directly represent Extension and/or the Extension Master Gardener Program. The community partner is responsible for leading the event. These activities should have a connection to horticulture.

- **Examples:** County Fairs, Seasonal Civic Events, Arbor Day, Earth Day, Farm City, Habitat for Humanity landscape, national Go Public Gardens Day, botanical garden events and similar. These may be, but often are not, recurring events.
- **Note-1:** Fundraisers supported for the direct benefit of a community partner should be reported here. The community partner is the organization directly raising the funds and does not share them with the EMG Program.

COMMUNITY PARTNER EVENTS (b) (standard definitions)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

- **Note-2:** Report MG-led fundraiser activities under “Extension MG Program Support” because these do support local Extension MG Program activities and priorities.
- **Note-3:** EMG activities in societies, clubs, and other organizations external to our program will not generally count as EMG volunteer hours. When these organizations have a horticultural connection (gardens, trees, bees, etc.), the following activities can count as EMG hours.
  - Serving as the guest speaker = “Ornamentals” or ”Food” + “Teaching adults”
  - Educational program time when the speaker is a recognized expert = “CEU’s”
  - Volunteering with these organizations at one of their events = “Community Partner Events”
- **Note-4:** If activities represent an ongoing partnership AND represent Extension and/or the Extension Master Gardener Program, they should be recorded under “Growing Ornamentals” or “Growing Food Plants” as appropriate. An example is dedicated garden demonstrations at public gardens or parks that are designed, maintained, and used by EMGs or Agents for teaching.

COMMUNITY PARTNER EVENTS

HOME

- ❑ **Community partner events**
  - Date_____
  - # hours_____ (including round-trip travel time)
  - # contacts _____ (sometimes = 0)
  - What_____ (free-form)
  - Community partner_____ (drop-down)

OPTIONAL REPORT (click button)

- ❑ **My donation**
  - # Plants _____
  - Financial $_____
  - (etc.) _____

SUPPORT OTHER EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

(standard definitions)

Other Extension activities include those with Forestry & Wildlife, Food Safety, Human Nutrition, 4-H, your County Offices, and other activities.

- Examples include *Classroom in the Forest, 4-H Chick Chain, Your Money-Your Life, Food Preservation Camp*, helping a Research Center event or project, Extension County Office help, judging 4-H competitions, event registration, event set-up, event hospitality, preparing goody bags, etc.
- **Note-1:** These volunteer activities directly assist or collaborate with Extension programs outside of those with the Home Grounds team. Extension Home Grounds activities include those related to reporting categories 1, 2, & 3.
- **Note-2:** Any activity with Extension that you agree to assist or collaborate.

SUPPORT OTHER EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

HOME

- **Other Extension activities**
  - Date_____
  - # hours_____ (including round-trip travel time)
  - # contacts _____ (sometimes = 0)
  - What_____ (free-form)
  - Extension activity_____ (drop-down)

OPTIONAL REPORT (click button)

- **My donation**
  - Financial $_____
  - # Plants _____
  - (etc.) _____

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER EDUCATION (a)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

(standard definitions)

- **Extension Master Gardener Intern** graded assignment.
  - This is automatic when they register in the Service Report. The default report will show 1 hour.
- **Extension Master Gardener Continuing Education** hours may be obtained in-person, by webinars, meetings, or websites. However, all instructors must be recognized and respected experts in the topic presented. Report round-trip mileage in a separate entry field.
  - All Certified Extension Master Gardeners should report a minimum of 10 continuing education units (CEU's) per year. "Units" = number of hours in instruction.
- **The Advanced Extension Master Gardener certification** process involves many steps. It starts with proposed education material development, a study outline, and meeting with and approval from an Extension Home Grounds Agent.

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER EDUCATION (b)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

(standard definitions)

- **Note-1:** Public outreach presentations, which are part of Advanced Extension Master Gardener certification, are reported under “Growing Food Plants” or “Growing Ornamentals” as appropriate.
- **Note-2:** CEUs and Advanced EMG certification are the ONLY sub-categories that report Travel Time as a separate entry. This prevents exaggerating the annual report of EMG education hours. You should report travel time round-trip, to and from educational opportunities.
- **Note-3:** Extension Master Gardener Interns do not need CEUs but can attend these events as they choose. If reported, these hours will not count toward the 50 volunteer hours (minimum) required for certification. They will count toward their lifetime record of hours.

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER CEUs

HOME

CHOOSE ONE

- ❑ **Extension MG Intern assignment** (default credit upon registering a new* service report account = 1 hour)

*Certified EMGs should never create a second account in the service report. If you have trouble accessing your account, contact your EMG Hours Manager or Extension Agent.

- ❑ **CEUs** – All Certified EMGs (min. 10 hrs/year)
- ❑ **Advanced Extension MG Training** *(report)*
  - Date _____
  - CEU Hours _____
  - Travel time _____
  - Where _____ (drop-down)
  - What _____ (what was the CEU topic?)

EXTENSION MG PROGRAM SUPPORT (a)

HOME
CLICK FOR REPORT

(definitions)

Program Support includes activities that directly support the Extension Master Gardener Program. They impact Extension and / or an MG association (state or local). These activities help the statewide Extension Master Gardener Program run smoothly.

- ACES support:
  - **EMG Intern training** – any support offered to the training course
  - **Advanced EMG support** – manage, mentor, or serve on advisory committee
  - **EMG Steering committee** – a state committee
- **Local MGA/AMGA Meeting:** Attending or helping others attend the association meeting, or other organizational support.

EXTENSION MG PROGRAM SUPPORT (b)

HOME

CLICK FOR REPORT

(standard definitions)

- **Local MGA/AMGA administration:** Officers, committee chairs, committees, MGA newsletter writers and editors, and other leadership and management duties.
  - **Note-1:** Newsletters and articles prepared for the local MG association are reported here.
  - **Note-2:** Newsletters and articles prepared for public readership are reported under “Creating & Sharing Information”.
- **Host AMGA Conference or Fall Seminar:** meetings, work sessions, planning, registration, writing articles, research, execution, and evaluation of event.
- **Fundraiser:** Funds from these events are used to support Local Extension Master Gardener Program activities like plants for the demo garden, mulch, speaker fees, Intern training, paper goods, awards, scholarships, memorials, philanthropy, operating expenses, and similar.

EXTENSION MG PROGRAM SUPPORT

HOME

CHOOSE ONE *(report)…*

- ❑ **EMG Intern training support** Date _____ # Hours* _____ What _____
- ❑ **Advanced EMG support** Date _____ # Hours _____ What _____
- ❑ **EMG Steering committee** Date _____ # Hours _____ What _____
- ❑ **MGA / AMGA meeting** Date _____ # Hours _____ What _____
- ❑ **MGA / AMGA administration** Date _____ # Hours _____ What _____
- ❑ **Host Conf./ Fall Seminar** Date _____ # Hours _____ What _____
- ❑ **Fundraiser** Date _____ # Hours _____ What _____

*(The Steering Committee decided to simplify the travel time definition = count round-trip time plus volunteer hours, unless for CEU)

OPTIONAL REPORT (click button)

- ❑ **My donation**
  - Financial $ _____
  - # Plants _____
  - (etc.) _____
  - Philanthropy recipient (organization) _____

Helpful Reminders

COMMUNICATE WITH OUR TEAM (Reminder)

- Success –
  - Communication across our Program team (Agents and EMGs) is important to our Program's overall success and survival.
- Impact –
  - The Extension Master Gardener Program has a greater impact when activities are a group effort.
- Good or GREAT –
  - Good ideas turn into GREAT ideas when projects have multiple people involved – the Extension Office, Extension Agents, the EMG association, and EMGs in multiple counties.

VALIDATING SERVICE HOURS (Reminder)

https://mg.aces.edu/resources/

- Will it benefit the community?
- Is it associated with a noncommercial group or endeavor?
- Is it related to gardening, the environment, or an Extension program?
- Are you helping people learn?
- Summary – How is the volunteer activity illustrating or impacting the EMG Program's mission?
  - "We improve the lives of Alabamians through research-based horticulture education delivered by a dedicated, trained, and involved Extension volunteer team."

COUNTING "CONTACTS" (Reminder)

- "Contacts" are defined as the number of people who receive information or instruction from you, the Extension Master Gardener Volunteer.

- Your Extension Master Gardener Volunteer peers ARE counted as contacts when you are providing them with instruction or information.
- Your Extension Master Gardener Volunteer peers are usually NOT counted as contacts when volunteering together or attending a meeting (demo. garden, plant sale, flower bed maintenance, conference, etc.)

HANDOUTS TO HELP

- https://mg.aces.edu/resources/

- See “Resources” page….
  - Suggestion to EMG Hours Managers and Agents
  - Use these as templates
  - Make customized lists to match your local activities

AN OPPORTUNE TIME

- Building on this “Tell a Better Story” theme….
- A better story also comes from a place of common ground

- From the strategic assessment activities, many voices agreed….
- This Extension program is most successful when everyone promotes our connections
  - Extension + Master Gardeners =
  - Extension Master Gardeners

Many Thanks!

To the Extension Master Gardener Program Steering Committee, Service Report Update sub-committee

– Jack LeCroy, Lyn Webb, Skip Coulter –

(August 2022 – August 2023)

……..

Chris Cook, Hemispheres Internet, Inc.



ALABAMA MASTER GARDENERS

ALABAMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Kerry Smith, State Extension Master Gardener Program Coordinator
Alabama Cooperative Extension System at Auburn University

2024 Service Report

