

Colorado State University Extension
2017 NATIVE PLANT MASTER® PROGRAM GUIDELINES
LARIMER COUNTY

Native Plant Master Course Themes

Each Native Plant Master (NPM) course is made up of three sessions held three successive weeks. The session themes 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 names, and stewardship of native plants. Session evaluation. |
| Second Session: | Ecological relationships including non-native species, noxious weeds, and relationships with wildlife, pollinators, other plants, etc. |
| Third Session: | Written field exam on material from first and second sessions.
Human uses , including use of natives for sustainable landscaping, ethno botanical and other human uses. Course survey. |

NPM Course Details

- The NPM Program is an award winning, non-credit, educational program offered by various County Extension offices through the State's land-grant institution, Colorado State University.
- All NPM courses are held in the field. Participants meet at the parking location arranged by the instructor for each session by 8:15 a.m., or at a time requested by the instructor, as the instructor will have materials to distribute before the class starts. The instructor will be present at 8:10 a.m. each morning so participants may ask questions before the session begins. The group will leave on the trail at 8:30 a.m. and will return to the trailhead by 12:30 p.m. All sessions start promptly. Smoking is prohibited on trails, except in areas designated by the instructor. Participants may only attend the course they are enrolled in.
- **All class participants must bring *Flora of Colorado* by Jennifer Ackerfield 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 35+ plants, 9+ will be keyed using *Flora of Colorado*. Additional recommended materials to bring to each class: (1) NPM manual (you will receive at your first class); (2) a 10X-magnification hand lens; (3) pencil; (4) water and snacks; and (5) warm clothing, sunscreen, rain gear.
- 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 cancelled. If you suspect weather conditions warrant cancellation, call your instructor the evening before the session to see if class will be cancelled. If a session is cancelled, no make-up session will be held due the difficulty in scheduling conflicts. Make-up sessions will not be held for those who are not able to attend a session.
- Courses 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. Restrooms may be available at the trailhead, but will not be present anywhere else on the trail.
- **FREE special class: Keying and terminology class will be offered to all participants who would like to refresh their botanical knowledge and is required for those who have a minimal background in botany. The class will be held on April 27, 2017, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at the CSU Larimer County Extension office, 1525 Blue Spruce Drive, Fort Collins.**

NPM Course Exam

- Non-volunteer participants are not required to take the final exam, although most do so as a personal test of their knowledge. Those taking a NPM course in fulfillment of certification volunteer requirements must pass a written final exam with a “C” or better. The exam is given at the beginning of the third session of the course.
- The exam is conducted on the trail where you will be asked to identify living specimens and provide additional information. Participants will have 1.5 hours to complete the exam. Scientific names should be those used in *Flora of Colorado*. The exam is “open book”, therefore spelling of technical terms counts.
- The exam will cover only material from the first and second sessions. You may use your required textbook *Flora of Colorado* to complete the exam. No other books (including the NPM Manual) or glued or pasted items such as tabs or loose notes will be allowed during the exam. It is recommended you take notes in your *Flora of Colorado* textbook so they are available during the exam.

NPM Course Refund Policy

A full refund, less a \$15 processing fee, will be given if notification is given to CSU Larimer County Extension 30 days prior to the course date. If notification is given less than 30 days prior to the course date, no refund will be given.

Native Plant Master Program Options

(1) Course Only Participant – Non-Volunteer

The cost per course is \$90. There is no educational contact requirement to CSU Larimer County Extension for those taking a NPM course under the Non-Volunteer option. Non-volunteer participants are not required to take the field exam, although they may wish to do so as a personal test of their knowledge.

(2) Certified Native Plant Master Volunteer - Educational Contact Requirement

- The cost per course is reduced to \$60 for those who fulfill the volunteer requirements. (See “NPM Educational Contact Requirement” section below.) **If the educational contact requirement is not met in the same calendar year as the course, the participant will be billed in December the difference between the volunteer and non-volunteer rate.**
- Acceptance into the NPM volunteer program is based on a demonstrated ability to make educational contacts by the participant. The number of volunteers accepted into the program is left to the discretion of the Larimer County Extension Program Leader. Typically, NPM volunteers are employed by or volunteer for a public agency or private business that involves educational outreach, although this is not a requirement.
- Apprentice NPM Volunteers must take three different courses (i.e. held in different months or locations with different habitat types) in order to minimize overlap of plants covered. Three courses do not need to be completed in one year.

NPM Educational Contact Requirement

- **Apprentice NPM Volunteers** - Education of the public is a key mission of the NPM program and documenting contacts and volunteer hours helps ensure continued funding for the program. Apprentice NPM Volunteers who are working to become certified NPM volunteers must pass three NPM courses with a grade “C” or higher and must teach at least 20 people per course taken about native plants using information learned in a NPM course. The course educational contact requirement of 20 per course must be met by November 30, 2017. A cumulative total of 60 educational contacts must be made in order to become a Certified NPM Volunteer. Contacts are cumulative and do not expire while an Apprentice is

working to become certified. Apprentice NPM Volunteers may begin counting educational contacts after the first session of the first course.

- **Apprentice and Certified NPM Volunteers** - An e-mail and educational contact form will be sent by the Program Leader to each NPM Apprentice and Certified NPM Volunteer. The completed form must be returned to the CSU Larimer County Extension office by November 30, 2017. The information collected helps us document that the NPM program has had an impact on the public, which helps ensure continued funding for the program.
- Educational programs may be team-taught with another volunteer. If so, each instructor 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 than your own may also be counted. The title of the program does not need to be specifically about native plants, as long as some information learned from a NPM course is used in the program. For example, educational contacts can be counted if the program is about noxious weeds using information from a NPM course.
- Volunteers may also count individual educational contacts made outside of formal public programs. Examples of these are educational contacts made about plants while roving on the trail, at the front desk of your agency, or information provided to friends and neighbors.
- The cumulative educational contact requirement for 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 and volunteer hours to another Extension program (i.e. Master Gardener) need to select one program to report contacts to in order to avoid double reporting.

Certification as a Native Plant Master

Certification as a Native Plant Master Volunteer, including a special pin, window sticker and patch, will be awarded upon successful completion of three NPM courses, passing three exams with a grade of “C” or higher, and the completion of 60 educational contact requirements. Certification is awarded in December.

Maintaining Native Plant Master Status

- Certification in future years may be maintained by teaching 60 people about Colorado plants and reporting at least 60 educational contacts and volunteer hours annually for as long as you wish to remain a certified Native Plant Master Volunteer.
- Certified NPM Volunteers can go on sabbatical status by contacting the Larimer County Extension office (970) 498-6000. Sabbatical status means you temporarily suspend your NPM Certification and are not required to make any public contacts or volunteer hours. During sabbatical status volunteers will receive only very important mailings (i.e. annual Impact Survey and notification of next year’s courses). Certification can be reactivated at any time by contacting the Extension office and fulfilling the annual educational contacts. Volunteers 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.

Native Plant Master Instructors

- Certified Native Plant Master Volunteers may apply to become an instructor mentee who will work with an existing instructor to observe and co-teach a small portion of a NPM course. Mentees may become instructors once they have successfully taught one or more NPM course with a current instructor. At the discretion of the County Program Leader, individuals with significant plant expertise may become instructors without being a Certified NPM Volunteer. However, in order to understand how a NPM course is taught, they must take at least one NPM course as a student before becoming a mentee.

- All mentee applicants will be required to pass the Colorado State University Extension background check process before being allowed to team teach with an existing instructor.
- Instructors may use the contacts they make from teaching NPM courses and classes toward the educational contact requirement. Instructors may also register for NPM courses or classes in any county at no cost or at a reduced cost, space available basis.

For More Information

For more information about the Native Plant Master Program, please visit or contact Karen Crumbaker, Colorado State University Larimer County Extension at kcrumbaker@larimer.org or (970) 498-6003.