



March 7, 2025

Dear Master Gardener Volunteer,

Thanks for volunteering for the upcoming Realtors' Home & Garden Show that runs from March 21 – 30, 2025 (show closed on Monday and Tuesday, March 24 and 25). There is much information in this letter that will help you to be prepared to volunteer; please take the time to read it carefully! The topic for our booth this year is Successful Container Gardening.

First, please check the enclosed schedule for your shift(s) and your name and phone number on the contact list. If there are any problems, contact MGV Heide Burns at hburns0110@gmail.com as soon as possible. Your **Exhibitor Pass** is also enclosed if you are working the **first** shift of any day. If you are working both a first shift and a later shift on another day, you will only get a pass for your first shift day. For your later shift, you will need to pick up your entry pass at the Will Call Ticket area located at the West Lobby entrance. Give them your name and tell them you are with SEWMG.

Entrance to the Expo Center and Parking:

First Shift: You must **enter through the loading dock on the East Side** of the building, using your **Exhibitor Pass**. You will not be allowed to enter through any other entrances with an Exhibitor Pass. Please arrive at the Expo Center by **9:45 a.m. (3:45 p.m. Wed-Thurs)** to allow time for set-up. Your Exhibitor Pass allows you to park in the Exhibitor Parking area, shown on the enclosed map, for a \$10 fee *payable with Credit Card only*. We encourage finding street parking to the south of Greenfield Avenue and entering at Gate 1 on 79th and Greenfield, if you choose not to park in the lot.

All other Shifts: You must enter at the **West Lobby Entrance** of the Expo Hall and obtain your **Entry Pass from the Will Call Ticket area located there**. Park in the Public Parking lot accessed through Gate 4 on 84th St., just north of Greenfield Avenue. Parking cost is \$10 *payable with Credit Card only*. (You cannot park in the Exhibitor Lot at Gate 1 without an Exhibitor Pass.) You can also find street parking within a few blocks south or west of Gate 4, if you are comfortable walking.

If you agreed to be a **Shift Captain**, the **list of duties** is also provided. Please take time to review it well in advance of your shift. Also included is a map of the Expo Center at State Fair Park, 8200 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, and a floor plan showing the location of our booth, which is near the West Entrance of the Expo Hall, Booth #1234, just north of Badgerland Lawn & Landscaping and east of the Garden Lounge.

Orientation will be held at the booth on Thursday, March 20 at 1:00 p.m. Attendance is mandatory for Shift Captains; however, all volunteers are encouraged to attend orientation, though we understand that not everyone can. The main features of the booth that will be of interest to our visitors will be discussed. We will also discuss logistics for entering the show, managing the booth, providing gardening information, what to do if handouts run out, etc. For orientation, you may park for free in the Exhibitor Lot, accessed through Gate 1 at 79th and Greenfield, and enter at the loading dock located on the East Side of the Expo Center.

Some basics about staffing the booth:

- Arrive early. Wear your nametag. Bring only what you really need. Put your coat in “Coat Check” if possible. There is limited space in the booth to safely stash your things. You may want to leave the purse at home and bring only important things that fit in your pockets. Don't leave anything behind. If anything is left behind, the last shift will get it to Heide or Valorie.
- First shift turns on the lights on the pop-up display and the last shift turns them off.
- When you arrive, report to your Shift Captain. They can assign you duties and a spot to cover in the booth. Put on a SEWMG apron so that booth visitors know you are there to answer questions.
- Read ALL the display boards and signs to know what points to make about each of the booth's features.
- Use a discerning eye for details and keep the booth clean, tidy, and looking as beautiful and welcoming as possible. If anything is broken or crooked, fix it. If you cannot fix it attractively, hide it or contact Valorie to have someone else come with supplies or tools.
- Offer visitors a Gardening Resources card to start a conversation. Be sensitive to those who do not want to engage in conversation but be available if they do.
- Avoid having long conversations with other volunteers. Visitors will often not interrupt to ask a question. We have had some problems with this in the past so please limit your conversations with each other and be aware of visitors.
- I know it is a long shift, but we can better assist our visitor if we are standing like they are. Feel free to take turns using the stool to rest.
- Stay in the booth except for bathroom breaks. Even if it is slow, do not wander off. Plan to see the show before or after your shift. Also eat before or after your shift. You never know when it will get busy.
- Snap photos of the booth and visitors to share on social media sites. Text copies to Valorie for archives at 414-791-2082.

If you are not able to work your scheduled shift:

- Try to switch shifts with someone on another shift. If you are not working first shift, and are swapping shifts or getting a fill-in, the replacement can explain that when they go to Will Call to pick up their entry pass (giving the Will Call person your name as the person originally scheduled for the shift, as that is what will be on their records). GMAR will have all the Will Call Tickets in an envelope marked SEWMG, so they should be sure to mention that when they pick up their ticket. **If you are working first shift, try to switch shifts with someone else on first shift on a different day. Otherwise, it is up to you to get a backup and get your entry pass to them so they can get into the show (we do not have extra tickets for your replacement).**
- If you cannot switch, contact your Shift Captain and then one of you should notify MGV Heide Burns at hburns0110@gmail.com, 630-334-1876, or MGV Valorie Sangsland at vjsland@gmail.com, 414-791-2082. They have a list of back-up volunteers. Those of you receiving entry passes in the mail, Heide or Valorie will direct you as to how to return your ticket so it can be used by another volunteer, if you are unable to get it to your replacement yourself.

If this is your first time staffing a booth for MGVs, have fun. You will probably be amazed by how much help you can provide. Even just directing people to the Horticulture Helplines on the Gardening Resources card can help them connect to reliable, research-based information. They will appreciate it. Thanks again for volunteering. We hope to see you at the Orientation at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 20.

Enjoy the experience and the Show!

Sincerely,

Valorie Sangsland and Heide Burns
SEWMG Special Events Co-Chairs