



JMG Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ is a helpful tool for you to use as you plan and lead a JMG group. Listed are questions and answers that we have received in the past.

Q. What is the Junior Master Gardener program?

A. The Junior Master Gardener program is an international youth gardening program of the University Cooperative Extension network. JMG engages children in novel, "hands-on" group and individual learning experiences that provide a love of gardening, develop an appreciation for the environment, and cultivate the mind.

JMG also inspires youths to be of service to others through service learning and leadership development projects, and rewards them with certification and recognition.

Youths can explore their world through meaningful horticultural and environmental science activities that encourage leadership development, personal pride, responsibility, and community involvement. The program incorporates service learning and volunteerism, which enables youth to make a positive contribution to their community.

Peer and cross generation mentoring occurs when JMG groups interact with Master Gardeners, community leaders and other volunteers. JMG Kids can be mentors to younger youth, by teaching them about horticulture.

JMG provides an opportunity for youth to interact and bond with nature. As they go through the JMG program, they can learn how to conserve our natural resources and make knowledgeable decisions about the environment.

Q. Where can I find out information about the JMG program?

A. Contact your local County Extension office, the State JMG office, the National JMG office, or the JMG website at www.jmgkids.us.

National JMG Office
Texas A&M University
225 Horticulture/Forestry Science Bldg.
2134 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-2134
(979) 845-8565 Fax: (979) 845-8906

Montgomery County Texas AgriLife Extension Service 4-H Youth Development 936-539-7823
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Q. Who can participate in JMG?

A. JMG is a project of the 4-H program. However, the strength of the JMG program is its flexibility. We do not restrict who can participate in the program. Most JMG groups are associated with a public/private school and an increasing amount of home school groups are becoming involved. JMG is also used as a part of many traditional youth clubs such as 4-H, Boy/Girl Scouts, YMCA and faith based groups. In addition, public and botanical gardens, children's museums and libraries typically have great educational environments and are utilizing JMG in their programming. JMG is a great match to these groups and an excellent educational outreach program for youth.

Q. What are the benefits of registering a JMG group?

A. Registering your group is FREE. Youth who are registered in the JMG program are eligible for certification in a national program. Each registered group will have a web page on the JMG web site; this site will be maintained by the JMG web master. Registered groups will be eligible for JMG contests, awards and certification.

Registering gives us a way of knowing where the JMG program is being utilized and who to contact with program updates and information. Registering does not obligate the group to complete the entire JMG program and have youth be recognized as certified Junior Master Gardeners.

Q. How do I register a JMG group?

A. Complete the JMG registration online! Visit the jmgkids.us website to begin. As always, it is free to register your JMG Groups. Remember, you must register your groups each year. JMG and 4-H Follow the school year, so register your groups beginning in the fall, preferably after September 1. You may start your group at any time during the year.

Q. How do I start a JMG group?

A. To get started identify a leader or teacher willing to be the contact for the JMG group. This can be anyone interested in working with youth. The JMG leader does NOT have to be a Master Gardener. If a JMG leader needs garden resources and information they can contact their local county Extension service for gardening support.

Identify a group of youth. This may be a school group, 4-H club, home school group, or an after-school program. The program is flexible and can be offered to many different groups and in many different environments. A JMG group must have minimum of five youth.

An important step is to register your JMG group. You may now register your groups online! It is fast and does not cost anything to register a group. Go to the JMG web site to get started!

Q. What are the levels of instruction?

A. The JMG program curriculum is broken into three tracks. This allows the JMG program the opportunity to make age relevant activities. Level 1 (for grades 3-5) contains the JMG Core Curriculum (Teacher/Leader Guide and JMG Youth Handbook) and the Golden Ray Series, Wildlife Gardener, and Literature in the Garden. Level 2 (for grades 6-8) currently consists of Operation Thistle: Seeds of Despair, Plant Growth and Development. In 2015, a new Level 1 JMG curriculum was published called Learn, Grow, Eat & Go. This replaced the previous JMG curriculum called Health & Nutrition from the Garden. Learn, Grow, Eat & Go focuses on nutrition, healthy recipes, kitchen math, and physical activity.

Q. When should we start our JMG group?

A. This is totally up to the JMG Teacher/Leader. A lot of the activities can be done inside or outside, so it is flexible as to when to start. Many groups have had a successful JMG experience without having a physical garden plot. Groups that do not have space for a garden plot can use container gardening as a way to have children garden without having to build or cultivate a bed area. It is NOT a requirement that a JMG group have a garden plot.

Q. How is the curriculum aligned with state teaching standards?

A. Standardized testing has become more and more important in our school systems. The JMG program has taken each curriculum and aligned all activities to each state's standards. This has opened doors into the public school system. This alignment is essential for adoption and use of JMG in school programs. To see if the JMG curriculum is compatible with your state's teaching standards, check the web site.

Q. What type of recognition does the JMG program offer youth?

A. There are three ways that youth can receive recognition from the JMG program. Check the JMG web site as more certification levels are being added. There are several choices online.

- Junior Master Gardener Level 1 Certification
- Golden Ray Series Certification (Level 1)
- Junior Master Gardener Level 2 Certification

Q. How is the Level 1 JMG curriculum organized?

A. The core curriculum of the JMG program is the Level 1 JMG Handbook and Teacher/Leader Guide. The two books complement each other. Together they contain more than four hundred hands-on horticultural and environmental activities. This particular curriculum was created with the assistance of horticultural professionals and tenured teachers. This compilation of educational professionals resulted in a very innovative and novel curriculum.

The curriculum has eight chapters including plant growth and development, soils and water, ecology and environmental horticulture, insects and diseases, landscape horticulture, fruits and nuts, vegetables and herbs, and life skills/career exploration.

The *JMG Teacher/Leader Guide* contains the group activities from the eight chapters that make-up the JMG Youth Handbook. These group activities are integrated into math, science, language arts, and social studies. They also include work sheets, fun pages, songs, and additional resource materials for the instructor.

The *JMG Youth Handbook* contains individual activities and is intended to compliment the JMG Teacher/Leader Guide. At the end of each chapter are leadership/community service projects. These are projects and activities to help your JMG group share with their family, friends, and community all the many things they have learned. We encourage each JMG member to have a *JMG Handbook*; however this is not required to participate in the program.

Q. How do youth become certified Junior Master Gardeners in Level 1?

A. To become certified, youth must meet the following conditions.

- Belong to a JMG group
- Complete 1 group activity per teaching concept in each chapter
- Complete 1 individual activity per teaching concept in each chapter
- Complete 1 community service/leadership project per chapter

The JMG core curriculum contains eight chapters with a total of 44 teaching concepts. Therefore, youth complete a total of 44 group activities, 44 individual activities and 8 community service/leadership projects to become certified Junior Master Gardeners.

Q. What is a Golden Ray Series and how do youth get Golden Ray Series certified?

A. The Golden Ray Series is recognition offered to youth that complete a small part of the JMG program. Groups can choose to focus on one chapter or topic.

Youth can receive Golden Ray Series certification in all eight chapters of the Level 1 curriculum and/or *Health and Nutrition from the Garden*, *Wildlife Gardener*, or *Literature in the Garden*.

NOTE: The requirements for Golden Ray Series Certification have changed! They are different from what is printed in the Level 1 JMG Teacher/Leader Guide. The new requirements are:

- Complete any combination of 12 activities in a single chapter (from teacher guide, youth handbook or a combination of both) or from other Golden Ray Series curricula
- Complete 1 Life Skill/Career Exploration activity
- Participate in 1 Community Service project

Q. How is the Level 2 curriculum organized?

A. Level 2 is different from Level 1 in several ways. It is more in-depth and created for grades 6-8. A youth handbook is contained in reproducible pages with in the *Teacher/Leader Guide*. All youth activities are contained in the Level 2 module. The first module, *Operation Thistle: Seeds of Despair* focuses on plant growth and development.

It is a fun, entertaining and a hands-on approach to learning about horticulture and the environment. The children will have the opportunity to learn things that will help them to defeat the evil and crafty Dr. Thistle!!!

Q. How do youth become certified Junior Master Gardeners in Level 2?

A. For youth to become certified Junior Master Gardeners in Level 2 they must:

- Belong to a registered JMG group
- 1 group activity per learning concept
- 1 individual activity per learning concept
- 1 community service project
- 1 life skill and career exploration activity

Q. When will Level 3 be available?

A. There has been preliminary work completed on Level 3 curriculum but it will likely be a year or two more before it is available to the public.

Q. Is there a time requirement for JMG Certification?

A. No, the JMG program is flexible. The program was designed so that registered groups could achieve certification with-in one school year, but we realize this isn't always feasible. We hope that all groups, set the goal of becoming certified Junior Master Gardeners, but certification is not a requirement for registered JMG groups.

Q. Do we have to start at chapter one and complete the program one chapter at a time?

A. It is suggested that you begin with chapters one or two. Chapter one: Plant Growth and Development and chapter two: Soils and Water are the basis for other JMG activities. There is not a requirement to complete the chapters in order. However, it may provide a greater understanding of gardening to begin with chapters one and two before starting chapters such as Landscape Design or Vegetables and Herbs. The final decision is left up to the teacher/leader of the JMG group.

Q. What can youth do after they receive their Level 1 Junior Master Gardener certification?

A. Youth that achieve Level 1 Junior Master Gardener certification can continue to be involved in the JMG program in a variety of ways. Many youth continue to meet as a JMG group and serve as "junior leaders" working with teachers, Master Gardeners, or others to start JMG groups. Certified youth can help to recruit new JMG members, participate in additional volunteer opportunities, and be a local "spokesperson" for the JMG program in the county or community.

Youth can continue learning and growing in the program by completing Golden Ray Series certification for any of the eight chapters in the Level 1 curriculum OR by completing a stand-alone Golden Ray Curriculum, such as Health and Nutrition from the Garden, Wildlife Gardener, or Literature in the Garden.

Youth can begin working on the Level 2 JMG certification.

Q. Do I have to be a Master Gardener to lead a JMG group?

A. No, we only ask that the JMG Teacher/Leader be interested in youth development. You do have to complete a Youth Protection Standards background check conducted by Texas A&M University in order to work with a youth group. Your local County Extension Office can assist you with this step.

Q. Do I have to attend a JMG training in order to lead a JMG group?

A. No, training is beneficial for a future JMG Teacher/Leader, but it is not required. Montgomery County offers an annual JMG Teacher In-service each August. Contact us for details. If your school is interested in a teacher training at other times during the year, please let us know.

Q. Can Master Gardeners or Extension Agents come to my school/site to lead my JMG Program? Will you install a garden bed for us?

A. Master Gardeners are Extension trained Volunteers. As volunteers, they do their best to be a resource and offer guidance, especially to new JMG registered groups. Specifically in Montgomery County, we have a large JMG program with hundreds of youth registered, and it is not always feasible or possible to reach every single program request for a presentation at your school. Please work with us and request programs early so we can try to work it in our calendars. JMG is designed for you as the teacher or leader to be able to use the curriculum to lead your own groups, and call on us to offer enrichment or a presentation if needed. When scheduling program requests, priority is placed on JMG registered groups. Master Gardeners are not able to install, plant, or maintain a garden for you, but they can offer guidance on successfully planning a garden plot.

Q. How do I order JMG curriculum, apparel, and other items?

A. JMG curriculum and apparel can be purchased on-line. To purchase curriculum, please visit the Junior Master Gardener website: <http://jmgkids.us/>

Q. What is the cost of the program?

A. Registering your group is FREE. The only cost of the program is the curriculum and activity supplies. Each group will have different incurred costs. It all depends upon how many youth are in the group, the type of activities completed and the type of garden.

Activities in the curriculum will require miscellaneous supplies. Most of the activity supplies require recycled materials or items that can be purchased at minimal cost.

Q. What does the "(R)" mean after the terms JMG and Junior Master Gardener?

A. JMG, Junior Master Gardener and associated logos are registered service marks of the Texas Cooperative Extension, The Texas A&M University System. A registered JMG group or participating state partner may use the terms in marketing or promoting their local programs. However, if these items appear in print then a "." should appear after the terms JMG and Junior Master Gardener. Terms Golden Ray Series, Operation Thistle and associated logos and should be followed by a small "sm" (ex: Operation Thistlesm). If these are not clearly noted, the following statement should be included in the printing:

"The terms, Junior Master Gardener, JMG and Golden Ray Series, and associated logos, are service marks of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service."

Registered groups and state partners do not have the authority to develop or print new JMG or Golden Ray series curriculum materials, modify the guidelines of the JMG program, or create or develop JMG or Golden Ray Series merchandise to be sold and/or distributed.

These service marks are reserved to insure the quality of the JMG program and the association of the program with the Cooperative Extension network.

-Adapted from the JMG web site-

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