

Helpline Guidelines

Helpline opens at 9:00 and runs until 4, arrive shortly before 9. Lunch is from 12-12:30.

A Helpline Handbook is located in the MG office with more detailed information.

Be prepared for a busy day or slow one. Bring a book or something to keep you busy.
Let Administrative Assistant know you are there.
Sign in and out on sheet in MG room.

Turn on computer: Log in instructions are found in small Helpline binder.

Use the mute button on phone while you discuss problem with coworker. NO personal calls on Helpline phone.

Become familiar with resources: MG handbook and garden books are located in cabinets over counter.

Internet resources should be extension sites (.edu) or plant societies (.org): no commercial sites should be used. Remember to stick with research based answers.

Answer the phone with Master Gardener Helpline: How may I help you? Be courteous, talk slowly and plainly.

While on the phone, you may use a note pad to write down client information and call details. This information will need to be entered into the online report detail and client info. You may explain to the client that it may be necessary to do research and return a call or send information. Ask questions to get as much information about the plant, the problem, the environment, soil condition, etc... as possible. Email information and links using the online system. There is a spot to click to send an email. Extension information/publications and custom notes may be emailed.

Follow the Helpline Procedures found in the small Helpline binder.

REFER all chemical questions, questions you cannot answer or run out of time to Regional Extension Agent, Nelson Wynn or Bethany O'Rear.

NEVER:

Never recommend a specific business or a single brand name product. Be general, you might say: You might find that at a big box store or a local nursery.

Never answer questions about poisonings; refer to Poison Control Center.

Never answer termite questions.

Never answer commercial horticulture questions.

Never answer any potential legal dispute questions.

DO NOT MAIL: Material from non-extension sources, soil test boxes or pesticide applicators materials.

Remember you don't have to KNOW all the answers but be able to FIND them.