



What is involved if I volunteer for a Garden Advice Party (GAP)?



A GAP is a Garden Advice Party. It is a traditional advice clinic held in a private garden at the request of a homeowner to answer questions specific to his/her/their garden. The requests often include topics such as:

- plant identification - What is this plant?
- plant selection - What plant would do well here? How do I keep this plant healthy?
- pruning - When do I prune this shrub?
- lawn alternatives - What can I plant instead of grass?
- disease and pest management - What is eating my plant?.

References/resources are provided to the client either during or following the site visit. No physical work is ever undertaken. The visit is 1-2 hours.

The public can request a GAP by emailing: gaps@vimga.org. The email is directed to the appropriate district and contact is made with the homeowner to set a date and to discuss their goals for the GAP. Once the date is set, district members are invited to volunteer. Since GAP requests can come in at any time, signing up for them is separate from clinic sign-ups. Usually 2-3 members, both CMGs and Interns, attend the event. The homeowner is encourage to invite neighbours to join in as well.

Prior to the visit, the **GAP CC** shares the client's questions with the volunteers, so they are familiar with the topics and have time to research possible resources. During the visit, the homeowner and the VIMGA team tour the garden, the homeowner asks questions, and the team collaborates to answer as many as they can. Answers to questions needing additional research will be assigned to team members and then emailed to the homeowner. Each member attending a GAP earns up to two Clinic Advice Hours and those researching flow-up questions earn up to two Education Hours.

Volunteering at a GAP provides a unique opportunity to view diverse gardens with a variety of gardening challenges and to work collaboratively with other VIMGA members.