

# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE COLORADO MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM BASED IN FORT COLLINS, CO

Intern:  
Brooke Burkey

Mentors:  
Chris Hilgert, Master Gardener Program Director and Extension Horticulture State Specialist  
Mark Rose, Multimedia Producer  
Jason Russell, Senior Video Producer  
Tony Koski, Extension Turf Specialist  
Alison O'Connor, Larimer County Extension Professor of Horticulture

## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

2025 will be the Colorado Master Gardener program's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so my mentor team had the idea to make a video celebrating the program and this milestone.

The original idea was to demonstrate and celebrate the program's past, present, and future with this video. That idea guided my writing and interviewing process.



## INTERNSHIP GOALS

- Spreading **awareness** of the Colorado Master Gardener program and **appreciation** for Colorado Master Gardeners themselves, especially to celebrate next year's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the program.
- Creating a video to accomplish the above goal.
- Being inclusive of all 5 regions' Master Gardener programs and a diverse pool of Master Gardeners in our video.

## HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

As a **horticulture** major with minors in **business** and **English**, this internship was an amazing way to learn more about and get real experience in all my areas of study.

I learned what a career in Extension is like, and I had the opportunity to meet Extension professionals around the state.

## WHAT YOU DID

- Communicated & coordinated with Extension staff to plan Colorado Master Gardener volunteer events to attend and film.
- Visited Master Gardeners across the state—we covered all of the following counties: **Boulder, Adams, Broomfield, Weld, El Paso, Douglas, Jefferson, Denver, Larimer, Arapahoe, Pueblo, Elbert, Eagle, Routt, and Mesa**. We were able to visit at least one county in each of the 5 regions of the state.
- In the above counties, some events and sites we visited included farmers' markets, county fairs, a plant giveaway, the Colorado Center for the Blind vegetable garden, demonstration garden work days, and the Jefferson County Courage Garden.
- Wrote interview questions and conducted video interviews with Extension staff and Master Gardeners.
- Wrote story arcs, outlines, and scripts for our video. Also continuously adapted and changed scripts and interview questions to fit new storylines that emerged in the filming process.



We conducted **more than 50 video interviews** throughout my internship. We interviewed Colorado Master Gardeners, county Extension horticulturists and Master Gardener coordinators, and other CSU & Extension staff who have been involved in the CMG program.

## WHAT YOU LEARNED

- I learned about the history of the CMG program by reading historical documents about the projects and people that contributed to its first 50 years.
- By observing and working with Mark Rose and Jason Russell, I learned about video production and storytelling.
- By consuming storytelling resources and doing a lot of practice, I learned about writing—specifically screenwriting / documentary writing and interview question writing—and became a better writer throughout the process.
- I learned about CSU Extension and the Colorado Master Gardener program; what all they do and the people who make it possible.
- I learned how powerful gardening can be as a healing and community-building force.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank all of the Extension staff members who assisted in this project by letting us know about events, inviting us to come out, and giving us interviews.

Mark Rose, Jason Russell, and Natalie Boggs's filming expertise made this entire project possible.

I also owe many thanks to all the Colorado Master Gardeners who gave us interviews and who are doing so much good all over the state through their volunteering. I had so much fun learning about what you do and have gained a great appreciation for this program!