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S E R V I C E

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## Purpose

Master Gardeners are unique individuals who take an active interest in gardening. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn, enjoy helping others, and are able to communicate with diverse groups of people.

Professional training in horticulture sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners. The University of Minnesota Extension Service provides this training in exchange for volunteer time. Master Gardeners work with their local county Extension offices to provide horticultural information to their communities.

The Master Gardener program in Minnesota is an educational program designed to train volunteers to help other people in their communities with gardening. The program was created by the University of Minnesota Extension Service as a way to educate paraprofessionals in the area of home horticulture. These paraprofessionals are then able to more effectively distribute information on gardening to the public. Many organizations benefit from Master Gardener activities. For more information contact your local county Extension office, as listed on the back.

## Qualifications

Requirements to enter the Master Gardener program are simple. You must have an active interest in plants and gardening and be willing to share this interest with others. You must be able to attend the classroom training sessions and complete an internship of 50 hours of volunteer time the first year.

For application materials, send in the attached response form or contact your local county Extension office. Locations of county Extension offices are listed on the back.

## Training

To become a Master Gardener, you will first participate in the Master Gardener Core Course. This course consists of 48 hours of classroom instruction conducted by Extension faculty members. The classes cover best management practices of lawn care; trees and shrubs; pest and weed control; soil science and plant nutrition; fruits and vegetables; flowers and other horticultural subjects. Classes are held in the Twin Cities, various locations in greater Minnesota and on the Internet.

Along with classroom training, a notebook containing Extension publications and a textbook are provided to participants. This mini-library is to be used as a reference, and includes fact sheets, pamphlets, folders, and bulletins and lecture outlines pertaining to subject areas covered in the training program. The cost of the materials is covered by the registration fee.

For a higher fee, the Master Gardener Core Course is also offered for personal or professional development to individuals who want to learn more about horticulture but choose not to volunteer. Contact the State Master Gardener Office to learn more about this option, 612-443-2460, extension 263.

After completing the Core Course, training continues with an internship in the local Extension office. This internship consists of 50 hours of volunteer time donated to the local county Extension office and should be completed within the first year of participation in the Master Gardener program.



## Certification

You will become a Certified Master Gardener upon completion of the Core Course and the internship within the first year. To continue as a Master Gardener, you must perform 25 hours of volunteer time each year through your local Extension office.

The benefits of becoming a Certified Master Gardener are many. Master Gardeners receive quarterly newsletters and other free update materials, participate in regional and national conferences, and attend educational meetings. These meetings provide opportunities to address gardening problems and new horticultural developments with other Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners are also given countless opportunities for community service and become recognized experts in their horticultural specialties.

## Commitment

In return for specialized training, Master Gardeners are asked to volunteer time in county Extension programs. Volunteer activities include responding to telephone requests for gardening information, working with community groups, and holding plant clinics. Certified Master Gardeners also give lectures and slide presentations, set up horticultural displays, write articles for local newspapers, and teach community education classes.

Master Gardeners function as resource individuals for horticultural questions in their local Extension offices. Their efforts serve to multiply the capabilities of county educators to achieve the University of Minnesota Extension Service objective of "involving people in improving their quality of life."

[www.extension.umn.edu/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/) or [www.hort.agri.umn.edu/mastgard.htm](http://www.hort.agri.umn.edu/mastgard.htm)

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