

Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program



Master Gardener Volunteer Applicant Information Packet

Documents Included:

- Cover letter from County Coordinator
- Cover letter from State Coordinator
- Master Gardener Program Policy Statement
- Standards of Behavior Agreement
- Volunteer Application
- Authorization for Criminal History Check
- Tentative Class Schedule

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

September 13, 2007

Dear Interested Gardener:

Thank you for being interested in the winter 2008 Master Gardener Volunteer Program class, sponsored by the Isabella County Michigan State University Extension.

We are pleased to announce that the classes will be held on Wednesday evenings from 6:00 - 9:30 pm in Room 320 of the Isabella County Building. The first class is set for February 6th and they will continue for approximately 14 weeks. Class size will need to be a **minimum of 15 participants** to hold the class.

To be certified as a Master Gardener, the program participants have to provide volunteer/community service as well as successfully passing weekly quizzes and a final exam. This program offers a great amount of gardening information but all the participants must have a strong commitment to sharing this information with others as a volunteer. The course is taught at a level that requires a basic knowledge of gardening.

Please fill out the enclosed application form and return by December 17th to Isabella County MSU-E, 200 N. Main, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858. Please be sure to include the authorization for Criminal History Check and the Standards of Behavior Agreement forms. A **\$50 non-refundable deposit** is required with the application. This will be applied to the total fee for the course. If the class is canceled due to low enrollment your deposit will be refunded.

The total fee for the course is \$200, which includes a notebook and all required course materials. The Isabella County Master Gardener Association is supplementing the cost of the class this year. Due to recent increases we would have had to raise the registration fee, but the association decided to help with those costs to keep the registration fee down.

We look forward to having you as a participant in the Master Gardener program in 2008. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 772-0911, ext. 215. You can also e-mail me at knack@msu.edu.

Sincerely,



Tracey Knack
MG Coordinator



Isabella County
MSU Extension

200 N. Main
Mt. Pleasant Michigan
48858-2321

989/772-0911, Ext. 302
FAX: 989/773-1622

Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status or family status.

Michigan State University, US Department of Agriculture and counties cooperating.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal opportunity employer.

Dear Master Gardener Volunteer Applicant:

Thank you for expressing interest in becoming a Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) Master Gardener Volunteer. Volunteers are an important and essential part of the Extension system and Master Gardener Volunteers make a significant contribution to consumer horticulture programming in most Michigan counties.

To effectively support our MSUE volunteers we have implemented a policy concerning an individual's involvement as a MSUE volunteer. This policy is designed to:

- Support and encourage a positive experience for volunteers involved in MSUE programs.
- Increase our effectiveness in communicating with volunteers and other program participants.
- Improve our organizational accountability to university, government and private agencies that provide the resources necessary to conduct MSUE programs.

MSU Extension requires that each potential Master Gardener volunteer:

- Complete and return the Master Gardener Volunteer Application.
- Read, sign and return the Master Volunteer Policy Statement.

Because Master Gardener Volunteers may interact with children or impaired adults as part of their volunteer activities, your local MSUE office may require a personal criminal history background check be run. This information may periodically be updated and will be handled confidentially, to the extent of Michigan law. The information will be kept in a secured file accessible only to trained Extension staff for a minimum of three years following the receipt of your Application or until termination of your involvement as an MSUE Master Gardener Volunteer. You may have access to this information within 24 hours of your MSUE office receiving your written request. The release of this information to other groups or individuals will be handled as outlined in The Michigan State University Operating Manual.

We appreciate your cooperation and look forward to the opportunity to work with you as we continue to share our gardening knowledge with others!

Growing people and plants,

Mary McLellan
State Master Gardener Coordinator



Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Program

Policy Statement

Mission

Biological environments are essential to life. Michigan State University is a primary provider of plant research and education, dedicated to the preservation and enrichment of life. The Master Gardener program, available to all citizens of Michigan, is designed to develop a cadre of Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) volunteers trained in horticulture. Their knowledge and skills related to basic plant science and home gardening enables these volunteers to improve the quality of life in their communities. This is accomplished by increasing people's appreciation for and use of plants and by providing them with instruction on growing plants using environmentally sound practices.

Qualifications

An individual interested in becoming a Master Gardener must possess the following qualifications:

- A strong interest in horticulture and home gardening.
- Willingness and availability to undertake extensive training in consumer horticulture practices.
- Willingness and ability to provide 40 hours of horticulture-related volunteer community service as approved by MSUE.
- Ability to communicate and share knowledge effectively and diplomatically with others.
- Willingness to support MSUE staff in giving citizens up-to-date consumer horticulture information.

Educational Training Course

County Master Gardener programs will offer the following core training classes:

- Orientation to MSUE and Master Gardener program
- Plant Science
- Soils for Plant Growth
- Herbaceous Ornamental Plant Culture
- Lawn Establishment, Care and Maintenance
- Vegetable Culture
- Small Fruit Culture
- Tree Fruit Culture
- Woody Ornamental Plant Culture
- Integrated Pest Management
- Indoor Plant Culture

MSU Extension provides the formal training program. Instructors are Extension staff members, experienced Master Gardeners and other experts.

The training program provides a balanced, integrated, practical course in plant science. Special topics, based on local needs, may be added. Core training is held during a two to three month period, with follow-up training or in-service provided during the year according to local needs and resource

Attendance: Each Master Gardener trainee is expected to attend every classroom session. If a participant misses more than one session and does not arrange to make up the session, he or she cannot become a certified Master Gardener.

Examination and quizzes: Every trainee, to become a Master Gardener, will take weekly quizzes and pass a final examination with a score of 70% or better. The final examination, a take-home test, emphasizes an individual's ability to gather accurate information from class notes and other reference material. This emphasis on problem solving techniques and resources will help Master Gardeners as they give horticultural assistance to others.

Volunteer Commitment

The Master Gardener training course consists of a minimum of 40 hours of core instruction. An equivalent amount of volunteer time, 40 hours, in horticulture/gardening-related activities, is a required prerequisite for becoming a Master Gardener. The purpose is to extend MSU Extension's educational programs in the areas of horticulture, gardening and small-scale food production.

These horticulture/gardening-related volunteer activities that count toward Master Gardener certification must have educational value for others and be nonpaying for the Master Gardener volunteer. The volunteer will provide reliable and accurate information to the public from requests received via telephone, office visits or letter inquiries and by use of displays, classes, workshops in matters related to home gardening.

At the discretion of each county Master Gardener coordinator, 20 of the required 40 volunteer hours will be spent working on MSUE directed projects and activities related to horticulture. For the remaining 20 hours, participants are encouraged to volunteer their time in a way that is especially meaningful to them. Approval by the county Master Gardener coordinator must be obtained before engaging in any volunteer activity. Through volunteering, Master Gardener trainees enrich their knowledge of horticulture, help others through education and launch exciting ideas.

Documentation: It is the responsibility of the Master Gardener trainee to document their time and report that time in writing to the county Master Gardener coordinator for tabulation.

Time limits: An individual has one year from the end of the Master Gardener training course to complete the required 40 volunteer hours.

Certification

Participants will receive Master Gardener certification after successful completion of the educational training course and the volunteer requirement. Certificates and name badges will be awarded then.

Re-certification

A Master Gardener may re-certify for participation in the program for another year by:

- Providing a minimum 15 hours of MSUE-approved volunteer service each year and,
- Completing five additional hours of horticulture training each year. All educational programs, both MSU and non-MSU sponsored, must be approved by the County Master Gardener coordinator. Full credit, hour for hour, will be issued for attending MSUE programs, state and international Master Gardener conferences and MSU courses. Non-MSU sponsored programs should be pre-approved before attending to make sure you will get the proper credit.

Inactive Status

An inactive Master Gardener is one who is unable to commit to the annual re-certification requirement of 15 volunteer hours and five hours of horticulture training. For re-certification a Master Gardener who has been inactive for one to three years must attend five hours of acceptable horticulture training for each year of inactive status. The must also provide 15 hours of volunteer service for each year of inactive status.

To be re-certified a Master Gardener on inactive status for more than three years is required to:

- Retake the basic Master Gardener core training to assure that their knowledge base is current
- Provide 15 hours of volunteer service to the county MSU Extension office.

Out-of-State Transfers

Master Gardeners who are certified in another state may be admitted to a Michigan Master Gardener program by meeting the following criteria:

- Purchase a current MSUE Master Gardener training manual.
- Score a minimum 70% on the take-home exam administered by MSUE. The test emphasizes an individual's ability to gather accurate information.
- Comply with the re-certification process.

Liability

The MSU indemnification policy is extended to Master Gardener volunteers performing services solely for and under the direction of MSUE.

Criminal History Background Check

As a policy of MSU Extension a criminal history background check must be run for any Master Gardener volunteer who will be volunteering under the following circumstance:

When working with children or impaired adults the volunteer will be alone, without another adult present for more than 15 minutes.

Guidelines

The title MSUE Master Gardener is to be used only and exclusively by individuals trained and certified to help MSUE. The title is valid only when the volunteer is participating in the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Program.

Training and experience gained by participating in the Michigan Master Gardener program are valuable, and may rightfully be listed as qualifications when seeking employment. Employed Master Gardeners are allowed to display credentials at their place of business.

On Master Gardener speaking engagements it is appropriate to receive payment for expenses only, such as supplies and mileage. If an honorarium is offered, it may be accepted and given to the county Master Gardener program.

Master Gardeners do not give specific recommendations for use of fertilizers and pesticides. Master Gardeners must encourage others to follow label recommendations included with all products.

Standards of Behavior

This Standards of Behavior is a contractual agreement accepted by volunteers who commit to the MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program. The Standards shall guide the volunteers' behavior during their involvement with the Master Gardener Program. Just as it is a privilege for MSU Extension to work with individuals who volunteer their time and talents to the Master Gardener Volunteer Program, a volunteer's involvement in the Program is a privilege and a responsibility, not a right.

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program provides unbiased, research based educational programs accessible to all Michigan residents. The primary purpose of this Standards of Behavior is to ensure the safety and well being of all Master Gardener Volunteer Program participants (i.e., target audiences, professionals and volunteers.)

Master Gardener volunteers are expected to function within the guidelines of Michigan State University, MSU Extension and the MSU Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program.



STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR AGREEMENT

The MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer will:

- Uphold volunteerism as an effective way to meet the consumer horticultural needs of Michigan residents.
- Uphold an individual's right to dignity, self-development, and self-direction.
- Accept supervision and support from professional Extension staff while involved in the program.
- Accept the responsibility to represent their individual county Master Gardener Program and the Michigan Master Gardener Program with dignity and pride by being positive mentors for those with whom they work.
- Conduct themselves in a courteous and respectful manner, with fairness, honesty and integrity.
- Respect, adhere to, and enforce the rules, policies and guidelines established by their individual county Master Gardener program, the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program, and Michigan State University Extension.
- Not commit a felonious criminal act.
- Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws.
- Perform duties in a responsible and timely manner.
- Report immediately any threats to the volunteer's emotional or physical well-being to the county Extension professional coordinating the Master Gardener program.
- Accept the responsibility to promote and support Master Gardener activities in order to develop an effective county, state and national program.
- Operate machinery, vehicles and other equipment in a responsible manner.

I have read and understand the Michigan State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Policy statement and Standards of Behavior outlined above. I agree to comply with the guidelines and fulfill the commitments required. I also understand that failure to comply with the above guidelines and policies may result in expulsion from the program at the discretion of the supervisory extension agent.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please sign this page and return it to your county Master Gardener Coordinator with your application.





MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION
MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Name: _____
(First) (Last)

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____ County _____

Phone: Day () _____ Evening () _____ Cell () _____

Email Address: _____

Why are you interested in becoming an MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer?

If accepted as a MSU Extension volunteer, I agree to abide by the policies of Michigan State University, MSU Extension and the Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Program. I understand that either party may cancel this relationship at any time.

Applicant Signature

Date

RELEASE FOR VIDEO, FILM AND PHOTOGRAPHS

I authorize Michigan State University to record the image and voice of the subject named below and give MSU and all persons or entities acting pursuant to MSU's permission or authority, all rights to use of these recorded images and voice. I understand that said images and/or voice will be used for educational, advertising, and promotional purposes in all conventional and electronic media, including but not limited to the Internet, and any future media. I also authorize the use of any printed material in connection therewith.

I understand and agree that these images and recordings may be duplicated, distributed, with or without charge, and/or altered in any form or manner without future or further compensation or liability, in perpetuity.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____

Total cost for the program is \$200.00. Please enclose your deposit check made payable to MSU Extension for \$50.00. Balance is due by the first night of class.

Please return the application by the date indicated in the cover letter. Contact us if you have any questions or wish further information. Thank you!

Return Completed Application and Deposit to: MSU Extension
Master Gardener Volunteer Program
200 N. Main
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Thank you for your willingness to share your talents!

MSU is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, material status or family status.

MSU EXTENSION CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK FORM

To protect your privacy, this form will be seen only by Michigan State University Extension staff.

MSU Extension policy states that if you volunteer to work with children or impaired adults on a one-to-one basis, you are required to submit to a background check. For your protection we will run a background check to have on file in case this situation arises during your volunteer commitment. Please fill out the form below and return with your application. Your application will not be accepted without this.

First Name Middle Name Last Name

Previous, married and/or maiden names: _____

Date of birth: _____ Sex: ___ Male ___ Female
Month / Day / Year

Drivers License # _____

Have you ever been convicted of a felony or a misdemeanor?

___ No ___ Yes – If yes, please explain: _____

I give Michigan State University Extension permission to check my criminal history with state and local police as well as with any jurisdictions in other states in which I have lived.

Signature Date

NOTE: A criminal record will not necessarily disqualify an applicant. A criminal record is one piece of information that will be considered in determining the appropriateness of an individual to be an MSU Extension volunteer.

OFFICE USE:

Date checked completed: _____ No _____ Yes _____

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**2008 WINTER MASTER GARDENER
TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE**
(Subject to change)

February 6 th	-	Introduction	-	Tracey Knack MG Coordinator
February 13 th	-	Plant Science	-	Jessie Spry Ag Instructor – Beal City
February 20 th	-	Soil Science	-	Paul Gross Isabella County CED
February 27 th	-	IPM	-	Dan Rossman Gratiot County CED
March 5 th	-	Lawn Care	-	Bob Rau Bohn Tree Service
March 12 ^h	-	Small Fruits	-	Jim Lincoln Retired MSU Extension Agent
March 19 th	-	Veggies	-	Bill Miller Isabella County Master Gardener
March 26 th	-	Tree Fruits	-	Mike Jenkins Elm Creek Nursery
April 2 nd	-	Woody Ornamentals-	-	Dave Breedlove Consulting Forester–Master Gardener
April 9 th	-	Gypsy Moth/ Exotic Forest Pest	-	Roger Lintemuth MSU Extension
		Composting	-	Tracey Knack
April 16 th	-	Flower Gardening-	-	Mike Creller Former MSU Extension Agent
April 23 rd	-	Houseplants	-	Nancy Fry Isabella County Master Gardener
		Hand Out Finals	-	Tracey Knack
April 30 th	-	Final Exam Turned In Volunteer sign-up – Spring Planning Bee!		
May 7 th	-	Diagnostic Training – more details at a later date		