



Tennessee Extension Master Gardener Program

What is the Tennessee Master Gardener Program?

The Extension Master Gardener Program is a volunteer service program for the University of Tennessee Extension. Extension professionals train local members of the community as volunteers to help provide sound, practical, research-based information to educate the public about home horticulture. Tennessee Extension Master Gardeners (TEMG) also help to solve other home gardening problems.

Tennessee Extension Master Gardeners provide great gardening information in many different ways. They may hold gardening workshops, lectures, plant clinics and demonstrations in their local community. TEMG programs offer home horticulture information to the general public with an educational and non-biased approach. TEMGs may write articles for the local newspaper or answer their neighbors' gardening questions. They are a terrific resource for their local communities.

Mission: The Tennessee Extension Master Gardener program seeks to improve the lives of Tennesseans by promoting environmental stewardship, non-commercial food production, and human health and well-being through residential and consumer horticulture education delivered by a dedicated and skilled volunteer network.

Vision: To provide useful, innovative and research-based horticulture information to all Tennessee residents and communities.

Values ...

Provide research-based residential and consumer horticulture education in a responsive and timely manner to augment and extend Tennessee Extension and achieve the Extension mission.

Collaborate with Tennessee Extension personnel, local municipal and nonprofit groups to offer educational leadership for better horticulture practices and programs in communities across Tennessee.

Foster a vibrant and effective learning environment that supports committed and engaged volunteers and attracts new Extension Master Gardener volunteers to the program.

Encourage environmental stewardship, noncommercial food production and youth education in communities and cities across Tennessee through engaging education and outreach programs.

Invest in educational tools and events that provide information to meet present needs while laying the foundation to serve Tennessee residents and communities in the future.

What are the goals of the Tennessee Extension Master Gardener (TEMG)?

A Tennessee Extension Master Gardener's goal is to educate the general public about horticulture in an appropriate and unbiased manner. Any request for information beyond the scope of a TEMG's training may be referred to the county Extension agent. Remember, TEMGs are not required to know everything! All pesticide recommendations made by a TEMG must be from a University of Tennessee Extension or Tennessee State University publication for home gardeners. TEMGs are encouraged to attend pesticide certification training courses offered in each county. TEMGs may not make recommendations to commercial industries.

How do I become a Tennessee Extension Master Gardener?

The first step in becoming a Tennessee Extension Master Gardener is completing an application. After your application is received and reviewed, you will receive a phone call from a member of the WCMG interview team. After the interview, you will receive notification of acceptance or denial into the program. If accepted, you will then begin your training as a Master Gardener Intern. After completing the intern requirements, you will then complete your volunteer service and continuing education to become a certified TEMG.

To become a TN Extension Master Gardener Intern, you must:

- Attend 40 hours of basic horticulture classes.
- Pass the Master Gardener examination administered by your local Extension agent.

To become a certified Master Gardener, you must:

- Complete the requirements of the intern and 40 hours of required community service. Service hours must be reported to the website (self) or given to the certification liaison, to be recorded, to become certified.
- Complete eight hours of continuing education by attending local meetings or Extension educational programs. Continuing education hours must be reported to become certified.

As a certified Master Gardener, you must have consented to the *Tennessee Master Gardener Volunteer Guidelines* (<http://extension.tennessee.edu/publications/specialpubs/MGvolguide.pdf>) and have been approved by University of Tennessee Extension to provide home gardening educational programs and information to your community.

What will I learn in Master Gardener training?

The training program includes a core curriculum of basic horticultural information appropriate to gardening in Tennessee. Your Extension agent may add additional classes as a part of your training. These classes are usually topics you need to know as you respond to questions in your community. Courses are taught by University of Tennessee Extension experts and local professionals. Your Extension agent will supply you with a specific course syllabus.

Will there be a test?

Quizzes and homework are assigned at the direction of the Extension agent. Master Gardeners may be tested with a final exam or a mid-term and final. At the request of the intern, oral examinations may be administered instead of a written examination. Certification will not be granted until all of the requirements are fulfilled.

What is the cost?

Program fees are necessary to pay for educational materials, literature and speaker travel. The Master Gardener intern may keep all materials and literature. The program fee associated with the Williamson County Master Gardener program is \$150.00 and may be paid by check, money order or cash, at time of application. Checks and/or money orders should be made out to UT Extension - Williamson County. Please designate in the memo line '2017 WCMG'.

Are there advanced training opportunities?

Tennessee Master Gardeners are required to update their training with continuing education (CEU) opportunities. Continuing education requirements may be satisfied by attending educational programs from state or local Extension groups, or any other approved educational meetings that might be beneficial to your service as a Master Gardener volunteer.

Master Gardeners who continue to serve the program for three or more years will be invited to advanced trainings sponsored by University of Tennessee Extension.

Master Gardeners who wish to be trained in a specific Master Gardener training topic may apply to become a Master Gardener Educator. Educator training opportunities will be provided by state specialists.

How do I remain a certified Master Gardener?

Master Gardener certification is awarded after completing the three requirements:

- Pass the training course,
- Turn in volunteer service hours, and
- Attend educational meetings for CEU credits.

The initial certification is valid for one year from becoming a certified Tennessee Master Gardener. Master Gardeners may recertify annually by completing the required number of volunteer hours in their county.

To recertify, Master Gardeners must:

- Update their member profile,
- Perform and report the county standards for a minimum of volunteer hours, and
- Obtain eight hours of county-approved continuing education.

Reporting and profile updates may be completed on the Tennessee Master Gardener Web site or hard copies may be turned in to the county Master Gardener certification liaison, who will be introduced at orientation.

How may the title of Master Gardener be used?

The title Tennessee Master Gardener is strictly reserved for certified Master Gardeners when volunteering for University of Tennessee Extension and may not be used for any commercial purposes. Master Gardeners should always identify themselves while volunteering for University of Tennessee Extension.

It is *inappropriate* to wear or display Master Gardener name badges, tee shirts, logos or certificates while working for any commercial industry, since it incorrectly implies an affiliation between the University of Tennessee and that industry. However, the horticulture training and volunteer service you have performed as a Master Gardener is valuable and worthy of mention on a resume.

Horticulture industry professionals may find the Master Gardener training valuable and useful for career development. These individuals are encouraged to enroll. Due to their career duties, it may be difficult to complete the Master Gardener certification.

What are the benefits of being a Master Gardener?

The service and information that Master Gardeners provide for local Tennessee residents is invaluable. Your work as a Master Gardener is much appreciated and can extend the resources of UT Extension. The faculty and staff of the University of Tennessee welcome you and wish you success in the program. We look forward to working with you in sharing our home horticulture information and expertise with all Tennesseans.

Amy Dismukes
UT/TSU Williamson County Extension
Horticulture Agent
Master Gardener Coordinator & Advisor
4215 Long Lane #200
Franklin, TN 37064
adismuke@utk.edu OR 615-790-5721

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