



Dear Prospective Master Gardener,

Thank you for your interest in the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program. Upon completion of training, Master Gardeners have one of the best gardening references available in Florida. It is a compilation of Cooperative Extension fact sheets, bulletins, and circulars that apply specifically to our unique climate. You will have the opportunity to learn from University of Florida Extension Agents and select guests. Classes will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, August 25, 2009. They will continue from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through November 17, 2009.

In order to be considered for this program, it is necessary for you to do several things.

- 1) Study the attached Sprouting Kit and complete the questionnaire.
- 2) Study the attached Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Contract. (Please bring to the interview).
- 3) Complete the following forms: Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Application, Sprouting Kit Questionnaire.
- 4) We have a limited number of openings for this class. Joan Benson will be scheduling interview appointments for the week of August 10. Please call for an appointment (772) 770-5031. If you need other dates please ask Joan to see what is available.
- 5) There is a \$250 deposit required to participate in the Master Gardener Training. Payments can be made in two increments of \$125 each. \$50 is refunded to you at the completion of your 75 hours of volunteer service. Make the check payable to **IRCEAC**.
6. **Please bring all completed forms, Master Gardener Contract and check at the time of your interview.**

I look forward to meeting you.
Horticulturally yours,

Christine Kelly-Begazo
Director/Agricultural Agent

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY

MASTER GARDENER SPROUTING KIT

This sprouting kit contains information that will be useful to you in understanding the Master Gardener program as well as the role and responsibilities of a volunteer Master Gardener. It will also give you insight into the Florida Cooperative Extension, how it functions and how Master Gardeners operate as a part of Cooperative Extension.

Please read the enclosed materials and complete the two questionnaires at the back of this packet.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Christine Kelly-Begazo, Director/Agricultural Agent
1028 20th Place, Suite D
Vero Beach, FL 32960-5305
772-770-5030
ckellybe@ufl.edu

Joan Benson, Staff Assistant
1028 20th Place, Suite D
Vero Beach, FL 32960-5305
(772) 770-5030
jebenson@ufl.edu

THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

PART 1 - HISTORY

The rapid urban growth in many areas of the United States and increased interest in the environment and home gardens have prompted ever-increasing numbers of homeowner questions to County Cooperative Extension agents. Many of these questions are seasonal in nature and are answered relatively easily, assuming that one has horticultural training.

In 1972, an innovative Extension Agent in the State of Washington reasoned that well trained volunteers could respond to typical homeowner questions freeing him and his colleagues for more technical and difficult problems. Volunteers, such as Extension homemakers and 4-H Leaders, had always been a part of the Extension but never before in the area of homeowner horticulture. The Extension Agent selected trained and certified volunteers as Master Gardeners. They soon succeeded in meeting his desired objectives - in fact they exceeded his expectations. And so it was that the Master Gardener Program began.

Since that time, the Master Gardener Program has grown and is now active in more than 30 states. Florida's began in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now in 62 Florida's counties. The Master Gardener Program in Florida is sponsored by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) of which the Cooperative Extension is part.

Just what is the Cooperative Extension? The Morrill Act established colleges in each state to be financed through grants of land from a name which is known as Land Grant Universities. These

colleges would emphasize teaching practical subjects such as agriculture and home economics. The 1887 Hatch Act provided for experimental stations at Land Grant Colleges to conduct research for those colleges' agricultural problems.

Then, in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act created the Extension as a part of these colleges as a means of disseminating the practical knowledge gained through agricultural research. The University of Florida at Gainesville is Florida's Land Grant College; the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is that part of the University which has responsibility for Cooperative Extension.

The term cooperative refers to the method by which extension services are funded. In Florida, three cooperating tax sources provide funds: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State through legislative appropriations and the counties through appropriations by county governments. The word cooperative also implies a sharing of information generated through sound research programs at the Federal and State levels. The term Extension defines this organization's purpose - to extend the information generated at the State and Federal level to people at the county level in the form of a service. The Cooperative Extension is an informal educational organization which provides information in three main areas: Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth. Community Development, Marine Biology, Natural Resources and Energy are associated programs.

The motto and goal of Cooperative Extension is Helping People Help Themselves. Thus, you can see how well the volunteer Master Gardener concept fits into the ultimate objectives and goals of Extension.

PART II – Indian River County

In Indian River County, the Master Gardener Program began in 1983 and to date has provided annual training to qualify candidates as Master Gardeners. Currently, approximately 36 individuals are active in the program. They were selected and trained and have committed themselves to giving at least 35 hours of volunteer service each year they remain active in the program. More than one-third of those have been active more than one year. Indian River Master Gardeners have given over 25,000 hours of service to county residents in 26 years.

PART III - MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

The Master Gardener Training Program is demanding and intensive. The 84 hours of training will consist of traditional classroom, field, lab, and Internet activities. Subjects include basic botany, entomology, pathology, ecosystems, soils, fertilizers, vegetables, citrus, turf grasses, use of (and alternatives to) chemicals, ornamentals, and related topics. All information is based on the knowledge and research of the University of Florida.

Each weekly session is approximately 7 1/2 hours (including lunch), 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every Tuesday and one (1) Saturday morning, 8:00 a.m. – noon. The session topics are outlined in the Master Gardener Syllabus, which will be available on-line @ <http://indian.ifas.ufl.edu> and distributed on the interview date.

Each trainee will be provided resources containing extensive reference materials from the University of Florida. These materials are updated frequently so that Master Gardeners are always provided the most current recommendations approved by the University of Florida.

Master Gardeners deal only with homeowner-type questions. The Extension Agents themselves respond to all commercial/professional growers' problems.

On completion of the training period, all Master Gardener trainees are required to satisfactorily complete a comprehensive examination on the material covered. Only then can the trainees become certified and be awarded the title of Master Gardener.

Once certified, Master Gardeners must abide by a set of policies set out by the University of Florida and IFAS. Those policies regarding Florida Master Gardeners are attached and should be carefully studied.

PART IV - MASTER GARDENER ACTIVITIES

Most Master Gardener activities center around the Cooperative Extension office in Vero Beach, at least initially. Ten volunteer service hours are required to be spent there during training. This allows trainees to become familiar with the Center, its personnel and facilities, and the Extension Agent becomes familiar with her new helpers. The remaining required 65 volunteer service hours may be spent in a wide variety of activities which are related to some aspect of gardening and contribute to community education and service. Many Master Gardeners continue their close association with the Center by answering telephone calls, mailing out brochures in response to request, even developing presentations for garden clubs and other civic associations. Others choose to work in the shade house or demonstration gardens. Master Gardeners are strong supporters of 4-H and school enrichment programs. Master Gardeners can present classes to the public, helping the typical new-to-Florida homeowner adapt his gardening techniques to the peculiarities of Florida and St. Lucie County in particular.

As the Master Gardeners assist the Extension Agents, they are in effect extending the Extension's outreach abilities. As such, they provide advice and recommendations which have been well documented as result of experimentation and testing and are approved by the University of Florida.

Training never ceases for the certified and working Master Gardener. Ten certified educational units (CEU's) are required to be completed each year. Twelve times throughout the year, Master Gardeners have their general meetings. These meetings are also used for planning and status reports on various projects and information exchange and updates. There are field trips to gardens, nurseries, parks and similar facilities, used for further training throughout the year. Once a year IFAS conducts postgraduate Master Gardener training by the University of Florida. This conference is presented by State Extension specialists who strive to bring all Master Gardeners into sync with the latest horticultural developments and provide a look into the future of horticultural research.

PART V - CONCLUSION

Master Gardeners are people wanting to help others make the program what it is. Words cannot describe the sense of accomplishment one feels in helping someone become a better gardener. These are the people who make America green and who bond together through a common interest in gardening, horticulture and the spirit of volunteerism. The Master Gardener Program is a wonderful opportunity to learn and to help your community. We hope that you will become a part of this growing experience.

FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

**** PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY ****

SECTION I:

NAME _____

NICKNAME, IF ANY _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ FAX _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

SECTION II:

Have you applied for Master Gardener training before? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, when? _____ Where? _____

Please list any training and/or practical experience you have had in gardening, horticulture, farming, or related fields: _____

Please list any specialized gardening interests or hobbies you have, e.g., vegetables, house plants, ornamentals, turfgrasses, landscaping, etc.: _____

Do you live here year-round or seasonally? If seasonally, please indicate which months _____

What gardening affiliations do you have, e.g., garden clubs, horticulture societies, etc.? _____

Are you currently volunteering in any other organizations (e.g., Cancer Society, Kiwanis Club, Gardening Club, PTO, etc.?) _____ Yes _____ No

How did you learn about the Master Gardener Program? _____

Why do you want to become a Master Gardener? _____

Name _____

Date _____

SPROUTING KIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Use the information provided with this application to answer the following questions. Please circle the letter indicating your answer and return to St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension, on your scheduled interview day.

1. The Master Gardener Program is sponsored by:
 - a. The University of South Florida
 - b. The U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - c. University of Florida IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences)
 - d. Florida Department of Plant Industry

2. The Cooperative Extension Service was created by a legislative act called:
 - a. The Morrill Act (1862)
 - b. The Smith-Lever Act (1914)
 - c. The Hatch Act (1887)
 - d. The Larson Act (1898)

3. The Indian River County Master Gardeners are required to volunteer how many hours the first year to Cooperative Extension programs?
 - a. 25 hours total for as long as they remain active.
 - b. 25 hours for each year they remain active.
 - c. 50 hours total for as long as they remain active.
 - d. 75 hours for each year they remain active.

4. The Cooperative Extension Service is funded by:
 - a. The Federal Government
 - b. The State of Florida
 - c. The County of Indian River
 - d. All of the above

5. Indian River County Master Gardeners are required to attain how many hours of horticultural training in order to recertify for another year?
 - a. 3 hours.
 - b. 6 hours.
 - c. 10 hours.
 - d. 15 hours.

6. The main purpose of the Master Gardener Program is to increase or extend the programmatic goals identified by the Master Gardener Coordinator.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. The Cooperative Extension Service provides information to the community primarily in the program(s) and area(s) of:
 - a. Family & Consumer Sciences
 - b. 4-H Youth.
 - c. Agriculture.
 - d. All of the above.

8. Master Gardeners make recommendations to home-owners based on:
 - a. Public sources such as books, magazines and newspaper articles.
 - b. Personal, practical experience.
 - c. Information generated by the University of Florida
 - d. All of the above.

9. The title “Master Gardener” is to be used only in association with the Master Gardener Program and not for commercial purposes.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.

10. Master Gardeners are occasionally called upon to extend information to people involved in commercial agricultural/horticultural endeavors.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.

**FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER CONTRACT
POLICIES REGARDING FLORIDA MASTER GARDENERS**

The title “Florida Master Gardener” is to be used only and exclusively in the Florida Cooperative Extension Master Gardener program in which the trained and certified Master Gardener is carrying out the program objectives identified by the Master Gardener Coordinator. In addition to the University training, Master Gardeners have diagnostic support via County Extension Horticulturists and State Extension Specialist. Master Gardeners are also provided with Cooperative Extension publications which discuss plant problems. Thus, Master Gardeners are expected to identify themselves only when doing unpaid, volunteer, educational work in this program.

Florida Master Gardeners are advised not to advertise their name or their place of business, nor to be listed on the advertisements of business places as Master Gardeners. This is a University of Florida-Florida Cooperative Extension public service program providing unbiased information. Appearing as a commercial activity, having association with commercial products, or giving implied University of Florida or Extension endorsement of any product or place of business is improper.

In making recommendations which include the use of chemicals (the latest insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardeners are to follow published Cooperative Extension recommendations. Use of other pesticide recommendations is not approved. Cultural problems which are not specifically covered by Cooperative Extension recommendations may be handled by suggesting treatments which an experienced Master Gardener considers appropriate. Questions concerning commercial production of crops and pest control on such crops are to be referred to the local County Extension Agent.

A Florida Master Gardener must have attended the prescribed hours of instruction and pass an examination administered by Florida Cooperative Extension before becoming a certified Master Gardener. This certification is restrictive in that it is valid only when the individual is participating in the Florida Master Gardener Program and for one year only. If an individual ceases active participation, then the certification as Master Gardener becomes void. New certifications will be issued each year only to those individuals who make a commitment for participation in the program for the coming year. Those not continuing in the program will not be renewed and should be aware that if they represent themselves as Master Gardeners they are violating their original commitment to Florida Cooperative Extension.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Florida Master Gardener program are valuable and may rightfully be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment. Once employed, and while serving as a paid employee, or if self-employed, Master Gardeners should not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Master Gardener at the place of business (unless the place of business is specifically designated as a Master Gardener Clinic location by the County Extension Agent).

Experienced Master Gardeners are likely to receive invitations to speak before groups. Gratuitous payments for speaking engagements are not encouraged by the Extension and we ask that you do not seek payments for these speaking commitments.

Your work is much appreciated by Florida Cooperative Extension and your local area gardeners who have received or will receive your counsel. Your signature below indicates that you have read, understood and agree to abide by the policies set forth.

Signature

Signature of County Extension Agent

Date

Date