How Does Your Gardener Grow?

Master Gardener Information Packet
Greetings from the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program of the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service! During the training program, participants receive an array of information that helps them understand the Master Gardener program, as well as the role and responsibilities of a volunteer Master Gardener. They learn about the Florida Cooperative Extension Service and how it functions as well as how Master Gardeners operate as part of the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service office.

Besides the information on serving as a volunteer, Master Gardener Trainees also receive horticultural information which will help them become successful Florida gardeners. The class is filled with exciting lectures, workshops, demonstrations and tours designed to give the participants the tools they need to become effective Manatee County Master Gardeners.

After completing the classroom training, these new MG’s get on-the-job training by volunteering as information specialists in the Plant Clinic at the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service and at community-based projects all over the county. After successfully completing the training program, the participants are awarded the title of Florida Master Gardener.

This booklet contains all the information necessary to determine if the Manatee County Master Gardener program is for you. We have high expectations for individuals chosen to be a part of the Master Gardener Volunteer Training. These participants eventually become horticultural ambassadors for the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service. Please take time to read this booklet carefully and then complete the application and questionnaire.

The topics taught in the Master Gardener Training current year class is on the next page. Most of the instructors for the course are the horticultural staff of the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service and University of Florida specialists. The textbook for the class is the Florida Master Gardener Handbook, which is a compilation of University of Florida IFAS publications. Attendance at all classes is mandatory as is the completion of the ten additional continued educational units (CEUs) and 75 hours of volunteer service in the first year. 50 service hours must be spent in the Plant Clinic answering homeowner questions. During the first year as a Master Gardener, you will be part of a team of experienced Master Gardeners.

If after reading this publication you are interested in participating in the program, we encourage you to complete the application and return it to our office before June 20, 2009. Interviews for potential Master Gardener Trainees will be held in early July. Questions about the program should be directed to Cindy Mozeleski or Lisa Hickey at (941) 722-4524.

Master Gardener Coordinator
### MANATEE COUNTY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

#### MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS TOPICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLORIDA-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPING™ CONCEPTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BASIC BOTANY AND PLANT SCIENCE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATIVE AND INVASIVE PLANT IDENTIFICATION (UNIT TEST)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BASIC ENTOMOLOGY/GOOD BUGS – BAD BUGS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VEGETABLE GARDENING &amp; PEST MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT (IPM)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PESTICIDE LABELS – UNDERSTANDING THEM (UNIT TEST)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TROUBLE SHOOTING PLANT PROBLEMS – PLANT PROBLEM DIAGNOSIS FIELD EXERCISE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN WILDLIFE &amp; WILDLIFE HABITAT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRUNING IN YOUR LANDSCAPE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CITRUS SELECTION AND CARE/BACKYARD TROPICAL FRUITS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COASTAL VEGETATION/SHORELINE MANAGEMENT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOIL SCIENCE – PLANT NUTRITION &amp; NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TURF SELECTION AND CARE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IRRIGATION PRINCIPLES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PLANT PROPAGATION</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TELEPHONE SKILLS, OFFICE PROCEDURES - WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MASTER GARDENER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNITY PROJECT AND FINAL EXAM</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This program schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service.
HISTORY OF THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

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

In 1972, an innovative Extension Service Agent in the state of Washington reasoned that well-trained volunteers could respond to many of the everyday 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 Service but never in the area of homeowner horticulture. With this in mind, 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, the Master Gardener Program began.

Since that time, the Master Gardener Program has grown and is now active in 50 states. Florida adopted the Master Gardener concept in 1979; Manatee County was one of the three original Florida counties to hold Master Gardener training. The program has been a tremendous success and is now active in over 80% of 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 Service is a part.

WHAT IS THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE?

For a more complete understanding of this unique organization, we must go back to 1862, when the U.S. Congress passed the Morrill Act which established colleges in each state to be financed through grants of land from the Federal government. They became known as “Land Grant Colleges,” a name which persists today. 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 Service 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 is that part of the university which has responsibility for the Cooperative Extension Service.

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, State (through legislative appropriations) and counties (through appropriations by county governments). The word “cooperative” also implies a sharing of information generated through 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 Service is an informal educational organization which provides information in three main areas: Agriculture; Family and Consumer Sciences; and 4-H and Youth. Other associated programs include
Community Development, Marine Biology, and Energy. The motto and goal of the Cooperative Extension Service is “Helping People Help Themselves.” Thus, the volunteer Master Gardener concept fits very well into the ultimate objectives and goals of the Extension Service.

THE MANATEE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

Manatee County, one of the three original Florida counties to hold Master Gardener training, began its Master Gardener program in 1979. To date, Manatee County has provided annual training periods to hundreds of quality volunteers enabling them to become certified Florida Master Gardeners.

Individuals are selected, trained, and, after completing their initial 75 hours (50 of which must be spent in the Plant Clinic) and acquire 10 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) within 12 months of the completion of the class, commit to serving and answering homeowner’s gardening questions.

The Master Gardener commits to giving at least 35 hours of volunteer service hours and acquires 10 Continuing Education Units in each year they remain active in the program.

Master Gardeners mainly assist the Extension Agents with the dissemination of horticultural information to homeowners that visit or call the Plant Clinic, as well as assist with staffing information booths at various county-wide events and providing presentations to the community. Master Gardeners have been involved with off-site projects such as school gardens and landscapes, community gardens, Junior Master Gardener Program, as well as other educational programs.

Selection to become a candidate for the Master Gardener Program is not predicated on prior training, education, knowledge or experience. Neither do age, race, sex nor physical handicap dictate selection. Gardening experience and knowledge are always helpful, but they are by no means a requirement for selection into the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program. Selection is based on a desire to serve volunteer time in the community offering horticultural knowledge to the public.

HORTICULTURAL TRAINING

Training never ceases for the certified and working Master Gardeners. Throughout the year, Master Gardeners meet at the Extension Service office for business meetings and educational programs. Periodic field trips are scheduled to botanical gardens, parks, and nurseries. Specialized knowledge and gardening projects enable Master Gardeners to work effectively in the Plant Clinic providing the general public with research-based advice.

Once a year, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Services (IFAS) conducts an advanced Master Gardener training course at the University of Florida. These voluntary two-day sessions serve to educate Master Gardeners with special classes geared specifically for them. This program is presented by State Extension Specialists who strive to bring all Master Gardeners into contact with the latest horticultural developments and provide a look into the future of horticulture research. It is also a great opportunity to meet other Master Gardeners from around the state of Florida and share in the joys and even the frustrations of being a Florida Master Gardener.

The Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program is **demanding and intensive.** Formal classroom work constitutes more than 80% of the training period. Course material acquaints the participants with concepts related to basic botany, soils, fertilizers,
vegetables, citrus care, pest management, ornamentals, diseases, and other related topics. Information presented in most classes focus on Florida gardening in an environmentally-friendly manner. The information presented in this program is based on the knowledge and research of the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

As part of the training, the participants will also become familiar with the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program (FYN). Master Gardener trainees will be expected to understand the nine principles of FYN and how they are used to create a Florida-friendly landscape. Florida Yard Advisers are trained to accept special responsibilities and opportunities to bring the FYN Program into neighborhoods. Master Gardeners usually work inside at the Extension office. By contrast, Yard Advisers educate homeowners in their own yards where the lessons are personal and specific.

Upon completion of the training period, the participants are required to satisfactorily pass a comprehensive examination on the materials covered. This exam is designed to help participants understand their areas of weakness as well as help the horticulture staff be sure that they are covering the material adequately.

After successfully completing the formal training, serving the initial 75 hours, and acquiring 10 CEUs, the participants are then certified and are awarded the title of Florida Master Gardener.

Once certified, Master Gardeners must abide by a set of policies established by Manatee County, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the University of Florida IFAS. By-laws have been established based on the policies listed. These “Policies Regarding Florida Master Gardeners” and “Policies Regarding Manatee County Master Gardeners” are included as part of this packet and should be carefully reviewed.

**MASTER GARDENER FEES**

There is a $125.00 fee for the Master Gardener training program in Manatee County. The fee is non-refundable and covers the cost of the *Master Gardener Training Manual*, printed materials, and classroom supplies purchased for the program. These materials are updated frequently so that Master Gardeners are provided the most current recommendations approved by the University of Florida IFAS.

**POLICIES REGARDING FLORIDA MASTER GARDENERS**

There are several policies regarding the Master Gardener Program. It is important that all participants understand and adhere to them.

A Florida Master Gardener must:

- Attend the prescribed hours of instruction;
- Pass an examination administered by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service;
- Contribute 75 volunteer hours during the first year as a Master Gardener Trainee and acquire 10 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

This certification is restrictive in nature. When the individual is actively participating in the program, it is valid only as follows:

- 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 to those individuals who have committed 35 hours of volunteer service.
Committing to continuing education: Master Gardeners are expected to:

- Commit to obtaining ten hours of continuing education annually.
- Those not continuing in the program will not be re-certified, carry the title of Florida Master Gardener, and will no longer receive the Master Gardener educational benefits associated with the title of Master Gardener.

An inactive Master Gardener who desires to be re-certified must pass a comprehensive exam and meet the current requirements of the local program.

The title "Florida Master Gardener" is to be used as follows:

- **Only and exclusively** in the Florida Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener Program in which the trained and certified Master Gardeners answer gardening questions or work on community gardening projects.
- Only when doing unpaid volunteer or educational work in this program.

Once you are a certified Florida Master Gardener Volunteer, you will be eligible to attend educational programs such as the Florida Master Gardener Update Training offered by the University of Florida, as well as local educational programs and field trips provided by the County Agent. You will also have access to diagnostic services via the County Extension Agent and State Extension Specialists. Master Gardeners are also provided with the most recent information available on issues relating to environmental horticulture and new Extension publications as they are developed.

Experienced Master Gardeners are likely to receive invitations to speak before groups. Therefore, the Master Gardener should understand the following:

- Gratuitous personal payment (i.e., in the form of cash) for such speaking activities are not encouraged. However, if the group would like to make a donation to the Friends of Extension Executive Committee Fund, this may be graciously accepted and will be used for the benefit of the entire group.
- Please do not seek payment for such speaking appearances. Your work is much appreciated by the Florida Extension Cooperative Service and your local area gardeners who have received or will receive your counsel.
- 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 Service public service program providing unbiased information.
- Appearing at a commercial activity, having association with commercial products, or giving implied University/Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business is improper.
- Master Gardeners deal **only** with the homeowner. The Extension Service Agents themselves respond to all commercial or professional growers’ problems.

In making recommendations which include the use of chemicals (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardeners are to:

- Follow published Cooperative Extension Service recommendations;
- Avoid giving pesticide recommendations other than those recommended by the Cooperative Extension Service;
- Refer all questions concerning commercial horticulture to the local County Extension Agent.
Most states and many countries have Master Gardener Programs. Each is different according to its needs. In Manatee County, our needs lie mainly at the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service Plant Clinic. Our Plant Clinic is staffed from Monday through Friday from 9 to 4 (with the exception of Wednesday, the clinic is closed); most volunteer time is needed in this clinic.

The Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service is well aware of community needs and gardening projects off-site. It would be impossible for us to supply all the help that is needed by these groups. However, if there are special projects that we feel meet our criteria for assistance, or that are directly related to the mission and goals of the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service, then these opportunities may be used to fulfill volunteer hours.

All community projects must have prior approval by the Environmental Horticulture Agent before a Master Gardener will be allowed to allocate time spent doing them to the required hours.

New Master Gardeners must give 75 hours of volunteer time to the Manatee County Cooperative Extension Service and acquire 10 hours of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) during the first year to receive a certificate of completion and be given the title of Florida Master Gardener.

Fifty (50) hours must be spent in the Plant Clinic before the new Master Gardener will be allowed to start on existing or new community-based projects. All 75 of the volunteer hours and the 10 Continuing Education Units (CEU’s) must be completed within one year of the graduation date. The new Master Gardener must also attend at least five gardening days during his/her first year.

To continue certification in the future as a Manatee County Master Gardener, the Master Gardener must complete 35 hours annually and attend at least ten hours of approved educational programs each year.

As Master Gardeners assist the Extension Service Agents, they are in effect, “extending the Extension Service.” As such, they provide advice and recommendations which have been well documented as a result of experimentation and testing and are approved by the University of Florida. There is something for Master Gardeners to do no matter what the skill or the ability.

The 35 volunteer hours per year after the first year represent the minimum. Many Master Gardeners far surpass the required 35 service hours, with some exceeding several hundred hours in a year.

In order to give additional assistance to our Master Gardener Trainees, we have created the Master Gardener Mentor Program. In this part of our program we ask veteran Master Gardeners to mentor our new trainees. These veterans show the trainees the ropes.

Each new trainee is assigned a mentor for the duration of the initial training year. Mentors help with the selection of our new trainees, but even more than that, they are critical in helping the new trainees fit into our team.

Prior to the beginning of the class, our Mentors will contact the new trainees in order to be sure that they know what to
expect and to answer any last minute questions. They will meet you on the first day of class. During the course of your training, they will be in regular contact with you to be sure that things are working out. They also have the responsibility to be with the new trainees on their first volunteer clinic day to orient them and introduce them to the other volunteers. **Note: in order to begin volunteering before the end of the training class, you must be directly supervised by a mentor.**

It is important that new trainees stay in contact with their assigned mentor. They will be there to help if you have questions, problems or concerns.

**OTHER MASTER GARDENER POSSIBILITIES**

Once Master Gardeners are established and have volunteered in the Plant Clinic, there are numerous other volunteer possibilities:

a. Deliver educational presentations as part of a speakers’ bureau.
b. Help in the propagation house and assist with plant propagation and plant fair projects (located in Horticultural Learning Center).
c. Help in the demonstration garden (vegetables and ornamentals) for the Manatee County Extension Service. These are located in the Horticultural Learning Center.
d. Assist with maintaining demonstration landscape sites in various locations.
e. Plan and assist in horticultural projects with disabled children or adults.
f. Plan and supervise vegetable gardening projects.
g. Plan and supervise butterfly garden projects.
h. Provide landscape assistance.
i. Assist in computer projects (Data Base Management, Quicken, Spreadsheets).
j. Keep publication inventory and supply records.
k. Staff plant clinics in non-office locations.
l. Staff information booths at fairs and other Extension programs.
m. Write articles for the Master Gardener monthly newsletter or local newspapers.
n. Work in the Soil Lab (performing pH and soluble salt tests).
o. Become a Florida Yard Adviser and recognize Florida-Friendly Landscapes. Provide assistance with scheduling clinic coverage or yard certifications.
p. Provide assistance with Master Gardener training.
q. Help with beverage and food hosting at Extension programs.
r. Teach children at area schools.
s. Hold positions of the Executive Committee Board or become members of other specialty committees.
More grows in the garden than was sown there.

**RECIPE FOR A SUCCESSFUL MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER**

First plant four rows of Peas...

**Presence**

**Promptness**

**Preparation**

**Perseverance**

Next plant five rows of Lettuce...

**Let us** obey the rules and regulations

**Let us** be true to our obligations

**Let us** be faithful to duty

**Let us** be loyal and unselfish

**Let us** love one another

Then plant three rows of Squash...

**Squash** gossip

**Squash** indifference

**Squash** criticism

Finally, no garden is complete without Turnips...

**Turn up** for meetings

**Turn up** with a smile

**Turn up** with a determination to make everything count for something good and make what we do worthwhile.