



2/2/2017

Dear prospective Master Gardener,

Thank you for your interest in the Florida Master Gardener Program! The enclosed Sprouting Kit contains information that will be useful to you in understanding the Florida Master Gardener program, as well as the role and responsibilities of a Master Gardener volunteer. It will also give you insight into the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, how it functions, and how Master Gardeners operate as part of the Extension Service.

For the 2017 program, we will select 15 people to participate in the Putnam County Master Gardener training program scheduled to begin on Thursday, August 24th at 9AM and will take place WEEKLY through November 9th followed by a graduation ceremony on November 16, 2017. Classes will be hosted at the Putnam County Ag Center (East Palatka) and some off-site locations for field trips. In order to be considered for this year's program, you will need to do the following:

- **Complete the enclosed application form and answer the questions attached.**
- **Select your choice of dates/times for an interview.**
- **Training program fee is \$100.00. You may pay in full, or submit a deposit of \$50 to hold your spot. The balance is due by Friday, July 28th. Make checks out to "EHAC." Cash is also accepted. If you are not selected for this year's program, your deposit will be refunded.**
 - **Married couples and partners sharing occupancy may opt to share materials for \$160/couple.**
 - **NO REFUNDS GRANTED AFTER AUGUST 21, 2017**
- **Return all forms and your fee/deposit by June 5, 2017 to the Putnam County Extension Office in care of Prissy Fletcher:**

**111 Yelvington Rd, Ste 1
East Palatka, FL 32131**

If you have any questions, please contact me at **386-329-0324** or **pfletch@ufl.edu**. We will confirm your interview time by June 19th, 2017. I look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Evelyn "Prissy" Fletcher

Putnam County Residential Horticulture Agent and Master Gardener Coordinator

Florida Master Gardener Application Form

Name: Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Nickname, if any: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Home Phone: _____ Alt. Phone: _____ (cell / work)

Birthday (Month and Date): _____

Questionnaire:

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

Are you a member of any gardening clubs, or horticulture/agriculture organizations?

What types of volunteer work have you done in the past or are currently doing?

Are you currently employed? If so, full or part-time?

Have you ever pleaded “nolo contendere” (no contest), been convicted or found guilty of a first degree misdemeanor or a felony? Acceptance into the program requires a background check performed by UF/IFAS.

Have you previously applied for Master Gardener training in Putnam or other counties?

Are you residing in Putnam County Florida year round? If not, please specify the times of year that you will not be available for volunteering.

Do you have basic computer skills? For example, can you send e-mails, use search engines (like Google or Yahoo) to find information, and/or download a PDF?

What type of volunteer work would you like to be involved in toward completion of your commitment? (e.g., plant clinic duty, soil pH testing, demonstration gardens, etc.)

Do you work better with groups or prefer to work on solitary projects?

Florida Master Gardeners must comply with UF/IFAS and county policies, including affirmative action, which states that we will not discriminate our clients with respect to religion, race, gender, age, political views and so forth. This is important because we work with the public. Will you have any issues following these requirements?

Why do you want to become a Florida Master Gardener?

Acknowledgment:

I wish to become a UF/IFAS Master Gardener of Putnam County. I am requesting acceptance into the training program beginning August 24, 2017. I have proven that my permanent residence is in Putnam County, and eligible to participate in this training program. My acceptance is not officially confirmed until the full payment of \$100 has been received. I will not be refunded unless I cancel by August 21, 2017, and I will only receive \$50 due to pre-payment of field trips and books. I understand that if accepted, I can only miss one training session, and that these trainings are not open to my friends and family. I understand that a background check will be required before the first day of training, and will provide the necessary information. I am aware that a final exam is given on the final class date and that I must pass with 75% or better to become a Master Gardener of Putnam County. If I successfully complete the course of instruction, I agree to donate at least 75 hours of public service in the next 12 months through the UF/IFAS Master Gardener Program, along with 10 hours of continuing education. I have also read, understood, and agreed to abide by the Policies Regarding Florida Master Gardeners.

Signature_____

Date_____

Interview Request Form

Prior to final selection for training, all Master Gardener candidates meet informally with the Master Gardener Coordinator. This meeting gives you the opportunity to visit the Cooperative Extension Service Office (if you've not yet done so), and to understand the purpose of the program, and expectations during training.

These interviews take only about 30 minutes, and are scheduled for the follow dates and times:

Thursday, June 29th from 9am-12pm

Friday, June 30th from 9am-12pm

Thursday, July 6th from 1-3:30pm

Friday, July 7th from 1-3:30pm

Please indicate below the date and a convenient time of your choice based on what is listed above. Every effort will be made to meet your request. Phone interviews are also an option if you cannot make any of the available times.

On arrival, please check in with the office staff at the Extension Office.



Master Gardener Interview Request

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ Preferred Date: _____

Preferred Time: _____



**MASTER
GARDENER**
UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

107 Mehrhof Hall
PO Box 110675
Gainesville, FL 32611-0675
Phone: (352) 392-1831 x331
Fax: (352) 392-1413
<http://mastergardener.ifas.ufl.edu>

The 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 Service 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 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. 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. This led to the genesis of the Master Gardener volunteer program.

Since that time, the Master Gardener program has grown and is now active in 45 states. Florida's began in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now active in over half of Florida's counties. The Florida Master Gardener Program is sponsored by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) of which the Cooperative Extension Service is a part.

Just 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 (IFAS) 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, 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 Service is an informal education organization which provides information in three main areas: agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences.

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



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Florida Master Gardener Structure

The University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service (“UF/IFAS Extension”) oversees the State of Florida’s Master Gardener program. The Master Gardener program trains and maintains horticulture volunteers for UF/IFAS Extension throughout the State of Florida. The goals of this program are to increase the availability of horticultural information for the community at large and to improve the quality of life for the residents of each county in Florida through horticulture volunteer activities.

UF/IFAS Extension does not require Florida counties to have the Master Gardener program. Rather, each individual county Extension office determines the focus and structure of the program. The volunteers (or MGs as they call themselves) execute a variety of outreach tasks as determined by the county coordinator (usually the consumer horticultural agent). Duties are quite varied and can include: answering horticultural questions over the phone, in person or through the media; participating in public service projects; giving educational programs; supporting youth activities, assisting in field research; and other activities. The ultimate end to all these activities is to extend the vision of UF/IFAS Extension -- protecting and sustaining natural resources and environmental systems, enhancing the development of human resources, and improving the quality of human life through the development of knowledge in agricultural, human and natural resources and making that knowledge accessible.

As stated above, each county Master Gardener coordinator determines the structure of that county’s Master Gardener program. A formal Master Gardener organization is not required. If your county already has a structured organization or you develop one later, the following guiding principles must be followed. Additional requirements may be added with the approval of the county coordinator and state Master Gardener coordinator so long as such requirements do not vary or override the required principles. If a county’s Master Gardener organization forms or has formed a non-profit corporation to carry out the mission of the organization, such guiding principles shall be incorporated into the corporation’s organizational documents (i.e., articles of incorporation and by-laws). Additionally, the organizational documents shall include additional provisions relating to the county Extension office’s oversight and authority over the corporation and such organizational documents and amendments thereto shall be subject to approval of the county coordinator, state Master Gardener coordinator, the county Extension director and the appropriate district director.



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Policies Regarding Florida Master Gardeners

Within the state of Florida, 56 counties currently maintain active Master Gardener programs. This being the case, a need exists for the establishment of standards for all Florida Master Gardeners to represent their county in a manner consistent with exemplary citizenship and leadership.

To become a certified Florida Master Gardener, one is required to attend the prescribed hours of instruction and pass an examination administered by the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service. This certification is restrictive in nature and is valid only for one year and when the individual is participating in the Florida Master Gardener Program. New certifications will be issued each year only to those individuals who make a commitment for participation in the coming year.

As a certified Florida Master Gardener, you will be eligible to attend educational programs such as the Florida Master Gardener Continued Training Conference offered by the University of Florida, as well as local educational programs and field trips provided by the county agent. Master Gardeners are also provided with the most recent information available on environmental horticulture issues and related topics by the County Master Gardener Coordinator and State Extension Specialists.

Master Gardeners are encouraged to participate in all components of the planned program (including record keeping), be responsive to the reasonable requests of the county agent in charge, and be respectful of the need for personal safety and the safety of others. Whenever injuries do occur, they should be reported to the County Master Gardener Coordinator immediately. Along with active participation, Master Gardeners are expected to uphold a professional demeanor. The University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service functions without regard to race, sex, or national origin and does not tolerate:

- ❖ Possession of alcohol or drugs in the workplace;
- ❖ Abuse or theft of public or personal property;
- ❖ Sexual harassment or misconduct;
- ❖ Verbal abuse or failure to cooperate with other Master Gardeners, staff members, and/or the public;
- ❖ Possession or use of weapons or fireworks in the workplace;
- ❖ Defamation of the organization;
- ❖ Creating an implied or outright University or Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business;

- ❖ Misrepresentation of sources of information;
- ❖ Consistently giving out incorrect information;
- ❖ Use of state and/or county equipment without authorization.

Master Gardener Certification may become void when an individual ceases active participation in the program or dismissal may result from violations described above. Illegal activities will be referred to law enforcement. Those individuals not continuing in the program should be aware if they represent themselves as Florida Master Gardeners, they are violating their original commitment to the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Florida Master Gardener program are valuable and may rightly be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment. Once employed, and while serving as a paid employee, or if self-employed, Master Gardeners shall not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Florida Master Gardener at the place of business.

Experienced Florida Master Gardeners may be invited to speak before various community groups. Please do not seek payment for such speaking appearances. Gratuitous personal payments (i.e., in the form of cash or gifts) for such presentations are not encouraged.

The title “Florida Master Gardener” is to be used only and exclusively in the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener Program in which trained and certified Florida Master Gardeners answer gardening questions. Master Gardeners are expected to use the title only when doing unpaid volunteer educational work on the behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service. Florida Master Gardeners shall not use the Florida Master Gardener title in any advertisements or activities not related to University of Florida/IFAS Master Gardener activities. The Florida Master Gardener program represents a University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service public education program and one should avoid having association with commercial products or implying University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service endorsements of any product or place of business.

In making recommendations, which include the use of chemicals (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardener **MUST FOLLOW PUBLISHED** University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension recommendations. Cultural problems that are not specially covered by University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service recommendations may be handled by suggesting treatments, which an experienced Master Gardener considers appropriate. If you are making a recommendation based on personal experience, state clearly that you are speaking for yourself and not the Extension Service. Questions concerning any commercial horticultural enterprise (i.e., vegetable production, fruit crops production, landscape maintenance of golf course, recreational park, school grounds or commercial nursery production) are to be referred to the local Horticulture Extension Agent.

Special Note:

Individuals who are not acting on behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service are strongly urged to make every effort to minimize the appearance of being on duty before making any recommendations in the area of horticulture. Speaking “off the record” is your right; however, make sure everyone knows you are speaking for yourself and not the Extension Service.

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I have read the above policies regarding my services as a Florida Master Gardener volunteer and do here by agree to give at least 75 hours of service in my first year and at least 35 hours in each subsequent year to the Florida Master Gardener Program in return for the training provided by the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service.

I have also read the state guidelines regarding active/inactive status of Master Gardeners and understand the recertification policy.

Agent Date

Signature of Applicant Date