

March 2022

Thank you for inquiring about the Orange County Master Gardener program. We are happy that you are interested! We are a group of volunteers from all over Orange County who enjoy helping the community learn about gardening. You do not need to know anything about gardening to train as a Master Gardener but if you are a gardener, that's great!

Examples of our volunteer work include helping at community gardens and schools, hosting information tables at farmers' markets, running a free seed exchange, holding plant sales and maintaining demonstration gardens. We also reach out to the public through a website, social media posts and a monthly newsletter.

We also like to keep learning. At our monthly meetings, we hear talks about gardening subjects and issues. Some of us sign up for short classes online or at local botanical gardens.

To become certified as a Master Gardener, you must participate in our training class, which meets three hours a week for 14 weeks. During the class, you'll also need to spend a few hours a week on reading and projects. During the first year after you complete the class, you will be expected to volunteer 30 hours for our program. After that first year, Master Gardeners continue to volunteer at least 30 hours a year.

Our next training class starts in September 2022. It will be held from 9 a.m. to noon each Wednesday from Sept. 7 to Dec. 14; the class will not meet on Nov. 23 because of the Thanksgiving holiday. We plan to hold the class in-person at the Bonnie B. Davis Environment and Agricultural Center in Hillsborough. Additionally, you are expected to volunteer some of your time at our plant sale (October 8). This will be a time to meet some of our other Master Gardeners and begin networking. We are following safe practices during the Covid pandemic and can switch to online learning if it becomes necessary.

Most of the classes will be taught by North Carolina Cooperative Extension agents who are experts on plant topics. The course has required reading and quizzes. Class members also will complete a group project. Class members are expected to attend all class sessions; two excused absences are allowed and are handled on an individual basis.

In June, we will hold two information sessions for applicants. One session will be on Zoom and one will be in person. We'll have details later. It will be a good opportunity to hear more about the course and our program and to ask questions.

If you would like to apply for the 2022 class, please complete the attached screening application.

If you are returning the application in person, bring it to the Orange County Extension Office at the Bonnie B. Davis Environmental and Agricultural Center, 1020 US-70 West, Suite 130, Hillsborough, NC, 27278 (the office is across from the DMV driver's license office).

If you are mailing the application, the address is: Orange County Master Gardeners, Orange County Extension Office, P.O. Box 8181, Hillsborough, NC 27278.

Feel free to skip some sections of the application if you feel they do not apply to you. We are interested in finding out why you would like to be a Master Gardener. Please let us know what skills or knowledge you might contribute to our group - they do not have to be gardening skills! You might have computer experience, graphic skills, teaching skills or a background in working with children. Tell us about it!

**The application must be submitted by 5 p.m. on May 31, 2022.** A non-refundable \$10 application fee, payable to **Orange County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers**, must accompany your application. Please make a copy of your completed application for your records. The applications will be reviewed by a committee of Master Gardeners and you will hear from us by June 30, 2022.

If you are accepted for the class, you are expected to pay a training fee of \$110 to \$160 by Aug. 1. (The cost depends on which version of the course handbook you choose.) This fee covers Master Gardener registration, the textbook and supplies. Scholarships are available if needed.

If you have questions, please contact one of the people listed below.

We look forward to receiving your application!

Sincerely,



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