

May 2017

Dear Master Gardener Applicant:

We are pleased that you are interested in the Duval County Master Gardener Program! The enclosed "Program Guide" will answer most of your questions; however, please feel free to call if you need additional information.

You will be contacted by telephone to set-up an appointment for a ten (10) minute interview once your application has been received. Interviews will be held on **Friday June 2, Thursday June 15, Tuesday June 20, and Friday June 23**. The interviews will be held at the Duval County Extension Office located at 1010 North McDuff Ave., Jacksonville, Florida.

To be considered as a potential Master Gardener applicant you must complete and return the application by the **Monday, June 19, 2017 deadline** and participate in a (10) minute interview. A **\$100.00** fee is required once you are accepted into the program. For those that are accepted, an orientation will be held at our office on **Wednesday, July 19, 2017 from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.** There are a limited number of Master Gardener interview appointments available. If the number of applications exceeds the dates and times allotted for interviews, written applications will be screened and only those applicants passing the initial screening will be interviewed and considered for the Master Gardener program.

Please complete and return the **Duval Master Gardener App (5 pages), Florida Master Gardener App (3 pages) and the Background Screening Form (1 page) to Master Gardener Program, 1010 N McDuff Avenue, Jacksonville, FL 32254. If you have the ability, you may also scan the completed forms to Sarah Freeman [sfreeman@coj.net](mailto:sfreeman@coj.net)**

The Master Gardener Program is intended as training for homeowners and not for persons employed in the horticultural industry. We feel that the personal interviews will give you a chance to ask questions about the program and will improve our selection process. You can only be a Master Gardener in the county that you live in.

Again, thank you for your interest in the Master Gardener Program.

Sincerely,



Terry B. DelValle  
Urban Horticulture Extension Agent IV  
Program Director



# **2017 MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM GUIDE**

**Jointly sponsored by:**

**Florida Cooperative Extension Service  
IFAS, Nick Place, Dean**

**The City of Jacksonville  
Lenny Curry, Mayor**

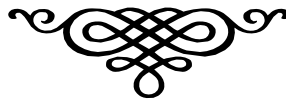
**Duval County Cooperative Extension Service  
Mike Sweat, Director**

## **2017 DUVAL COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM GUIDE**

This "Program Guide" 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 Service, how it functions and how Master Gardeners operate as a part of the Extension Service.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Terry DelValle  
Urban Horticulture Extension Agent IV  
1010 N. McDuff Ave.  
Jacksonville, FL 32254  
(904) 255-7450



### **THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM**

#### **Part I - History**

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 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. The Extension Agent selected, trained, and certified volunteers as Master Gardeners and 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 all 50 states. Florida's program began in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now active in 58 of the 67 Florida 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.

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 agricultural research.

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 educational organization, which provides information in three (3) main areas: Agriculture, Home Economics and 4-H Youth. Community Development, Marine Biology and Energy are associated programs.

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.

## **Part II - Duval County Master Gardener Program**

In Duval County, the Master Gardener Program began in 1983 and to date has provided 34 training classes to qualify candidates as Master Gardeners. Currently, 200 individuals are active in the program. They were trained and have committed themselves to giving a minimum number of hours of volunteer service for each year that they remain active in the program.

Selection to become a candidate for the Master Gardener Program is not based on prior training, education, knowledge or experience. All candidates will be considered regardless of race, creed, gender, or national origin.

A sincere desire to help others, a desire to learn and a personal commitment to volunteer service are the major selection criteria involved. Gardening experience and knowledge are always helpful, but they are by no means a requirement for selection for the Master Gardener Program.

### Part III - Master Gardener Training

The Master Gardener Program is demanding and intensive. The formal classroom training is held jointly with Master Gardeners from Duval and Nassau counties.

**Orientation** will be held at the Duval County Extension Office on **Wednesday, July 19, 2017 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.** Training sessions begin at 9:30 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. on Wednesdays at either the Duval Extension Office or Nassau County site. Training will be on the following dates: **July 26, August 2, August 9, August 16, August 23, September 6, September 13, September 20, and September 27**, and will conclude with graduation in Gainesville (Gainesville trip is optional) on Wednesday, **October 4**. Master Gardeners are allowed to miss only **one (1)** class because of the quantity of information covered in each session. An organizational meeting will be held in Duval County on **Wednesday, October 11, from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

Subjects to be covered include basic botany, nematology, entomology, pathology, animal pest control, turf grasses, soils and fertilizers, vegetable gardening, pesticide safety, plant propagation, fruits, woody ornamentals, plant identification and usage, and integrated pest management.

The fee for each trainee is **\$100** which covers reference materials from the University of Florida. These materials are updated frequently so that Master Gardeners always provide the most current recommendations approved by the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida.

Master Gardeners deal only with homeowner-type questions. The Extension Agents will respond to all commercial or professional grower questions or problems.

At the conclusion of the fifty (54) hour training period, all Master Gardeners are required to take a comprehensive examination on the materials covered and receive a ***passing grade of 70%***. Only then can the candidate be awarded the title of Master Gardener.

Once certified, Master Gardeners must abide by policies set out by IFAS and the Duval County Extension Agents.

### Part IV - Master Gardener Activities

For new Master Gardeners, volunteer activities begin in **January 2018** following course completion. **Seventy-five (75) hours** of volunteer service are required the first year and **35 hours** of service each year after that in order to remain active. All Master Gardeners also have to attend **ten (10)** hours of approved training each year to maintain active status. Most Master Gardener activities and trainings are offered at the Duval County Extension Office at 1010 N. McDuff Avenue.

New Master Gardeners are **required** to volunteer a minimum of **24 hours answering phone calls** from homeowners on gardening questions at the Extension Office and **15 hours helping maintain the landscape at the Extension Office your first year only**.

Master Gardeners provide their hours of volunteer time in many ways. Here is a listing of some of the ways volunteer hours have been returned: answering telephone calls, helping with mail-outs, working in the soils lab, doing art work, writing newsletter or newspaper columns and fact sheets, making home problem-solving visits, working with youth in the 4-H program, working in the brochure storage room, working in community and demonstration gardens, conducting plant clinics, speaking to garden circles, working with the Jr. Master Gardening program in elementary schools and judging horticultural contests.

As the Master Gardeners assist the Extension Agents, they are in effect "extending the Extension Service." As such, they provide advice and recommendations that have been well documented as a result of experimentation and testing and are approved by the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida.

Training never ceases for the active Master Gardeners. Regular on-going training sessions give Master Gardeners the opportunity to gain additional gardening information of a timely nature.

Every year an advanced training is held and opened up to Master Gardeners in various counties. The UF/IFAS State Master Gardener Program offers a 3 day conference every other year and in the off year, it is a day-long program offered in different regions. These advanced sessions provide in-depth information on gardening subjects and are presented by State Extension specialists, agents, and other authorities. It is an excellent opportunity for Master Gardeners to take a look into the future of horticultural research at IFAS.

## **DUVAL COUNTY MASTER GARDENER POLICIES**

The title "Florida Master Gardener" is to be used only and exclusively in the Florida Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener program in which the trained and certified Master Gardeners answer gardening questions. Thus, **Master Gardeners are expected to identify themselves only when doing unpaid volunteer educational work in this program.**

In addition to the University training, Master Gardeners have diagnostic support via County Extension Horticulturists and State Extension Specialists. Master Gardeners also are provided Cooperative Extension Service publications, which discuss University recommendations.

**Florida Master Gardeners are advised not to advertise their names or their places of business, nor 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 as a commercial activity,

having association with commercial products, or giving implied University or Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business is improper.

In making recommendations, which include the use of chemicals (e.g., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardeners are to follow published Florida Cooperative Extension Service recommendations. Use of other pesticide recommendations is not approved. Cultural problems, which are not specifically covered by Cooperative Extension Service 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 attend the prescribed hours of instruction and pass an examination administered by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service before becoming a certified Master Gardener. This certification is restrictive in nature 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 recertified and should be aware that if they represent themselves as Master Gardeners, they are violating their original commitment to the Florida Cooperative Extension Service.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Florida Master Gardener program is 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.

Experienced Master Gardeners are likely to receive invitations to speak before groups. Gratuitous payments/gifts for speaking are not a concern since such speaking activity is entirely separate from the question-answering done at Master Gardener Clinics. However, please do not seek payment for such speaking appearances. Your work is much appreciated by the Florida Cooperative Extension Service and your local area gardeners who have received or will receive your counsel.

### **DUVAL COUNTY GUIDELINES REGARDING RECERTIFICATION**

A Master Gardener may recertify for participation in the program for another year by:

- (1) Successfully completing the initial seventy-five (75) hours of volunteer service and adhering to the policies set forth in the agreement letter;
- (2) Committing to thirty-five (35) hours of volunteer work to be completed in

- the following year(s);
- (3) Completing ten (10) hours additional horticulture training each year. Examples of this are: New Master Gardener training, Master Gardener Advanced Training in Gainesville, one-on-one training in the office, university or community college related course work, horticulture seminars at the Duval County Extension Office, etc. If in doubt, check with the Extension Agent to see if the training is acceptable.

### **INACTIVE STATUS**

An inactive Master Gardener is one who is unable to commit to an additional thirty-five (35) hours in a subsequent year, but would like the opportunity to possibly recertify him/herself in the future. The following policies apply:

- (1) An inactive Master Gardener is one who is in good standing and completed his/her original commitment of seventy-five (75) hours volunteer service.
- (3) Inactive Master Gardeners are ineligible for Master Gardener Advanced Training in Gainesville, mailings, or Master Gardener educational meetings.

For individuals requiring special accommodations, please contact our office (904-255-7450) within a minimum of 5 working days of the program. For persons with hearing or speech impairments, when contacting our office please use the Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771 (TDD).

Extension programs are open to all regardless of race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, religion, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no endorsement by the Extension Office is implied.