

Transylvania Cooperative Extension Now accepting applications for the 2020 Master Gardener Volunteer Training Class.

"If you have experience in gardening, landscaping or another horticultural science AND you enjoy getting involved in your community, then we sure could use you," says Transylvania County Cooperative Extension Director Bart Renner. "We are looking for individuals who are excited about creating and delivering Extension's Educational programs around Gardening."

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a national program of trained volunteers who work in partnership with their county Cooperative Extension office to extend information throughout the community. The first Master Gardener program was started in Washington State in 1972. Forty-six states now have Master Gardener programs with over 15,000 people participating nationwide.

As an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, you will assist your local Cooperative Extension program with designing and implementing educational programs throughout the community. Here in Transylvania County, Master Gardeners work with local schools, the Farmers Market, 4-H, and other organizations to answer questions and deliver educational programs on lawn and garden care. The volunteer activities can include answering gardening questions, conducting plant clinics, planting demonstration gardens, talking to community groups and more.

How does the Master Gardener Program benefit me?

Through the training program and the interaction with other experienced gardeners, you will become a more knowledgeable gardener. Classes are held on Tuesday, from 1-4 p.m., February through April for 13 weeks. The weekly training will include both lecture and hands on practice. We cover a wide variety of topics including soil science, plant propagation, integrated pest management, pruning, and so on. You will be expected to complete a quiz every week and a final exam. You will also receive a manual and many additional publications.

There are also Master Gardener workshops held around the state that all Master Gardeners are welcomed to attend. There will be opportunities to take field trips to interesting gardens and nurseries. And you will meet many people who share your interest in gardening.

The Master Gardener Volunteer program is not all work. The volunteers often enjoy socializing at cookouts and covered dish suppers during and after the training period. Social activity allows the participants time to discuss new ideas as well as to forge new friendships and get to know the community better.

How do I become a Master Gardener Volunteer?

The desire to help others and volunteer in your community is the first requirement. A personal commitment to complete the required training and to volunteer at least 40 hours of service is equally important. A fee of \$130 is charged to cover the textbook, state association dues, a t-shirt, a polo shirt, and all class materials. If that all sounds ok, then [click here](#) to fill out an application. The deadline for applications is December 13, 2019. For more information on the Master Gardener program, email Bart Renner at bmrenner@ncsu.edu or call us at 884-3109.