



UF/IFAS Sumter County Extension

7620 SR 471 Suite 2
Bushnell, Florida 33513
(352) 569-6862
(352) 569-6861 fax
<http://sumter.ifas.ufl.edu>

February 7th, 2017

Dear Prospective UF/IFAS Sumter County Master Gardener:

Thank you for your interest in serving as a University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Master Gardener volunteer. A new Master Gardener training class is scheduled to begin on Friday, September 1, 2017. We will be selecting 25 Master Gardener trainees. The classes will be held at the Sumter County Extension office in Bushnell. Training dates scheduled for 2017 will be held on Fridays: September 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, October 6, 13, 20, 27, November 3, 10, 17, 24, December 1 and class ending on December 8.

Classes are scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. This Application gives you the history of the Master Gardener Program. In order to be considered for the Master Gardener Program, you **must** provide the following:

1. Complete the enclosed Application and return it to:

UF/IFAS Extension Sumter County
Master Gardener Program ATTN: Donna Lester
7620 SR 471 Ste. 2
Bushnell, FL 33513-8734

2. Call Donna Lester (Program Assistant) at 352-569-6864 or email at dmlester@ufl.edu to set up an interview date and time. Interviews will be starting the first week in July.

Please note: To apply you must be a Sumter County resident, agree to a background check, have basic computer skills and an email account to access our Volunteer Management System (VMS). Training will be provided. If chosen for the Master Gardener Program, there will be a fee of \$120 payable to the UF/IFAS Sumter County Extension.

We look forward to receiving your Application.

Sincerely,

Jim E. Davis
Residential Horticulture Agent II
Master Gardener Coordinator

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 easy to answer assuming that one has horticultural training.

In 1972, an innovative County 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, and so this is how the Master Gardener Program began.

Since that time, the Master Gardener Program has grown and is now active in every state; 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 Florida Master Gardener Program is sponsored by University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) of which the Cooperative Extension Service is 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 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 on agricultural problems.

Then, in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act created the Extension Service as a part of these colleges to disseminate the practical knowledge gained through agricultural research. The University of Florida at Gainesville is Florida's land grant college; 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 provides information in three 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.

In Sumter County the Master Gardener Program began in October of 1995 and to date has provided several training classes to qualify trainees as Master Gardeners. These Master Gardeners were selected and trained and have committed themselves to contributing the required hours of volunteer service each year to remain active in the program.

IFAS is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, disability or national origin, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, UF/IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Board of County Commissioners.

Gardening experience and knowledge are always helpful, but they are by no means a requirement for selection for the Master Gardener Training Program.

Master Gardener Training

The Master Gardener Training Program is demanding and intensive. Formal classroom work constitutes more than 75% of the training period. Subjects include basic botany, soils, fertilizers, vegetables, entomology, citrus, turfgrass, use of (and alternatives to) chemicals, ornamentals, diseases and other related topics. All information is based on the knowledge and research from the University of Florida.

For a minimal charge, each trainee is provided a collection of UF/IFAS approved books. This collection contains extensive reference materials from the University of Florida. These materials are used so that Master Gardeners always provide recommendations approved by UF/IFAS.

Master Gardeners deal only with homeowner questions. Extension faculty responds to all commercial/professional growers concerns. Upon completion of the training period, all Master Gardener trainees are required to pass a comprehensive examination on the materials covered throughout training.

Note: All Master Gardeners are required to undergo a background check.

Master Gardener Activities

Master Gardener activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- disseminating science-based information through plant clinics
- answering telephone calls or other clerical work
- develop and deliver presentations for garden clubs/civic associations
- gardening in the Bushnell Demonstration Garden

- gardening while teaching children at the Sumter County Youth Center
- setting up and cleaning up for meetings and demonstration booths
- staffing extension events and booths
- writing informational articles for newspapers and other media
- fundraising organization and participation
- working in our community gardens and beautification gardens
- participating in various educational field trips
- other various approved activities within Sumter County.

Since the Master Gardeners assist the Extension Agents and staff, they are “Extending the Extension Service.” As such, they provide advice and recommendations, which have been well documented as a result of experimentation and research and are approved by the University of Florida/IFAS.

The Master Gardener Program is an opportunity to learn and to help others. We hope that you will become a part of this "growing" experience!

UF/IFAS Sumter County Master Gardener Program

Residential Horticulture Agent II/Master Gardener Coordinator - Jim E. Davis
Program Assistant - Donna Lester

2017 Master Gardener Executive Advisory Committee

President – Jim Warrelmann
President-Elect – Theresa Ratti
Treasurer – Howie Johnson
Secretary – Dennis Tobin
Member Representative – Rich Selvar
New Member Representative – Kate Dilts

Florida Master Gardener Application

Please type or print legibly.

Section I.

Name: Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Nickname, if any: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ FAX: _____

Section II:

Have you applied for Master Gardener training before? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, when? _____ Where? _____

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

Why do you want to be a volunteer of the Florida Master Gardener Program? _____

Please list any volunteer work have you done? _____

What skills or expertise could you provide to the Master Gardener Program? _____

I, _____ (print name), wish to become a UF/IFAS Sumter County Master Gardener and would like to be accepted into the training program beginning September 1, 2017. I understand that, if accepted, I must successfully complete the course of instruction, and I agree to:

- 1) Donate 75 total hours of volunteer time in the following project areas: 30 hours in the Demonstration Garden at the Bushnell office. 9 hours in Plant Clinics. 4 hours in Langley Community/Beautification Garden(s). 4 hours in the Youth Garden. 4 hours at the Horticulture Show, and the remainder (24 hours) in other areas of my choice, within one year following completion of the training course and final examination.
- 2) Attend 10 hours of continuing education within one year following completion of the training course and final examination.
- 3) Successfully pass the final examination at the end of the training course with a score of 80% or higher.
- 4) Receive certification in the Green Industries Best Management Practices (GI-BMP) program within one year of training period.
- 5) Volunteer at both of the UF/IFAS Sumter County Master Gardener major fundraising events. The Plant and Garden Festival and Fall Plant and Garden Festival within one year following completion of training course and final examination.
- 6) Complete a designated project by the end of the training course. Projects will be assigned by the coordinator on September 8, 2017.

I have read and understand the application.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

An orientation class will be held on Friday, June 16th - 9am to 12pm for all applicants. Everyone is urged to attend. This brings an opportunity to meet Jim Davis, Master Gardener Coordinator, and ask questions about the UF/IFAS Master Gardener program.