

History

Master Gardener Program

The VCE Master Gardener training program was created by Extension to meet an enormous increase in requests from home gardeners for unbiased, research-based horticultural information. People often call their local Extension office for advice on what to plant and how to care for it.

The Master Gardener program was first created in 1972 in the State of Washington, and it is now established in all 50 states. Master Gardeners have become a vital part of Extension. Master Gardeners provide consumers with reliable knowledge so they can enjoy and value the natural environment around their homes. VCE-MG training has also become a fun and useful volunteer activity that has given its participants a sense of community spirit, accomplishment, and intellectual stimulation.

The VCE-Master Gardeners provide communities with locally identified programs, including answers to individual questions, via hotlines and plant clinics; educational programs to meet targeted needs, such as the establishment of community gardens for low income persons; education for the preservation of historic landscapes; and guidance in making the natural environment accessible to all residents.



Volunteers with VCE

Cooperative Extension serves as a link between land-grant universities and the community. Extension provides outreach to the average citizen and works to disseminate the latest information and research. Volunteer involvement is one of the most important and unique aspects of Cooperative Extension. This is in keeping with Extension's philosophy that active citizen participation in planning and implementation insures program success. Volunteers are a valuable and an integral part of the education mission of VCE. VCE-Master Gardeners are part of this family of volunteers, as they are educational partners of VCE.

In 2006, VCE benefited from 4,000 active Master Gardener Volunteers who contributed more than 300,000 hours to help VCE reach and teach more than 500,000 Virginians!



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Virginia Cooperative Extension

Becoming A Master Gardener



VCE-Stafford Office
Serving the Counties of
Caroline, King George,
Spotsylvania, and Stafford,
and the City of Fredericksburg

A partnership of
Virginia Tech and
Virginia State University

Master Gardeners



Do you have an interest in horticulture and want to learn more? Are you looking for a way to improve your community through volunteer service? Do you enjoy teaching and talking to the public?

If the answer to any of these questions is yes, Master Gardener volunteer opportunities may be right for you

Virginia Cooperative Extension-Master Gardeners come from all walks of life. They are a group of enthusiastic volunteers linked by their love of gardening.

Master Gardener volunteers donate 20 hours of their time a year to provide gardening and horticulture expertise to our community. Their expertise is drawn from their training, their rich personal experiences, and the research of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University, Virginia's land grant universities.

Training

To become a VCE-MG, you must complete the Master Gardener training course. A program has been established to provide both novice and experienced gardeners a basic background in horticulture.

The Master Gardener course, a 50 hour program, is held once a year through the local Extension office.

After completing the course, Master Gardener Interns have a full year to volunteer 50 hours in order to fulfill their training requirement and to be recognized as official Master Gardeners.

For more information on the Master Gardener program or the Master Gardener Association of the Central Rappahannock Area, Call:
Virginia Cooperative Extension,
Stafford County Office:
540-658-8000, extension 1056

A Rewarding Experience



Master Gardeners work to improve their community by supporting the concept of sustainable landscape management which is the responsible use of natural resources in a manner that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

Local Master Gardeners support the VCE mission of educating the general public by:

Helping to conduct educational gardening programs for the public

Answering gardening questions at the local Extension offices and community functions

Working with local schools to help develop gardening programs for children

Promoting the safe use of fertilizers and pesticides to preserve water quality and the environment

Working to preserve important local historic gardens