



Contact:

**University of Illinois Extension
Fulton-Mason-Peoria-Tazewell Unit**

Tara Heath

Program Coordinator, Horticulture
tsheath@illinois.edu

309-547-3711

extension.illinois.edu/fmpt



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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**EXTENSION
MASTER
GARDENER**



Discover how to
become an Illinois
Master Gardener
volunteer



What training is required?

Extension Educators and State Specialists with the University of Illinois provide the training for Master Gardeners. Online and hybrid training options are available and include online modules with in-person activities. Class size may be limited due to space restrictions in some locations. Master Gardener training covers various home horticulture topics including:

- Vegetable Gardening • Insects •
- Tree and Small Fruits • Basic Botany •
- Integrated Pest Management •
- Turfgrass Care • Plant Diseases •
- Tree and Shrub Care • Soils and Fertilizer •
- Flower Gardening • Organic Gardening •
- Living with Wildlife •

Opportunities

To become a certified Master Gardener participants are required to volunteer 40 hours of time to their local University of Illinois Extension office. After certification, Master Gardeners volunteer 20 hours each year and attend 10 hours of approved continuing education. Volunteer opportunities include but are not limited to answering telephone or electronic mail questions about gardening; staffing plant clinics or farmers markets; speaking to local organizations; establishing demonstration or community gardens; conducting programs with youth, the elderly or the disabled or writing newspaper articles.

Master Gardeners educate the public on topics such as improving landscapes, choosing plant varieties, water saving tips for gardens, proper pest identification and management, how to grow their own produce, optimum mulching strategies, and composting.

The only guideline is that the projects be educational and concern horticulture. You will work with the local Extension Unit Leaders to determine how your volunteer time can best be spent.

Is Master Gardener training for you?

- Do I want to learn more about plant care and gardening?
- Do I look forward to sharing my knowledge with people in my community?
- Am I eager to participate in a practical and intensive training program?
- Do I have enough time to attend the training and complete my annual volunteer and continuing education requirements?

If you answered “yes” to all the questions, the Master Gardener program could be for you.



Join Our Team!

A completed application, background screening and interview are required. A fee will be charged to cover the class and manual costs.

Master Gardeners are an integral part of University of Illinois Extension outreach. As such, they are covered by the University’s liability policy. In all volunteer work related to the program, Master Gardeners are expected to follow the recommendations of the university.

What is a Master Gardener?

The program is open to any adult (age 19 or older) with an interest in plants and a desire to share that with others. Master Gardeners are a dedicated group and many choose to return year after year to share their knowledge with others. The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program is for those enthusiastic individuals who have completed training and agree to volunteer at least 40 hours within 2 years to the local U of I Extension office.

