

2009 PENINSULA MASTER GARDENER TRAINING Gloucester, Hampton, Newport News, York County

Description of Program

1. The Mission Statement

Mission is to train Virginia Cooperative Extension volunteers, so that these Master Gardeners will be able to provide horticultural educational opportunities to the public through research based horticultural programs and activities to enhance their environment, lives, and community.

2. The Course

The Peninsula Master Gardener class is held annually in the fall during the months of September, October, and November. It provides 60 hours of instruction based on the sixteen chapters Virginia Master Gardener Handbook developed by Virginia Tech's Horticulture Department.

Classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 am until 12:00 pm, beginning September 8, 2009 and ending November 19, 2009. Classes are held at Northside Christian Church located off of Route 17 in lower Tabb.

Students should plan on spending at least two hours reading the next class's course material so to better understand the horticultural concepts and ideas that will be presented. Field trips (5) are a part of the curriculum.

If more than three classes are missed, you will not have received sufficient training to graduate. Both research projects are, take-home, open-book, multiple-choice, taken over the weekend. A course grade of 70% is required to graduate.

3. The Instructors

The instructors are specialized in the subject they present. These instructors are trained horticulturists or trained in a related field. Experienced Master Gardeners serve as course moderators.

4. Costs

The course fee of \$85.00 covers the cost of the newly revised Master Gardener Handbook, and other materials. There is no charge for the instructors' services. The graduation luncheon is a separate function, with each participant paying her/his portion.

5. Obligations

In return for the education you receive, you are required to return 50 hours of volunteer service to your Extension Office over the next year through the Master Gardener program. Twenty-eight (28) volunteer hours annually are required to remain active as a Master Gardener after the first year. Many current Master Gardeners enjoy working with the program and exceed the minimum number of hours year after year. Levels of Master Gardener Status are identified as follows:

Master Gardener Trainee – while in training.

Master Gardener Intern - while repaying your 50 hours.

Master Gardener – after repaying 50 hours.

Maintaining Master Gardener status – 28 hours per year: 20 hours service time and 8 hours of advance training.

Specialized Master Gardener - completes program requirement in advance-level training in one area (several are available).

Emeritus Master Gardener – dedicated MG who “retires” due to health or other reasons after 300 hours of service.

6. Volunteer Opportunities

How you choose to repay your volunteer service is up to you and the Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator. There are a variety of options, but it is important that you discuss it with the coordinator first and have his/her support. You will need to keep a written record of your Master Gardener activities and total hours of service and to submit to your Extension Office monthly.

Some examples of frequently performed MG educational program/services that meet community needs are:

- Developing and presenting educational horticultural exhibits, handouts, and programs.
- Identifying horticultural problems, developing and implementing solutions through on-site visits.
- Answering telephone environmental and horticultural questions.
- Developing community landscaping areas and garden projects.
- Conducting tree pruning and lawn maintenance classes.
- Developing and presenting to youth groups horticultural classes that support various standards of learning goals and to give students hands-on experiences working with plants, soil, and water.
- Compiling gardening newsletters, writing articles or computer data entry.
- There are as many ways to repay the time, as there are talents among Master Gardeners!

7. Application

You must apply for the Master Gardener Training Course through your locality’s local Extension Office. A total of only fifty students can be accepted into the course, and the remainder will be placed on a waiting list should other positions become available before the course begins.

Because the number of participants from each locality must be limited, students are selected on the basis of their responses on the application and at the interview. We look for an interest in gardening/horticulture, educating the public, working with others, enthusiasm and the ability “to pay” back her/his hours by volunteering.

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