

## OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



### MISSION:

The Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Program is a volunteer educational program designed to meet the horticultural needs of citizens of Ohio. Its purpose is to train volunteers and use their expertise to teach people more about plants, their culture, and their importance to the environment and to our quality of life.

### HISTORY:

The Master Gardener Program began in the state of Washington and is now conducted at land-grant university Extension programs in nearly every state, as well as Canada. The program began in Ohio in 1986 and is now active in more than 50 counties within the state. Cuyahoga County currently has about 200 active Master Gardener Volunteers.

### WHAT ARE COMMON MGV ACTIVITIES?

- Researching then answering resident inquiries on horticulture topics (via telephone, email or in person at a farmers market).
- Supporting instruction in fourth grade plant science with garden curriculum.
- Giving talks to garden clubs and other organizations.
- Planting, maintaining, and teaching in Extension's Demonstration Gardens (Ben Franklin School Garden and Share the Health Garden).
- Assisting with therapeutic horticulture projects with patients in nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities.
- Providing general information and assistance at garden shows, fairs, plant sales and other events.
- Assisting at special horticulture lectures tailor-made for seniors (the Tri-C Encore Program).
- Acting as mentor for a specific neighborhood Community Gardening Program.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

The Master Gardener Volunteer must show an interest in, enthusiasm for, and knowledge of gardening. He/she must be able to communicate with the public by phone and deal courteously with the visiting public and Extension program participants. **Master Gardener Volunteers are held to rigorous standards of behavior with the public, in disseminating pest management information, and in upholding youth protection policies and guidelines.** He/she must be able to read, write and comprehend the information presented in the training sessions, and be able to communicate that information to the gardening public. The Master Gardener Volunteer must pass all weekly quizzes and the final exam in order to volunteer in the program. He/she must provide his/her own transportation to training and volunteer activities.

## SUPPORT PROVIDED:

In addition to the Ohio Master Gardener Manual, Master Gardener Volunteers have at their disposal office reference materials and Internet resources to assist in answering questions and requests for information. If the Master Gardener Volunteer is unable to assist a consumer, questions are referred to the appropriate staff or the Extension Educator. For additional support within the first years, a new Master Gardener Volunteer will have the opportunity to be assigned an experienced Master Gardener Volunteer as a mentor.

## THE BASIC TRAINING PROGRAM:

Each year a new class of Master Gardener Trainees is selected. The class size is limited to ensure the best possible training for the trainees and reasonable volunteer opportunities. Classes will be held at the Cuyahoga County Extension office in Cleveland. The classes will begin in August, each Thursday night, dates August 9<sup>th</sup> to October 25<sup>th</sup>. There will also be three day-long Saturday classes, dates TBA.

The class duration is from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

Classroom lectures and learning activities are provided by Ohio State University Faculty, District Specialists and State Specialists, as well as a few local experts. Trainees must successfully complete weekly quizzes and a take-home, open-book final examination.

When the trainee has successfully completed the course and the final examination, he/she is now an Intern in the Master Gardener Program. Volunteering becomes a critical part of the learning process and Interns must complete a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer work by September 30, 2019, to become certified as an Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteer. There are continuing requirements to maintain this certification (currently 20 hours volunteer work and 10 hours of Continuing Education each year.)

	Volunteer Hours	Continued Education Hours
Year 1	50	0
Year 2+	20	10

***This program is not designed for professional horticulturists.  
It is a volunteer program.***

## APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. A completed application and completed reference forms from three references must be returned by July 8, 2018 to:

*Master Gardener Basic Training Program  
Ohio State University Extension, Cuyahoga  
12200 Fairhill Rd.  
Cleveland, Ohio 44120*

Applications and reference forms are also available on-line at: [www.cuyahogamg.org](http://www.cuyahogamg.org)

2. Interviews will be held the second or third week of July (dates TBA) at the OSUE office.
3. Each applicant will be notified of his or her status by telephone/email the week of July 23, 2018.
4. If accepted, a check payable to *Ohio State University Extension, Cuyahoga County* and must be received before the first class. The cost of the program is \$250.00. (*Limited sliding scales are available based on need, See application.*)
5. If accepted, the applicant will be required to have a criminal background check done immediately at his/her own cost. Results of this check must be on file in the county or state office prior to August 31, 2018.

## IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Class attendance is mandatory. Be prompt. Class begins at 6:00 PM sharp. Your participation is important!
2. Read the selected text from the manual the week before class. It will help you understand the lecture material that week.
3. All candidates will audit three Master Gardener approved committee functions.
4. HotLine volunteer time is mandatory. Hours can be served at the office, at Farmers' Markets, the Cuyahoga County Fair, Home and Garden Show, and others.
5. Acceptable volunteer hours are available solely by service at approved Cuyahoga County Master Gardener Volunteer activities.
6. Within the first year, no single volunteer opportunity is to make up the sum total of your volunteer time.
7. Your volunteer hours are to be reported in a timely manner, once each month. Should you find them helpful, Time Logs are available online at [www.cuyahogamg.org](http://www.cuyahogamg.org) However, volunteer hours must be entered in the Volunteer Management System. Details will be provided for recording hours on this system at a required training about the online information system.
8. Volunteer hours may begin starting Jan. 1, 2019, after you have completed and submitted your final exam on or before the exam deadline, and you have received a passing grade. Volunteer hours are to be completed by September 30, 2019.
9. After your first year, you will be required to complete 20 hours of volunteer service each year and 10 hours of Continuing Education credit each year to be considered an active Master Gardener Volunteer in good standing.

*OSU Extension—CFAES provides educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. If you have questions concerning access to this event, need a sign language interpreter, or have any other request for accommodations of disability, please contact Maggie Fitzpatrick at [Fitzpatrick.255@osu.edu](mailto:Fitzpatrick.255@osu.edu) or 216-429-8200 X217.*

