

Master Gardener training course coming in 2020

Even though gardening season is over, gardeners themselves never stop learning, growing and giving. This is the essence of what it means to be a Master Gardener. If you enjoy learning and giving back as a volunteer, consider becoming a Master Gardener in 2020.

Now is the time to apply and reserve your spot for the 2020 training course. Master Gardener basic training classes will be held at the Hays Extension office beginning January 29, 2020 and run Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. through March 18th. Topics covered include: basic botany, soil fertility, insects, diseases, tree and shrub care, vegetables, fruit gardening, turf management, wildlife, landscape design and more.

Who are Master Gardeners?

Master Gardeners are K-State Research & Extension volunteers who enjoy cultivating their own plants and gardens while sharing their skills and knowledge with the community around them to help others grow. Master Gardening is a wonderful way to enrich your life and the lives of others.

Why become a Master Gardener

The decision to become a Master Gardener can be very rewarding. It is a decision to take your horticulture knowledge to the next level, and it is also a commitment to find creative ways to make a difference in our community while sharing that knowledge with the people and places around you.

Training is just one great benefit. Master Gardeners receive a 40-hour-plus horticulture training course from K-State Extension specialists and county Extension agents. The basic training provides a great starting point for those new to gardening, but is also in depth enough to apply to gardeners of any skill level. Other benefits of being a Master Gardener include the camaraderie of people who share similar passions, receiving ongoing horticulture support through K-State Research and Extension, and occasional visits to horticultural places of interest.

What about volunteering?

Once training is complete, Master Gardeners take their knowledge out to the community to share it with others in unique and meaningful ways. First year Master Gardeners volunteer 40 hours of time and during succeeding years have a commitment of just 20 hours to remain active.

Master Gardeners are encouraged to find their creativity in looking for ways to impact the community. A few activities many Master Gardeners enjoy volunteering on include: the demonstration garden, county fairs, educational garden tours and events, and booths at public events.

Use these two questions to help determine if the Master Gardener program is right for you:

- Are you available for about 40 hours of daytime classes on Wednesdays from February through March?
- Do you have the interest and the time to attend monthly Master Gardener meetings and donate 40 hours of horticultural service to our community during the first year?

If you are interested in joining the program or have questions regarding any of this information call the K-State Research & Extension office. We need notification of interest as soon as possible as space is limited. Applications can be filled out or downloaded online at cottonwood.k-state.edu or picked up at

the Extension office and are due by January 8, 2020. The Great Bend office can be contacted at 620-793-1910 and the Ellis county office is 785-628-9430. We look forward to hearing from you!

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