**Who Are the Master Gardeners?**

Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, planting beds of decorative perennial and annual plants, and edible gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and help others and able to communicate with diverse groups of people. What really sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture.

**What exactly is that special training?**

First off, the Texas Master Gardener program is an educational volunteer program conducted by the [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](http://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/)  of the [Texas A&M University System](http://tamus.edu/).

Due to COVID-19, the Fall 2020 classes will be virtual, but that doesn’t stop our ability to provide top-quality classes. The first 10 classes will be presented by AgriLife Extension Professors & Specialists from all over the state. Classes cover horticulture topics such as lawns, entomology (insects), vegetables, soils and more. Additional classes will acquaint you with the Fort Bend County Master Gardener Program.

In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardeners contribute time as volunteers, working through their county’s [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](http://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/) office to provide horticultural-related information to their communities.

Master Gardeners are representatives of [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension](http://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/). In all volunteer work related to the program, Master Gardeners follow the research-based recommendations of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. The title “Texas Master Gardener” can be used by volunteers only when engaged in Extension-sponsored activities.

Training will result in greater confidence in your own efforts in the garden, provide the opportunity to learn with professional instruction, the “Texas Master Gardener Handbook”, community service opportunities, gardener friendships, and continuing educational opportunities through The Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc. (“FBMG”).

Delete “Service”; change it’s to its

**Is the Master Gardener Program for Me?**

To help you decide if you should apply to be a Master Gardener, ask yourself these questions:

* Do I want to learn more about the culture and maintenance of many types of plants?
* Am I eager to participate in a practical and intensive training program?
* Do I look forward to sharing my knowledge with people in my community?
* Do I have enough time to attend training and to complete the volunteer service, described below?

If you answered yes to these questions, the Master Gardener program could be for you!

In exchange for training, participants (“associates”) are required to volunteer 50 hours of time to Fort Bend County Extension approved projects by a 2021 date certain to be determined, after which the title Texas Master Gardener is earned. The type of volunteer service performed by Master Gardener Associates varies according to community needs, abilities and interests of the Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners will answer telephone requests for information related to gardening, plant and maintain demonstration gardens, care for the greenhouse, participate in plant clinics, seminars, or garden club presentations, attend FBMG committee meetings and FBMG meetings. Master Gardeners may speak to local groups and conduct workshops. They may help establish community garden projects, work with 4-H youth, schools, libraries or assist agents with news or radio releases related to gardening. The Master Gardener Coordinator in the County Extension office decides how volunteer time can be best utilized.

This is a certification course. Once this initial certification is achieved, one becomes a Certified Texas Master Gardener. It is important to note that once Certified, not always certified, and a person could lose their status if they don’t complete all the requirements every year of 12 hours of Continuing Education and 24 hours of Volunteer time.

For additional information, you can contact the Master Gardener Program Coordinator by phone 281-633-7033 or by email mmcdowell@ag.tamu.edu.