

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 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 the garden curriculum.
- Giving talks to garden clubs and other organizations.
- Planting, maintaining, and teaching in Extension's Demonstration Gardens (Ben Franklin School Garden and Fairhill 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 a mentor for a community gardening.

QUALIFICATIONS:

The Master Gardener Volunteer must show an interest in, enthusiasm for gardening and they must be able to contribute to the program. **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.** They must participate fully in and complete the basic training to volunteer in the program. They must be able to record and log their volunteer hours. They must provide their 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.

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 complete a take-home, open-book final examination.

When the trainee has completed the course and the final examination, they are now an Intern in the Master Gardener Program. Volunteering becomes a critical part of the learning process. Interns must complete a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer work by the 30th of September the year following the basic training to become certified as an Ohio State University Extension Master Gardener Volunteer. There are continuing requirements to maintain this certification (currently 25 hours volunteer work and 10 hours of Continuing Education each year.)

	Volunteer Hours	Continued Education Hours
Year 1	50	0
Year 2+	25	10

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

APPLICATION PROCESS:

1. Attend an informational meeting about the Master Gardener Volunteer Program and the Basic Training
2. A completed application must be submitted online or returned to:

Master Gardener Basic Training Program
Ohio State University Extension, Cuyahoga
12200 Fairhill Rd.
Cleveland, Ohio 44120
OR
Rivera.482@osu.edu

3. Each applicant will be notified of their status by email.
4. Attend a program orientation (mandatory).
5. If accepted, you will register and pay for the training through the carmen canvas online portal. The cost of the program is \$250.00 (two partial scholarships are awarded each year, and a payment plan is available to anyone, see application).
6. During the training, the applicant will be required to have a criminal background check done immediately at their own cost. Results of this check must be on file in the county or state office before entering the program.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

1. A majority of this training is provided online you will need reliable access to a computer and the internet.
2. The training is self-paced however you must complete the coursework by November 12.
3. Attendance at 3 in-person labs is required.
4. Read the selected text from the manual the week you will complete each section. It will help you understand the lecture material that week.
5. Acceptable volunteer hours are available solely by service at approved Cuyahoga County Master Gardener Volunteer activities.
6. Within the first year, you must complete the required volunteer hours in signature Master Gardener projects.
7. Your volunteer hours are to be reported promptly. Volunteer hours must be entered into 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 after you have attended the volunteer fair and the volunteer management system training. Volunteer hours are to be completed by September 30, the year following your training.
9. After your first year and years after, you will be required to complete 25 hours of volunteer service and 10 hours of Continuing Education credit annually 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 Rivera at Rivera.482@osu.edu or 330-599-7710, or contact our office at 216-429-8200.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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