



**THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

## Master Gardener Volunteer Program Overview

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program provides intensive training in horticulture to interested Ohio residents who then volunteer their time assisting with educational programs and activities for Ohio residents through their local Ohio State University Extension county office. Volunteers are not required to have gardening skills or knowledge; a passion for learning about gardening and sharing this knowledge with others is a must!

Working with county Extension personnel, Master Gardener Volunteers provide such educational services to their communities as: answering gardening questions from the public; conducting plant clinics; gardening activities with children, senior citizens, or disabled persons; beautifying the community; developing community or demonstration gardens; and other horticultural activities.

### **How did the Master Gardener Volunteer Program originate?**

The Master Gardener program originated in Seattle, Washington in 1972. The Extension Agent in the King County office of the Washington State Extension Service began to train and utilize the expertise of volunteers in order to more effectively reach the gardening public with research-based educational information. It was a great concept that has now spread across the United States, Canada and to other countries.

The Master Gardener program in Ohio has existed since the late 1970s and has grown steadily. Although its initial start and growth was in the more urban counties of our state, there are now nearly 3000 active Master Gardeners in more than 71 Ohio counties, urban, suburban and rural.

### **How do I know if I'd make a good Master Gardener Volunteer?**

You could qualify to be an Ohio Master Gardener if:

- You want to learn more about plants and gardening.
- You are eager to participate in a practical and intensive training program.
- You enjoy sharing your knowledge with others.
- You have the time to attend training and serve your community as a volunteer educator.

### **When is Master Gardener Volunteer training conducted?**

Most Master Gardener Volunteer training takes place in late winter to early spring, late January through March. Here in Geauga County, we train February through the first week of May, for a total of 50 hours. However, some counties train in the summer or fall. Most training is conducted in the day-time, since most volunteer opportunities take place during the day.

Recruitment of new volunteers usually begins in September in Geauga County, or about 4 months before training begins. Contact the local County Extension office for specific details.

### **Is there a fee for Master Gardener Volunteer training?**

Yes, there is a fee for Master Gardener Volunteer training. The fee covers the cost of training materials and other expenses the county may incur to conduct training and to help support educational activities. Fees for Geauga County are \$200, but this varies from county to county.

### **How can I find out more about my county's Master Gardener Volunteer program?**

For more information on your local Master Gardener Volunteer program, click on the County Contacts link and then click on your county name. There you'll find the name of your county Master Gardener Volunteer program coordinator. The coordinator will be happy to answer any other questions you may have.