

Dear Solano County Resident:

Thank you for your interest in the Master Gardener Program! In the packet, you will find an application and some additional information about becoming a certified Master Gardener.

The Master Gardener Program is part of the University of California Cooperative Extension. Master Gardeners are formal, non-paid volunteers that are recruited, oriented, trained, and certified as part of an organized volunteer program. The program provides public education, in home gardening, and basic horticulture. No previous horticultural experience is required for acceptance into the Master Gardener Program, as the training in plant science and horticulture is quite comprehensive. A strong interest in gardening, horticulture, and ecology, along with a strong desire to learn, a commitment to community service, and availability for active participation are the best prerequisites for Master Gardener applicants.

The Master Gardener Program is a formal volunteer program with specific training requirements and time commitments from its volunteers. All Master Gardeners must pass the training course final with a score of 70% or more. The training consists of approximately 15-16 weekly four-hour sessions. In addition to the training, fifty (50) hours of volunteer service in approved educational outreach activities are required the first year. Twenty five (25) of volunteer outreach and twelve (12) hours of continuing education are required each subsequent year to remain a certified Master Gardener.

For this training, classes will be held on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. in Solano County. However, this year, in an effort to utilize available resources, we are **combining the first 5 training classes** on Thursday mornings (9 am until 1pm) with two other counties: Sacramento and Yolo. These 5 classes will be held at two (2) different locations. The first two classes will be held at the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) building in Davis, and the next three will be at Norton Hall in the UC Cooperative Extension Office in Woodland. After the 5 classes are done, trainees will return to their home county and continue the training there.

The tuition for the Master Gardener training course is \$130.00. This fee entitles you to two books: *California Master Gardener Handbook* and *Pests of the Trees and Landscape Plants*; fingerprinting; handouts, and name badge once you've successfully completed the training. If accepted into the program, this fee will be collected prior to the training class.

Due to University policy, Master Gardeners must be screened via fingerprinting in order to be accepted as a University of California volunteer. Fingerprints are not shared between any of the agencies, so new prints will have to be obtained, even if you have been fingerprinted in the past. Fingerprinting will take place during a training class session.

The deadline to apply for the January 2016 class is October 30, 2015 by 5:00 p.m. Late submissions will not be considered.

As the number of applicants is always far greater than the number of trainees accepted into the program, we screen the applications; a committee thoroughly reviews each application several times. Final candidates will be notified by mail and will be scheduled for an informal interview in early November.

Thank you for your inquiry about the Master Gardener Program. If you have questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,



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