

Who Are Master Gardeners?

You probably know a Master Gardener and may not even know it. Master Gardeners are your neighbors. We live in your community, and work in your local nurseries and hardware stores. Master Gardeners love plants and gardening and face the same gardening challenges that you do. We may be members of the local garden club, rose society, or California Native Plant Society. Master Gardeners are volunteers trained and certified by the University of California Cooperative Extension in home gardening and horticulture. We promote the application of useful basic gardening practices. Our purpose is to teach and extend research-based information to home and community gardeners.

The Master Gardener Program is an educational and public service component of the University of California Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR), which oversees the Cooperative Extension

Master Gardeners have expertise in trees, native plants, composting, deer resistant plants, roses, vegetables, ornamentals, water conservation and more. They offer suggestions to benefit your oak trees and deter your gophers. They provide advice on plants that use little water or can tolerate our thin mountain soils. They'll teach you how to create your own soil amendments that benefit both the garden and the community.

Master Gardener membership is open to anyone in Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties. A background check, including fingerprinting, is required to become a Master Gardener. We will be scheduling an orientation so that anyone interested in becoming a Master Gardener can learn about the program and the volunteer requirements.

The training classes for new volunteer candidates begin in January and will continue weekly through April 2021. We will be offering a hybrid form of training. What does this mean? This will be a combination of prerecorded lectures, weekly Zoom Meetings and small in person workshops. These classes will include over 50 hours of training by University of California personnel and horticulture specialists in various fields. Topics include water management, soils, composting, native plants, fruit production, plant diseases, entomology, Integrated Pest Management, understanding pesticides and more.

A fee of \$195 will be charged to cover the cost of all class materials, which includes several reference texts. After successfully completing the training program, certified Master Gardener volunteers agree to fulfill annual volunteer service and continuing education requirements. We will also offer the training at the Professional rate of \$350 for those that will not be able to volunteer.

If you are interested in the UCCE Master Gardener Program, please fill out an online short form. <http://ucanr.edu/uccecs-master-gardener-training-interest>

If you have questions, please contact the UCCE Central Sierra office by email. Debbie Powell is the UCCE Master Gardener Coordinator for Calaveras and Tuolumne Counties and her email is dlpowell@ucanr.edu.

Debbie Powell has edited and modified Rebecca Miller-Cripps original article. Rebecca Miller-Cripps is a University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener of Tuolumne County. She has a B.S. in Biology: Ecology & Genetics from California State University, Stanislaus.

UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties can answer home gardening questions. Call 209-533-5912 or go to: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=7269> to fill out our easy-to-use problem questionnaire. Check out our website at: http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners/ You can also find us on Facebook.