

Complete Online Application by January 6, 2020

November 18, 2019

Thank you for your interest in our 2020 UC Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program! If you enjoy gardening, and want to teach others how to garden sustainably, this may be the program for you! Please read below to learn more about the program and whether it may be a match for you.

UC Master Gardeners extend research-based information by conducting workshops and demonstrations, diagnosing plant and pest problems, speaking to community groups, educating teachers and parents at school gardens, and answering gardening questions at fairs and farmers markets as well as on our email and phone helplines. By training Master Gardener volunteers, we empower neighborhoods to create their own solutions and foster healthier gardens, communities and a sustainable environment.

Since 1993, we have trained 1388 Master Gardener volunteers who have served 2,059,408 Los Angeles County residents and earned 83,312 continuing education hours.

In 2018-2019, our 273 Master Gardener volunteers logged 15,952 volunteer hours and 3,731 continuing education hours helping 60,413 Los Angeles County residents at 332 locations (98 community gardens, 116 school gardens, 7 senior gardens, 9 homeless and battered-women's shelters, and 102 fairs, workshops, farmers markets and phone and email helplines).

Overview

- The UC Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program in Los Angeles County is open to Los Angeles County residents over 18 years of age.
- We're looking for **experienced community volunteers** who already:
 - know the basics of gardening
 - have done at least some of their volunteer work in gardening-related projects and activities
 - have given public presentations
 - have worked with people of diverse backgrounds
 - have access to a computer and have basic working familiarity with internet and email
- University of California research-based information will be presented to promote sustainable horticultural practices in home, community and school landscapes.
- Classes will meet for 13 weeks every Saturday from February 15 through May 16, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm in Los Angeles in the Echo Park neighborhood. Meetings start promptly at 9:00 am. You must attend the first class on February 15. After the first class, you can miss only one meeting with prior notice.
- Instruction in English will include lectures, hands-on activities, and field trips to area botanical gardens and other sites (carpooling is recommended).
- Acceptance letters will be emailed January 22, 2020.

If you are accepted into our 2020 Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program

- You will be emailed an acceptance letter on January 22 with your first class assignments and due dates – all to be completed prior to the first day of class.
- You will be emailed a Live Scan form and list of Live Scan locations in L.A. County for required fingerprinting and criminal background check by the California Department of Justice. Fingerprinting will need to be completed no later than February 7.

- **By February 7, you will need to** pay the \$300 course fee online by credit card or by check. Partial scholarships are available upon approval.

Class Session

- Class members are called "Master Gardener Trainees" while they attend the 13-week, 78-hour training course.
- Class will NOT meet on Saturday, April 11, 2020. This is our Spring Break.
- Major class topics include basic plant science, propagation, fertilization, soils, irrigation, composting, vegetable, herb, and fruit gardening, ornamental plants and trees gardening, Integrated Pest Management (diseases, insects, weeds, small animals), tools, how to start community and school gardens, and community outreach techniques.
- Graduation from the class session requires 1) attendance at each week's class (you may miss only one class with prior notice) and 2) a passing grade of at least 70% on the take-home, open-book final examination.

Volunteering

- For the first year, a minimum of 50 hours of volunteering by June 30, 2021 can be accomplished in these areas:
 - Community and school gardens, farmers markets and fairs — giving workshops, responding to gardening questions, providing technical assistance to gardeners
 - Phone and e-mail helplines — answering questions.
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- While no minimum "Continuing Education" hours are required by June 30, 2021, 12 hours will be required the second and subsequent years.
- Master Gardeners must post all of their volunteer and continuing education hours onto the online Statewide Master Gardener Volunteer Management System. Instructions will be provided.
- In order to maintain active status after the first year, Master Gardeners must post a minimum of 25 volunteer and 12 continuing education hours annually.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly Continuing Education meetings are held on the second Saturday of every month from June through February from 9:30 am to 1:00 pm at various garden locations throughout Los Angeles County.

Graduation

On the last day of class, May 16, 2020, "Master Gardener Trainees" who have completed their final exam, class evaluation, and commitment form become "First-Year Master Gardeners" and receive a Certificate of Completion of Class Instruction and Master Gardener identification badges. Passage of the final exam by at least 70% and class attendance will be confirmed later.

We hope you'll continue volunteering in our program long after you've completed your initial minimum requirements. We have active Master Gardeners from every year's class since 1990; they've volunteered thousands of hours!

Application Survey Submission

- Complete and submit the online application survey by 6:00 pm on January 6, 2020.
- The link is: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=28745>.
- If you have questions, please contact Program Coordinator Valerie Borel at vtborel@ucanr.edu by 3:00 pm on Monday, January 6, 2020.

Regards,

Rachel Surls, Ph.D.
Sustainable Food Systems Advisor

Valerie Borel
Horticulture and Master Gardener Program Coordinator

**2020 UC Master Gardener
Volunteer Training Program Application
for Los Angeles County
Frequently Asked Questions**

These questions may help you decide if you want to apply to the
UC Master Gardener Program.

1. What kind of volunteer work will I be doing to get my required 50 hours of volunteer service?

Lots of things! Some examples are working at community gardens, school gardens, and staffing tables at fairs and farmers markets in an educational role — you might be answering questions, teaching a workshop, or helping to design a garden. The key is that you are educating the public about gardening. Master Gardeners teach non-commercial gardeners only. We also need volunteers to assist with various committees that help us run the MG Program.

2. What kinds of things are not eligible for MG volunteer hours?

- a. Physical labor (such as digging, weeding, etc) does not count as volunteer hours except in certain rare assignments pre-approved by the MG staff.
- b. Starting a garden club, or a local chapter of a gardening organization.
- c. Any work with a for-profit company.
- d. Advising commercial gardeners (any person or agency that is selling what they grow or selling their gardening services).
- e. Travel time to volunteer assignments except in rare pre-approved circumstances.
- f. Consultation or advisement to individual residents except through the Helplines.

3. I want to teach people about raising chickens (bees, goats, food preservation, etc.) in addition to teaching them about gardening. Can I do that as a Master Gardener?

No. You will be able to teach any of the topics covered in the California Master Gardener Handbook that you are trained on in MG class. We do not cover any animal husbandry or beekeeping, nor do we cover food preservation, so we can't allow you to teach those in your capacity as a UC Master Gardener. We will provide you with suggestions about where to refer members of the public who are interested in these topics.

4. When will I do my Master Gardener hours? Will you assign me projects?

During your first year of the Master Gardener Program, you'll be required to complete your 50 volunteer hours by working on specific assigned projects. After your first year, you can continue working on those projects, you can work on any other established project, or, you can create your own project with prior approval from MG staff. We also send out numerous volunteer

opportunities – it will be up to you to respond to and follow up with these. Your first-year volunteer hours must be completed by **June 30, 2021**.

5. I want to apply, but it is possible that I will be moving away within the next year. Should I apply?

If there is a possibility that you will move away from Los Angeles County in your first year after training, we encourage you to apply another time! We invest a great deal in training each Los Angeles County Master Gardener, and when they can not do their volunteer hours because they move away, it means that we have less support to offer to the many schools and community groups that request Master Gardener assistance. So if you are planning a career change that may involve a transfer, are applying to graduate schools out of the area, etc., we ask that you hold off and apply at another time.

6. How competitive is the Master Gardener Program in Los Angeles County?

Our county has more than 10 million people, and many of them love to garden. This means that we get many applications for our annual training program. We usually get 125-150 applications for 50 positions in each class. Those accepted typically have a strong track record as community volunteers who have already volunteered on gardening-related projects. People often apply more than once before they are accepted.

7. I don't live in Los Angeles County; can I still apply?

Each county has its own UC Master Gardener Program, and we suggest that you apply in your county of residence. There may be occasional case-by-case exceptions, but we do prioritize Los Angeles County residents.

8. I am a staff member at an agency that works with school gardens (or community gardens, etc.) Does my work count for my Master Gardener hours?

No, Master Gardener work is not paid work. It may be possible to get your volunteer hours with your agency, with prior approval of MG staff, but you will need to do something that's above and beyond your paid assignment.

9. I have an *unpaid* internship with an agency that works with school gardens (or community gardens, etc.). Does my work count for my Master Gardener hours?

No, we consider this much the same as paid employment. You may be able to get your volunteer hours with your agency, with prior approval of MG staff, but you will need to do something that's above and beyond your existing internship.

10. I am passionate about organic gardening (permaculture gardening, square foot gardening, etc.) and I really want to teach that method. Will that be okay?

In the UC Master Gardener Program, you'll be learning university research-based information about many aspects of gardening. You'll be offering options to those you work with, rather than promoting one particular style of gardening.

11. What if I want the training but don't have time to volunteer?

The UC Master Gardener Training Program is specifically for individuals who have time to volunteer. We count on our trained Master Gardeners to respond to numerous community volunteer requests. When people do not fulfill their volunteer commitment, it prevents us from reaching people in Los Angeles who need help learning how to garden – at schools, in communities, and other locations. Fortunately, if you are interested in the information only, there are other options. You can purchase the [UC Master Gardener Handbook](#) or take one of our 4-week [Grow LA Victory Garden sessions](#) in spring or fall.