

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau Ask Laura Newsletter Column
Authorship for October 2015 Newsletter

Q: What is the UC Master Gardener Program?

A: The UC Master Gardener program was started in 1981 to extend research-based knowledge and information on horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to home gardeners of California. The local program was formed in 1995 to provide home gardening education in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties. Master Gardeners have provided thousands of hours of educational services to local gardeners through the problem-solving “hotline”, public information booths, community and school gardens, and various horticultural workshops and classes.

Q: How do I get a gardening or home pest control question answered?

A: The Master Gardener hotline is located at the UCCE Watsonville office. Master Gardeners are ready to answer your questions Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9 AM to noon. Call 763-8007 or stop by with a sample of your gardening problem or example of the pest. You can also look for local educational events at the Master Gardener website too: <http://mbmg.ucanr.edu/>

Q: How do I become a Master Gardener?

A: Applicants must successfully complete a comprehensive training program on horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices. Class topics include botany, composting, integrated pest management (IPM), soils, water management, entomology, plant pathology, fruit and ornamental tree culture and sustainable landscape practices. UC Master Gardeners commit to volunteer at least 50 hours of volunteer work on approved programs during the first year as a Master Gardener, and then 25 hours per year thereafter. Also, they complete 12 hours of continuing education in horticulture each year. Training occurs every 2 years on even years. The training beginning in January 2016 is full, but you can always put your name on the list for 2018!