

How Do I Become a Lake County Master Gardener Volunteer?

To become a Lake County Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV), one must be a resident of Lake County, apply and be accepted into our program, attend all training classes, and complete the required volunteer and continuing education hours.

How do you know if YOU would make a good Master Gardener Volunteer?

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

Yes to all? Then please keep reading!

Attend an Information Session

The purpose of the information session is to review the goals, policies, and procedures for the Master Gardener Volunteer Program, including the volunteer hours requirement for ongoing certification. Individuals interested in applying to the Lake County Master Gardener Volunteer Program are strongly encouraged to attend one of these meetings. No registration is required.

Complete an Application

Applications are available on this site.

References will be collected by the Lake County Extension.

Interview

Meet with the Lake County MGV Interview Committee for a personal interview. Discuss your primary interests, skills and talents and ask any questions you may have about the Master Gardener Program. Individuals interested in being a part of the next Master Gardener Volunteer class must attend an interview.

Acceptance Notification

Because enrollment in the Master Gardener Program is limited, unfortunately not all applicants will be able to enter the upcoming training session. The applicant will receive notification indicating acceptance or notification that your application will be kept on file.

Course Fee and Background Check

A fee to cover training and materials is due upon acceptance into the program and must be paid prior to the first class. The non-refundable fee is \$250.

Because some Master Gardener programs involve children and other vulnerable populations, an online criminal background check is required to be conducted and processed prior to the first class. Fingerprinting and criminal background check information will be provided upon acceptance into the program. Prior background checks are not accepted by OSU.

Forms to Sign

Each prospective trainee must agree to and sign the Volunteer Standards of Behavior form, as well as the Master Gardener Volunteer Program Policy Statement, the Master Gardener Volunteer Pest Management Information Policy and the Child Abuse Recognition and Reporting forms.

Attend Classes

The next Lake County MGV training is planned for January through March 2022. This will be a hybrid training with remote classes and face to face field trips. Most face-to-face training will be conducted during the day.

Each MGV trainee is expected to attend every class session. The trainee is responsible for initiating provisions to make up any missed sessions. A limit on the number of allowable absences may be made by the County MGV Coordinator.

The training program is to provide a balanced, integrated practical course in plant science. Core topics include:

- Orientation to Extension and an Introduction to the Master Gardener Volunteer Program
- Botany
- Houseplants

- Therapeutic Horticulture
- Soils
- Fruit
- Backyard Wildlife
- Woody Ornamentals
- Herbaceous Ornamentals
- Pollinators
- Entomology
- Plant Propagation
- Vegetables
- Plant Pathology
- Integrated Pest Management
- Herbs
- Lawns

Training centers around the Master Gardener Training Manual and lectures presented by Ohio State University Extension faculty and staff, as well as other experts. Quizzes on the lecture material, as well as a final exam, will be administered.

The focus is on learning basic horticultural skills in order to assist the gardening public. All information and techniques presented in the training program reflect results of the latest research conducted by the Ohio State University and other leading educational institutions.

Complete a Final Exam

An open book or take-home final exam is a test of the trainees' abilities to retrieve information from reference materials. Trainees may work together to research the answers, but the test itself must be completed individually. A minimum grade of 70% is required to pass.

Completion requires reference to the Master Gardener Training Manual, lecture notes, OSU Extension Fact Sheets and Bulletins, and other research-based resources.

Fulfill Your Volunteer Commitment

Upon completion of the training program, a trainee becomes an MGV intern. A total of 50 volunteer hours must be completed during the intern year; ten of those hours may be

continuing education hours. Upon completion of the required training and volunteer hours, the intern becomes a certified Ohio State University Master Gardener Volunteer.

Only unpaid public service in Ohio State University Extension-sponsored activities may be applied toward the volunteer requirements. Other volunteer activities may be counted after receiving prior approval by the Lake County Extension Educator.

Receive the Designation of *Master Gardener Volunteer*

Newly certified Master Gardener Volunteers are recognized at a special dinner. Now "official," new Master Gardener Volunteers can look forward to continuing education, fun and interesting social events, and expanded volunteer opportunities.

Going Forward

Volunteers are encouraged to continue with the program by recertifying on an annual basis. To recertify each year following the intern year, 25 volunteer service hours and ten additional hours of continuing education are required. Volunteer opportunities may vary from week to week but will generally be during regular work hours, although evening and weekend opportunities exist.

Volunteer opportunities abound! Volunteering at approved Master Gardener activities may begin after you have completed training.

For more information...

Please contact the Lake County Master Gardener Volunteers at 440-853-2634 or email us at MGVLakeCounty@gmail.com.