

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT THE 2020 GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER COURSE

William M. Johnson, Ph.D.
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Galveston County Office
Horticulturist & Master Gardener Program Coordinator

Following is some important information about the Texas Master Gardener Course offered through the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office. Please read each item thoroughly.

Q. Who benefits from the Master Gardener program?

A. THE TEXAS MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM IS A PARTNERSHIP AND ITS PURPOSE IS TWOFOLD. First, it is designed to provide an intensive training in the many diverse aspects of horticulture for local residents as a direct benefit to the residents themselves. Secondly, the program is also designed to train participants so they can cooperate with the staff of the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in carrying out educational programs and activities that address horticultural issues of concern to county clientele. Participants must provide 50 hours of volunteer service in the area of horticulture within 9 months after completing the course (i.e., by December 31, 2020).

Q. Where will Master Gardener classes be held?

A. Classes will be conducted at the **Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service which is located at 4102-B Main Street (FM 519) inside Carbide Park in La Marque**. Individuals accepted for enrollment in the course should arrange to attend all class sessions.

Q. When will the 2020 Master Gardener Course be offered?

A. The 2020 Master Gardener Course will consist of 20 class periods and one field trip. Classes will be held beginning Tuesday, February 4, and on each Tuesday and Thursday thereafter through April 9, 2020. All classes are held from 12:00noon to 4:00 p.m. or 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. However, there will be two class periods held from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on dates to be determined. Also, a tour of Mercer Arboretum (located North of Houston), scheduled for Wednesday, March 25, 2020, will also be conducted as part of the training course. **(NOTE: Dates are subject to change.)**

Q. What is the deadline for submitting applications?

A. The deadline for submitting applications to the County Extension Office is **5:00 p.m., Thursday, December 12, 2019**. Course enrollment is limited to 24 participants. We have received numerous requests for application materials on the 2020 Master Gardener Course, therefore, if you plan to apply, it is important that you submit your application as soon as possible.

Q. How are applicants selected for the course?

A. Several factors are considered in the selection of applicants. Obviously, a serious interest in one or several types of horticultural activities including—but not limited to—gardening is required. While interests may include gardening, applicants are not required, however, to be actively engaged in gardening. Master Gardener classes are intended to also reflect the geographical diversity of the county. Therefore, within the limits imposed by the applicant pool, the 2020 Master Gardener class may be composed of participants from Bolivar Island to Friendswood. Applications are also welcome from the southern portion of Harris County (Clear Lake, Webster, etc.) and the eastern portion of Brazoria County

(Alvin, Pearland, etc.). The educational backgrounds of Master Gardener participants will likely be quite diverse based on past Master Gardener class participants. A college education is not required. Remember, we provide the training, but you must have a serious interest in horticulture and the commitment to provide some volunteer effort in return.

Q. How will I be contacted in regard to the status of my application?

A. You will be contacted initially by e-mail or by telephone to schedule an informal interview; therefore, be sure to provide a daytime telephone number (and an evening number, if different) on the application form as well as your e-mail address. You will be contacted either by Dr. William M. Johnson (Galveston County Extension Agent) or by a member of the Master Gardener Program Advisory Committee. Follow-up instructions will also be provided at that time.

Q. What are some of the major topics to be covered?

A. Topics to be covered include the following: Soils & Plant Nutrition; Vegetable Culture; Disease ID & Control; Insect Pest ID & Control; Weed ID & Control; Selection & Use of Pesticides; Proper Fertilization; Integrated Pest Management; Pruning & Training Ornamentals; Landscape Perennials & Annuals; Propagation & Grafting Techniques; and Urban Forestry.

Q. What types of examinations are given?

A. Quizzes are given at the conclusion of each class on the subject matter taught. However, the quizzes are “take home” and “open book.”

Q. Who will teach the course?

A. Dr. William M. Johnson will coordinate course activities and teach a few of the sessions. Several Extension Specialists from College Station will serve as guest lecturers including Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Extension Horticulturist and author of *Perennial Gardens* and *Antique Roses for the South*; Dr. Don Renchie, Associate Professor & Extension Pesticide Specialist; Alan Dreesen, Associate Department Head for Extension Forestry (retired); Dr. Barron Rector, Associate Professor & Extension Range Specialist; Monte Nesbitt, Extension Program Specialist - Fruits & Nut Trees; and Dr. Sam Feagley, Professor & Extension Soil Fertility Specialist (retired).

Q. What are the class requirements?

A. Attendance at all training classes is required. In addition, availability to complete volunteer hours during weekdays (Monday - Friday) during normal office hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) is an important factor. **Participants must also agree to provide assistance in conducting the Semi Annual Plant Sales to be held at Jack Brooks Park.** (NOTE: Participation in this activity counts toward your volunteer service hours requirement.)

Q. What types of volunteer activities qualify toward the 50 hours of volunteer service?

A. As one of the requirements for acceptance into the course, participants must agree to donate 50 hours of volunteer service within the time period of April 10, 2020 and December 31, 2020. All 2020 Master Gardener Course graduates are expected to provide a portion of their volunteer effort toward answering clientele telephone calls to the County Extension Office on gardening questions. Master Gardener volunteers will be provided training and support for answering telephone calls. Master Gardener volunteers can also provide volunteer service in a variety of other ways. The specific type of volunteer service to be provided will depend upon the interest, talents, and period of availability of each participant. Examples of types of volunteer hours include providing assistance to Extension staff in conducting educational programs such as field days, shows, short courses and youth gardening programs; and providing horticulture-related assistance to youth groups and to community improvement projects.

Q. When will participants graduate?

A. A Class Graduation Program for 2020 course participants will be held on Tuesday, June 9, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. on Galveston Island. In addition, Texas Master Gardener Certificates of Completion will be awarded to members of the 2019 Master Gardener Class who have completed all program requirements.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m., Thursday, December 12, 2019.**

Application forms can be picked up at the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service located at 4102-B Main Street (FM 519) inside Carbide Park in La Marque, or will be mailed upon request. Application material will be mailed or emailed to those individuals already on the notification list. These documents are also available on the Galveston County Master Gardeners' website.

REGISTRATION FEE: The registration fee is \$250. The registration fee provides you with a copy of the *Texas Master Gardener Handbook*, a wide variety of Extension fact sheets and other publications, and an engraved Master Gardener name badge. The registration fee also helps to cover class refreshments and speakers' fees and travel expenses. **Registration fee is collected after acceptance into the course, on the first day of class, and can be made in the form of cash, check, or credit card.**

REFERENCE BOOK: *The Texas Master Gardener Handbook* will be provided to each participant and the cost is included in the registration fee. The Handbook is an excellent reference book on a diversity of horticultural topics.



The Texas Master Gardener Program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and is designed to increase the availability of horticultural information and improve the quality of life through horticultural projects in Galveston County.

Website: <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>



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Galveston County AgriLife
Extension Office
4102-B Main Street (FM 519)
La Marque, Texas 77568

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