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## Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Application

Citizens interested in volunteering for the UF/IFAS Extension Florida Master Gardener program must complete this application. Acceptance is contingent on return of this form to your county Extension office for submission and clearance through appropriate screening processes. These processes are in place to help ensure the safety and well-being of all Extension program participants.

### General Information

Last Name  First Name  Initial

Address  e-mail

City  State  Zip Code  Day Phone:

How long have you lived at this address?  
 (if less than five years, attach a sheet listing all previous addresses for the past five years.)  
 Years  Months

List *work* experience during the past five years, with the most recent experiences first. Attach a page if needed.

Employer	Position/Title	City/State	Years
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

List *volunteer* experience during the past five years, with current or most recent experiences first. Identify work with youth and community groups. Attach a page if needed.

Organization/Group	Role/Title	City/State	Years
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

### Personal Interest

Have you applied for the Master Gardener training before?  No  Yes If yes, when?  Where

Please list any training and/or practical experience you have had in gardening, horticulture, farming, or related fields:

How did you learn about the Florida Master Gardener Program?

Why do you want to become a Master Gardener?

List *all* time periods that you can do volunteer work, e.g., every Friday afternoon, first Thursday of each month, etc.

**References** List three references who have knowledge of your qualifications but who are not related to you.

Name	E-mail Address	Phone

Have you ever pled no contest or guilty to a criminal offense or have you been convicted and/or had adjudication withheld for a criminal offense within the past seven years?

No  Yes

If yes, explain:

Have you ever pled no contest or guilty to a criminal offense or have you been convicted and/or had adjudication withheld for a criminal offense involving a minor (including a deferred imposition of sentence)?

No  Yes

If yes, explain:

*Note: A criminal record will not necessarily disqualify an applicant. A criminal record will be considered as it relates to specific responsibilities of the volunteer role.*

**Computer Skills** Please indicate computer skills you are proficient in:

- Internet search    Send e-mail with attachments    Send e-mail with photos attached  
 Publisher or newsletter software    Other: MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.(list below)

I wish to become a Florida Master Gardener and would like to be accepted into the training program beginning Sept. 5, 2017. I understand that if accepted and I successfully complete the course of instruction, I agree to donate at least 75 hours of public service in the 12 months following the training through the Florida Master Gardener Program. I have also read, understood, and agreed to abide by the policies regarding the Florida Master Gardener Program as outlined in the Annual Volunteer Agreement.

I certify that the above information is correct. I authorize the University of Florida IFAS Extension Service to request information for conducting a background check and to contact references. I authorize a check of my driver's license record as needed. I understand that misrepresentation or omission of the facts requested is just cause for non-appointment as an Extension program volunteer. My signature and information below are necessary to process application.

Name  Date   
Date of Birth  Driver's License Number & State

Thank you for your application. Return the application to the UF/IFAS Extension Alachua County Office, 2800 NE 39th Avenue, Gainesville, 32609 at your earliest convenience (deadline 6/30/17). You may click the 'submit' button to send electronically or mail/drop off/fax (352)334-0122. If you have any questions please call Denise DeBusk or Peggy Vanyo at (352)955-2402.

### **The History of the Master Gardener Program**

The rapid urban growth in many areas of the United States coupled with increased interest in the environment and home gardening have prompted ever-increasing numbers of homeowner questions to the County Extension Service agents. Many of these questions are seasonal in nature and are relatively easily answered assuming that one has horticultural training.

In 1972, an innovative Extension Agent in the State of Washington reasoned that well-trained volunteers could respond to many of the everyday homeowner questions freeing him and his colleagues for more technical and difficult problems. Volunteers, such as Extension Homemakers and 4-H Leaders had always been a part of the Extension Service but never in the area of homeowner horticulture. The Extension agent selected, trained, and certified volunteers as Master Gardeners. They soon succeeded in meeting his desired objectives - in fact they exceeded his expectations. This led to the genesis of the Master Gardener volunteer program.

Since that time, the Master Gardener Program has grown and is now in all 50 states. Florida's began in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now active in most of Florida's 67 counties. The Florida Master Gardener Program is sponsored by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) of which the Cooperative Extension is a part.

Just what is the Cooperative Extension Service? For a more complete understanding of this unique organization, we must go back to 1862 when the U.S. Congress passed the Morrill Act which established colleges in each state to be financed through grants of land from the Federal government. They became known as "land grant colleges", a name which persists today. These colleges would emphasize teaching practical subjects such as agriculture and home economics. The 1887 Hatch Act provided for experimental stations at Land Grant Colleges to conduct research for those colleges' agricultural problems.

Then in 1914 the Smith-Lever Act created the extension Service as a part of these colleges as a means of disseminating the practical knowledge gained through agricultural research. The University of Florida at Gainesville is Florida's land grant college; The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is that part of the university which has the responsibility for the Cooperative Extension Service.

The term "cooperative" refers to the method by which Extension services are funded. In Florida, three cooperating tax sources provide funds: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State through legislative appropriations, and the counties through appropriations by county governments. The word "cooperative" also implies a sharing of information generated through sound research programs at the federal and state levels. The term "extension" defines this organization's purpose -- to extend the information generated at the state and federal level to people at the county level in the form of a "service". The Cooperative Extension Service is an informal education organization which provides three main areas: agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences.

The motto and goal of the Cooperative Extension Service is "Helping People Help Themselves". Thus, you can see how well the volunteer Master Gardener concept fits into the ultimate objectives and goals of the Extension Service.

Last Name  First Name  Initial

PLEASE READ THE "**HISTORY OF THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM**" AND "**FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER ANNUAL VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**" AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

**Sprouting Kit Questionnaire #1**

MAKE ONE SELECTION FOR EACH QUESTION Please click on the button to indicate your answer and return with application.

1. The Master Gardener Program is sponsored by:
  - The University of South Florida
  - The U.S. Department of Agriculture
  - IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Science - University of Florida)
  - Florida Department of Plant Industry
2. The Cooperative Extension Service was created by a legislative act called:
  - The Morrill Act (1862)
  - The Smith-Lever Act (1914)
  - The Hatch Act (1887)
3. Master Gardeners are required to volunteer how many hours to public service?
  - 25 hours each year
  - 60 hours each year
  - 75 hours the first year and 35 hours in future years in order to remain active
  - 60 hours the first year and 25 hours in future years in order to remain active
4. Master Gardeners are required to attain how many additional hours of horticultural training in order to recertify for another year?
  - 3 hours
  - 6 hours
  - 10 hours
  - 15 hours
5. The main purpose of the Master Gardener Program is to increase or extend the service and output of information offered by the Cooperative Extension Service.
  - True
  - False
6. The Cooperative Extension Service provides information to the community primarily in the program(s) and area(s) of:
  - Home Economics
  - Youth
  - Agriculture
  - All of the above
7. Master Gardeners make recommendations to homeowners based on:
  - Public sources such as books, magazines and newspaper articles
  - Personal, practical experience
  - Information generated by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension
  - All of the above
8. The title Master Gardener is to be used only in association with the Florida Master Gardener Program and is not to be used for commercial purposes.
  - True
  - False
9. Master Gardeners are expected to extend information to people involved in commercial agricultural/horticultural endeavors.
  - True
  - False

## Sprouting Kit Questionnaire #2

There are many reasons why individuals want to be part of this effort and program. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Beside each comment below, enter the number which best describes how important it is to you.

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Important
4. Somewhat important
5. Of minor importance
6. Not a reason or factor

Becoming a Master Gardener is important to me because:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  | I will have the opportunity to receive useful training.   |
|  | I will become a part of the University of Florida.  |
|  | I will have the opportunity to share my knowledge with other gardeners.                           |
|  | I will gain practical experience that can help me get a job.                                      |
|  | I will be able to provide a service to other people in my community and/or neighborhood.          |
|  | I can get a tax credit for my volunteer work.   |
|  | I will receive free instruction and materials.  |
|  | I will be able to increase my knowledge in the area of gardening.                                 |
|  | I will gain a great deal of personal satisfaction. I will be able to creatively use my free time. |
|  | I will gain a great deal of personal satisfaction.  |
|  | I will be recognized by people in my community.   |
|  | I will be able to gain new skills as a gardener.  |
|  | I will be certified by the University of Florida, Cooperative Extension Service.                  |
|  | Other reasons: Please use space below.  |

Continue to the **Florida Master Gardener Annual Volunteer Agreement** on following pages

## **Florida Master Gardener Annual Volunteer Agreement**

Within the state of Florida, most counties maintain active Master Gardener programs. This being the case, a need exists for the establishment of standards for all Florida Master Gardeners to represent their county in a manner consistent with exemplary citizenship and leadership.

To become a certified Florida Master Gardener, one is required to attend the prescribed hours of instruction and pass an examination administered by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. This certification is restrictive in nature and is valid only for one year and when the individual is participating in the Florida Master Gardener Program. New certifications will be issued each year only to those individuals who make a commitment for participation in the coming year. All Florida Master Gardener Volunteers must agree to be screened as outlined by the program's screening guidelines and as deemed appropriate by the County Master Gardener Coordinator. All volunteers working with youth must successfully complete the online Youth Protection Training - YCS800 annually.

As a certified Florida Master Gardener, you will be eligible to attend educational programs such as the Florida Master Gardener Continued Training Conference offered by the University of Florida, as well as local educational programs and field trips provided by the County Master Gardener Coordinator. Master Gardeners are also provided with the most recent information available on environmental horticulture issues and related topics by the County Master Gardener Coordinator and State Extension Specialists.

An inactive Master Gardener is one who is unable to commit to an additional **35** hours annually at present, but would like the opportunity to possibly recertify him/herself in the future. The following policies apply:

- 1) An inactive Master Gardener is one who has completed their original commitment of **75** hours of volunteer service in the first twelve months following the completion of their training, but is not able to continue to volunteer the minimum of **35** hours per year.
- 2) The inactive Master Gardener must apply to the County Master Gardener Coordinator for recertification. If accepted, he or she must then attend or have attended **10** hours of acceptable horticultural training as approved by the coordinator to re-certify.
- 3) The inactive Master Gardener must take and pass a comprehensive examination provided by the county Master Gardener Coordinator.
- 4) An inactive Master Gardener may re-certify at any time as long as the above criteria are met and upon receiving approval from the county Master Gardener Coordinator.
- 5) Inactive Master Gardeners are ineligible to apply for awards of excellence, receive mailings, attend monthly meetings, or register for continued training opportunities.

### **Master Gardener Code of Conduct**

Along with active participation, Master Gardeners are expected to uphold a professional demeanor. The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service functions without regard to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act. All Volunteers must follow all University of Florida rules regulations and policies, abide by the Florida Master Gardener Program identity standards and all federal, state and local laws. The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service does not tolerate:

- ❖ Possession or use of alcohol or drugs in the workplace;
- ❖ Abuse or theft of public or personal property;
- ❖ Sexual harassment or misconduct;
- ❖ Verbal abuse or failure to cooperate with other Master Gardeners, staff members, and/or the public;
- ❖ Possession or use of weapons or fireworks in the workplace;
- ❖ Defamation of the organization;
- ❖ Creating an implied or outright University or Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business;
- ❖ Misrepresentation of sources of information;
- ❖ Consistently and knowingly giving out incorrect information;
- ❖ Use of state and/or county equipment without authorization.

Master Gardener Certification may become void when an individual ceases active participation in the program or dismissal may result from violations described above. Illegal activities will be referred to law enforcement. Those individuals not continuing in the program are prohibited from representing themselves as Florida Master Gardeners. Such prohibited representations constitute a breach of the terms of the UF/IFAS Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Florida Master Gardener program are valuable and may rightly be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment. Once employed, and while serving as a paid employee, or if self-employed, Master Gardeners shall not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Florida Master Gardener at the place of business. Experienced Florida Master Gardeners may be invited to speak before various community groups. Master Gardeners are prohibited from accepting payment, monetary or other for speaking appearances.

The title "Florida Master Gardener" is to be used only and exclusively in the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service Master Gardener Program in which trained and certified Florida Master Gardeners answer gardening questions and educate local residents. Master Gardeners are expected to use the title only when doing unpaid volunteer educational work on the behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. Florida Master Gardeners shall not use the Florida Master Gardener title in any advertisements or activities not related to University of Florida/IFAS Master Gardener activities. The Florida Master Gardener program represents a University of Florida Extension Service public education program; Master Gardeners are prohibited from endorsing commercial products or implying UF/IFAS endorses any product or place of business.

In making recommendations, which include the use of chemicals (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardeners **MUST FOLLOW PUBLISHED** University of Florida/IFAS Extension recommendations. Cultural problems that are not specially covered by University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service recommendations may be handled by suggesting treatments, which an experienced Master Gardener considers appropriate. If you are making a recommendation based on personal experience, state clearly that you are speaking for yourself and not the UF/IFAS Extension Service. Questions concerning any commercial horticultural enterprise (i.e., vegetable production, fruit crops production, landscape maintenance of golf course, recreational park, school grounds or commercial nursery production) are to be referred to the local Horticulture Extension Agent.

I have read and fully understand the above agreement regarding my services as a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer and agree to abide by the terms of this agreement, including the Master Gardener Code of Conduct, UF rules and regulations, and all federal, state and local laws. I further agree to perform at least **75** hours of service in my first year and at least **35** hours in each subsequent year to the Florida Master Gardener Program in return for the training provided by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. I also agree to attend a minimum of 10 hours of continued training as deemed appropriate by the county Master Gardener coordinator each year I participate in the program. I enter into this agreement knowingly and voluntarily.

**Statement of Appointment: Service from 11/30/17 to 12/1/18. (Appointments are renewed on an annual basis)**

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Signature of Applicant

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Date

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Dr. Denise DeBusk

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Date