

BECOME A TEXAS MASTER GARDENER

WHO ARE TEXAS MASTER GARDENERS?

Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers and gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and to help others, and able to communicate with diverse groups of people.

What sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In exchange for their training, individuals who become Master Gardeners volunteer their time, working through their cooperative Extension office, to provide horticultural-related information to their communities.

IS THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM FOR ME?

To help you decide if you should apply to be a Master Gardener, ask yourself these questions:

- Do I want to learn more about the culture and maintenance of many types of plants?
- Am I eager to participate in a practical and intense training program?
- Do I look forward to sharing my knowledge with people in my community?
- Do I have enough time to attend training and to complete the volunteer service?

If you are a Fannin County resident and answered yes to these questions, this program could be for you.

TRAINING

If accepted into the Master Gardener program, you will attend an 8-week Master Gardener training course. Classes are taught by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialists, staff, and local experts. These classes begin on February 28, 2024, and go through April 17. They are held at the Grayson County Courthouse in Sherman and surrounding locations. There is a fee of \$225 to cover the cost of the handbook and classes.

The Fannin County program offers a minimum of 50 hours of instruction following the Texas A&M AgriLife EarthKind practices of landscape management covering soil and plant nutrition, insect, disease, and weed management; trees; vegetable and herb gardening, lawn care, plant selection, composting, and water conservation. We also offer field trips that support the classroom training.

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

In exchange for training, Fannin County participants are asked to volunteer time to their Extension program. Fifty hours of volunteer service, within one year following the training, is required to become a Texas Master Gardener.

The type of service done by Master Gardeners varies according to community needs and the abilities and interests of the Master Gardeners. Our current volunteer projects include our annual Garden, Lawn and Home Expo that is held the second weekend in April, hosting half-day programs on various topics for the community several times during the year. We have installed a rainwater harvesting system to use for educational

programs. The system will also be used to help irrigate a proposed demonstration garden in the area behind the Extension office. We are in the process of preparing the site for the various educational areas that will be added which will include a small orchard and vineyard, greenhouses, walking path, classroom space, and nature areas to name a few. Master Gardeners are working in conjunction with Extension Health and Wellness, 4H and Master Naturalists to provide this valuable educational facility for the use of Fannin County residents.

CERTIFICATION

Participants become certified Texas Master Gardeners one year after they have completed the training course. During that year they must fulfill their volunteer commitment. In order to retain the certification, master gardeners must volunteer at least 12 hours and attend 6 hours of recertification education. A background check is required as part of the training and recertification process.

You may pick up an application for Fannin County Master Gardeners training at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office at 2505 N Center St., Bonham, or visit our website at txmg.org/fannin. For more information, call 903-583-7453 or email fanninmastergardeners@gmail.com.

NOTE: The Master Gardener program is an educational and volunteer program offered through the Cooperative Extension Service of the Texas A&M University system. Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity program provider. Individuals with a disability needing an accommodation should contact Texas A&M AgriLife Extension at least one week prior to the event.