

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT THE 2024 GALVESTON COUNTY MASTER GARDENER COURSE

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The Texas Master Gardener Training course begins January 30 to April 9, 2024. 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. The program is an intensive training for local residents in many diverse aspects of horticulture with a direct benefit to said residents. The program trains participants to cooperate with Galveston County Extension staff 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 12 months after completing the in-class instruction course (i.e., completing required 50 hours by April 9, 2025).

Q. Where will Texas Master Gardener classes be held?

A. Classes are conducted 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.** Individuals accepted for enrollment in the course should arrange to attend all class sessions.

Q. When will the 2024 Texas Master Gardener Course be offered?

A. The 2024 Texas Master Gardener Training course will consist of 22 class periods and 1 field trip. Classes will be held beginning Tuesday, January 30, 2024 through Tuesday, April 9, 2024, twice a week through this schedule from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. each Tuesday and Thursday morning. There may be additional classes on dates to be determined. We will take a tour of Moody Gardens Tropical Rainforest on a Wednesday during the schedule as part of the training course. **(NOTE: Dates are subject to change.)**

Q. What is the deadline for submitting applications?

A. The deadline for completing the application to the County Extension Office is **5:00 p.m., Monday, December 18, 2023** for applicant consideration. Course enrollment is limited to 20 participants. We have received numerous requests for program application to the 2024 Texas 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: a serious interest in several types of horticultural activities is required, as well as service to our community. While interests may include gardening, applicants are not required to be actively engaged in gardening. Texas Master Gardener classes reflect the geographical diversity of the county. The 2024 Texas 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) and the eastern portion of Brazoria County (Alvin,

Pearland). We anticipate the educational backgrounds of Texas Master Gardener participants will likely be quite diverse, and based on past Texas 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; 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 Stephen Brueggerhoff (Galveston County Horticulture Extension Agent) or by a member of the chapter Texas Master Gardener Program Advisory Committee. Follow-up instructions are provided at that time.

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

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

Q. What types of examinations are given?

A. A pre/post program test is distributed first and last day of class. Additional review questions are given at the conclusion of each class on the subject matter taught, then discussed the next morning session.

Q. Who will teach the course?

A. Mr. Stephen Brueggerhoff will coordinate course activities and teach a few of the sessions. Several Extension Specialists from College Station will serve as guest lecturers via live video streaming and include Dr. Tim Hartmann, Assistant Professor and Regional Extension Fruit Specialist; Dr. Jake Mowrer, Extension Associate Professor for TAMU Department of Soil and Crop Sciences; Monte Nesbitt, Extension Program Specialist - Fruits and Nut Trees; Dr. Juan Anciso, Vegetable Specialist; and Dr. Kimberley Cochran, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist for TAMU Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology.

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) and office hours (8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.) is an important factor. **Participants must also agree to provide assistance in conducting periodic program and plant sale events.** (NOTE: Participation in this activity counts toward your volunteer service hour 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 period **after the last class day** of April 9, 2024 through April 9, 2025. All 2024 Texas Master Gardener Course graduates are expected to provide a portion of their volunteer effort toward rotations at our demonstration garden, training on answering garden questions to our Master Gardener Hotline service, assistance during scheduled public events, support at plant sale events and support at education seminars. After directed rotations, Texas Master Gardener volunteers can also

provide volunteer service in a variety of other ways. The specific type of volunteer service provided will depend upon the interest, talents, and availability of each participant. Examples of types of volunteer hours include providing assistance to Extension staff in conducting educational programs such as field days, horticulture 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. While it is possible that an individual can complete required volunteer hours by end of 2024, on average your 2024 Class Graduation Program is scheduled at our annual members meeting on Galveston Island June 2025. In addition, Texas Master Gardener milestone certificates and recognitions will be awarded to long-standing Galveston County Master Gardener members.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Application deadline to the County Extension Office must be received by **5:00 p.m., Monday, December 18, 2023** for applicant consideration. **All applications will be facilitated through an online form.** Contact administrative assistant Jill Jessen, jill.jessen@galvestoncountytexas.gov, 281-309-5065 if you need assistance in completing your application.

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 Texas Master Gardener name badge. The registration fee also helps to cover class refreshments, speaker fees and travel expenses. **Registration fee is collected after acceptance into the course and before the first day of class, and through online registration in the form of a credit card.** Contact administrative assistant Jill Jessen regarding payment via check. Note all payments must be received prior to the first day of class.

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: Galveston County Master Gardeners - <https://txmg.org/galveston>

Galveston County AgriLife Extension - <https://galveston.agrilife.org>

Office: Galveston County AgriLife Extension, 4102-B Main Street, La Marque, TX 77568; 281-534-3413

Program contact: Jill Jessen, Administrative Assistant – Horticulture, jill.jessen@galvestoncountytexas.gov, 281-309-5065