



Orange County Master Gardeners Association Program Application



Dear Future Master Gardener Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in the upcoming Orange County Master Gardener training class. To let you know a little about what Master Gardeners are, we are a volunteer development program of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Master Gardener volunteers receive in-depth horticultural training. In return, they provide volunteer service through AgriLife Extension by delivering horticultural education to their communities. Program participants should be able to communicate with the public by telephone, personal contact, as a speaker or through written correspondence. Master Gardener volunteers serve as "horticultural docents" supervised by AgriLife Extension personnel who assign, review and facilitate volunteer work.

Step 1: To gain the title of **Master Gardener Intern**, a Trainee

- receives a minimum of fifty (50) hours of instruction

The volunteer aspect of the Master Gardener program allows individuals to dedicate their time and talents to educate and enhance their local community utilizing the science and art of horticulture.

Step 2: **Master Gardener Interns:**

- give 50 hours of volunteer service in Master Gardener and/or AgriLife Extension initiated projects in Orange County within one year of their training date.
- are certified as a Master Gardener when all requirements are met

Step 3: **Re-certification** of a Master Gardener is an annual process that requires:

- 12 volunteer service hours
- 6 hours of continuing education credits

Training classes meet each Thursday evening from 6PM - 8/8:30PM. The upcoming class will be a combination of online and face-to-face class that will maximize flexibility for our volunteers. There will be some Saturday courses and/or field trips. The course fee is \$150, payable by the start of class. Classes will run Sept. 3 thru Nov. 19, Dec. 3 thru Dec 17.

You are more than welcome to contact me if you have any questions at sheribethard@yahoo.com or 409 673-5057.

Sheri Bethard
President



**Texas Master Gardener
Orange County, Texas
Application**



The Master Gardener training program is for twelve (12) months. Upon completion of all requirements, participants are certified as Texas Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners then re-certify annually through volunteer service and continuing education.

Applicant's Name: (please print) _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____

Email: _____

Professional/Personal experience:

Volunteer and/or community service: List the organization and what you do/did (school/youth group, church, hospital, civic groups).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Why do you want to become a volunteer in AgriLife Extension's Master Gardener program?
(Useful training, increase skills/knowledge, give back to the community, personal accomplishment, creative use of time, etc.)

How did you learn about the Master Gardener Volunteer Program?

What is your current employment status?

Employed Retired

If you are still employed, how and when will you be able to volunteer?

What is your gardening/horticulture and related fields experience and/or training? Include experience or knowledge of vegetables, herbs, roses, composting, propagation, turf, trees, fruit, nuts, perennials, etc. What is your gardening story? When did you start gardening, have you worked professionally in horticulture or a related field, what is your favorite thing about gardening?

Statements of Agreement:

I desire to be a Master Gardener volunteer in Orange County. I understand that Master Gardeners are trained volunteers - community educators, who share their horticultural knowledge and gardening experience with their fellow citizens. If accepted in the Master Gardener training program, to complete certification:

- I understand the Master Gardener program is a program sponsored by the Orange County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
- I agree to a background check - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service volunteer requirement.
- I will complete the classroom training course, including a final presentation.
- I will volunteer a minimum of 50 hours in Master Garden and/or AgriLife Extension initiated programs.
- I understand to re-certify annually, a minimum of 12 volunteer hours and 6 hours of continuing education is required in Extension sanctioned programs
- I understand as a Certified Texas Master Gardener, I represent - Orange County, the Orange County office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, and the Texas A&M System and will adhere to their policies and guidelines.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in any AgriLife Extension activity are encouraged to contact the Burlinson County Extension Office to discuss specific needs.

Educational programs of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Volunteer Opportunities

Please rate your choices for spending your volunteer time from one (1) to three (3) with 1 being your preferred and 3 being not preferred. Two (2) you will do but it is not your preferred choice.

_____ 1. HOT-LINE MASTER GARDENER. Will receive calls on the Master Gardener Hot-Line in the Extension office weekly to answer questions from the public. Some contact could be walk-ins and other thru email.

_____ 2. GARDEN PROGRAM SPEAKER. Prepare and present programs on a wide variety of horticultural topics to groups such as garden clubs, civic clubs, etc.

_____ 3. GREENHOUSE TEAM VOLUNTEER. Work with the Greenhouse Manager being a part of the planting, care and maintenance of the Master Gardener greenhouse.

_____ 4. RESOURCE PERSON. Research topics and provide information to the writers for articles to be written in local newspapers and monthly local AgriLife newsletter. Help research questions coming into the Hot-Line.

_____ 5. HORTICULTURAL NEWS WRITER. Write articles for the local newspapers and the monthly local AgriLife newsletter along with public relations articles involving the Master Gardeners.

_____ 6. INTERNET/WEB TECHIE. Work with website Master Gardener to keep the Orange County website current along with posting new articles to the Facebook page.

_____ 7. EXHIBIT PROJECT COORDINATOR. Develop and coordinate exhibits that are horticulture related to be presented at fairs, farmers markets, etc. (Art in the Park, Eco-Fest at Shangri La) along with working during the event.

_____ 8. EXHIBIT PROJECT VOLUNTEER. Work with the Exhibit Project Coordinator to plan exhibits for presentation at fairs, farmers markets, etc. and work during the event.

_____ 9. EDUCATION. Help organize local chapter education events and workshops for the local population

_____ 10. OFFICER. Would be willing to serve as an officer in the organization after becoming certified.

Volunteer Application Form

And consent for criminal background history check authorization/waiver

To be completed by Extension program volunteers (ENP, BLT, etc.) and Master Volunteers only.

Please print:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. APPLICANT'S FULL, LEGAL NAME | 2. COUNTY |
| 3. ADDRESS | 4. CITY ZIP |
| 5. FIRST 5 DIGITS OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER | 6. DATE OF BIRTH |
| 7. DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER (optional) | 8. GENDER (circle one) Male / Female |
| 9. Are you of Hispanic ethnicity? Yes / No
RACE (circle one) White / Black / Asian / American Indian
Alaskan Native / Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander | 10. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AREA |

Previously Screened

11. I verify that I have been previously screened including a criminal background check and PASSED. Yes No
- If yes, by who? _____ When (Year): _____
- For what purpose? _____
- Did you pass? If not, what restrictions were imposed? _____

Please sign at the bottom of the form.

12. I hereby authorize VERIFYI and/or its Service Provider and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service to request and receive any and all background information about or concerning me, including, but not limited to, my Criminal History, Credit History including a consumer report under the Fair Credit Reporting Act, 15 U.S.C 1681, Driving Record, Employment History, Military Background, Civil Listings, Educational Background, Professional License from any Individual, Corporation, Partnership, Law Enforcement Agency, and other entities including my Present and Past Employers. I authorize the Texas AgriLife Extension Service or any of its components to make reference checks relating to my volunteer service. I understand that this information will be used to determine my eligibility as a volunteer/employee with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. This request is for criminal history only. No credit report will be requested or obtained.

The criminal history, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data, as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications and delinquent conduct committed as a juvenile. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment/volunteer position with this organization. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the criminal history check may be repeated at any time. I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the criminal history as received by client/agency and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I also understand that the criminal history could contain information presumed to be expunged.

I further release and discharge VERIFYI and their Service Provider and all of their Subsidiaries, Affiliates, Officers, Employees, Contract Personnel, or Associates, from any and all claims and liability arising out of any request for information or records pursuant to this authorization and/or procurement of an investigative consumer report and understand that it may contain information about my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living, whichever are applicable.

I understand that I have the right to make written request within a reasonable period of time to VERIFYI for additional information concerning the nature and scope of the investigation. I acknowledge that I have voluntarily provided the above information for employment/volunteer purposes, and I have carefully read and understand this authorization.

13. Date _____ 14. Applicant's Signature _____

Volunteer Application Form Instructions

1. Applicant's Printed Name – Complete with first name, middle name and last name.
2. County – Complete with the county name in which you are applying to be a volunteer.
- 3/4. Address – Complete with your current mailing address, city and zip code.
5. Social Security Number – Complete with at least the **first five** digits of the social security number. The social security number is an individual descriptor that enables the system to complete a national criminal search of 47 jurisdictions.
6. Date of Birth – Complete with the month, day and year of birth.
7. Driver's License Number – Complete with current driver's license number and state. Although optional, this helps affirm your identity during a background check.
8. Gender – Complete by circling one of the options.
9. Race – Complete the race and ethnicity section by circling the answers that apply. This field is optional; however, it is very important in confirming accurate identity.
10. Volunteer Program Area – Complete with the program area you are volunteering for (e.g., Better Living for Texans, Expanded Nutrition Program, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Master Wellness Volunteer).
**4-H volunteers should complete the Texas 4-H Adult Volunteer Application (4-H 2-1.056)*
11. Previously Screened – Texas A&AgriLife Extension Service will accept prior screenings conducted within the past three years from other entities. The approved list of prior screenings either as an employee or volunteer include: school districts, churches, youth groups/associations (Little League, sports associations, etc.), youth agencies/organizations (Big Brother/Big Sister, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, after school/extended care programs), law enforcement (county, state or federal/prison system), Texas Youth Commission, Department of Defense – Child and Youth Services, Department of Defense – Family Programs, concealed handgun license; and/or licensed childcare workers.
** The minimum requirement is a criminal background check conducted through DPS or a National Criminal Search entity.**
*** Other sources may be considered based on documentation provided with screening criteria and specifics.***
**** Documentation is required for screenings from other entities. This could include a letter of acceptance from the employer or volunteer group, or a letter written from the screening entity to the Texas AgriLife Extension Service stating you have been screened and tested.*
12. Authorization Statement – State agencies screening volunteers are required by legislation to use the Volunteer Center of North Texas. The Volunteer Center contracts with VeriFYI. VeriFYI is a background verification software system that accesses multi-jurisdiction checks utilizing one of the largest private-sector criminal history databases in the nation (180 million records). All information received is held in confidence and not shared at the county level. Criminal record results are shredded when a volunteer's status is determined.
13. Date Completed
14. Applicant's Signature