



## **Bastrop County Master Gardener Program**

### **Who are Texas Master Gardeners?**

Master Gardeners are members of our local community who take an active interest in their own lawns as well as other gardening projects in the area. We are people who love to learn! The goal of the Master Gardener Program is to share our knowledge through many ways with many diverse groups. What sets a Master Gardener apart from other home gardeners is our special training in horticulture. In exchange for this training we contribute back to the community as volunteers. Our activities and programs are coordinated through our local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office.

**We welcome you! We hope you will join Bastrop County Master Gardeners!**

### **Our Course Objective:**

Bastrop County Master Gardeners will complete at least 50 hours of classroom training to gain a basic understand of the topics covered in the *Texas Master Gardener Handbook*. The topics will include plant growth and development, propagation, soils analysis and improvement, water management, plant nutrition, Earth-Kind landscaping, plant health management, fruit, berry and nut production, vegetable and herb gardening, landscape design, plus lawn and turf care. These are all presented by well-trained individuals, usually professionals in the field.

**Your Commitment:**

- 50 hours of classroom and field training; completion of all tests; presentation of your own landscape project; and completing 50 hours of volunteer time in Bastrop County Master Gardener projects to be completed within one year of your last class.
- In all volunteer programs representing the Master Gardener Program, we use only research-based information as recommended by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

**Is the Bastrop County Master Gardener Program for me?**

- Do you want to learn about the culture and maintenance of a variety of plants?
- Would you enjoy an active training program?
- Can you meet the time requirements for training and volunteering?
- Will you represent the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Texas A&M System ?
- Would you enjoy sharing information about our program in our community?

**Certification:**

Participants become certified Master Gardeners after they have completed the training hours, the tests, and fulfill their volunteer commitment. Each year after, a Master Gardener must complete a minimum of 20 volunteer hours and 6 continuing education hours to remain active. Annual Bastrop County Master Gardener dues are approximately \$25. The title “Texas Master Gardener” can be used only when engaged in Texas A & M AgriLife Extension-sponsored activities.

**Please consider all these factors before completing the attached application.**



## Bastrop County Master Gardeners Class Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) - \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you want to be a Master Gardener? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your previous/current work/experience in gardening and volunteering: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If currently employed, where? \_\_\_\_\_

If retired, from where? \_\_\_\_\_

**Areas of Interest/Skills: Check areas where you have experience and interests:**

\_\_\_ Greenhouse/Propagation

\_\_\_ Water Conservation/Xeriscape

\_\_\_ Home Food Production

\_\_\_ Organic Gardening

\_\_\_ Insects/Plant Diseases

\_\_\_ Gardening with elderly/disabled

\_\_\_ Gardening with Youth

\_\_\_ Community outreach

**Do you agree to the following? If so, initial each line.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Pay tuition of \$235.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Attend a minimum of 50 hours of classroom and field

\_\_\_\_\_ Undergo a personal background check as required by Texas A & M AgriLife

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete all open-book tests

\_\_\_\_\_ Complete 50 hours of volunteer service within one year of the final classroom

\_\_\_\_\_ Report volunteer and classroom hours as directed

After carefully considering all the information above—requirements and commitments--we welcome your application. Please sign below that you acknowledge all the above and would like to become a member of our Bastrop County Master Gardeners Program.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please return your completed application along with a check for \$235 payable to BCMGA. Drop it off or mail to.

**Bastrop County Master Gardener Association**

**901 Pecan Street**

**Bastrop, TX 78602**

---

# Volunteer Application Form

And consent for criminal background history check authorization/waiver

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

4-H volunteers must register online via 4-H CONNECT or by completing the 4-H Adult Volunteer Application (4-H 2-I.056)

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 ( <i>circle one</i> ) Male / Female |
| 9. Are you of Hispanic ethnicity? Yes / No<br>RACE ( <i>circle one</i> ) White / Black / Asian / American Indian<br>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? \_\_\_\_\_
- If you have been screened and passed a criminal background check through an Extension-approved entity, a letter/proof must be submitted.

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, 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.
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_



## Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement



We appreciate your commitment to the Texas Master Gardener program. Your satisfaction and progress in this volunteer position is important to us. Please read the following expectations and indicate your willingness to cooperate by signing the end of this form. This form must be signed and filed with the County Extension office, and will need to be updated annually. Volunteers not adhering to all items in this agreement may forfeit their certification as a Master Gardener volunteer.

I understand that I am trained by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service in the field of horticulture and I am expected to extend research based on information to the public on behalf of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In exchange for the minimum of 50 hours of Master Gardener Training provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, I will:

- Commit to a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service to the Horticultural programming efforts in Bastrop County within one year to become a certified Master Gardener.
- I understand that to maintain active status as a Master Gardener Volunteer, I must volunteer a minimum of 20 hours annually after my intern year and gain a minimum of 6 continuing education hours annually.
- Provide a record of this service as directed by the Master Gardener Program Coordinator.
- Comply with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Background Check policy. The background check is to be renewed every three years.

When acting as a Texas Master Gardener volunteer I agree to:

- Consistently exhibit a positive professional manner toward and about Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Master Gardener Program, the Master Gardener Coordinator, other Master Gardener volunteers and clients.
- Carry out and discharge all duties in a responsible and timely manner.
- Avoid conflict of interests
  - Not use my Master Gardener status to promote any commercial activity or private business.
  - Volunteer's efforts for their place of employment will not be considered as volunteer service to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
- Recommend and use (when functioning as a Master Gardener) only Texas A&M AgriLife approved information for any public, herbicides, fertilizer or cultural practices.
- Provide my own transportation and pay my own expenses incurred as part of official volunteer activities. (Expenses may be tax deductible with proper documentation.) Some County Master Gardener Associations may assist volunteers with expenses to certain types of events. Check with your local Master Gardener Program Coordinator for more information on specific association policies and procedures.
- Act in accordance with the highest standard of ethics:
  - Not physically, verbally or sexually harass/abuse anyone
  - Refrain from illegal or unsafe behavior
  - Dress appropriately and not use harsh language

In regard to Master Gardener Coordinators, Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Recognize the responsibilities of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service staff/Master Gardener Coordinator in settling program priorities, standards and direction. Specific projects for the performance of the volunteer work are determined locally and should reflect local needs.
- Refer all commercial horticulture inquiries to the Master Gardener Coordinator or other Extension staff.

In regard to Master Gardener Colleagues, Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Welcome volunteers from all backgrounds
- Respect and safeguard the individual rights, competencies, safety, and property

In regard to Clients, Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Provide quality service to the public without regard to socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

I further understand that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will:

- Provide training, supervision, and direction to Master Gardeners through the local county Extension office
- Communicate expectations and responsibilities of the program to volunteers.
- Match volunteer skills and interests with volunteer opportunities within the county.
- Support Master Gardener volunteers and the local Master Gardener Association.
- Provide continuing education opportunities.
- Provide access to Extension horticulture reference materials and reasonable access to Extension professionals.
- Uphold and cultivate a trustful relationship between staff and volunteers.
- Reassign and/or terminate, if necessary any volunteer who does not uphold Texas Master Gardener policies, procedures, guidelines, and/or values.

I understand that, as a volunteer, I will not be acting as a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employee and will not receive pay or employee benefits. I also understand that I am not covered by workers' compensation laws in connection with my volunteer affiliation. I understand and agree that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and I both have the right to end my volunteer relationship with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at any time, for any reason, and without notice.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Printed Name; \_\_\_\_\_

Information taken from: Purdue, Rutgers, Georgia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, California, & Texas (Montgomery Co.) Master Gardener Programs.