

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT THE 2019 ELLIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION (ECMGA) TRAINING CLASS

Shirley Campbell Program Coordinator

The following is some important information about the Texas Master Gardener Course offered through the Ellis 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 AND ITS PURPOSE IS TWOFOLD. First, it is designed to provide intensive training in the many diverse aspects of horticulture for local residents as a direct benefit to the residents themselves. Secondly, the program is also designed to train participants so they can cooperate with the staff of Ellis County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in carrying out educational programs and activities that address horticultural issues of concern to county clientele. Participants must provide 75 hours of volunteer service in Ellis County in the area of horticulture within 9 months after completing the course (i.e., by November 30, 2019).

Q. Where will Master Gardener classes be held?

A. Classes will be conducted at the **First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin Avenue, Waxahachie, 75165.** Individuals accepted for enrollment in the course are expected to attend all class sessions.

Q. When will the 2019 Master Gardener Course be offered?

A. The 2019 Master Gardener Course will consist of eight class periods and one field trip. Classes will be held on each Tuesday and Thursday, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., beginning Tuesday, February 5th ending Thursday, February 28th.

Q. What is the deadline for submitting applications?

A. The deadline for submitting applications to the County Extension Office is **4:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 9, 2019.** We hold only one course per year and course enrollment is limited. We have received numerous requests for application materials on the 2019 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. Obviously, a serious interest in one or several types of horticultural activities including—but not limited to—gardening is required. While interests may include gardening, applicants are not required, however, to be actively engaged in gardening. Master Gardener classes are intended to also reflect the geographical diversity of the county. Therefore, within the limits imposed by the applicant pool 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; therefore, 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. Followup instructions will also be provided at that time. At this time a background form will be completed - at no cost to the applicant.

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

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

Q. What types of examinations are given?

A. Quizzes are given at the beginning and conclusion of the course to make sure the subject matter is being understood by all participants.

Q. Who will teach the course?

A. Extension Specialists from Texas A&M College Station will serve as guest lecturers as well as certified Master Gardener Specialists.

Q. What are the class requirements?

A. Attendance at all training classes is required. In addition, availability to complete volunteer hours during weekdays and weekends is an important factor. Participants must also agree to provide assistance in conducting the annual Ellis County Lawn and Garden Expo to be held in Waxahachie, on March 30 with set-up March 29. Downtown Waxahachie and Midlothian Farmers Markets are excellent opportunities for volunteer service hours. (NOTE: Participation in these activities counts toward your volunteer service hours requirement.)

Q. What types of volunteer activities qualify toward the 75 hours of volunteer service?

A. As one of the requirements for acceptance into the course, participants must agree to donate 75 hours of volunteer service within the time period of March 1, 2019 and November 30, 2019. All 2019 Master Gardener Course graduates are expected to provide a portion of their volunteer effort toward answering clientele telephone calls to the County Extension Office on gardening questions. Master Gardener volunteers will be provided training and support for answering telephone calls. Master Gardener volunteers can also provide volunteer service in a variety of other ways. The specific type of volunteer service to be provided will depend upon the interest, talents, and period of availability of each participant. Examples of types of volunteer hours include providing assistance to Extension staff in conducting educational programs such as field days, shows, short courses and youth gardening programs; and providing horticulture-related assistance to youth groups and to community improvement projects. Volunteer efforts on scheduled garden workdays will count towards their hours requirement.

Q. When will participants graduate?

A. Texas Master Gardener Certificates of Completion will be awarded to members of the 2019 Master Gardener Class upon completion of all program requirements at the end of 2019.

Q. What is Certification and Recertification?

A. Participants become certified Master Gardeners after they complete the Master Gardener training course, pass an examination, **and** volunteer 75 hours by November 30, 2019. In order to **retain** the Texas Master Gardener title, individuals are required each year to participate in a minimum of six (6) hours of recertification training (CEU's) and provide an additional 12 hours of volunteer service through the Ellis County Extension office.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Applications must be received by **4:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 9, 2019**. Application forms can be downloaded from website, Facebook, picked up at the Ellis County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service located at 701 I-35E S, Waxahachie, or will be mailed upon request by calling the office (972) 825-5175.

REGISTRATION FEE: The registration fee is \$225. **Registration fee is collected after acceptance into the course, on the first day of class and must be made in the form of cash or check.** 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 Master Gardener name badge. The registration fee also helps to cover class lunches, snacks, speakers' fees and travel expenses. During class a soil fertility analysis [Form D-494B, Routine Analysis (Test #1)] for a soil site of your choosing will be available to students at current soil testing costs, not included in course fee.

REFERENCE BOOK: *The Texas Master Gardener Handbook* will be provided to each participant and the cost is included in the registration fee. The Handbook is an excellent reference book on a diversity of horticultural topics.

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 Ellis County.

Website: www.ecmga.com

Ellis County AgriLife Extension Office
701 I-35E S
Waxahachie, TX 75165

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.