

WSU Snohomish County Extension Master Gardener Program

Applying for 2022 Volunteer Master Gardener Training

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY:

Master Gardener Trainees are WSU volunteers and are thereby subject to the Governor's proclamation 21-14.1 "COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement" as well as all other COVID protocols required by the state, WSU, Snohomish County, and any other applicable local authority. All such COVID-19 protocols will be strictly enforced. The below information and instructions include current COVID-19 protocols governing the Master Gardener program, which, of course, could change by the start of Training. We will update applicants as appropriate of any such changes.

The purpose of the Washington State University (WSU) Snohomish County Extension Volunteer Master Gardener (MG) Program is to train volunteers to be effective community educators in gardening and environmental stewardship by providing information to the Citizens of Snohomish County generated from research at WSU and other research universities.

Successful MGs demonstrate a strong volunteer ethic and a deep sense of commitment, coupled with a willingness to learn and share what they learn.

MG Training involves approximately 60 hours of college-level instruction using a combination of virtual Zoom classes and in-person hands-on exercises held on Thursdays, from January 27 through April 28 with two Saturday classes on April 9 & 23. Individual class times may vary, but will never start before 7:30 a.m. and will always end by 12:30 p.m.

The in-person hands-on classes may be inside or outside and/or under an overhang or awning and will require that all participants comply with current COVID-19 protocols such as wearing an approved facial covering (mask) over the nose and mouth. They may be held at one or more of these locations: McCollum Park, South Everett; Jennings Park, Marysville; Legion Park, North Everett; Willis Tucker Park, South of Snohomish; or the Evergreen Fairgrounds, Monroe.

Attendance is required for all Zoom and in-person training classes because there is no way to effectively make up the missed training. For copyright and other reasons, the Zoom classes cannot be recorded. Homework averages 3-4 hours a week and includes electronic access to the 640-page *Master Gardener Manual*, which is the primary text for MG Training. Homework also includes presentations, recorded lectures, and exercises, and is conducted online through WSU's Canvas platform.

Training requires computer and internet access, a Zoom account, and a working email account checked daily. While we will attempt to provide technical assistance, it is the Trainee's responsibility to make sure they have access to the necessary technology. For technical minimum requirements please visit <https://tinyurl.com/2a6b7sb2>.

Training focuses on familiarization with and learning how to use resources, to include the internet, to research, educate, mentor, and answer horticulture questions for the public, usually when working with other MGs, in an enjoyable, collaborative environment. All quizzes and exams are taken online at home using your own computer and are multiple choice, open book, and graded pass/fail. One Veteran Master Gardener Mentor is assigned to 3-5 Trainees and will work with those Trainees throughout their first year in the MG Program.

At the time of acceptance into the MG Program for Training, applicants must be at least 18 years of age, a resident of Snohomish County, have passed the required national background screen, and have agreed to

comply with all applicable Covid protocols (see above), which currently includes providing visual proof of being fully vaccinated for COVID-19 at the time of acceptance.

In addition to the \$375 tuition fee, applicants must also commit to volunteer a minimum of 40 hours working on approved Snohomish County Master Gardener projects during 2022. After successfully completing their first year, they will become Certified Master Gardeners and may continue in the Master Gardener program by agreeing to volunteer 35 hours annually.

If your application is accepted, we will contact you via e-mail to schedule the required Orientation during which you will learn more about the MG Program, the commitment you are making to become a Volunteer Master Gardener Community Educator, and to answer any questions you may have. At the time of your Orientation, you will be emailed additional information about training and the program along with all the required administrative forms and instructions. Orientations will be via Zoom and are currently scheduled for either 10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 18, or 10 a.m., Thursday, Dec. 2. You need only attend one. Please allow two hours but the time needed may vary depending upon the number attending and the questions asked.

Once you complete the Orientation and have submitted all the required forms, you will be emailed instructions on how to complete the national background screen, which is conducted online by an independent contractor. As part of the background screening process, you will need to provide your Social Security number directly to them. WSU will have no access to the information you provide. Complete instructions will be sent to you after the Orientation. The screen will cost \$14 but we will pay for it unless you choose to cover the cost as a donation to the MG program.

Once you have successfully completed the background screening process, you will have two weeks to confirm your place in the 2022 MG Training Class by paying your tuition fees. Payment instructions will be sent by email. Do NOT pay tuition fees until you receive the instructions. The fees are broken out this way: \$300 payable by check and \$75 payable by major credit card when signing up for the WSU Online Training component.

Class size is limited to 30 Trainees this year because of COVID-19 protocols, so we encourage anyone interested to apply as soon as possible as the class historically fills early. We cannot confirm your place in the Class of 2022 until your application has been reviewed and accepted; you have attended the required orientation session; you have completed and submitted all required administrative forms; you have successfully completed the national background screen; have complied with current COVID-19 protocols; and have paid your tuition fees in full.

To apply, simply fill out the online application form at <https://tinyurl.com/56xwz7fx> paying particular attention to the essay questions and to the required references. Then save it to your computer and email a copy it to howard.voland@wsu.edu. Do not send payment with your application. We will not accept paper or FAX copies.

All communication will be done via e-mail so please make sure your e-mail address is correct and legible. Incomplete and/or illegible applications will be discarded without further action, so please write clearly, proof carefully, and answer all questions completely, especially the essay question and the references.

Please note that we do not have permanent office space at this time both because of COVID-19 protocols and because our former office at McCollum Park has been permanently closed. We expect to open new office space in Willis Tucker Park early next year.

For questions, please contact MG Coordinator Howard Volland by email only at howard.voland@wsu.edu.