



Master Gardener Program

**Yakima County
Master Gardener Program**

Dear prospective Master Gardener,

Thank you for your interest in applying to become a volunteer in the WSU Yakima County Extension Master Gardener Program. While this program offers gardeners opportunities to gain personal knowledge in a variety of different gardening subjects, our primary focus is to develop community educators. You will become a part of the Yakima County Master Gardeners who have a very diverse background of gardening expertise and interests. As a result, you will be learning from one another while making lifelong friendships.

A downloadable application is included, hold off paying the \$100 application fee.

In October, after we have received your application, you will be invited to an informal **"Meet and greet" session** with Master Gardener veterans. You have a choice of the dates and times, all will be held at the Extension office located at 2403 S. 18th St. Suite 100 Union Gap, WA 98903. Each session is about 1 hour in length.

At the session you will be given a WSU Pesticide agreement, a Volunteer Position Description to sign, a Sterling Background check information and you will be provided with information on how to register and pay for the WSU online training course (approximately \$75.00) by credit card before the January class start date.

We ask that you read over this fact sheet so that you are aware of the opportunities and obligations; hopefully, it will help to answer most of your questions. If you have additional questions, please jot them down and ask them during the session. This session will help you determine if becoming a WSU Master Gardener volunteer is a good fit for you at this time. We will notify you if you are selected and if you chose to accept - your application fee will be cashed at the first-class session.

MG Program overview: If you do decide to become a WSU Master Gardener you will be part of a world-class gardening program that has been in existence since 1973. We provide professional, unbiased, research-based home gardening and horticulture information to the public. To prepare volunteers for this role, we train committed gardeners in basic botany, integrated pest management, soil science, plant identification, pest, and disease diagnosis and so much more through a **WSU online course**. You must have a computer to access the Internet, have an email account and a high-speed Internet is highly recommended. About 2 hours per week needs to be devoted to the online study.

Yakima County Program Details: Applicants accepted into the MG training program will be contacted by their mentor(s) before class who will assist in the educational process and be available to answer any questions. You will then attend a mandatory Canvas Online Luncheon Orientation the 2nd week of January, before formal classes begin the following week. During this session you will learn how to access and utilize

the WSU online training course. You will be given an Orientation Handbook to read, and a temporary name badge that you need to wear each week to class and at any of our events. We will then meet for formal classes every Wednesday afternoon from 12:00-2:15 pm starting the 3rd week of January at the Red Barn in the Ahtanum Youth Park. At this point your title is trainee. Classes will continue for 16 weeks until the last week in April. During the first class you will be given a more detailed overview of the MG program, a lecture schedule will be provided with topics for our formal class speakers each week, and your picture will be taken for the directory. You will need to sign the attendance sheet each week; we suggest that no more than two class sessions may be missed. Each week you will need to come prepared by having read the assigned chapter(s) and take the open book quiz(zes) on the assigned chapter(s). You must have an 80% average on all the open-book quizzes and an 80% grade attained on the open-book final exam. Once you have successfully completed the coursework you will be referred to as an Intern.

In addition to class and online training all interns are required to complete 40 hours of volunteer service before the December 31st deadline. In those hours you will need to commit at least 9 of those hours working with a veteran in the Diagnostic Clinic, and after that you can volunteer for the Farmers Market or the State Fair helping to answer gardening related questions from the public. You are not expected to know everything there is to know about gardening. You will be trained on how to access the many tools and sound resources WSU provides to find the answer to a community member questions. Please note although MG emphasizes natural control of pests and diseases, you will also be required to provide the public with information about pesticides and chemicals that have been approved by WSU. An additional 9 hours will be volunteering in the Greenhouse learning plant propagation; 9 hours will be in the two Demonstration Gardens learning planting techniques, caring for plants, and landscape design. And 1 hour answering a clinic question by using science related resources. You can choose to give your response in a 5-minute talk during class OR write a 300-word article answering your question. You may choose to volunteer the rest of your hours in any of our many other teams, hopefully several in which you are passionate. You also need to record your hours online each month using the WSU GivePulse website. The following year in February, an award ceremony is held where, IF all requirements are completed, you will receive a Certificate with a title of Master Gardener, permanent name badge and receive a \$50 refund. If the requirements are not met, we do offer a 2-year plan.

All subsequent years as a Veteran, there is no charge, you will fill out a re-application form to stay an active member, will need to attend 10 hours of continuing education and donate 25 hours of voluntary service while 'following your passion.

It is a great organization, with a wonderful group of people - it is our hope that you chose to become a part of our "gardening family".

For more information: visit our webpage at <http://tinyurl.com/yakimamg>, email at gardener@co.yakima.wa.us or call our Diagnostic clinic at 509-574-1604. Thank you.

Claudia Steen, MS

Program Coordinator