

August 30, 2017

Dear Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program (VCE MG). VCE MGs serve as volunteer educators and assist the Loudoun County Extension office in their mission of delivering a variety of educational programming to county residents. As Extension MGs (EMGs) our educational programming focus for residents is on safe, effective and sustainable landscape management practices. Our VCE MG mission is to provide unbiased research-based horticultural information to residents and is delivered under the auspices of Virginia Tech and Virginia Cooperative Extension.

The training period to attain certification as a VCE MG is divided into two phases. The first phase is comprised of approximately 60 hours of classroom learning and is designed to provide a thorough understanding of all areas in horticulture and includes topics such as botany, soils, plant disease, turf grasses and pruning. Classes are taught by experienced industry professionals, advanced trained VCE educators and professors.

Upon successful completion of the classroom phase, you become an Intern. The internship period runs through December 31st and incorporates 75 hours of volunteering. It is designed to provide practical hands-on learning under the guidance of experienced VCE MGs. The 75 hours are broken down into specific increments with approved projects to include:

Help Desk - Plant diagnostic services are provided for residents who call, email or walk-in. ***Help Desk hours Monday–Friday 9 am -12 noon. 24 hours of internship required.***

Garden Clinics – Plant diagnostic services and educational information that are provided at various sites in the county. ***Clinics operate on Saturdays.***

Healthy Virginia Lawns – Homeowner visits, upon request, to assess lawn health and further educate the homeowner on proper maintenance to avoid unnecessary runoff or use of fertilizers.

Demonstration Garden at Ida Lee - A public garden space maintained by EMGs for hands-on application of topics learned in class and further serves as an outdoor classroom and lecture area for the VCE MGs, as well as a resource for residents to witness sustainable landscape methods in practice. ***Demo Garden work hours are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 am-12 noon. 24 hours of internship required.***

Other projects – Could include assisting speakers with presentations, writing articles of interest, children's education programming, community events and unit support tasks and projects. ***Times vary. 27 hours of internship required.***

Many interns accrue far more than the minimum 75 hours required and become an integral part of the unit taking on key unit support tasks and leadership positions. All hours are an opportunity to serve the community, increase your horticultural knowledge and enjoy a shared passion among unit members.

After successful completion of the class training and internship through December, a January graduation bestows the title of **Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener** to the Intern.

Please see the next page for important class information, dates, deadlines and fee information for the 2018 training class.

Invent the Future

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, genetic information, marital, family, or veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



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All interested applicants must complete and sign an EMG Volunteer Application. This application can be found on the Loudoun County Master Gardener website at www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org or can be obtained by visiting the Loudoun County Cooperative Extension Office located at 30 Catoclin Circle SE, Suite B, Leesburg. (Wells Fargo Bank building). Space is limited so please submit applications promptly. **Applications will be considered in order of receipt with Loudoun County residents filling slots first**, followed by outside county residents.

The classroom portion of the training is held on **Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9am to 12:30pm** at the Loudoun County Extension Office (will be 750 Miller Dr., Leesburg, in January). In addition, several classes are held offsite and may continue into the afternoon hours. Also, several, optional, "Lunch N Learns" will be held at 12:30pm, where you will have an opportunity to ask questions on pertinent topics or learn additional material relevant to local projects.

Tuition is charged upon acceptance in the program and is currently **\$235**. This fee covers the course textbook, "The Virginia Master Gardener Handbook", as well as other training materials and includes a one-year membership to the Virginia Master Gardeners Association (VMGA).

Important Dates to Note:

September 28, 2017 – 7pm. An Open House/Informational Meeting for VCE MG program applicants to meet the Training Team and ask questions concerning the program. This meeting is held at the Loudoun County Extension Office at the Catoclin address noted above. **Applicants will be asked to schedule their interviews at this time.**

October 16, 2017 – Application deadline for 2018 training class.

Late October/Early November 2017 – Interviews for applicants who have submitted completed applications.

Mid December 2017 – All applicants will be notified of their acceptance status for the class and tuition will be due at this time. Make checks payable to the Loudoun County Master Gardener Association (LCMGA) and drop off or mail to the Loudoun County Extension Office, address as noted above.

January 25 thru April 10, 2018 – Classes will be held during this time. *Please note that class cancellations for weather are based upon Loudoun County Public Schools. There are not classes during Loudoun Spring Break.*

Thank you for your interest in the VCE MG volunteer educator program. If you have further questions, please email LCMGtraining@gmail.com or call the Extension Office at 703-777-0373.

Sincerely,



Jim Hilleary, Unit Director
Extension Agent
Agriculture & Natural Resources