



Virginia Cooperative Extension
County of Loudoun
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July 10, 2020

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 assisting Loudoun County Extension in their mission to deliver a variety of educational programs. As Extension MGs (EMGs), our educational programming focus is on safe, effective and sustainable landscape management practices to help conserve our natural resources. Our VCE MG mission is to provide unbiased, research-based horticultural information to the community, 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, including topics such as botany, soils, plant disease, turf grasses and water quality. Classes are taught by experienced industry professionals, advanced trained VCE educators and professors.

The classroom portion of the training is **Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9am to 12:30pm** at the VCE Loudoun Office. Please note for 2021 we have a virtual classroom option to use zoom if you are uncomfortable attending in-person. The recorded sessions are for evening classroom attendees. Several classes are offsite and may continue into the afternoon hours. In addition, four optional "Lunch N Learns" are at 12:30pm, where you will have an opportunity to ask questions on pertinent topics or learn additional material relevant to local projects.

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 (note this will be different for evening class attendees, see website for specifics):

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 and 9 hours can count toward Help Desk 24 hours of internship.**

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

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 age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.



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. **1 site visit is required in internship, counts toward the “Other Projects”.**

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 graduation bestows the title of **Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener**.

All interested applicants shall 1) complete and sign an EMG Volunteer Application, 2) secure two personal references, and 3) complete the skills questionnaire. All three forms can be found on the Loudoun County Master Gardener website at www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org under *Become an Extension Master Gardener*, or can be obtained by visiting the VCE Loudoun Office located at 750 Miller Dr., SE, Suite F-3, Leesburg, 20175. All three forms should be submitted together as a package. Phone and in-person/zoom interviews commence in October after all paperwork is submitted. Class space is limited so please submit paperwork promptly as **applications will be considered in order of receipt**. Note: Loudoun County residents have priority.

Tuition is charged upon acceptance in the program and is currently still to be determined. This fee covers the course textbook, “*The Virginia Master Gardener Handbook*”, as well as other training materials and includes a one-year membership in the state association, Virginia Master Gardener Association (VMGA).

Important Dates to Note:

September 24, 2020 – 7pm. Informational Meeting for VCE MG program applicants to meet the Training Team and ask questions concerning the program. ***This meeting will be virtual and done through zoom. You must RSVP (bbarbara@vt.edu) to get the access link.***

October 23, 2020 – Application package deadline for 2021 training class.

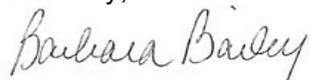
Late October/Early November 2020 – Applicant interviews.

Mid-December 2020 – Applicants will be notified if accepted 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 26 thru April 13, 2021 – Classes held. *There are no classes during Loudoun County 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,



Barbara Bailey
Community Engagement Coordinator
Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County