



Virginia Cooperative Extension
County of Loudoun
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July 25, 2021

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 VCE MGs, 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 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** For 2022 we will extend the virtual classroom using zoom for real-time day classes, and recorded sessions for evening classes. Several classes/labs 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 a VCE MG 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 a.m. - 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 24 hours required for evening class students, 9 hours for daytime class students.**

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 a.m.- noon. 24 hours of internship required for daytime class students.**

Other Project Areas – Can include assisting speakers with presentations, water/tree 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.**

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".**

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.



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 the online EMG Volunteer Application, 2) secure two personal references, 3) interview, and 4) pass a background screening. Phone and/or in-person/zoom interviews commence in October after application and references are submitted. **Applications will be considered in order of receipt.** Note: Loudoun County residents have priority.

Tuition is charged after acceptance and upon registration in the program and is currently still to be determined. This fee covers an electronic copy of 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 23, 2021, 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 fill out the google form:***

<https://forms.gle/RYn3cEzANvAyiwhs8> to get the access link one week prior to event.

October 23, 2021 – Application deadline for 2022 training class.

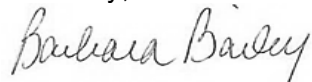
Late October/Early November 2021 – Applicant interviews.

Mid-December 2021 – Applicants will be notified if accepted. Tuition will be collected through an online system called Destiny One when registration is active.

January 25 thru April xx (TBD), 2022 – 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 me at 703-771-5836.

Sincerely,



Barbara Bailey
Community Engagement Coordinator
Virginia Cooperative Extension, Loudoun County