



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
301 Manny Martinez Dr. 2nd Floor
El Paso, TX 79905
Telephone: 915-771-2354

June 1, 2016

Dear Master Gardener Applicant:

Attached please find an application for the fall 2016 El Paso County Master Gardener program, a very successful **volunteer training program** that has been used in all fifty states and even some foreign countries. Although the program began in the state of Washington in 1972, Texas was not far behind, and El Paso, which has been training Master Gardeners since 1982, has the second oldest program in the state.

The Master Gardener program offers 12 weeks of intensive horticulture training on such topics as vegetable gardening, trees and pruning, xeriscaping, soils, fertilizers, plant pests and more. After successful completion of the course, **participants are required to volunteer time**, sharing with the community what they have learned through a number of educational related projects.

For this year's class, we will be selecting approximately 25 participants. After your application has been received, you will be called for an interview with the County Extension faculty. Although it is helpful for participants to have some basic knowledge about gardening and other plant-related topics, **the selection process will be based more on willingness to become an active volunteer** in an elite corps of El Paso County gardeners. If you are selected for the program, you will be given an intensive horticulture training that will serve as the foundation for the much broader knowledge that you will gain after having served as a volunteer (everyone who completes that program remarks that it is during the volunteer service of the program that they actually begin to retain the knowledge gained in the course).

After successful completion of the course, you will be asked to perform **at least 60 hours** of community service on approved projects during the following year. These volunteer hours will be served under the direction of the County Extension Agent and will involve answering questions from the public, working with other Master Gardeners in our research and demonstration gardens, designing and delivering gardening presentations, and various other fun projects throughout the year. Although only 60 hours of volunteer service are required to complete the program and become a certified Master Gardener, it is hoped that you will volunteer many more hours in your community. In order to retain your certification as a Master Gardener, you must perform volunteer hours and go through continuing education classes every year. Many opportunities exist for advance training courses, which are only taught to certify Master Gardeners.

The fee for the course is \$195.00 (with a \$30.00 refund after completing the volunteer requirements). Each participant will be provided the Texas Master Gardener Handbook (a comprehensive horticultural text) as well as various other handouts on topics covered in each class. Orientation is set to begin September 1st with a four hour session. Classes will begin on September 8 and continue through November 17, 2016. Classes will meet every Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and will be held at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office Ascarate Annex, 301 Manny Martinez Dr. 79905 and will be taught by professionals from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, as well as other regional horticulture experts.

Please do not send any money with your application. The course fee will be due at the time of registration, after an orientation to the program and its requirements (September 1st).

Thank you for showing interest in this in-depth gardening course and master volunteer opportunity. The **deadline for the application is August 19, 2016** so please return the following two application pages and your essay as soon as possible to drodriguez@ag.tamu.edu or to the address below. I wish you the best in your gardening ventures. Please don't hesitate to email or call me if you have any questions about the program.

Sincerely,

Denise S. Rodriguez, M.S.
County Extension Agent-Horticulture
301 Manny Martinez Dr. 2nd Floor
El Paso, TX 79905
Phone: 915-771-2354
Email: drodriguez@ag.tamu.edu

Please rate the following reasons for your participation in the Master Gardener course on a scale of **0 (not important at all) to 5 (most important)**.

TO BECOME A MASTER GARDENER IS IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE:

		<i>Not</i>	⇒	⇒	⇒	<i>Most</i>
		<i>Important</i>				<i>Important</i>
I will be able to increase my knowledge of gardening	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will be able to gain new skills as a gardener	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will have the opportunity to receive horticultural training	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will be able to provide a service to other people in my community and/or neighborhood	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will have the opportunity to share my knowledge with other gardeners	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will gain a great deal of personal satisfaction	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will be able to creatively use my free time	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will be certified by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will gain gardening experience that can help me get a job	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will become part of an elite corps of horticultural volunteers	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will be able to meet and socialize with other gardeners	0	1	2	3	4	5
I will be recognized by people in my community	0	1	2	3	4	5

Please return your completed application to:

Email: drodriguez@ag.tamu.edu

Postal mail: Denise S. Rodriguez
Master Gardener Program
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
301 Manny Martinez Dr. 2nd Floor
El Paso, TX 79905

Application deadline is August 19, 2016

Application for the 2016 Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Master Gardener Program

I wish to be accepted into the Master Gardener training program and to become a Master Gardener in El Paso County. I understand that in exchange for the training made possible through the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, I will be required to volunteer at least 60 hours of my time to various El Paso County Master Gardener community projects during the year following my training. I understand that only after successful completion of the entire program, including classes, final exam and volunteer hours, will I become a certified Master Gardener.

Name (print) _____

Signature _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip Code _____

Day-time phone _____ Evening phone _____

Please complete the following questions:

I am available for the weekday morning and afternoon classes YES NO

How did you learn about the Master Gardener program? _____

Years of gardening experience _____

Type of gardening experience and related training _____

Areas of specialization or hobbies (for example, flowers, vegetables, ornamentals, houseplants, organic gardening, etc.)

Experience working with the community (for example, schools, youth, churches, senior citizens, hospitals, civic groups, etc)

Group affiliations (for example, garden clubs, community gardens, plant societies, etc)

Are you presently employed, and if so, where? _____

Please use an attached sheet and explain (500 words or less) why you want to become a Master Gardener.