



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
9521 Socorro Rd., Suite A-2, Box 2, El Paso, TX 79927 Telephone: 915-860-2515

May 23, 2014

Dear Master Gardener Applicant:

Attached please find an application for the fall 2014 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 \$165.00 (\$220.00 for applicants working in a commercial industry related in any way to the field of horticulture). 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. The course is set to begin August 28<sup>th</sup> with a half-day orientation. Classes will begin on September 4<sup>th</sup> and continue through November 13, 2014. Classes will meet every Thursday from 8:30 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and will be held at the El Paso Garden Center, 3105 Grant Ave. (on the west-side of Memorial Park, near Piedras), and will be taught by professionals from the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, as well as other local 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 (August 28<sup>th</sup>).

Thank you for showing interest in this in-depth gardening course and master volunteer opportunity. The **deadline for application is August 8, 2014** so please return the following two application pages and your essay as soon as possible (keep this letter for your reference). 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  
9521 Socorro Road, A2/Box 2  
El Paso, TX 79927  
Phone: 915-860-2515  
Email: [drodriguez@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:drodriguez@ag.tamu.edu)

## **Application for the 2014 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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 explain (500 words or less) why you want to become a Master Gardener.**

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:

Not  $\Leftrightarrow$   $\Leftrightarrow$   $\Leftrightarrow$  Most  
**Important** **Important**

0	1	2	3	4	5
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I will be able to increase my knowledge of gardening					
I will be able to gain new skills as a gardener					
I will have the opportunity to receive horticultural training					
I will be able to provide a service to other people in my community and/or neighborhood					
I will have the opportunity to share my knowledge with other gardeners					
I will gain a great deal of personal satisfaction					
I will be able to creatively use my free time					
I will be certified by the Texas AgriLife Extension Service					
I will gain gardening experience that can help me get a job					
I will become part of an elite corps of horticultural volunteers					
I will be able to meet and socialize with other gardeners					
I will be recognized by people in my community					

Please return your completed application to:

Email: [drodriguez@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:drodriguez@ag.tamu.edu)

Postal mail: Denise S. Rodriguez  
Master Gardener Program  
Texas AgriLife Extension  
9521 Socorro Rd., Suite A2, Box 2  
El Paso, TX 79927

**Application deadline is August 8 2014**