The Michigan Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a horticulture education and volunteer leader training program offered by Michigan State University Extension (MSUE). It provides home gardening information to Michigan citizens through a network of trained volunteers. An interest in plants, a personal commitment to volunteerism and an enthusiasm for sharing knowledge with others are the only prerequisites.

Participants attend classes in their area learning basic horticulture principles and environmentally sound gardening practices. They then provide volunteer leadership and service to their community through a variety of horticulture-related activities. Information on this program can be found at www.mg.msue.edu

History

The program originated at Washington State University in 1972. It has grown to over 600 programs in forty-six states, the District of Columbia and several Canadian provinces. MSU Extension created and held its first Master Gardener Volunteer Program in 1978. Today, more than 23,000 residents from more than 72 Michigan counties have earned and enjoy the “Master Gardener” designation.

Mission

The Master Gardener Volunteer Program serves two major and equal functions:
* To provide instruction in basic horticulture science to motivated and active gardeners,
* To provide MSU Extension with trained gardeners who will educate others in the community through horticulture-related volunteer activities.

Program Description

The educational component of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program provides an overview of major horticulture subjects in a classroom setting. Master Gardener trainees attend a series of classes, covering a minimum of 14 topics and work from a 1,000 page Master Gardener Manual. Topics covered in the 14 basic class sessions are:

- Introduction to MSU Extension
- Plant Science
- Soils for Plant Growth
- Annuals & Perennials
- Woody Ornamentals
- Lawns
- Vegetables
- Small Fruits
- Tree Fruits
- Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Indoor Plants
- Household & Nuisance Pests
- Water Quality
- Diagnostics

Volunteer Commitment

The volunteer commitment of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program takes the Master Gardener trainee out into the community to educate others through a variety of horticulture-related activities. These activities may range from designing an elementary school garden with children, to creating a horticulture therapy program at a senior center, or helping a neighborhood beautification team with site and plan selection.

Upon completion of the educational component and 40 hours of volunteer service, the Master Gardener trainee will receive his or her Master Gardener certification.

Class Information & Schedule

In Fall 2016, the goal is to have two class locations connected via distance technology. Instructors will rotate between the two locations.

REGISTRATION & COST: $300 (includes 1 introduction class and 13 training classes) – Payment is by check or by credit card. Your seat in the class is not reserved until payment is received in full.

KENT COUNTY
Class Dates: Fall 2016 – dates TBD
Timeframe: 4 to 8 p.m.
Class Location: Kent MSU Extension, 775 Ball Avenue N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49503

SECOND LOCATION
Dates: Fall 2016 – dates TBD
Timeframe: 4 to 8 p.m.
Class Location: TBD

For more details or information on the West Michigan Master Gardener Program and/or to be placed on the 2016 waiting list, contact Adriane Land at landadri@anr.msu.edu or (616) 632-7880.