



Leon County

615 E. Paul Russell Rd.  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
850-606-5200

Thank you for your interest in the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program!

Attached is information that will be useful to you in understanding the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program, as well as the role and responsibilities of a Master Gardener Volunteer. It will also provide insight into the Florida Cooperative Extension Service, how it functions, and how Master Gardener Volunteers operate as part of the Extension Service.

The Leon County Master Gardener Volunteer training course consists of 13 sessions and begins each September, meeting once a week through December. In order to be considered for this year's program, please:

- Complete the enclosed application
- Complete the attached questionnaire
- Submit all three items by July 1 to:

Mark Tancig  
Horticulture Agent  
UF/IFAS Extension Leon County  
615 Paul Russell Road  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Prior to final selection for training, all applicants will have an informal interview. This gives you the opportunity to visit the Leon County Extension Office (if you've not yet done so) and learn more about the training course and opportunities for serving as a Master Gardener Volunteer. These interviews take only about 15-20 minutes and will be scheduled with you after the application period closes July 1. The course fee of \$175 is payable after acceptance into the program.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [tancig00@ufl.edu](mailto:tancig00@ufl.edu).

Sincerely,

Mark Tancig  
Commercial/Residential Horticulture Agent/Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator

# Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Application

Residents interested in volunteering for the UF/IFAS Extension Florida Master Gardener Volunteer program must complete this application. Acceptance is contingent on return of this form to your county Extension office, an interview and clearance through appropriate screening processes. These processes are in place to help ensure the safety and well-being of all Extension program participants.

**General Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Male  Female

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived at this address? \_\_\_\_\_ years

(If less than five years, attach a sheet listing all previous addresses for the past five years.)

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

List *work* experience for the past 5 years, with most recent experiences first.

Employer	Position/Title	City/State	Years

List *volunteer* experience, with current or most recent experiences first. Identify work with youth and community groups. Add a page if needed.

Organization/Group	Role/Title	City/State	Years

**Personal Interest**

Have you applied for/completed the Master Gardener Volunteer training before?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If yes, when? \_\_\_\_\_ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any training and/or practical experience you have had in gardening, horticulture, farming, or related fields:

What, if any, gardening groups do you belong to, e.g., garden clubs, horticultural societies, etc.?

How did you learn about the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program?

Why do you want to become a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer?

Do you have an interest in a particular aspect of service as a Master Gardener Volunteer (answering horticultural questions, teaching groups, playing in the dirt, teaching youth, etc.)?

Will you be able to attend monthly demonstration garden workdays, which are held on the third Monday of each month from 9:00 to 12:00 a.m.?

Are you able to attend all class trainings? List any that you know you would need to be absent.

What days/time of the day are you available to volunteer?

Do you use a computer and communicate via email? Most of our communication is via email and we keep track of service hours online.

**References**

List three references who have knowledge of your character but who are not related to you.

Name	Mailing Address	Phone

Have you ever pled no contest or guilty to a criminal offense or have you been convicted and/or had adjudication withheld for a criminal offense within the past seven years?

Yes\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain:

Have you ever pled no contest or guilty to a criminal offense or have you been convicted and/or had adjudication withheld for a criminal offense involving a minor (including a deferred imposition of sentence?)

Yes\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If yes, please explain:

*Note: A criminal record will not necessarily disqualify an applicant. A criminal record will be considered as it relates to specific responsibilities of the volunteer role.*

**I wish to become a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer and would like to be accepted into the training program in Leon County. I understand that if accepted and I successfully complete the course of instruction, I agree to donate at least 75 hours of public service in the 12 months following the training through the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program.**

**I certify that the above information is correct. I authorize the University of Florida IFAS Extension Service to request information for conducting a background check and to contact references. I authorize a check of my driver's license record as needed. I understand that misrepresentation or omission of the facts requested is just cause for non-acceptance as an Extension program volunteer. My signature and information below are necessary to process this application.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
Driver's License Number (State)

## Questionnaire

Name \_\_\_\_\_

There are many reasons why individuals want to be part of this program. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions and **submit it with your application**. Beside each comment below, write the number, which best describes how important it is to you.

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Important
4. Somewhat important
5. Of minor importance
6. Not a reason or factor

Becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer is important to me because:

- A. I will have the opportunity to give back to my community.
- B. I will become a part of the University of Florida.
- C. I will have the opportunity to share my knowledge with other gardeners.
- D. I will gain practical experience that can help me in a job or business.
- E. I will be able to provide a service to other people in my community.
- F. I will gain a great deal of personal satisfaction.
- G. I will be able to creatively use my free time.
- H. I will gain new knowledge and skills as a gardener.
- I. I will gain status/recognition as a Master Gardener volunteer.
- J. I will gain social contacts and make new friends.
- K. I will be joining a network of like-minded people.
- L. Other reasons: Please use space below.

## **The History of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program**

The rapid urban growth in many areas of the United States coupled with increased interest in the environment and home gardening have prompted ever-increasing numbers of homeowner questions to County Extension agents. Many of these questions are seasonal in nature and are relatively easily answered, if one has horticultural training.

In 1972, an innovative Extension Agent in the State of Washington reasoned that well-trained volunteers could respond to many of the everyday homeowner questions freeing him and his colleagues for more technical and difficult problems. Volunteers, such as HCE and 4-H Leaders had always been a part of the Extension Service but never in the area of homeowner horticulture. The Extension agent selected, trained, and certified volunteers as Master Gardeners. They soon succeeded in meeting his desired objectives - in fact they exceeded his expectations. This led to the genesis of the Master Gardener Volunteer program.

Since that time, the Master Gardener Volunteer program has grown and is now active in all 50 states. Florida's program began in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now active in most of Florida's 67 counties. The Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program is sponsored by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) of which the Cooperative Extension Service is a part.

Just what is the Cooperative Extension Service? For a more complete understanding of this unique organization, we must go back to 1862 when the U.S. Congress passed the Morrill Act which established colleges in each state to be financed through grants of land from the Federal government. They became known as "land grant colleges," a name which persists today. These colleges would emphasize teaching practical subjects such as agriculture and home economics. The 1887 Hatch Act provided for experimental stations at Land Grant Colleges to conduct research for those colleges' agricultural problems.

Then in 1914 the Smith-Lever Act created the Extension Service as a part of these colleges as a means of disseminating the practical knowledge gained through agricultural research. The University of Florida at Gainesville is Florida's land grant college; The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is that part of the university which has responsibility for the Cooperative Extension Service.



The term "cooperative" refers to the method by which extension services are funded. In Florida, three cooperating tax sources provide funds: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State through legislative appropriations, and the counties through appropriations by county governments. The word "cooperative" also implies a sharing of information generated through sound research programs at the federal and state levels. The term "extension" defines this organization's purpose -- to extend the information generated at the state and federal level to people at the county level in the form of a "service." The Cooperative Extension Service is an informal education organization which provides information in three main areas: agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences.

The motto and goal of the Cooperative Extension Service is "Helping People Help Themselves." Thus, you can see how well the volunteer Master Gardener concept fits into the ultimate objectives and goals of the Extension Service.