



Dear Prospective Master Gardener Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program! The course will be offered beginning April 7, 2021 (Franklin) and April 8, 2021 (Wakulla) for the 13 weekly classes. The deadline for registration is March 12, 2021.

For your convenience, you can pay online with *Eventbrite* – This link is on the UF/IFAS Wakulla County Extension website: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/wakulla/> - Menu - Master Gardener Volunteer page to the UF/IFAS Wakulla County Master Gardener Volunteer Program link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ufifas-wakulla-master-gardener-volunteer-program-class-2021-tickets-135867145289>

** *EVENTBRITE* charges a convenience fee ABOVE the UF/IFAS Wakulla Master Gardener Volunteer Program cost. There are NO REFUNDS – ALL SALES ARE FINAL.

Your training as a Master Gardener Volunteer will prepare you for your volunteer work under the direction of UF/IFAS Wakulla County Extension Director, Dr. Pat Williams. This entire program will take 12 months. You will become a volunteer for the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Services (IFAS) and will be providing services to the residents of Wakulla and Franklin County and their home gardens.

MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER TRAINING FOR 2021

Classes begin on Wednesday, April 7, 2021 (Franklin) and April 8, 2021 (Wakulla) at 9:00 – 4:00 p.m. with 1 hr. lunch. The \$120.00 application fee covers all the materials and handouts you will need including the UF/IFAS Master Gardener Volunteer manual, name badge, polo shirt and registration fee. Class availability will depend on at least ten students registering.

BENEFITS OF BECOMING A MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

- The primary benefit of becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer is the breadth, depth and quality of horticulture/gardening information you will gain. Your 78 hours of classroom and hands-on training will expose you to valuable information on fertilizer, garden pests, weather, herbicides, pesticides, organic vegetable gardening and more.
- Your classmates with whom you will be studying and working are like-minded people who share your love of caring for plants.
- The knowledge you will gain will help you improve your own garden and try out ideas you learn in class.
- Helping others: your friends, neighbors and IFAS clients. You will be working through the Extension office to provide research-based information about gardening, America's most popular pastime.



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- You will be presented information on volunteer opportunities with 4-H programs as well as gardening programs at schools and at the Extension office.
 - As a Master Gardener Volunteer trainee, you will have access to Extension trainers, facilities and informational sources.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME A MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER

- Complete a Master Gardener Volunteer Application
- Pay the \$120.00 application fee
- Complete a background check
- Complete the 78 hours of classroom and garden training
- Complete 75 volunteer hours through the Wakulla or Franklin Extension Office by March 2022. Volunteer hours include some work in the Extension gardens, office work, approved community and school garden projects, 4-H work and many other opportunities explained during your classes.

For your convenience, you can pay online with *Eventbrite* – This link is on the UF/IFAS Wakulla County Extension website: <https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/wakulla/> - Menu - Master Gardener Volunteer page to the UF/IFAS Wakulla County Master Gardener Volunteer Program link:

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** *EVENTBRITE* charges a convenience fee ABOVE the UF/IFAS Franklin Master Gardener Volunteer Program cost. There are NO REFUNDS – ALL SALES ARE FINAL.

Complete pages 3 & 4 and include your Check or Money Order by March 12, 2021 to “Attention Sherry Balchuck” at the Wakulla County Extension office, 84 Cedar Avenue, Crawfordville, FL 32327; ONLY.

ATTENTION PLEASE: Franklin County Extension Office DOES NOT ACCEPT ANY APPLICATION FEES for the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program.

If mailed or personally delivered, be sure to include your Check or Money Order for the \$120.00 application fee. You should keep the other pages of the application for your files.

All Checks or Money Orders should be made payable to: UF/IFAS.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Pat Williams at 850-926-3931 or email williams.p@ufl.edu.

Sincerely,



Pat

Dr. Pat Williams
UF/IFAS Wakulla County Extension Director
(850) 926-3931

Do we have permission to use your photo for media release? (Circle One)	Yes	No
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Section Three

What ideas do you have for the type of volunteer hours you can do toward completion of your commitment? (e.g., answering calls, preparing news releases, making home visits, etc.)

List *all* time periods that you can complete volunteer hours (for example: every Friday afternoon or first Thursday of each month).

What are the *best* days for you to do volunteer work?

Section Four

I wish to become a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer and would like to be accepted into the training program beginning April 7/8, 2021. I understand that if I successfully complete the course of instruction, I agree to donate at least 75 hours of public service in the next 12 months through the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program. I have also read, understood, and agreed to abide by the Policies Regarding Florida Master Gardener Volunteer (see pages 5 – 7 following).

Signature_____

Date_____



Policies Regarding Florida Master Gardener Volunteer

Within the state of Florida, most counties maintain active Master Gardener Volunteer programs. This being the case, a need exists for the establishment of standards for all Florida Master Gardener Volunteers to represent their county in a manner consistent with exemplary citizenship and leadership.

To become a certified Florida Master Gardener Volunteer, one is required to attend the prescribed hours of instruction and pass an examination administered by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. This certification is restrictive in nature and is valid only for one year and when the individual is participating in the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program. New certifications will be issued each year only to those individuals who make a commitment for participation in the coming year. All Florida Master Gardener Volunteers must agree to be screened as outlined by the program's screening guidelines and as deemed appropriate by the County Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator. All volunteers working with youth must successfully complete the online Youth Protection Training – YCS800 annually.

As a certified Florida Master Gardener Volunteer, you will be eligible to attend educational programs such as the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Continued Training Conference offered by the University of Florida, as well as local educational programs and field trips provided by the County Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator. Master Gardener Volunteers are also provided with the most recent information available on environmental horticulture issues and related topics by the County Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator and State Extension Specialists. An inactive Master Gardener Volunteer is one who is unable to commit to an additional 35 hours annually at present, but would like the opportunity to possibly recertify him/herself in the future. The following policies apply:

- 1) An inactive Master Gardener Volunteer is one who has completed their original commitment of 75 hours of volunteer service in the first twelve months following the completion of their training, but is not able to continue to volunteer the minimum of 35 hours per year.
- 2) The inactive Master Gardener Volunteer must apply to the County Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator for recertification. If accepted, he or she must then attend or have attended 10 hours of acceptable horticultural training as approved by the coordinator to re-certify.
- 3) An inactive Master Gardener Volunteer may re-certify at any time as long as the above criteria are met and upon receiving approval from the county Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator.
- 4) Inactive Master Gardener Volunteers are ineligible to apply for awards of excellence, receive mailings, attend monthly meetings, or register for continued training opportunities.

The county Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator can make exceptions in unusual circumstances.



Master Gardener Volunteers are encouraged to participate in all components of the planned program (including record keeping), be responsive to the reasonable requests of the County Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator in charge, and be respectful of the need for personal safety and the safety of others. Whenever injuries do occur, they should be reported to the County Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator or County Extension Director immediately.

Master Gardener Volunteer Code of Conduct

Along with active participation, Master Gardener Volunteers are expected to uphold a professional demeanor. The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service functions without regard to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act. All volunteers, including Master Gardener Volunteers must follow all University of Florida rules, regulations, and policies, abide by the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program identity standards and all federal, state and local laws. The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service does not tolerate unlawful or unprofessional behavior, including, but not limited to the following:

- ❖ Possession or use of alcohol or drugs on volunteer service assignments;
- ❖ Abuse or theft of public or personal property;
- ❖ Sexual harassment or misconduct;
- ❖ Verbal abuse or failure to cooperate with other Master Gardener Volunteers, staff members, and/or the public;
- ❖ Possession or use of weapons or fireworks on volunteer service assignments;
- ❖ Defamation of the organization;
- ❖ Creating an implied or outright University or Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business;
- ❖ Misrepresentation of sources of information;
- ❖ Creating unauthorized social media pages or any other web presence;
- ❖ Consistently and knowingly giving out incorrect information;
- ❖ Use of state and/or county equipment without authorization.

Master Gardener Volunteers are volunteers as defined in section 110.501, Florida Statutes and University of Florida Regulation 6C1-3.0031 (1) (b), who serve at the discretion of the University. Like all University volunteers, Master Gardener Volunteers may be released from service for any lawful reason, including, but not limited to when the University determines the volunteer's service is no longer needed, the volunteer ceases active participation in the program, inappropriate or unprofessional conduct, or a violation of a University rule, policy or regulation, state or federal law. Any Master Gardener Volunteer engaged in illegal activity will be referred to law enforcement. Those individuals not continuing in the program are prohibited from representing themselves as Florida Master Gardener Volunteers.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer program are valuable and may rightly be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment. Once employed, and while serving



as a paid employee, or if self-employed, Master Gardener Volunteers shall not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer at the place of business. Experienced Florida Master Gardener Volunteers may be invited to speak before various community groups. Master Gardener Volunteers are prohibited from accepting payment, monetary or other, for speaking appearances. Master Gardener Volunteers shall be entitled to workers compensation and state liability protection under the same conditions as state employees in accordance with chapter 440, Florida Statutes. A Master Gardener Volunteers' services may cease, at any time, at the discretion of the University. A notice stating the effective date of the release from service shall be provided to the volunteer in accordance with University of Florida Regulation 6C1-3.0031 (5) (b).

The title "Florida Master Gardener Volunteer" is to be used only and exclusively in the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service Master Gardener Volunteer Program in which trained and certified Florida Master Gardener Volunteers answer gardening questions and educate local residents. Master Gardener Volunteers are expected to use the title only when doing unpaid volunteer educational work on the behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. Florida Master Gardener Volunteers shall not use the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer title in any advertisements or activities not related to University of Florida/IFAS Master Gardener Volunteer activities. The Florida Master Gardener Volunteer program represents a University of Florida Extension Service public education program; Master Gardener Volunteers are prohibited from endorsing commercial products or implying UF/IFAS endorses any product or place of business.

In making recommendations, which include the use of chemicals (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardener Volunteers **MUST FOLLOW PUBLISHED** University of Florida/IFAS Extension recommendations. Cultural problems that are not specially covered by University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service recommendations may be handled by suggesting treatments, which an experienced Master Gardener Volunteer considers appropriate. If you are making a recommendation based on personal experience, state clearly that you are speaking for yourself and not the UF/IFAS Extension Service. Questions concerning any commercial horticultural enterprise (vegetable production, fruit crops production, landscape maintenance of golf course, park, school grounds or commercial nursery production) are to be referred to the local Horticulture Extension Agent.

Master Gardener Volunteer Certification may become void when an individual ceases active participation in the program or dismissal may result from violations described above. Illegal activities will be referred to law enforcement. Those individuals not continuing in the program should be aware if they represent themselves as Florida Master Gardener Volunteer, they are violating their original commitment to the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program are valuable and may rightly be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment. Once employed, and while serving as a paid employee, or if self-employed, Master Gardener Volunteers shall not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer at the place of business.



Experienced Florida Master Gardener Volunteer may be invited to speak before various community groups. Please do not seek payment for such speaking appearances. Gratuitous personal payments (i.e., in the form of cash or gifts) for such presentations are not encouraged. The title “Florida Master Gardener Volunteer” is to be used only and exclusively in the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service Master Gardener Volunteer Program in which trained and certified Florida Master Gardener Volunteer answer gardening questions. Master Gardener Volunteer are expected to use the title only when doing unpaid volunteer educational work on the behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. Florida Master Gardener Volunteer shall not use the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer title in any advertisements or activities not related to University of Florida/IFAS Master Gardener Volunteer activities. The Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program represents a University of Florida Extension Service public education program and one should avoid having association with commercial products or implying University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service endorsements of any product or place of business.

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Special Note:

Individuals who are not acting on behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service are strongly urged to make every effort to minimize the appearance of being on duty before making any recommendations in the area of horticulture. Speaking “off the record” is your right; however, make sure everyone knows you are speaking for yourself and not the Extension Service.

I have read the above policies regarding my services as a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer and do hereby agree to give at least 75 hours of service in my first year and at least 35 hours in each subsequent year to the Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Program in return for the training provided by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service.

(Signature required on page 4)

