

Complete Online Application by January 8, 2018

November 15, 2017

Thank you for your interest in our 2018 UC Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program! If you enjoy gardening, and want to teach others how to garden sustainably, this may be the program for you! Please read below to learn more about the program and whether it may be a match for you.

UC Master Gardeners extend research-based information by conducting workshops and demonstrations, diagnosing plant and pest problems, speaking to community groups, educating teachers and parents at school gardens, and answering gardening questions at fairs and farmers markets as well as on our email and phone helplines. By training Master Gardener volunteers, we empower neighborhoods to create their own solutions and foster healthier gardens, communities and a sustainable environment.

Since 1993, we have trained 1279 Master Gardener volunteers who have served 1,103,099 Los Angeles County residents and earned 69,995 continuing education hours.

In 2016-2017, our 280 Master Gardener volunteers logged 16,659 volunteer hours and 3,437 continuing education hours helping 117,177 Los Angeles County residents at 331 locations (99 community gardens, 136 school gardens, 9 senior gardens, 7 homeless and battered-women's shelters, and 80 fairs, workshops, farmers markets and phone and email helplines).

Overview

- Our program is open to Los Angeles County residents over 18 years of age.
- We're looking for 1) experienced community volunteers who already 2) know the basics of gardening, 3) have given public presentations, 4) have worked with people of diverse backgrounds, 5) have initiated and carried through with successful projects, and 6) have access to a computer and have basic working familiarity with internet and email.
- We'll present University of California research-based information to promote sustainable horticultural practices in home, community and school landscapes.
- Classes will meet for 13 weeks on every Saturday from February 17 through May 19, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in Pasadena. Meetings start promptly at 9:00 am. You must attend the first class on February 17. After the first class, you can miss only one meeting with prior notice.
- Instruction in English will include lectures, hands-on activities, and field trips to area botanical gardens and other sites (carpooling is recommended).
- Acceptance letters will be emailed January 22, 2018.

If you are accepted into our 2018 Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program

- You will be emailed an acceptance letter on January 22 with your first class assignments and due dates – all to be completed prior to the first day of class.
- You will be emailed a Live Scan form and list of Live Scan locations in L.A. County for required fingerprinting and criminal background check by the California Department of Justice. Fingerprinting will need to be completed no later than February 9.
- **By February 9, you will need to** pay the \$275 course fee online by credit card or by check. Partial scholarships are available upon approval.

Class Session

- Class members are called “Master Gardener Trainees” while they attend the 13-week, 78-hour training course.
- Major class topics are basic plant science, propagation, fertilization, soils, irrigation, composting, vegetable and herb and fruit gardening, ornamental plants and trees gardening, Integrated Pest Management (diseases, insects, weeds, small animals), tools, how to start community and school gardens, and community outreach techniques.
- Graduation from the class session requires 1) attendance at each week’s class (you may miss only one class with prior notice) and 2) a passing grade of at least 70% on the take-home, open-book final examination.

Volunteering

- A minimum of 50 hours of volunteering by June 30, 2019 can be accomplished in these areas:
 - Community and school gardens, farmers markets and fairs — giving workshops, responding to gardening questions.
 - Phone and e-mail helplines — answering questions.
 - Other projects you develop, which have been approved.
- While no minimum "Continuing Education" hours are required by June 30, 2019, 12 hours will be required the second and subsequent years.
- MGs must post all of their volunteer and continuing education hours onto the online MG Statewide Master Gardener Volunteer Management System. Instructions will be provided.
- For MGs to maintain active status, they must post a minimum of 25 volunteer and 12 continuing education hours annually.

Monthly Meetings

Monthly Continuing Education meetings are held on the second Saturday of every month between class sessions (June through February) from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at various garden locations throughout Los Angeles County.

Graduation

On the last day of class, May 19, 2018, “Master Gardener Trainees” who have completed their final exam, class evaluation, and commitment form become “First-Year Master Gardeners” and receive a Certificate of Completion of Class Instruction and Master Gardener identification badges. Passage of the final exam by at least 70% and class attendance will be confirmed later.

We hope you’ll want to continue volunteering in our program long after you’ve completed your initial minimum requirements. We have active Master Gardeners from every year’s class since 1990; they’ve volunteered thousands of hours!

Application Survey Submission

- Complete and submit the online application survey by 6:00 pm on January 8, 2018.
- The link is: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=22247>
- If you have questions, please contact Program Coordinator Valerie Borel at vtborel@ucanr.edu by 3pm on Monday, January 8, 2018.

Regards,

Rachel Surls, Ph.D.
Sustainable Food Systems Advisor

Valerie Borel
Horticulture and Master Gardener Program Coordinator

2018 UC Master Gardener Trainee Application for Los Angeles County

Frequently Asked Questions

These questions may help you decide if you want to apply to the UC Master Gardener Program.

1. What kind of volunteer work would I be able to do to get my required 50 hours of volunteer service?

Lots of things! Some examples are working at community gardens, school gardens, and staffing tables at fairs and farmers markets in an educational role — you might be answering questions, teaching a workshop, or helping to design a garden. The key is that you are educating the public about gardening. Master Gardeners teach non-commercial gardeners only. We also need volunteers to assist with various committees that help us run the MG Program.

2. What kinds of things are not eligible for MG volunteer hours?

- a. Physical labor (such as digging, weeding, etc) does not count for volunteer hours except in certain rare assignments pre-approved by the MG staff.
- b. Starting a garden club, or a local chapter of a gardening organization.
- c. Any work with a for-profit company.
- d. Advising commercial gardeners (any person or agency that is selling what they grow or selling their gardening services).
- e. Travel time to volunteer assignments except in rare pre-approved circumstances.

3. I want to teach people about raising chickens (bees, goats, food preservation, etc.) in addition to teaching them about gardening. Can I do that as a Master Gardener?

No. You will be able to teach any of the topics covered in the California Master Gardener Handbook that you are trained on in MG class. We do not cover any animal husbandry or beekeeping, nor do we cover food preservation, so we can't allow you to teach those in your capacity as a UC Master Gardener. We will provide you with suggestions about where to refer members of the public who are interested in these topics.

4. When will I do my Master Gardener hours? Will you assign me projects?

The Master Gardener Program requires you to be proactive and do your MG hours as your time and schedule permits. We send out numerous volunteer opportunities – it will be up to you to respond and follow up. You can also design your own volunteer opportunities, with prior approval from MG staff. You will need to do complete volunteer hours by **June 30, 2019**.

5. **I am a staff member at an agency that works with school gardens (or community gardens, etc.) Does my work count for my Master Gardener hours?**

No, Master Gardener work is not paid work. It may be possible to get your volunteer hours with your agency, with prior approval of MG staff, but you will need to do something that's above and beyond your paid assignment.

6. **I am doing an *unpaid* internship with an agency that works with school gardens (or community gardens, etc.). Does my work count for my Master Gardener hours?**

No, we consider this much the same as paid employment. You may be able to get your volunteer hours with your agency, with prior approval of MG staff, but you will need to do something that's above and beyond your existing internship.

7. **I am passionate about organic gardening (permaculture gardening, square foot gardening, etc.) and I really want to teach that method. Will that be okay?**

In the UC Master Gardener Program, you'll be learning university research-based information about many aspects of gardening. You'll be offering options to those you work with, rather than promoting one particular style of gardening.

8. **What if I want the training but don't have time to volunteer?**

The UC Master Gardener Training Program is specifically for individuals who have time to volunteer. We count on our trained Master Gardeners to respond to numerous community volunteer requests. When people do not fulfill their volunteer commitment, it prevents us from reaching people in Los Angeles who need help learning how to garden – at schools, in communities, and other locations. Fortunately, if you are interested in the information only, there are other options. You can purchase the [UC Master Gardener Handbook](#) or take one of our 4-week [Grow LA Victory Garden sessions](#) in spring or fall.