

How Does Your Gardener Grow?

2009 Master Gardener
Preview Packet



Dear Master Gardener Applicant:

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a Master Gardener volunteer. Training dates have been established and classes are scheduled to begin on **Friday, January 23, 2009**. These training classes will meet every Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Marathon EOC meeting room located at 2798 Overseas Highway, Marathon. **The fee for the 2009 Master Gardener class is \$125.00 per person. This fee covers your Master Gardener manuals and course materials.**

This packet contains information that will be useful to you in understanding the Florida Master Gardener program, how it functions, and how Master Gardeners operate as a part of the UF/IFAS/Monroe County Extension Office. You will also find insights into the roles and responsibilities of a Master Gardener volunteer. In order to be considered for the program, it will be necessary for you to do the following things:

1. **Attend a regional preview session.**
2. **Complete and return at the end of preview session**
3. **Phone Interview for the Monroe County Master Gardener volunteer position being held December 18th, 19th, and 22nd.**

Enthusiasm and a willing to do volunteer work are important traits for participants of our program. The selection process will be based on attending the preview session, then a follow-up phone interview. **If you are unable to interview during this time, please contact the Monroe County Extension office immediately. Final selections and notification will be made by December 23, 2008. The class is limited to 25 participants.** If selected, your class fees are due in total by **January 23, 2009** (first day of class) to our office. Fees may be paid by check or money order only, made payable to the University of Florida.

I am truly excited about the upcoming Master Gardener class and want to thank you for expressing an interest in the UF/IFAS/Monroe County Master Gardener horticulture education and volunteer program.

Horticulturally yours,

Kim Gabel
Environmental Horticulture Agent
UF/IFAS/Monroe County Extension

"How Does Your Gardener Grow"
Monroe County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Information

Greetings from the Master Gardener Program of the UF/IFAS/Monroe County Extension. During the next year I look forward to your participation in the Monroe County Master Gardener program. I will be working diligently during 2009 to help you understand your roles and responsibilities as a volunteer Master Gardener and I look forward to working to make sure your volunteer experience with us is enjoyable.

For further horticultural educational opportunities, there are south Florida regional, state, national and international Master Gardener conferences you are eligible to participate in because you are a certified Monroe County Master Gardener. Please note you must pay the entire costs of your attendance at these conferences.

This booklet contains all the information you need to know about the Monroe County Master Gardener program. I have high expectations for individuals that are a part of our Master Gardener Program. Remember you are the horticultural ambassadors for the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), and Monroe County Extension.

Questions about the program should be directed to Kim Gabel at (305) 292-4504 or by e-mail at: kgabel@ufl.edu.

HISTORY OF THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

The rapid urban growth in many areas of the United States coupled with increased interest in the environment, climate change 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, assuming that one has horticultural training.

In 1972, an innovative Extension Service 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 Extension Homemakers and 4-H leaders had always been a part of the Extension Service, but never in the area of homeowner horticulture. With this in mind, 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. And so it was, the Master Gardener Program began.

Since that time, the Master Gardener Program has grown and is now active in over 30 states. Florida adopted the Master Gardener concept in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now active in 56 of Florida's 67 counties. The University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), of which the Extension Service is a part, sponsors the Florida Master Gardener Program.

What is the Extension Service?

For a more complete understanding of this unique organization, we must go back to **1862**, when U.S. Congress passed the **Morrill Act** that established one college in each state to be financed through grants of land from the Federal

government. They became known as "Land Grant Colleges," a name that 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 is the part of the university which has responsibility for the Extension Service. **Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU)** is one of seventeen **1890's colleges** for African Americans. Resources for research and extension were not provided until 1966.

The Extension Service is cooperatively funded by three sources: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State of Florida (through legislative appropriations), and counties, (through appropriations by county governments). The Extension Service is also a cooperative because of sharing of information generated through 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 **Extension Service is a nonformal educational organization** which provides information in three main areas: Agriculture & Horticulture; Family and Consumer Sciences; and 4-H and Youth. Other associated programs include Community Development, Marine Biology, and Energy. The motto & goal of the Extension Service is "Helping People Help Themselves." Thus, you can see how well the Master Gardener concept fits into the ultimate objectives and goals of the

Extension Services.

THE MONROE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

In Monroe County, the Master Gardener (MG) Program started in 1992. To date, the MG training program has qualified hundreds of horticultural volunteers enabling them to become Certified Master Gardeners. Individuals are selected, and attend a 60 hour training and complete their initial 75 volunteer hours in their first year along with 10 hours of continuing education. Active MGs volunteer a minimum of 35 volunteer service hours and 10 learning hours each year. Currently, there are 60 active members throughout the Florida Keys.

The Master Gardeners of Monroe County have been involved with community projects such as: native tree giveaways, Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program (FYN) landscaping projects, FYN yard advisors, as well as horticultural educational programs. Master Gardeners also assist the Horticulture Agent by providing homeowners with horticulture information through the MG Help Desk, office walk-ins, regional plant clinics, or staffing information booths at various events.

Selection to become a candidate for the Monroe County Master Gardener Training Program is not predicated on prior training, education, knowledge, or experience. Neither does age, race, sex, nor physical handicap dictate selection.

A sincere desire to help others, a desire to learn, and a personal commitment to volunteer service are the major selection criteria involved. Gardening experience and knowledge are always helpful, but they are by no means a requirement for selection for the Master Gardener Program.

HORTICULTURAL TRAINING

Training never ceases for the certified and working Master Gardener. Throughout the year, Master Gardener quarterly regional meetings are held. Field trips are also scheduled to visit Master Gardener homes, botanical gardens, parks, and nurseries. Specialized knowledge is gained to better enable Master Gardeners to work effectively on their gardening projects as well as provide research-based horticulture advice.

Annually, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), conducts a Master Gardener Conference at the University of Florida or at another Florida location. This voluntary three-day session serves to acquaint Master Gardeners with diagnostic and research facilities that respond to requests for assistance from the Extension Agents. This program is presented by State Extension Specialists who strive to bring all Master Gardeners into contact with the latest horticultural developments and provide a look into the future of horticulture research. It is also a great opportunity to meet Master Gardeners from around the state of Florida and share in the joys and even the frustrations of being a Florida Master Gardener.

Most of the advanced training classes will present information on how to garden in Florida in an environmentally friendly manner, something we refer to as Florida Friendly Landscaping. The information presented in this program is based on the knowledge and research done by the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS). You will be expected to understand the nine principles of FYN and how they are used to create a Florida Keys friendly landscape.

Remember that only after successfully completing the formal training and the required initial 75 hours of volunteer service and 10 continuing education hours will the intern become certified and be awarded the title of Master Gardener.

Master Gardeners must abide by a set of policies set forth by Monroe County, the Extension Service, and UF/IFAS. **Policies regarding Florida Master Gardeners are included as a part of this packet and should be carefully studied.**

MASTER GARDENER FEES

There is a \$125 fee for the initial Monroe County Master Gardener training program. This fee is non-refundable and covers the costs of printed materials and classroom supplies purchased for the program. Part of the fee covers the cost of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension publications. These materials are updated frequently so that Master Gardeners always provide the most current recommendations approved by UF/IFAS.

POLICIES REGARDING FLORIDA MASTER GARDENERS

There are several policies regarding the Master Gardener program. It is important that all participants understand and adhere to them.

Florida Master Gardener Interns must:

- Attend the prescribed hours of instruction.
- Pass an examination administered by UF/IFAS/Monroe County Extension.
- Contribute 75 volunteer hours and 10 continuing education hours before becoming a certified Master Gardener.

This certification is restrictive in nature. It is valid only as follows:

- When the individual is actively participating in the Monroe County

Extension program.

- Master Gardener certification is good for one year only. If an individual ceases active participation, then the certification as Master Gardener becomes void.
- Each year active Master Gardeners must provide 35 hours of volunteer service.
- Attend 10 hours of additional horticultural training.
- Those choosing not to continue in the program will become inactive Master Gardeners.
- An inactive MG can become active again after completing 35 MG volunteers hours, 10 learning hours and pass a comprehensive exam.

The title "Florida Master Gardener" is to be used as follows:

- **Only and exclusively** in the Florida Extension Master Gardener program in which the trained and certified Master Gardener answers gardening questions or works on approved landscape demonstration projects.
- Only when doing unpaid volunteer or educational work in the Monroe County Master Gardener program.

Master Gardeners should never rely solely on their personal knowledge, as the Extension Service provides the following support:

- Ongoing training to keep active participants abreast of current trends, recommendations, practices, procedures and legal issues.
- Master Gardeners have diagnostic support via county Extension horticulturists and state Extension Specialists and the DDIS (Distance Diagnostic Identification System).
- Master Gardeners are also provided with Extension Service publications that discuss a variety of horticultural plants and pest problems.

Experienced Master Gardeners are likely to receive invitations to speak before groups. Therefore, the Master Gardener should understand the following:

Please do not seek payment for speaking appearances that involve the presentation of Extension information. Your work is much appreciated by the Florida Extension Service and your local area gardeners who have received or will receive your counsel.

- Florida Keys Master Gardeners are advised not to advertise their name or their place of business, nor to be listed on the advertisements of business places as Master Gardeners. This is a University of Florida/IFAS/Monroe County Extension Service public service program providing unbiased information.
- Appearing as a commercial activity, having association with commercial products, or giving implied University/Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business is improper.
- **Master Gardeners deal only with homeowner-type questions.** The Extension Service Agent responds to all commercial or professional landscapers and retail nursery problems.

In making recommendations that include the use of chemicals (e.g., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardeners are to:

- Follow the most up-to-date published Extension Service recommendations.
- Please do not give recommendations based on personal experience.
- Do not answer questions concerning commercial horticultural recommendations. These are to be referred to the local Extension Agent.

POLICIES REGARDING MONROE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER RULES

Most states and many counties have Master Gardener programs. Each is different according to their needs. In Monroe County, our needs lie mainly with providing the Keys homeowners with information about environmentally friendly practices for the home landscape. Due to the geographic makeup of the county, regional projects will be developed for the Upper, Middle and Lower Keys.

It would be impossible for the Monroe County Extension Service to supply all the help needed to meet all community horticultural needs. However, if there are special projects that I feel meets the criteria for assistance or that is directly related to the mission and goals of the Monroe County Extension Service, then you may use these opportunities to fulfill all or part of your volunteer hours. **All community projects must have prior approval from the Master Gardener Coordinator.** Current community projects that qualify include Key Largo, Key West and Marathon Plant Clinics, and FYN Landscaping demonstration landscapes.

You will be asked to start volunteering during your training by spending a few hours in several selected areas to give you an idea of the activities available. **The first 50 hours must be spent on assisting with the Florida Yards and Neighborhood Program and the Plant Clinics, and the remaining 25 hours may be used by working on community-based projects of my choice. All 75 volunteer hours and 10 continuing education hours must be completed by March 27th 2010. To maintain an active Monroe County Master Gardener status, you must annually complete 35 volunteer hours and attend 10 hours of approved educational programs.**

MONROE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The Monroe County Master Gardener program will focus on obtaining volunteers for the Help Desk and Plant Clinic positions. Other approved MG volunteer positions are the FYN program, staffing plant information booths throughout the county, working with youth groups, developing school and community gardens, preparation of newsletters, and other activities as needed by Extension personnel. The job descriptions in this packet describe some of the organized positions available at the Monroe County Extension.

As Master Gardeners assist the Extension Agents, they are in effect, "extending the Extension Service." As such, they provide advice and recommendations which have been well documented as a result of experimentation and testing and are approved by the University of Florida. There is something for Master Gardeners to do no matter what the skill or the ability.

MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

These are the current MG volunteer openings. The applicant will choose his/her volunteer positions from those listed. These include:

Horticulture Help Desk

Regular Work Day: M-Tu-W-Th-F

Location: Key West, Key Largo (Murray Nelson government building)

Description: Answer homeowner horticulture questions from walk-ins, e-mails and phone calls using the UF research based information and DDIS system.

Skills: Customer relations, computer, and not squeamish looking at insects under the microscope.

Regional Plant Clinics

Regular Work Day: Key Largo, every first Saturday of the month during October-April. Big

Pine Key, and Marathon, every third Saturday of the month during October-April. Key West, every first and third Monday afternoon, except holidays.

Location: Big Pine Key, Key Largo, Marathon, Key West

Description: Answer homeowners' questions about horticultural issues.

Skills: Customer relations.

FYN Volunteer

Regular Work Day: Varies by activity – weekdays, evening and weekend opportunities are available.

Location: Throughout the Keys.

Information: FYN is a community outreach program that teaches environmentally friendly landscape practices. The primary objectives of the program are conserving water, reducing polluted stormwater run-off from the landscape, fertilizing appropriately, managing yard pest responsibly and creating habitats for wildlife such as butterfly gardens.

Description:

- **FYN Yard Advisors** - Field work evaluating landscape problems, providing homeowners with information based on the FYN principles.
- **FYN Demonstration site development** - Plan, implement, and maintain a FYN demonstration site that includes the nine FYN principles.

Horticultural Worker

Regular Work Day: Depending on project.

Location: To be developed throughout the Keys.

Description: Work with school gardening and schoolyard landscaping projects (i.e., butterfly gardens).

Skills: Customer relations.

2009 Monroe County Master Gardener Program

Please complete this application and return it to the UF/IFAS/Monroe County Extension Office at the address below. Type or print legibly.

SECTION 1: *Please give us this basic information about how to contact you.*

Mr. Mrs. Ms. *Please circle one* E-Mail Address: _____
 First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City / Key: _____ Zip: _____
 Home /Cell: _____ Work phone: _____

Please circle: Full time resident Part time resident (which months) _____

SECTION 2: *Please complete the following questions.*

1. Have you participated in Master Gardener training before? Yes _____ No _____
 If yes, when? _____ Where? _____
2. Please list any training and/or practical experience you have had in gardening, horticulture, farming or related fields. _____

3. Please list any specialized gardening interests or hobbies you have. _____

4. What gardening affiliations do you have, e.g., garden clubs, horticulture societies, etc. _____

5. Are you currently active in other types of organizations (e.g., Cancer Society, Kiwanis Club, PTA, etc.)?
 Yes _____ No _____ If yes, which ones? _____
6. How did you learn about the Master Gardener Program?
7. Why are you a good candidate for becoming a Monroe County Master Gardener?

