



Green Spring Extension Master Gardener Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Green Spring Extension Master Gardener (GSEMG) program is sponsored by the Virginia Cooperative Extension and supported by the Fairfax County Park Authority at Green Spring Gardens.

What is an Extension Master Gardener?

An Extension Master Gardener, working through their host organization, volunteers within their community to educate the public. The GSEMG mission is to educate and promote environmentally sound horticulture practices through community outreach in Fairfax County. We refer to our educational approach as *EcoSavvy* gardening.

What does the class cover?

The class covers a variety of topics: Botany, Soil, Entomology, Lawn & Turf, Plant Propagation, Plant Pathology, Water Quality & Conservation, Basics of Pruning, Natives and Invasives, Woody Landscape Plants, Herbaceous Landscape Plants, Vegetable and Fruit Gardens, Pesticide Use and Safety, Indoor Plants and Landscape Design. There are hands-on learning labs associated with several of the classes.

How much gardening experience must I have to apply for the GSEMG training program?

None! Gardening experience is not a prerequisite to apply for any master gardener program in the Commonwealth of Virginia. All trainees, regardless of individual experience or interests, complete the same Virginia Cooperative Extension endorsed training program to become master gardeners.

Is there a minimum age requirement to be a master gardener?

Yes. You must be at least 18 years old at the time of application to be eligible.

How do I apply to the GSEMG Program?

For information on the GSEMG program, and to join the application list, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring/extension-master-gardeners/membership>

What are the recruiting process steps?

The recruiting process has four steps-orientation, application, interview, acceptance. An orientation detailing all aspects of the training program will be held in April each year. After this orientation, interested applicants will be sent a link to fill out an application. All applicants will be interviewed and required to complete a background check. Interviews and background checks are usually completed by June. Selections are usually completed in mid-July and selectees will be notified soon after.

How many students are accepted into each class?

The maximum class size is 25.



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Do you maintain a waitlist?

Yes

How do I get more information about the program?

Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring/extension-master-gardeners> or send an email to: GSPublicityteam@gmail.com

Additional information is available at: <https://mgmv.org/about/become-a-master-gardener/>

What are the dates for the next GSEMG class?

The GSEMG class will begin in early September each year and conclude in early December. An initial course syllabus will be provided at the spring orientation and will be finalized after trainee selection is complete.

What is the class schedule?

Trainees are required to attend two class sessions per week. Each class session covers a different topic. Classes are typically held on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 2-1/2 hours each. Currently, the classes are organized following a hybrid model with one class held evenings (6:00-8:30 am) via Zoom, and one held in person at Green Spring Gardens (1:00 – 3:30 pm).

What if I miss a class?

GSEMG's may miss no more than two (2) class sessions. Missed sessions must be made up by completing all required class work and reviewing the video recording of the missed class.

How much does the program cost?

The current fee is \$300 per person.

What is required to graduate?

All course assignments, quizzes and labs must be successfully completed to graduate as an VCE Master Gardener Intern.

How long is the internship and what are the completion requirements?

The GSEMG internship lasts one year. Each intern must complete 50 hours of service in approved volunteer activities including these REQUIRED activities:

- VCE Help Desk
- Green Spring Gardens Help Desk April - October
- Green Spring Gardens Demonstration Gardens (Wildlife, Discovery, Children's & Edible)



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Upon successful completion of all internship requirements, each trainee will be certified as a “VCE Master Gardener Volunteer”.

What is the deadline for completion of intern volunteer hours?

Interns normally complete their requirements within 12 months. With the permission of the Unit Coordinator, interns may be allowed to take a second year to complete their requirements.

How do I maintain certification?

To maintain certification, subsequent years require:

- 20 hours of service in approved volunteer activities
- 8 hours of approved Continuing Education
- Annual EMG Recertification fee: currently \$25

What types of volunteer opportunities are available?

- Talks with Master Gardeners
- Adopt-A-Library
- Docent Garden Tours
- Creative Exhibits
- High Tech Presentations
- Publicity
- Networking team
- New Class Support
- Photography
- Wildlife, Edible, Discovery, and Children’s Gardens
- Youth & Family Ed
- Wolf Trap National Park
- Administration
- EcoSavvy Symposium
- Wellness Circle Healing Gardens
- Community Outreach



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