

Master Gardener Training Course Overview

I. **Computer-Based, Modularized, Self-Paced, Independent Study**

Students will work through 17 modules that contain required reading, slide presentations, self- tests of knowledge, suggested reading links for the internet, and quizzes. The learning modules will be accessed online or students may request a computer flash drive to use on their own computers. The textbook for the class is the “Virginia Master Gardener Handbook” also located online. Students may purchase a hard copy of the Handbook online via Amazon if they prefer. The cost of the online textbook is included in the application fee. Eleven hands-on labs will be offered, 1 – 2 each month from March through July. Each student must participate in at least seven of these, although attendance is encouraged for all labs. Labs will be in a variety of sites to allow students to actively participate in horticulture activities such as propagating plants. There will be required reading and open-book quizzes for each module, and an open-book final exam. An average grade of 70% or higher is required for the modular quizzes, and a grade of 70% or higher is required for the final exam. While the class is self-paced, students must complete the modularized part of the program, including 7/11 labs, all quizzes, and the final by date determined on the lab schedule usually ending in August.

II. **The Instructors:**

Instructors for the hands-on labs include Virginia Cooperative Extension Educators, Specialists from Virginia Tech, local horticulture professionals, Soil and Water Conservation specialists and veteran Master Gardeners.

III. **Internship:**

Fifty (50) hours of internship (volunteer service) is required for completion at the end of the Master Gardener course. Internship hours are earned by volunteering for our many Master Gardener projects. Volunteer projects and programs that count as internship hours include, but are not limited to: additional assistance with the Help Desk (responding to calls from Bedford Town/County residents on a variety of horticultural issues); planning and/or conducting Gardening Seminars; educating students in approved school and education projects; supporting the role of the Virginia Cooperative Extension in community endeavors such as CenterFest and local Farmers Markets; and speaking to groups interested in learning about horticulture.

The fifty (50) hours of volunteer service must be completed within the year following completing the modules and final exam in order to obtain full Master Gardener certification.

IV. **Mentors**

Each student will be assigned an experienced Master Gardener as a mentor. Students can call or email their mentor, as well as meet face-to-face, to ask questions or discuss the learning experience. Mentors will help interns become involved in projects for their internship hours and help them become involved in BAMGA, the local Master Gardener Association.

V. **Application:**

Class size is limited! Submit your completed application immediately. An interview will be scheduled after the application is received. Students will be notified if they are accepted into the class following the interview. At that time, the \$150.00 registration fee will be due. **Applications received after February 1, must pay a late registration fee of \$165.**

VI. ***Welcome, Future Master Gardener! We look forward to meeting you, working with you, and helping you to become a fellow certified Master Gardener.***

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact Scott Baker at (540)586-7675 (TDD: (800) 828-1120) during the business hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

