

Press Release: please post asap

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## MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

*Helping People and Communities Grow*

Do you enjoy being outdoors and working in the soil?  
Would you like the opportunity to learn more about growing plants?  
Are you excited about the chance to share your time and talents with others and spend time with people who share your interests?

If so, you might want to become part of the Michigan Master Gardener Program (MGP). This horticulture education and volunteer training program is offered by Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) and provides home gardening information to Michigan residents through a network of trained Master Gardener volunteers. All you need to get involved in the MGP is an interest in plants, a personal commitment to volunteering and an enthusiasm for sharing your knowledge with others.

During the last 35 years, more than 30,000 Michigan residents have taken part in the MGP, improving their communities through gardening, teaching thousands of children, adults and senior citizens the joy of gardening, learning how to garden using environmentally sustainable practices and making lifelong friends.

### **Access to World Class Gardening Knowledge**

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Program connects gardeners across the state to Michigan State University's faculty and resources. Participants have access to information generated at one of the nation's top plant science teaching and research universities and the chance to use this knowledge to improve their communities and enrich their lives.

Master Gardener volunteers start by completing a 13-session course that provides a solid knowledge base grounded in university-generated data. Training is offered through MSU Extension and covers the topics of Introduction & Volunteerism, Plant Science, Soil Science, Integrated Pest Management, Diagnostics for Master Gardeners, Annual and Perennial Flowers, Woody Plants, Lawns, Vegetable, Small Fruit, Tree Fruit, Indoor Plants, Household and Nuisance Pest, and Gardening Practices to Protect Water Quality.

### **An Opportunity to Serve**

After completing the course, Master Gardener trainees must complete 40 hours of horticulture-related service within one year to earn their Master Gardener certification. That community service may include:

- working with students to design an elementary school garden

- creating a horticulture therapy program at a senior center
- helping a neighborhood association create an urban garden.
- Sharing environmentally-friendly gardening practices at community events
- Establishing vegetable gardens to meet local nutritional needs
- Beautifying community sites for special events or community activities that attract local residents and tourists

Community based MGP coordinators and facilitators assist trainees in exploring opportunities that meet their interests, schedules and comfort levels. Most of all, Master Gardener trainees get the chance to get outdoors and spend time with other gardening enthusiasts in challenging and rewarding activities.

### **Connecting with Others**

Master Gardener volunteers love to have fun! Many gardeners establish lifelong friendships and connections when they join local programs that beautify their community and bring personal fulfillment and satisfaction. Many counties offer ongoing educational programs, garden tours, lectures and other social activities in which volunteers learn and share their knowledge while interacting with others.

### **Next Steps**

The Master Gardener Program welcomes anyone interested in learning about gardening, community service and working with other volunteers. No prior knowledge or experience in gardening is required. Join this exciting program by participating in the fall 2016 training session in the Escanaba area. Registration must be completed online any time before August 11, 2016 at the following website: [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/master\\_gardener\\_program\\_escanaba](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/master_gardener_program_escanaba)

### **Fall, 2016 MSUE Master Gardener Program in the Escanaba area**

**Classes held at: Bay de Noc Community College  
525 ITV Conference Room, Student Center  
2001 N. Lincoln Rd.  
Escanaba, MI 49829**

August 25th through December 1st  
Thursdays from 5:30 – 9:30 p.m. EST  
Cost: \$300.00 (includes the 1000-page training manual, speakers and facilities)  
Partial scholarships are available by applying online by July 30<sup>th</sup>.  
Completion of the 40 hours volunteer project is an expectation.

For more information, contact:

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More detailed information and registration information is available online at:  
<http://mg.msue.msu.edu> and  
[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/master\\_gardener\\_program\\_escanaba](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/master_gardener_program_escanaba)