

WHAT IS THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM?

The Master Gardener Program was started in 1972 by Washington State University Extension Service. It is now offered in all 50 states and has become a useful and enjoyable activity for volunteers. The program offers participants a sense of community spirit, accomplishment, and intellectual learning, while providing their community with valuable services and information.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Level 1 and Level 2 classes are offered or periodically in person. Courses consist of eight classes taught via MSU-Bozeman Extension Specialist and coordinated by Yellowstone County Master Gardeners using the Brightspace platform. Classes provide instruction in the latest, research-based, horticulture practices. Online classes are self-paced and can be taken anytime.

PROGRAM COST

The class fee is \$125 per level. Limited scholarships are available upon approval. Veterans can qualify for a discounted fee of \$80 for online classes by providing a copy of a Military or Veterans ID Card.

A Montana Master Gardener Handbook is required for all Level 1 & Level 2 classes. If not previously purchased, you can do so by visiting the MSU Extension Publication Store (store.msuextension.org). The cost for the handbook is \$50.

First time online participants must also pay a \$30 technology fee to the online educational platform, Brightspace.



VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

Community service hours in horticulture related activities, events, or programs are required by all program participants to receive their certification. Within one year of completing a course and its required exams students must fulfill a minimum volunteer commitment of 20 hours for Level 1 or 30 hours for level 2.

Renewing Master Gardeners must volunteer 20 hours yearly to maintain good standing in the program.



MASTER GARDENER COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

LEVEL 1 MASTER GARDENER COURSE

- Introduction to MSU Extension and the Master Gardener program
- Soils and fertility (N-P-K-Fe)
- Plant growth and development
- Vegetable gardening
- Growing small fruit
- Growing and caring for flowers
- Landscape design
- Trees, shrubs, vines and pruning
- Lawns and irrigation
- Composting
- Introduction to Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

LEVEL 2 MASTER GARDENER COURSE

- The role of a Master Gardener in Extension
- Binomial nomenclature
- Fertility, plant nutrients (more emphasis on micronutrients and microorganisms)
- Plant growth and development
- Entomology, plant diseases and abiotic disorders
- Vegetable and fruit Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Tree, shrubs and lawn Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- Propagation
- Season extension

Level 2 students are required to pass an in person, closed book, proctored exam.

LEVEL 3 MASTER GARDENER COURSE

The Level 3 Master Gardener course is a three-day intensive training offered on the campus of Montana State University-Bozeman. There is approximately 30 hours of class time and a minimum 40-hour volunteer commitment. The Level 3 course emphasizes a hands-on curriculum focusing on volunteer management training, plant diagnosis and insect identification. Students will tour local businesses with relation to sustainable food production as well as the local farmer's market and the MSU Horticulture Farm. To be eligible for the Level 3 course, students must be a certified Level 2 Master Gardener and be nominated by their county or reservation Extension Agent or Master Gardener Coordinator. Space for the class is limited and there may be a waiting list.

WHAT IS THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE?

In the late 1800s, the Extension system was created to address rural agricultural issues. Over the last century it has adapted to changing times and landscapes, and continues to address a wide range of human, plant, and animal needs in both urban and rural areas.

Extension provides non-formal education and learning activities to people within each county. It emphasizes using knowledge gained through research and education and bringing it directly to the people to create positive change.

OTHER SERVICES OFFERED BY MSU EXTENSION IN YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

Family and Consumer Sciences – Sara Fluer

Agriculture - Trestin Benson-Feagler

4-H/Youth Development - Roni Baker

Horticulture - Heidi Schueler

EFNEP (Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program)

The programs of the MSU Extension Service are available to all people regardless of race, creed, color, sex, disability, or national origin. Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cody Stone, Director of Extension, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, 59717. Montana State University Extension encourages persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any special accommodations or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact the Extension Office at 406-256-2828 in advance of your participation.

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MSU EXTENSION IN YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

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Billings, MT 59107
406-256-2828

montana.edu/extension/yellowstone/horticulture/mastergardener

To register for a class or for more information visit our website or contact Heidi Schuler via phone or email Heidi.schuler@montana.edu.