



University of Illinois Extension Advanced Master Gardener Training Guidelines

Advanced Master Gardener Training vs. Continuing Education

Advanced Master Gardener Training has often been confused with continuing education. Currently the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program requires at least 10 hours of continuing education annually for Master Gardeners to retain their Active Master Gardener status. Approved educational updates for continuing education include such things as the State Master Gardener Conference, local Master Gardener update sessions, University of Illinois Extension sponsored seminars and short courses, credit horticulture or plant science classes, or other horticultural classes approved by the local Master Gardener coordinator. Generally these are short-term educational activities of several hours to several days' duration.

Advanced Master Gardener Training requires a pre-determined number of hours in one horticulture-related topic area with. Prior approval of classes by the unit Master Gardener Coordinator is required. The contact hours may be a combination of face-to-face and on-line instruction. The extended instructional time permits greater subject matter depth than is possible in Core Course instruction. Advanced Master Gardener Training topic development and approval will be coordinated through the state Master Gardener office. Current advanced training hours will also count towards continuing education requirements.

Current Advanced Training Opportunities

For 2012-2013 the following areas of Advanced Training will be offered. These trainings provide for education in topics related to the Extension priorities and will prepare Master Gardeners to provide programming for the public in these areas as well as become more proficient in answering questions related to these issues.

1. Advanced Ecology-Master Gardeners may complete either Master Naturalist training or 20 hours of ecology related classes to receive this certification. Classes such as ecology, conservation, native plants, wildlife, soils or other related topics will count towards this certification. A minimum of 20 hours of training is required. Those who have completed the Master Naturalist class in the last 6 years will be "grandfathered" in for credit for that course.

2. Sustainable Landscaping- A minimum of 20 hours of training is required. Classes such as Master Composter training, rain barrel or rain garden classes or other sustainable landscaping classes will count. Those who have completed the Master Composter class in the last 6 years will be “grandfathered” in for credit for that course.

3. Advanced IPM- A minimum of 20 hours of training is required. Training could include PSEP training; the NCIPM module on Diagnostics; IPM online modules to be released by the state office; classes on invasive species, First Detector Training; conference workshops on invasive species, weeds, insects or diseases.

4. Advanced Local Foods- A minimum of 20 hours of training is required. Training could include local foods training; local food or specialty crop conference sessions; GAP training or organic sessions such as the Elluminate session on Organics by Rich Tobiasz offered in summer 2011 by the state office.

Those who have completed Master Naturalist or Master Composter training in the last 6 years will be allowed to “grandfather in” their training hours. The local Master Gardener Coordinator will determine if a class counts towards advanced training credit, although they may consult with the state Master Gardener Coordinator if needed.

Advanced Master Gardener Training Instructors

Instructors for Advanced Master Gardener Training shall be University of Illinois Extension Unit Educators, Extension Specialists, College faculty, Junior college faculty, Green Industry professionals, and/or other horticultural professionals approved as instructors by University of Illinois Extension.

Advanced Master Gardener Training Timeline

An Advanced Master Gardener Training class may be taken over a period of up to two years from the initial class period. Those who previously took the Master Naturalist or Master Composter training will be allowed to “grandfather in” the training time for these classes. Students unable to complete the minimum required hours in the topic area within a 2-year time frame from starting training will not be awarded an Advanced Master Gardener pin for that subject. However, at a later date, they may retake the course to achieve Advanced Master Gardener status in the topic. Master Gardeners should submit their credentials to their local Master Gardener Coordinator for approval to receive the advanced training certification.

Requirements of Advanced Master Gardeners

Advanced Master Gardener Training is open only to Active, Certified University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners. Master Gardener Interns must first complete their internship before beginning an Advanced Master Gardener course. Inactive Master Gardeners and Master Gardener Alumni must first reactivate as University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners before enrolling in an Advanced Master Gardener course. Completion of Advanced Master

Gardener Training in a topic area does not obligate the Master Gardener to additional volunteer service time beyond the basic requirements to retain Active Master Gardener status.

Recognition as Advanced Master Gardeners

Upon successful completion of the Advanced Master Gardener course, participants will be awarded a pin and certificate representative of the course topic. Advanced Master Gardeners are encouraged to wear their Advanced Master Gardener pin(s) in conjunction with their University of Illinois Extension name badge. Pins will be available through the State Master Gardener office for no charge.

September 2012

Reviewed 5-2015