

# How to Become a Master Gardener

*Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office*



October 30, 2019



Dr. William M. Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

*News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.*

PHOTO CREDIT: William M. Johnson

**The next Galveston County Master Gardener training course will begin in February 2020. The course curriculum will include a diverse variety of classroom and outdoor learning activities. Pictured is Lanny Dreesen (retired Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Urban Forester and Professor) conducting an outdoor learning exercise on urban forestry.**

Gardeners by nature are great people and our Galveston County Master Gardeners volunteers exemplify the very best in unselfishly providing volunteer service that benefits residents throughout the county. The Galveston County Master Gardener program was started in

1982 and we are celebrating our 37th anniversary this year.

We are the second oldest county Master Gardener program in the State of Texas. The number of counties implementing Master Gardener programs has grown significantly over the years and currently there are over

100 Texas counties with Master Gardener programs.

So, how does one become a Master Gardener? To learn more about the Galveston County Master Gardener Program and how to become a Master Gardener, you are invited to attend a



presentation entitled "What Is a Galveston County Master Gardener?" on Saturday, November 2, at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street, La Marque) from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. A panel of Master Gardeners will conduct a forum-style presentation where they will discuss the many facets of this volunteer program including the application process, the training course and what to expect after completion of the course. Pre-registration is requested to ensure availability of handouts (phone 281-309-5065 or e-mail galvcountymgs@gmail.com).

Texas Master Gardeners are a corps of highly trained volunteers who help people and communities through horticultural education. Texas Master Gardeners are people from the local community that have completed sixty-five hours of classroom instruction and provided 50 hours of volunteer service to help provide county programs on horticultural issues.

Most of the Master Gardener training classes are taught by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension professors who are widely recognized in their areas of expertise. The course curriculum will include botany, soils and soil fertility, plant propagation, plant disease identification and management, pesticide safety, weed identification and management, vegetables, insect identification and management, composting, turf grasses and home vegetable production.

The Master Gardener volunteer experience is all about learning and you will come away from the train-

ing much more knowledgeable than when you started. If you choose to join this organization, you will enjoy a learning experience that will last a lifetime. Your experience not only will be rewarding, but you will also gain a huge family of friends from diverse backgrounds along the way.

The 18-session training program begins on Tuesday, February 4. Classes meet Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the Extension Office until April 9.

Applications will be made available during the "What Is a Galveston County Master Gardener" presentation on November 2. Applications can also be downloaded from our website (<https://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>) as well as other important information. Applications will be accepted until Thursday, December 12. Don't miss this great opportunity.

#### At a Glance

**WHAT:** What Is a Galveston County Master Gardener

**WHEN:** Saturday, November 2

**TIME:** 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

**TOPICS:** A panel of Galveston County Master Gardeners will explain who Master Gardeners are and how to become one. Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an active interest in lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers, and gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and help others, and able to communicate with diverse groups of people. What sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In addition to the

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presentation, Master Gardeners Interns will answer questions and facilitate discussion.

**WHAT:** The Great Pepper Extravaganza

**WHEN:** Saturday, November 23

**TIME:** 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

**TOPICS:** Peppers are perhaps the most diverse of all the vegetables grown in home gardens. They may be sweet and mellow or fiery hot, depending on the variety, and are easy to grow. This presentation by Galveston County Master Gardener Gene Speller includes backgrounds and origins of pepper plants; heat value classification (Scoville Units), how to start them from seeds, culture and growing tips, recommended varieties for this area, insect and disease control, and pepper uses. Gene will have a tasting display of salsa, pickled peppers, and pepper vinegar that he has prepared. He will also have his homegrown peppers available for tasting and comparisons. The general public is encouraged to bring in their own unsliced peppers for taste comparisons.

**LOCATION:** Both programs will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Pre-register by e-mail ([galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com)) or phone (281-309-5065).