June 25, 2014

Dear prospective Master Gardener Volunteer,

Thank you for your interest in the Florida Master Gardener Program! The enclosed Sprouting Kit contains information that will be useful to you in understanding the Florida Master Gardener program, as well as the role and responsibilities of a volunteer Master Gardener. It will also give you insight into the UF/IFAS Extension Service, how it functions, and how Master Gardeners operate as part of the Extension Service.

This year we will select up to 25 people to participate in the Master Gardener training program scheduled to begin on Tuesday, September 2 and that will take place weekly through November 4. In order to be considered for this year’s program, you will need to do several things:

- Study the attached Sprouting Kit and complete both of the questionnaires.
- Complete the enclosed application form.
- Select your choice of dates/times for an interview.
- When you come to the interview, bring a check made out to Martin County Extension Programming for $175. This fee covers the materials you will use during training. If you are not selected for this year’s program, your deposit will be refunded immediately.
- Return all forms to the address above by August 1, 2014.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 772-419-6962 or goodiel@ufl.edu. We will call and confirm your interview time during the week of August 4, and we look forward to meeting you in person in the near future.

Sincerely,

Yvette Goodiel  
Sustainability & Commercial Horticulture Extension Agent II

Enclosures: Sprouting Kit
Florida Master Gardener
Volunteer Application

Citizens interested in volunteering for the UF/IFAS Extension Florida Master Gardener program must complete this application. Acceptance is contingent on return of this form to your county Extension office for submission and clearance through appropriate screening processes. These processes are in place to help ensure the safety and well-being of all Extension program participants.

General Information

Name: ________________________________ Male □ Female □

Mailing Address: ________________________________

City: _______________________ County: ________________ Zip: __________

How long have you lived at this address? ________ years ________ months
(If less than five years, attach a sheet listing all previous addresses for the past five years.)

Day phone: __________________ Evening phone: __________________

E-mail address: ________________________________

List work experience during the past 5 years, with most recent experiences first. Add a page if needed.

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<th>Employer</th>
<th>Position/Title</th>
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List volunteer experience during the past five years, with current or most recent experiences first. Identify work with youth and community groups. Add a page if needed.

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<th>Organization/Group</th>
<th>Role/Title</th>
<th>City/State</th>
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**Personal Interest**

Have you applied for the Master Gardener training before? Yes____ No____
If yes, when? ______________ Where? ____________________

Please list any training and/or practical experience you have had in gardening, horticulture, farming, or related fields:

What, if any, gardening groups do you belong to, e.g., garden clubs, horticultural societies, etc.?

How did you learn about the Florida Master Gardener Program?

Why do you want to become a Florida Master Gardener?
What ideas do you have of the type of volunteer work you can do toward completion of your commitment? (e.g., answering calls, preparing news releases, making home visits, etc.)

List all time periods that you can do volunteer work, e.g., every Friday afternoon, first Thursday of each month, etc.

What are the best days for you to do volunteer work, e.g., every Friday afternoon, first Thursday of each month, etc.? 
**References**
List three references who have knowledge of your qualifications but who are not related to you.

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<th>Name</th>
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Have you ever pled no contest or guilty to a criminal offense or have you been convicted and/or had adjudication withheld for a criminal offense within the past seven years?

Yes  
No

If yes, explain:

Have you ever pled no contest or guilty to a criminal offense or have you been convicted and/or had adjudication withheld for a criminal offense involving a minor (including a deferred imposition of sentence)?

Yes  
No

If yes, explain:

*Note: A criminal record will not necessarily disqualify an applicant. A criminal record will be considered as it relates to specific responsibilities of the volunteer role.*
I wish to become a Florida Master Gardener and would like to be accepted into the training program beginning September 2, 2014. I understand that if I am accepted and successfully complete the course of instruction, I agree to donate at least 75 hours of public service in the 12 months following the training through the Florida Master Gardener Program. I have also read, understood, and agreed to abide by the policies regarding the Florida Master Gardener program as outlined in the Annual Volunteer Agreement.

I certify that the above information is correct. I authorize the University of Florida IFAS Extension Service to request information for conducting a background check and to contact references. I authorize a check of my driver’s license record as needed. I understand that misrepresentation or omission of the facts requested is just cause for non-appointment as an Extension program volunteer. My signature and information below are necessary to process this application.

__________________________________________  ___________________________
Signature                                      Date

__________________________________________
Date of Birth

__________________________________________
Driver’s License Number (State)

Thank you for your application. Return the application to the county Extension office at your earliest convenience.
Sprouting Kit Questionnaire #1

Please CIRCLE the letter indicating your answer and return this along with application.

1. The Master Gardener Program is sponsored by:
   A. The University of South Florida
   B. The U.S. Department of Agriculture
   C. IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Science – University of Florida)
   D. Florida Department of Plant Industry

2. The Cooperative Extension Service was created by a legislative act called:
   A. The Morrill Act (1862)
   B. The Smith-Lever Act (1914)
   C. The Hatch Act (1887)

3. Master Gardeners are required to volunteer how many hours to public service?
   A. 25 hours each year
   B. 60 hours each year
   C. 75 hours the first year and 35 hours in future years in order to remain active
   D. 60 hours the first year and 25 hours in future years in order to remain active

4. Master Gardeners are required to attain how many additional hours of horticultural training in order to recertify for another year?
   A. 3 hours
   B. 6 hours
   C. 10 hours
   D. 15 hours

5. The main purpose of the Master Gardener Program is to increase or extend the service and output of information offered by the Cooperative Extension Service.
   A. True
   B. False

6. The Cooperative Extension Service provides information to the community primarily in the program(s) and area(s) of:
   A. Home Economics
   B. Youth
   C. Agriculture
   D. All of the above

7. Master Gardeners make recommendations to homeowners based on:
   A. Public sources such as books, magazines and newspaper articles
   B. Personal, practical experience
   C. Information generated by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension
   D. All of the above

8. The title Master Gardener is to be used only in association with the Florida Master Gardener Program and is not to be used for commercial purposes.
   A. True
   B. False

9. Master Gardeners are expected to extend information to people involved in commercial agricultural/horticultural endeavors.
   A. True
   B. False
Sprouting Kit Questionnaire #2

There are many reasons why individuals want to be part of this effort and program. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions. Beside each comment below, write the number, which best describes how important it is to you.

1. Extremely important
2. Very important
3. Important
4. Somewhat important
5. Of minor importance
6. Not a reason of factor

Becoming a Master Gardener is important to me because:

A. I will have the opportunity to receive useful training.
B. I will become a part of the University of Florida.
C. I will have the opportunity to share my knowledge with other gardeners.
D. I will gain practical experience that can help me get a job.
E. I will be able to provide a service to other people in my community and/or neighborhood.
F. I can get a tax credit for my volunteer work.
G. I will receive free instruction and materials.
H. I will be able to increase my knowledge in the area of gardening.
I. I will gain a great deal of personal satisfaction.
J. I will be able to creatively use my free time.
K. I will be recognized by people in my community.
L. I will be able to gain new skills as a gardener.
M. I will be certified by the University of Florida, Cooperative Extension Service.
N. (Other reasons: Please use space below.)
Sprouting Kit—Interview Request Form

Prior to final selection for training, all Master Gardener candidates meet informally with an Extension Service Agent and/or currently certified Master Gardeners. This meeting gives you the opportunity to visit the UF/IFAS Extension Martin County Office (if you’ve not yet done so), and to meet and talk to the Master Gardener Coordinator and current Master Gardeners.

These interviews take only about 15 minutes and are scheduled for August 6, 7, and 8. Interviews will be conducted on the hour and every 20 minutes thereafter from 9:00 a.m. until 11:40 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. each day. Please indicate below the date and time of your choice. Every effort will be made to meet your request. Your interview date/time will be confirmed by telephone no later than August 4.

On arrival, please check in with the receptionist at the Extension Office.

Name:________________________________________

Phone Number:_________________ Preferred Date:______________

Preferred Time:_________________
The History of the Master Gardener Program

The rapid urban growth in many areas of the United States coupled with increased interest in the environment and home gardening have prompted ever-increasing numbers of homeowner questions to County Extension Service agents. Many of these questions are seasonal in nature and are relatively easily answered assuming that one has horticultural training.

In 1972, an innovative Extension Agent in the State of Washington reasoned that well-trained volunteers could respond to many of the everyday homeowner questions freeing him and his colleagues for more technical and difficult problems. Volunteers, such as Extension Homemakers and 4-H Leaders had always been a part of the Extension Service but never in the area of homeowner horticulture. The Extension agent selected, trained, and certified volunteers as Master Gardeners. They soon succeeded in meeting his desired objectives - in fact they exceeded his expectations. This led to the genesis of the Master Gardener volunteer program.

Since that time, the Master Gardener program has grown and is now active in all 50 states. Florida's began in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now active in most of Florida's 67 counties. The Florida Master Gardener Program is sponsored by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) of which the Cooperative Extension Service is a part.

Just what is the Cooperative Extension Service? For a more complete understanding of this unique organization, we must go back to 1862 when the U.S. Congress passed the Morrill Act which established colleges in each state to be financed through grants of land from the Federal government. They became known as "land grant colleges," a name which persists today. These colleges would emphasize teaching practical subjects such as agriculture and home economics. The 1887 Hatch Act provided for experimental stations at Land Grant Colleges to conduct research for those colleges' agricultural problems.

Then in 1914 the Smith-Lever Act created the Extension Service as a part of these colleges as a means of disseminating the practical knowledge gained through agricultural research. The University of Florida at Gainesville is Florida's land grant college; The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is that part of the university which has responsibility for the Cooperative Extension Service.

The term "cooperative" refers to the method by which extension services are funded. In Florida, three cooperating tax sources provide funds: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State through legislative appropriations, and the counties through appropriations by county governments. The word "cooperative" also implies a sharing of information generated through sound research programs at the federal and state levels. The term "extension" defines this organization's purpose -- to extend the information generated at the state and federal level to
people at the county level in the form of a "service." The Cooperative Extension Service is an informal education organization which provides information in three main areas: agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences.

The motto and goal of the Cooperative Extension Service is "Helping People Help Themselves." Thus, you can see how well the volunteer Master Gardener concept fits into the ultimate objectives and goals of the Extension Service.
Florida Master Gardener Annual Volunteer Agreement

Within the state of Florida, most counties maintain active Master Gardener programs. This being the case, a need exists for the establishment of standards for all Florida Master Gardeners to represent their county in a manner consistent with exemplary citizenship and leadership.

To become a certified Florida Master Gardener, one is required to attend the prescribed hours of instruction and pass an examination administered by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. This certification is restrictive in nature and is valid only for one year and when the individual is participating in the Florida Master Gardener Program. New certifications will be issued each year only to those individuals who make a commitment for participation in the coming year. All Florida Master Gardener Volunteers must agree to be screened as outlined by the program’s screening guidelines and as deemed appropriate by the County Master Gardener Coordinator. All volunteers working with youth must successfully complete the online Youth Protection Training – YCS800 annually.

As a certified Florida Master Gardener, you will be eligible to attend educational programs such as the Florida Master Gardener Continued Training Conference offered by the University of Florida, as well as local educational programs and field trips provided by the County Master Gardener Coordinator. Master Gardeners are also provided with the most recent information available on environmental horticulture issues and related topics by the County Master Gardener Coordinator and State Extension Specialists.

An inactive Master Gardener is one who is unable to commit to an additional 35 hours annually at present, but would like the opportunity to possibly recertify him/herself in the future. The following policies apply:

1) An inactive Master Gardener is one who has completed their original commitment of 75 hours of volunteer service in the first twelve months following the completion of their training, but is not able to continue to volunteer the minimum of 35 hours per year.

2) The inactive Master Gardener must apply to the County Master Gardener Coordinator for recertification. If accepted, he or she must then attend or have attended 10 hours of acceptable horticultural training as approved by the coordinator to re-certify.

3) The inactive Master Gardener must take and pass a comprehensive examination provided by the county Master Gardener Coordinator.

4) An inactive Master Gardener may re-certify at any time as long as the above criteria are met and upon receiving approval from the county Master Gardener Coordinator.

5) Inactive Master Gardeners are ineligible to apply for awards of excellence, receive mailings, attend monthly meetings, or register for continued training opportunities.
The county Master Gardener Coordinator can make exceptions in unusual circumstances. Master Gardeners are encouraged to participate in all components of the planned program (including record keeping), be responsive to the reasonable requests of the County Master Gardener Coordinator in charge, and be respectful of the need for personal safety and the safety of others. Whenever injuries do occur, they should be reported to the County Master Gardener Coordinator or County Extension Director immediately.

**Master Gardener Code of Conduct**

Along with active participation, Master Gardeners are expected to uphold a professional demeanor. The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service functions without regard to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans’ Readjustment Assistance Act. All Volunteers must follow all University of Florida rules regulations and policies, abide by the Florida Master Gardener Program identity standards and all federal, state and local laws. The University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service does not tolerate:

- Possession or use of alcohol or drugs in the workplace;
- Abuse or theft of public or personal property;
- Sexual harassment or misconduct;
- Verbal abuse or failure to cooperate with other Master Gardeners, staff members, and/or the public;
- Possession or use of weapons or fireworks in the workplace;
- Defamation of the organization;
- Creating an implied or outright University or Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business;
- Misrepresentation of sources of information;
- Consistently and knowingly giving out incorrect information;
- Use of state and/or county equipment without authorization.

Master Gardener Certification may become void when an individual ceases active participation in the program or dismissal may result from violations described above. Illegal activities will be referred to law enforcement. Those individuals not continuing in the program are prohibited from representing themselves as Florida Master Gardeners. Such prohibited representations constitute a breach of the terms of the UF/IFAS Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Florida Master Gardener program are valuable and may rightly be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment. Once employed, and while serving as a paid employee, or if self-employed, Master Gardeners shall not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Florida Master Gardener at the place of business. Experienced Florida Master Gardeners may be invited to speak before various community groups. Master Gardeners are prohibited from accepting payment, monetary or other for speaking appearances.
The title “Florida Master Gardener” is to be used only and exclusively in the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service Master Gardener Program in which trained and certified Florida Master Gardeners answer gardening questions and educate local residents. Master Gardeners are expected to use the title only when doing unpaid volunteer educational work on the behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. Florida Master Gardeners shall not use the Florida Master Gardener title in any advertisements or activities not related to University of Florida/IFAS Master Gardener activities. The Florida Master Gardener program represents a University of Florida Extension Service public education program; Master Gardeners are prohibited from endorsing commercial products or implying UF/IFAS endorses any product or place of business.

In making recommendations, which include the use of chemicals (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardeners MUST FOLLOW PUBLISHED University of Florida/IFAS Extension recommendations. Cultural problems that are not specially covered by University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service recommendations may be handled by suggesting treatments, which an experienced Master Gardener considers appropriate. If you are making a recommendation based on personal experience, state clearly that you are speaking for yourself and not the UF/IFAS Extension Service. Questions concerning any commercial horticultural enterprise (i.e., vegetable production, fruit crops production, landscape maintenance of golf course, recreational park, school grounds or commercial nursery production) are to be referred to the local Horticulture Extension Agent.

I have read and fully understand the above agreement regarding my services as a Florida Master Gardener Volunteer and agree to abide by the terms of this agreement, including the Master Gardener Code of Conduct, UF rules and regulations, and all federal, state and local laws. I further agree to perform at least 75 hours of service in my first year and at least 35 hours in each subsequent year to the Florida Master Gardener Program in return for the training provided by the University of Florida/IFAS Extension Service. I also agree to attend a minimum of 10 hours of continued training as deemed appropriate by the county Master Gardener coordinator each year I participate in the program. I enter into this agreement knowingly and voluntarily.

Agent ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Signature of Applicant ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Revised 7-2014