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October 9, 2009

To: Prospective Master Gardener Volunteers – *Information you requested*

Thank you for your interest in the University of Wisconsin – Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program. Please read the following carefully.

Master Gardener Volunteer training is only offered through UW-Extension, and is a program dedicated to educating adults interested in helping their community through informative programs and projects. In Kenosha and Racine Counties, Master Gardener Volunteers answer gardening questions, present educational programs, design and maintain demonstration and therapeutic gardens, and help youth learn about and appreciate the natural world. The Master Gardener Volunteer program is a national program; the statewide Wisconsin Master Gardener Program administered by a coordinator at UW-Madison. (<http://www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener>).

The Master Gardener General Training course covers many aspects of horticulture and the environment, from flowers, shrubs and trees, lawns, vegetables and fruits to soils, insects and plant diseases. There are 12 classes in General Training; each one will be dedicated to a different topic. The classes are taught by the UW-Extension Horticulture Educators. There are opportunities in each class for questions and answers, discussions, and hands-on activities. In the future, as an active Master Gardener Volunteer in good standing, you will have the opportunity to take more advanced, specialized continuing education courses and classes.

As a Master Gardener Volunteer in Training you are expected to complete the General Training Course, including passing a take-home exam with a grade better than 70%. In addition, 24 hours of volunteer service on an approved Master Gardener Volunteer project is required. This volunteer commitment must be met by October 1, 2010. In order to remain a Master Gardener Volunteer in the future, you will be required to perform a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer service each year along with obtaining 10 hours of continuing education.

In 2010, classes will meet on Tuesdays, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. from February 2 through April 27. Classes alternate between two locations, the Kenosha County Center in Bristol (NE corner of Hwys 45 and 50) and the Racine County Office Building in Ives Grove (1/4 mile west of I-94 on Hwy 20 and Spring Street.) Participants are expected to attend all classes.

#### **APPLICATION PROCESS:**

We have 40 spaces available in the 2010 class. The following criteria must be met in order to be accepted into the program:

1. Ability to attend all of 12 MGV Training classes
2. Attend **one** of the Orientation sessions on **November 9** or **November 11**, 2009
3. Application to the Master Gardener Program filled out completely and returned by **November 15<sup>th</sup>** (**may be returned at Orientation**)

4. Volunteer Agreement filled out completely, signed and returned by **November 15, 2009**
5. Pass the state required criminal background check
6. Fully understand the volunteer nature of the program and commit to completing a minimum of 24 hours of volunteer time on a certified MGV project(s) by October 1, 2010.
7. A short informal interview **may be** required if there are more applicants than spaces.

Attendance at one of the two sessions of "Orientation to the Master Gardener Volunteer Program" is mandatory for acceptance into the program. The dates and locations are:

**Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.**  
**at the Kenosha County Center, 19600 75<sup>th</sup> St., Bristol**

OR

**Wednesday, November 11<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.**  
**at the Racine County Office Building, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant**

At the **Orientation** session you will learn:

- ❖ Everything you always wanted to know about the Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program
- ❖ Details of the Volunteer Agreement – what does it really mean?
- ❖ Master Gardener Volunteer Project Highlights – photos and descriptions of some of the current MGV projects in Racine and Kenosha Counties.
- ❖ Question & Answer – time to ask your questions about the program.

Please bring the enclosed Application and Volunteer Agreement forms to the Orientation. You may complete them that night, but please read through everything before coming to Orientation.

You will be notified of your acceptance into the program pending the completion of the basic background check. Background checks are required by the state for volunteers in the Master Gardener program. Your social security number will be required on the background check form. Background check forms are sealed and sent to the Wisconsin State Master Gardener Coordinator, who does the check. After the background check is completed, forms and information are destroyed.

The course fee of **\$160**, which covers the cost of books and materials, will be due to Kenosha County UW-Extension by **January 19, 2010**. If you are in need of financial assistance, please contact either Barb or Patti to discuss other methods of payment for the class.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact one of us. Thank you.



Patti Nagai, Ph.D.  
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