2019 Master Gardener Training Course for Working People

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One of the better-known University of Georgia volunteer programs, Master Gardener, is on the bucket-list of many people. Through the Georgia Master Gardener training course, UGA Extension faculty provide adult trainees with research-based information about gardening and horticulture.

One of the frequent criticisms of the Georgia Master Gardener program is that the training course is only offered on weekdays, essentially excluding people who haven’t yet achieved retirement.

In 2019, UGA Extension Forsyth County is changing that. In order to make the program more accessible to folks who still hold full-time jobs, we’re offering Georgia Master Gardener training on Saturdays.

What does the Georgia Master Gardener training course cover?

Georgia Master Gardener curriculum covers soil and plant science, plant selection, and gardening challenges with classes that include:

- Botany and plant physiology
- Soil and plant nutrition
- Plant pathology
- Basic entomology
- Weed identification and control
- Integrated Pest Management
- Pollinator gardening

- Vegetable gardening
- Fruit gardening
- Annuals and perennials
- Tree selection and care
- Turfgrass selection and care
- Landscape design
- Gardening with wildlife

Classroom lectures and textbook chapters will be supplemented with hands-on learning activities as often as possible.

The course also prepares trainees to become Master Gardener Extension Volunteers. After completing 50 hours of training, trainees may become UGA Extension volunteers and assist the Extension agent in providing horticultural information to other community members through a variety of projects and programs. Volunteer opportunities include answering homeowner client questions about gardening at event booths or in the Extension office; working with other MGEVs to conduct youth gardening programs such as Jr. Master Gardener; supporting MGEV
demonstration and education gardens; and assisting with Extension educational activities throughout the county.

**When and where is the Master Gardener training course offered?**
Forsyth County Extension will offer Georgia Master Gardener training on the second Saturday of each month from January through December of 2019. Most classes will be face-to-face at a location in Cumming, but some classes may be offered by webinar. Classes will begin at 9 a.m. and end at 4 p.m., with a break for lunch. Enrolled trainees must attend at least 10 of the 12 classes and pass midterm and final examinations to complete the course.

**Who can apply for the Georgia Master Gardener training course?**
Georgia Master Gardener is an adult education class that was developed to train community service volunteers to help the local Extension office provide unbiased, research-based horticulture information to more community clients than the Extension agent alone can reach. All interested adults who are willing to commit to completing the training are welcome to apply, but space is limited. This non-traditional offering of the program is designed to make the course accessible to Forsyth County residents who, because of employment status, have been excluded from traditional Georgia Master Gardener training courses.

**How do I apply?**
Application materials for the 2019 UGA Extension Forsyth County Georgia Master Gardener Training Course are available on our website at [http://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth.html](http://extension.uga.edu/county-offices/forsyth.html). Tuition of $200 covers program materials and is due upon acceptance into the program.

If taking the Georgia Master Gardener training course has been on your wish list, but you haven’t been able to attend weekday classes because you still work full-time, here’s your chance to apply for a course that meets monthly on Saturdays. Get your application in now!

**Are You Ready for Winter Storms?**

In the past few weeks, the southeastern corner of our nation has suffered from two major hurricanes. Through news reporting, we watched Hurricane Florence approach the Carolinas for what seemed like a week. Clean-up from that September storm was still underway when Michael slammed into the Florida panhandle as a category 4 hurricane, then roared across Georgia to dump more rain on our northeastern neighbors. Recovery measures are underway, but these storms cost many families dearly through loss of life, homes, businesses, farms, crops, livestock, and pets.
Recovery is the last step in emergency management. All of the other steps are preparatory actions that can help us survive emergencies and disasters that we may – or may not – see coming. Emergency preparedness starts with:

1. Risk assessment. We need to take some time to consider the environments that surround us – home, work, car, et cetera – and all risk factors associated with them.
2. Risk mitigation. Once we identify a risk, we need to make necessary changes to eliminate the hazard if possible, or take steps to mitigate damage if the risk factor is something we can’t completely control.
3. Prepare. Emergencies often require a quick response, both mentally and physically. We can prepare for emergency survival based on our risk assessment. If evacuation is likely, we’ll need a grab and go bag for each family member, including pets. On the other hand, if shelter in place is the better option, we need to have appropriate stores of water and food, especially food that can be prepared even if the power is out.

**How to prepare for winter storms**

During good weather, winterize your home by:
- Insulating walls and attics
- Sealing air leaks around windows and doors with caulk or weather-stripping
- Insulating storm doors and windows.

As you do routine grocery shopping, purchase one or two extra shelf-stable, ready-to-eat canned goods, like non-condensed soup, canned chicken breast and tuna, pasta meals, and vegetables. This builds your emergency food supply without adding too much to your grocery bill each week. Unlike frozen foods, canned foods won’t be damaged by a long power outage. Make sure you have a manual can opener, too. Dry foods like pasta and rice are stable, but they require water and cooking, luxuries that may be in short supply during a storm.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends stocking at least a three-day supply of adequate nutrition, water and prescription medications for each family member, including pets and livestock. Why three days? That’s how long it may take to restore electricity and clear roads of ice, fallen trees and other hazards. But as we’ve seen with recent natural disasters, actual restoration of electricity, water and transportation can take much longer.

To get through disruptive storms or other emergencies you’ll also need:
- Water – one gallon per person per day for drinking and hygiene
- Alternate heat source and fuel, such as firewood for your fireplace
- Flashlights with extra batteries
- NOAA weather radio
- First aid kit
- Entertainment, such as board games, cards and books to keep boredom and cabin fever at bay

**What to do if your power goes out**

Use foods from the refrigerator first, then frozen foods, then canned foods. If your oven doesn’t work without electricity, use coals in your fireplace to heat food. Use cast iron cookware if you
have it, or place food in pockets of aluminum foil. Remember Hobo Packs from summer camp? Alternatively, you can cook outside on your grill. Don’t bring your grill inside; this can cause deadly carbon monoxide to build up in your home. If you must venture outside, bundle up, including gloves and a warm hat that covers your ears.

Go ahead and fill up some containers with water. If there’s space in your freezer, make ice. It will help keep frozen foods frozen longer without power. Fill your bathtub with water for washing and toilet flushing.

To stay warm, centralize the family in one room, preferably one with a fireplace or woodstove, and close the doors to the other rooms. Bring blankets, books, and games to help the time pass.

**HOBO PACKS** – Add a little more fun to snow days with some fireplace cooking. Pull out whatever meat you have in the refrigerator and dice it into small pieces. Do the same with fresh veggies like potatoes, celery, carrots, onions, mushrooms, and peppers. Small pieces cook more evenly and quickly over the coals. Put each ingredient in separate bowls and offer salt and pepper at the end of the line.

Next, make an aluminum foil pocket for each member of the family: Roll out two 12-inch sheets of aluminum foil (heavy duty is best) and sandwich a moist paper towel between the sheets. The moisture also helps food cook evenly. Let everyone add their choices from the diced food selection to the center of the aluminum foil sandwich. Put the short edges together and roll the foil down several times until you can’t roll anymore. Repeat for each side of the pocket, completely sealing the food into the foil. Have everyone write their initials or name on the foil.

Place the packs on warm coals in the fireplace. Don’t put them into flames. Let them cook for about 20 minutes. Heavily-filled packs may need more cooking time. Use tongs to pull the packs off the coals. You can eat right out of the foil to make clean up easier.

**Learning with Extension – Events and Opportunities**

**Rite Bite Cooking for Diabetes** – Oct. 22, 30, November 3, 13
Join Family and Consumer Sciences agent Barbara Worley for the Rite Bite diabetes management cooking class at the Cumming branch library. Register through the library.

**Master Gardener Training 2019** – Application deadline: November 16, 2018
If becoming a Georgia Master Gardener is on your bucket list, but you haven’t been able to attend classes during the week, apply now for the 2019 Master Gardener training in Forsyth County. Learn how Forsyth County Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are Building Community through Gardening. Applications for the training are available on the UGA Extension Forsyth County website.