

Ask a Master Gardener

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Phyllis King, Carroll County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer

Becoming a Master Gardener

Q. I have been impressed over the past few years with the activities of the Master Gardeners. Since I retired this year, I will have time to complete the training. What are the steps to start this process?

A. The first step is to complete an application. Applications can be picked up at the Extension office at 900 Newnan Road in Carrollton, call the office to have a copy mailed to you or go to <http://www.ugaextension.com/carroll/anr/MasterGardenerPage.html> and download the application. Return the completed application, the signed volunteer agreement form and the application for screening form by December 1. You will also need a \$175.00 check to cover supplies and the text book. In 2016, the classes will be held on Thursdays from 9:00 am – 4:00 pm starting on February 11th and ending on April 14th. The classes will be held in Carroll and Douglas Counties.

Before the classes begin, you will be scheduled for an interview to learn a little more about you and give you an opportunity to ask any questions that you might have about the program. The class is very interesting and includes sessions on soil, proper planting, beneficial and harmful insects, plant diseases, identification and control of weeds, the physiology of plant growth, and so much more. Your instructors will be experts in their fields and will include county Extension agents, local experts, and master gardeners. You will have a mid-term and a final exam. After you finish the class, in that first year you must complete 50 hours of volunteer service with the Carroll County UGA Cooperative Extension and then complete 25 hours of service each year after that to maintain your certification.

There are many areas of interest that you can explore to earn your hours; one of the most useful is working at the Extension office to help the Extension staff with horticultural questions and other related tasks. Another area that many Master Gardeners find valuable is working in the Buffalo Creek Garden which is located at the Ag Center. The Junior Master Gardener Program is being expanded in 2016 to include two additional age groups and will offer many opportunities for completing volunteer hours. Master gardeners also host workshops on a variety of subjects such as spring and fall gardens and building raised beds.

If you have gardening questions, contact a Master Gardener Extension volunteer at the UGA Cooperative Extension Carroll County office at 900 Newnan Road, Carrollton at 770-836-8546 or via email at ccmg@uga.edu.