

Brian Maddy, County Extension Agent

Master Naturalist Training Program

Just what is a master naturalist? By definition a master naturalist is an expert in or a student of natural history. What is natural history? It is the scientific study of animals or plants, especially concerned with observation rather than experiment, and presented in popular form rather than academic form. A master naturalist is an expert who ties together how our natural world works together (my definition).

This spring the Troup County Extension Service will be offering the Georgia Master Naturalist Extension Volunteer training program. The Georgia Master Naturalist Program is an adult environmental education course developed by UGA extension and the Warnell School of Forestry. The program is a series of weekly programs with specific environmental topics. This program is a hands-on environmental education that explores habitats and ecosystems in Georgia and human impacts on those environments. The mission of the program through the University of Georgia is to provide unbiased, scientifically accurate information about environmental issues.

The sessions will be customized to our local habitats in West Georgia and East Alabama. Wetlands, ponds, rivers, lakes, forests, farms, mountains, urban landscapes will be our classrooms for part of the program. Topics will include ecological systems, water quality, native plants and invasive plants, forestry, Georgia wildlife, birding, soil conservation, entomology, urban landscapes and environmental awareness and will compliment the field studies.

Part of the goals of the Master Naturalist program is to introduce participants to our regional natural resources such as West Point Lake, Hills and Dales, FDR State Park, the Chattahoochee River and the Marvin Jones Nature Center.

After completing this fun and interactive program, Georgia Master Naturalists are encouraged to share their knowledge with our community by volunteering in local schools or nature centers.

The program will begin in late March and conclude in late May or early June. We will meet once per week with mornings beginning at 9:30 AM and concluding at approximately 3:30 PM. Most afternoons will be delegated to field trip activities. The cost of the program will be \$175.00 per person with discounts for couples. As with all UGA volunteer programs all participants must have a background check.

extension.uga.edu

For more information and the application packet, please stop by the office, email the office: uge2285@uga.edu or call the office at your earliest convenience.

What's going on in Extension?

- Tree seedlings can be ordered from the Georgia Forestry Commission, 706.845.4122
- February 15th: Troup County Association of Beekeepers, 7 PM, Ag Center, Guest
- February 16th: Troup County Cattleman, 7 PM, Ag Center, dinner starts at 7 PM (\$6.00), Program at 7:30 PM, Guest speakers: 4-H and FFA Officers
- February 11th: MGEV Meeting, Ag Center, 7 PM, Guest speaker: Tia Gonzales, Auburn University.
- February 18th: Timber Growers Meeting, Ag Center, 7 PM, Guest Speaker: Joseph Moore, Topic: Reforestation

If you have any questions or concerns, stop by or call the office.

Brian Maddy is the ANR Agent for Troup County Extension. The Troup County Extension office is located at 114 Church Street, LaGrange, GA. 30240 (706) 883-1675. Monday - Friday/8:00 AM – 12 noon and from 1:00 PM - 5:00pm.

extension.uga.edu