



Do you enjoy plants and gardening? Are you looking to learn more and hone your skills but don't know where to go? The Extension Master Gardener program will educate you on many aspects of horticulture, allow you to test your knowledge and skills, all while serving your local community.

The Nebraska Extension Master Gardener program is a horticulture related volunteer training program based in many counties throughout the state. It has been part of Nebraska Extension since 1976. Master Gardener volunteers are trained by Nebraska Extension faculty and staff. They contribute time as volunteers working with their local Extension office to provide horticulture-related information to their community. Participants are required to complete 40 hours of training and 40 hours of volunteer service during the initial year of their involvement in the program. Master Gardener volunteers retain their certification through annual training and volunteering.

Volunteer hours can be completed through various activities. These activities could include: planting and maintaining demonstration gardens, collecting data on research projects, helping with county and state fair activities, speaking to community groups, leading garden tours, collecting plant samples, answering phone questions, teaching youth programs, or whatever sparks your interest and utilizes your talents.

Educational topics will cover a wide range of horticultural issues. Topics that have been covered in previous training sessions include: native plants for water conservation, an in-depth look at fertilizers, turfgrass and related insects, beneficial pollinating insects and vegetable garden pests, tree and shrub pruning, pesticide safety and non-chemical pest control techniques, and small fruits and tree fruit basics. The content of the topics are focused on the home gardener, but those employed in the green industry are also welcome.

Do you have that perfect person in mind or are you interested in becoming a Master Gardener? Nebraska Extension in Hall County will be offering two Master Gardener training sessions at the Hall County Extension Office meeting rooms in Grand Island. The first session will offer six trainings on Tuesday evenings February 4 through March 10, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. The second session will be held during the day from 9:00-12:00 noon and from 1:00-4:00 p.m. March 9, 11, 13, 16, 18, & 20. For individuals who wish to become new Master Gardeners, the fee is **\$175**. With that fee the Master Gardener interns receive a large resource notebook, an integrated turfgrass management book, a short-sleeved t-shirt, and a name tag. The fee will also help fund handout materials, speaker travel expenses, room rental, and other costs associated with the training program. For returning Master Gardeners, the fee is **\$20** to help fund costs associated with the training program. The ProHort program is for green industry professionals and has a fee of **\$325**. ProHort participants will receive a large resource notebook, an integrated turfgrass management book, and 40 hours of education. The general public is also welcome to attend sessions for a fee of \$5 per person for each training session. Please contact Elizabeth Killinger, 308-385-5088, prior to January 15th with the Master Gardener training session you are interested in attending. More information, updated schedules, and a brochure can be found at <http://hall.unl.edu>

For more information e-mail Elizabeth Killinger at ekillinger2@unl.edu, call 308-385-5088, or visit the Nebraska Extension in Hall County website: <http://hall.unl.edu>.

*Elizabeth Killinger is the Horticulture Extension Educator with Nebraska Extension in Hall County.
For more information contact Elizabeth at elizabeth.killinger@unl.edu, her blog at <http://huskerhort.com/>, or HuskerHort on Facebook and Twitter.*