



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Grayson County Master Gardeners
100 West Houston
Sherman, Texas 75090

Dear Applicant for the Master Gardener Program,

Thank you for your interest in the Grayson County Master Gardener Training Program. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service is an educational organization provided by the Federal, State and County governments, through the Texas A&M University System. Because the size and scope of our programs, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service trains volunteers to assist in reaching the citizens of Texas with research-based information.

The Master Gardener Program is a volunteer development program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service and is designed to increase the availability of horticultural information and improve the quality of life through horticultural projects. Program objectives are implemented through the training and "employing" local volunteers, known as Master Gardeners. They aid Extension by conducting school garden projects; answering telephone requests for horticultural information; working with special audiences in the community; and designing and implementing community improvement projects, as well as coordinating Master Gardener projects. The Master Gardener program is made up of certified volunteers who have been trained by Extension and meet the required volunteer service hours each year. While participants will benefit personally in this training, it should be understood that the principal criteria for acceptance into the program is the availability and willingness of the applicant to volunteer.

The training covers topics such as: the proper environmental and cultural practices in the cultivation and management of ornamental and flowering plants, the production and care of vegetables, fruits and nuts, the care and maintenance of turf and landscape plants, and a general understanding of the sciences of Plant Pathology, Entomology, Botany, and Soils. We plan for two classes, one in Summer and another in Winter, depending on class size. We need a minimum of 10 students per class. Training takes place once a week for approximately 10 weeks. There will be more than 50 hours of training provided to you during this training program. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agents, specialists, volunteers, and local experts will teach individual classes. Each class will start at 9:00 a.m. and will last until 4:00 p.m. with one hour for lunch. Since there is no way to make up classes, we require that you NOT miss more than one class, so please plan ahead. You are required to be present for the entire class time with no exceptions. Most classes will be held in the Assembly Room on the 2nd floor of the Grayson County Court House. Please use the south entrance to the Court House.

In return for this training, you are required to contribute a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service in Grayson County during 12 months following the training. Fifteen hours of the total volunteer service hours must be earned answering questions related to horticulture in the Master Gardener office located at the Extension Office in Sherman. Our interest in selecting individuals for this program goes beyond the first year of service. We need people who are willing to commit to continued participation as experienced Master Gardeners through annual recertification. Recertification requirements are 15 hours of volunteer service and 6 hours of recertification training for each calendar year, plus your attendance at a minimum of 4 monthly Master Gardener meetings.

The Master Gardener Training Program fee is \$180 for the Training Class. The Master Gardener Handbook, Extension Fact Sheets and other class materials will be provided. Background checks of all Extension volunteers and employees are mandatory for the protection of our clientele. Volunteers must adhere to Youth Protection Standards established by the Extension Service and participating organizations.

Please send the course fee of \$180 with your Application, Volunteer Release, and your Volunteer Application Form (background history check) to the Grayson County Extension Office. Please make checks payable to Master Gardener Fund. If a class is cancelled your check will be returned.

I encourage you to visit the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Website at <http://texasextension.tamu.edu>, the Grayson County Extension website, <http://grayson-tx.tamu.edu>, the Texas A&M Horticulture website, <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>, the Texas Master Gardener website, <http://www.texasmastergardeners.com/>, as well as the Grayson County Master Gardener website at <http://graysoncountymastergardeners.net/> to learn more about us. I look forward to meeting you at the initial session February 22nd, 2017

Sincerely,

Chuck Jones
County Extension Agent
Master Gardener Coordinator
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Grayson County
100 West Houston
Sherman, Texas 75090

Beverley Patterson
Grayson County Master Gardener
President
Sherman, Texas 75090
(cell: 972-505-1841)
(e-mail: beverleybriggs58@gmail.com)



Grayson County Master Gardener Application

I am applying for acceptance into the Texas Master Gardener Training program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service in Grayson County. I understand that in exchange for the training made possible through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service, I agree to volunteer 50 hours of my time to the county's Master Gardener Program within one year of completion of the training course. In addition, I agree to serve 15 hours of my total volunteer hours at the Master Gardener help desk. I also agree to attend a minimum of 4 Master Gardening monthly meetings that year. I understand that I will become a certified Texas Master Gardener when I complete both the training, attend the 4 meetings, and the volunteer service within the first year. I agree to attend all Master Gardener Training classes and stay for duration of class time. I agree to pay the fee of \$180 for the training course and understand that refunds are not available after December 30th, 2016.

Name: _____ (Please Print Name)

(Signature)
Address: _____
City/State/Zip Code: _____
Telephone: (Day) _____ (Night) _____
Email Address: _____
Emergency contact name and phone: _____
Medical conditions we should know about (optional): _____

Please complete the following questions. Use additional pages if necessary.

1. Are you a resident of Grayson County? If yes, how many years? _____
2. How did you learn of the Master Gardener Program? _____

3. Why do you want to become a Master Gardener? _____

4. Years of gardening experience: _____

5. Type of gardening experience and related training: _____

6. List areas of specialization or hobbies (e.g., flowers, vegetables, ornamentals, house plants, community gardening, fruit crops, trees, creating wildlife habitats, organic gardening, etc):

7. Please describe any other skills and/or abilities you have which might be useful in volunteer work (e.g., computer and/or clerical skills, web page design, public speaking, artistry, photography, graphic design, fund-raising, newsletters and media relations, program and/or presentation development, editing, etc.):

8. Describe any experience you have in working with each type of community: schools, youth organizations, churches, senior citizens, hospitals, scouts, etc.: _____

9. Please list any group affiliations (garden clubs, plant societies, community gardens, civic organizations, etc.):

10. Are you currently employed? If yes, where?

Title: _____ Duties: _____

14. Please indicate when you are available for volunteer work.

	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
Monday	_____	_____	_____
Tuesday	_____	_____	_____
Wednesday	_____	_____	_____
Thursday	_____	_____	_____
Friday	_____	_____	_____
Saturday	_____	_____	_____
Sunday	_____	_____	_____

15. Please provide additional comments, including skills from your professional or community experiences.

Please complete this application and return to:

**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Attn: Master Gardener President
100 West Houston
Sherman, TX 75090**

**For additional information, please visit the web site @ <http://grayson-tx.tamu.edu>;
call the Master Gardener Office at (903) 813-4204**

or e-mail the Master Gardener office at mastergardeners@co.grayson.tx.us

Extension programs serve people of ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. A member of the Texas A&M University System and its statewide Agriculture Program



TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION
VOLUNTEER RELEASE FORM

**I, , agree to serve as a Grayson County
Master Gardener Volunteer for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
service.**

As a volunteer, I agree to perform to the best of my ability those tasks for which I volunteer, execute each project/work on time, and if unable, to call my supervisor, to accept supervision, maintain confidentiality: observe the same rules and policies as paid staff, strive to help the Grayson County Master Gardener Program and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service obtain its goals and objectives, and to give my supervisor adequate notice before terminating as a volunteer.

As a volunteer, I understand the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service, the Grayson County Master Gardener Program and the Texas A&M University does not provide volunteers with employee's benefits, accident insurance, death benefits, and compensation for lost time due to injury; nor do the above agencies carry general liability insurance covering volunteers.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Volunteer's Signature)

Extension programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, State of Texas, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the Grayson County Commissioners Courts work cooperatively to provide Extension to your county.

The Mission of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service in Grayson County is to improve county residents' Quality of life with custom-made educational programs which are based on community identified needs in the areas of agriculture, environmental stewardship, youth and adult life skills, human capital, leadership and community economic development.

The mission of the Master Gardener Program is to assist the Extension Agent in providing horticulture information and training to the gardening public, based on Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service research and on the best horticulture practices available.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AGREEMENT

This agreement is intended to indicate the seriousness with which we treat our volunteers. The intent of the agreement is to assure you both of our deep appreciation of your services and to indicate our commitment to do the very best we can to make your volunteer experience here a productive and rewarding one.

In the capacity of a Master Gardener volunteer, I understand and agree:

- To disseminate Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service and Texas A&M University horticultural information to all who request it, without regard to sex, race, religion, color, national origin, age, or disability.
- To only provide horticultural information consistent with Texas A&M University and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service.
- To comply with training, documentation, certification and re-certification requirements, as delineated in the Master Gardener handbook and the Grayson County Master Gardener Association By-laws.
- To provide my own transportation and pay my own expenses incurred as part of official volunteer activities (expenses may be tax deductible with proper documentation).
- To refrain from using alcohol or drugs while participating in volunteer activities, volunteering while intoxicated, or possessing any weapons during volunteer activities.
- To cooperate with Extension personnel, support staff members, and volunteers to jointly further our mission and the objectives of the Master Gardener Program.
- To cultivate and uphold a trustful relationship with staff and volunteers, and consistently exhibit a professional manner to staff, volunteers, and the public.
- To use the title of Master Gardener as it is intended: to signify a highly trained individual actively volunteering with the Master Gardener program. I understand that my status as a Master Gardener and that the County Master Gardener Program are subject to the complete discretion of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service, and that I, as a volunteer in the program, may reassign and/or be terminated at any time for any or no reason. I understand my master gardener title is not intended for using in business related promotions.
- To abide by the spirit of the above rules in order to maintain my status as a certified Master Gardener volunteer.
- To adhere to Youth Protection Standards established by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service and participating organizations, and agree to background checks every three years or sooner, based on current guidelines.

I further understand that the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service will:

- disseminate horticultural information consistent with Texas A&M University System to all who request it, without regard to sex, race, religion, color, national origin, age, or disability.
- support the Master Gardener Program volunteers.
- provide equipment, training, supervision and direction to volunteers.
- uphold and cultivate the trustful relationship between staff and volunteers.

I have read and understand this Volunteer Service Agreement and further agree to abide by the conditions of this memorandum until it is revoked or revise.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date



Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement



We appreciate your commitment to the Texas Master Gardener program. Your satisfaction and progress in this volunteer position is important to us. Please read the following expectations and indicate your willingness to cooperate by signing the end of this form. This form must be signed and filed with the county Extension office, and will need to be updated annually. Volunteers not adhering to all items in this agreement may forfeit their certification as a Master Gardener volunteer.

I understand that I am trained by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in the field of Horticulture and I am expected to extend research based information to the public on behalf of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. In exchange for the minimum of 50 hours of Master Gardener Training provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, I will:

- Commit to a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service to the horticultural programming efforts in _____ County within one year to become a certified Master Gardener.
- I understand that in order to maintain active status as a Master Gardener Volunteer, I must volunteer _____ (varies by county, but must be a minimum 12 hours) hours annually after my intern year and gain _____ (varies by county, but must be a minimum 6 hours) continuing education hours annually.
- Provide a record of this service as directed by the Master Gardener Program Coordinator.
- Comply with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Background Check policy. The background check is to be renewed every three years.

When acting as a Texas Master Gardener volunteer I agree to:

- Consistently exhibit a positive professional manner toward and about Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Master Gardener Program, the Master Gardener Coordinator, other Master Gardener volunteers and clients.
- Carry out and discharge all duties in a responsible and timely manner.
- Avoid conflict of interests
 - Not use my Master Gardener status to promote any commercial activity or private business.
 - Volunteer's efforts for their place of employment will not be considered as volunteer service to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.
- Recommend and use (when functioning as a Master Gardener) only Texas A&M AgriLife approved information for any public pesticide, herbicides, fertilizer or cultural practices.
- Provide my own transportation and pay my own expenses incurred as part of official volunteer activities. (Expenses may be tax deductible with proper documentation.) Some County Master Gardener Associations may assist volunteers with expenses to certain types of events. Check with your local Master Gardener Program Coordinator for more information on specific association policies and procedures.
- Act in accordance with the highest standard of ethics:
 - Not physically, verbally or sexually harass/abuse anyone
 - Refrain from illegal or unsafe behavior
 - Dress appropriately and not use harsh language

In regard to Master Gardener Coordinators, Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Recognize the responsibilities of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service staff/ Master Gardener Coordinator in setting program priorities, standards and direction. Specific projects for the performance of the volunteer work are determined locally and should reflect local needs.
- Refer all commercial horticulture inquiries to the Master Gardener Coordinator or other Extension staff.

In regard to Master Gardener Colleagues, Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Welcome volunteers from all backgrounds
- Respect and safeguard the individual rights, competencies, safety, and property

In regard to Clients, Master Gardener volunteers will:

- Provide quality service to the public without regard to socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

I further understand that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will:

- Provide training, supervision, and direction to Master Gardeners through the local county Extension office.
- Communicate expectations and responsibilities of the program to volunteers.
- Match volunteer skills and interests with volunteer opportunities within the county.
- Support Master Gardener volunteers and the local Master Gardener Association.
- Provide continuing education opportunities.
- Provide access to Extension horticulture reference materials and reasonable access to Extension professionals.
- Uphold and cultivate a trustful relationship between staff and volunteers.
- Reassign and/or terminate, if necessary, any volunteer who does not uphold Texas Master Gardener policies, procedures, guidelines, and/or values.

I understand that, as a volunteer, I will not be acting as a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employee and will not receive pay or employee benefits. I also understand that I am not covered by workers' compensation laws in connection with my volunteer affiliation. I understand and agree that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and I both have the right to end my volunteer relationship with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at any time, for any reason, and without advance notice.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Information taken from: Purdue, Rutgers, Georgia, Wisconsin, Missouri, Illinois, California, & Texas (Montgomery Co.) Master Gardener Programs.



CONFIDENTIAL



Volunteer Application Form

And consent for criminal background history check authorization/waiver

To be completed by Extension program volunteers (EFNEP, BLT, etc.) and Master Volunteers only.

4-H volunteers must register online via 4-H CONNECT or by completing the 4-H Adult Volunteer Application (4-H 2.1.056)

Please Print:

1. APPLICANT'S FULL, LEGAL NAME	2. COUNTY
3. ADDRESS	4. CITY ZIP
5. FIRST 5 DIGITS OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER	6. DATE OF BIRTH
7. DRIVER'S LICENSE NUMBER (optional)	8. GENDER (circle one) Male / Female
9. Are you of Hispanic ethnicity? Yes / No	10. VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AREA
RACE (circle one) White / Black / Asian / American Indian	
Alaskan Native / Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	

Previously Screened

11. I verify that I have been previously screened including a criminal background check and PASSED. Yes No

If yes, by who? _____ When (year): _____

For what purpose? _____

Did you pass? If not, what restrictions were imposed? _____

If you have been screened and passed a criminal background check through an Extension approved entity, a letter/proof must be submitted.

Please sign at the bottom of the form

12. I hereby authorize veriFY1 and/or its Service Provider and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service to request and receive any and all background information about or concerning me, including but not limited to, my Criminal History, Driving Record, Employment History, Military Background, Civil Listings, Educational Background, Professional License from any Individual Corporation, Partnership, Law Enforcement Agency and other entities, including my Present and Past Employers . I authorize the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service or any of its components to make reference checks relating to my volunteer service. I understand that this information will be used to determine my eligibility as a volunteer/employee with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service.

The criminal history, as received from the reporting agencies, may include arrest and conviction data, as well as plea bargains and deferred adjudications and delinquent conduct committed as a juvenile. I understand that this information will be used, in part, to determine my eligibility for an employment/volunteer position with this organization. I also understand that as long as I remain an employee or volunteer here, the criminal history check may be repeated at any time. I understand that I will have an opportunity to review the criminal history as received by client/agency and a procedure is available for clarification, if I dispute the record as received. I also understand that the criminal history could contain information presumed to be expunged.

I further release and discharge veriFY1 and their Service Provider and all of their Subsidiaries, Affiliates, Officers, Employees, Contract Personnel, or Associates, from any and all claims and liability arising out of any request for information or records pursuant to this authorization and/or procurement of an investigative consumer report and understand that it may contain information about my character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living, whichever are applicable.

I understand that I have the right to make written request within a reasonable period of time to veriFY1 for additional information concerning the nature and scope of the investigation. I acknowledge that I have voluntarily provided the above information for employment/volunteer purposes, and I have carefully read and understand this authorization.

13. Date	14. Applicant's Signature
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Volunteer Application Form Instructions

1. Applicant's Printed Name — Complete with first name, middle name and last name.
2. County — Complete with the county name in which you are applying to be a volunteer.
- 3/4. Address — Complete with your current mailing address, city and zip code.
5. Social Security Number — Complete with at least the **first five** digits of the social security number. The social security number is an individual descriptor that enables the system to complete a national criminal search of 47 jurisdictions.
6. Date of Birth — Complete with the month, day and year of birth,
7. Driver's License Number — Complete with current driver's license number and state. Although optional, this helps affirm your identity during a background check.
8. Gender — Complete by circling one of the options.
9. Race — Complete the race and ethnicity section by circling the answers that apply. This field is optional; however, it is very important in confirming accurate identity.

Volunteer Program Area — Complete with the program area you are volunteering for (e.g., Better Living for Texans, Expanded Food and Nutrition Program, Master Gardener, Master Naturalist, Master Wellness Volunteer).

**4-H volunteers should complete the Texas 4-H Adult Volunteer Application (4-H 2-1.056)*

10. Previously Screened — Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service will accept prior screenings conducted within the past three years from other entities. The approved list of prior screenings either as an employee or volunteer include: school districts, churches, youth groups/associations (Little League, sports associations, etc.), youth agencies/organizations (Big Brother/Big Sister, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, after school/extended care programs), law enforcement (county, state or federal/prison system), Texas Youth Commission, Department of Defense — Child and Youth Services, Department of Defense — Family Programs, concealed handgun license; and/or licensed childcare workers.
** The minimum requirement is a criminal background check conducted through DPS or a National Criminal Search entity. **
*** Other sources may be considered based on documentation provided with screening criteria and specifics. ***
**** Documentation is required for screenings from other entities. This could include a letter of acceptance from the employer or volunteer group, or a letter written from the screening entity to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension service stating you have been screened and tested.*
11. Authorization Statement — State agencies screening volunteers are required by legislation to use the Volunteer Center of North Texas. The Volunteer Center contracts with VeriFYI. VeriFYI is a background verification software system that accesses multi-jurisdiction checks utilizing one of the largest private-sector criminal history databases in the nation (180 million records). All information received is held in confidence and not shared at the county level. Criminal record results are shredded when a volunteer's status is determined.
12. Date Completed
13. Applicant's Signature