

How to become a master gardener

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

The Colorado Master Gardeners program in the Golden Plains Area is accepting applications this fall with a November 18th deadline. Classes are taught in Phillips County Extension in Holyoke. Classes are held on Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6 to 9 p.m. starting Jan. 20 through March 22, with the exception of two Saturday classes.

Those accepted into the program will receive 10 weeks of training on plant care and have the opportunity to work with other gardeners from the Golden Plains Area who volunteer in the community. The Colorado Master Gardener program is ideal for gardeners who wish to increase their knowledge of horticulture and help others learn the joy of successful gardening.

In addition to receiving training from Colorado State University professors, specialists and horticulture agents, master gardeners learn on the job as they perform 50 hours of volunteer work during the first growing season and 25 hours every year after to keep the master gardener status. Volunteers help the community by answering questions on garden care and provide education through teaching classes, writing news articles, working with special audiences, maintaining demonstration sites, helping with the community garden, and helping with gardening projects for 4-H, FFA and other organizations. In the Golden Plains Area our Master Gardeners have helped do all of the above listed projects as well as keep the Plant Select®, xeric and native plant gardens, provided horticulture projects for those elderly and disabled, created flower container gardens, raised funds, and other various projects. Statewide, the value placed on the time donated by the 1,800 plus master gardeners is more than \$1.3 million.

The Colorado Master Gardener program also can be a stepping stone toward a career in horticulture. This program is recognized by the green industry as a great vocational education course. The Colorado Master Gardener program is open to persons working within the green industry as well outside of the professional field. Many people considering a career in the green industry start with this master gardener training as an all-around introduction to advanced plant care.

If gaining knowledge and helping others through horticulture is of interest to you, the Colorado Master Gardener program is an ideal volunteer choice. Contact Linda Langelo at Colorado State University Extension Office in Holyoke at 854-3616 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. for further details such as the cost.

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Colorado State University Extension in the Golden Plains Area and Morgan County provides unbiased, research-based information about 4-H youth development, family and consumer issues, gardening, horticulture and natural resources. As part of a nationwide system, Extension brings the research and resources of the university to the community.