About the Sequatchie Valley Master Gardener Program

Under the guidance of UT County Extension Agents, selected residents of local communities enter a specially designed training program in horticulture. Participants complete an intensive 40 hour class and gain more knowledge by serving as an Intern for a period of 8 to 20 months. During the Internship Master Gardeners serve as volunteers for a minimum of 40 hours in Extension approved community service activities and complete an additional eight hours of continuing horticultural education. Successfully completing the Internship leads to certification as a Tennessee Master Gardener. The initial certification is valid for one year. Sequatchie Valley Master Gardeners may recertify annually by completing 25 approved volunteer hours and obtaining eight additional hours of approved continuing education.

How may the title of Master Gardener be used?

The title Sequatchie Valley Tennessee Master Gardener is strictly reserved for Master Gardeners when serving as volunteers for University of Tennessee Extension and may not be used for other purposes.

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The Sequatchie Valley Master Gardener program is one of 46 statewide education and volunteer service programs of the University of Tennessee Extension. Master Gardeners from local communities are trained by Extension professionals and other experts to serve as volunteers to assist in providing sound, practical and research-based knowledge. The primary purposes are to educate the public about home horticulture and improve the quality of life in local communities. Master Gardener programs provide information to the general public using a non-biased approach and university based research. Master Gardeners provide great gardening information in many different areas including lawns, fruits, flowers, vegetables, trees and shrubs. Master Gardeners may hold gardening workshops, present lectures, organize and oversee plant clinics, and conduct demonstrations in their local community. In addition, Master Gardeners may write articles for the local newspaper or answer their neighbors’ gardening questions. In general, Master Gardeners are a terrific resource for their local communities.
Two things set Master Gardener volunteers apart from other home gardeners. First, Master Gardeners have specialized training in horticulture, including gardening, trees, lawns, shrubs, and landscaping. Second, Master Gardeners are willing and anxious to share their knowledge by educating others.

**Should you become a certified Master Gardener Volunteer?**
To help you decide whether you want to apply for and eventually become a Master Gardener volunteer ask yourself these questions:

- Do I want to learn more about many types of plants and the best practices for growing them?
- Am I eager to participate in a practical and intense training program?
- Do I look forward to sharing my knowledge with others in my community?

If you answered yes to the questions above, the Sequatchie Valley Master Gardener program could be for you!

**Here is how to become a certified Master Gardener.**
First, complete an application and be accepted into the program. Next, enroll in an intensive 40 hour Master Gardener training class that focuses on a variety of horticultural topics. Satisfactorily completing the training class qualifies you as a *Master Gardener Intern*. You then have approximately 20 months to complete the remaining certification requirements.

The additional requirements are:

- Pay back for your training by engaging in 40 hours of community service activities.
- Complete eight continuing education units (CEU’s) by attending 8 hours of Extension approved educational programs.
- All service and continuing education hours must be reported to become certified.

**What types of volunteer activities do Sequatchie Valley Master Gardeners engage in?**
The opportunities for volunteer service are almost limitless. Examples include:

- Plant and maintain flower gardens at Senior Centers, County Libraries and fairgrounds.
- Design, construct, plant and maintain handicap accessible raised bed vegetable gardens at area Nursing Homes.
- Conduct Gardening Workshops for the general public.
- Bring the joy of gardening to young children through the Junior Master Gardening program.
- Diagnose plant, insect and disease problems.
- Share gardening information with friends and neighbors.
- Hold public demonstrations of how to construct rain barrels and rain gardens.
- Participate in horticultural related citizen science research projects and programs such as: CoCoRaHS, Project Budburst, and Great Backyard Bird Count.