

Policies Regarding Florida Master Gardeners

There are several policies regarding the Master Gardener program. It is important that all participants understand and adhere to them.

A Florida Master Gardener must:

- Attend the prescribed hours of instruction
- Be punctual and adhere to class times & breaks
- Complete assignments
- Contribute **75** volunteer hours, before becoming a certified Master Gardener

This certification is restrictive in nature. It is valid only as follows:

- When the individual is actively participating in the program, volunteering 35 hours or more and completing 10 hours of continuing education each year
- If an individual ceases active participation, then the certification as Master Gardener becomes void
- The annual 35 volunteer hours is a minimum. Many Master Gardeners far surpass the required service hours with some exceeding several hundred even thousands of hours. Completers of the program receive a one year membership to the FBG

The title "Florida Master Gardener" is to be used as follows:

- **Only and exclusively** in the Florida Extension Service Master Gardener program in which the trained and certified Master Gardeners answers gardening questions or works on community gardening projects
- Only when doing unpaid volunteer or educational work in this program

Master Gardeners should never rely solely on their personal knowledge, as the Extension Service provides the following support:

- Ongoing training and in-service keep active participants abreast of current trends, recommendations, practices, procedures and legal issues
- Master Gardeners have diagnostic support via county Extension horticulturists and state Extension Specialists
- Master Gardeners are also provided with Extension Service publications which discuss plant problems

Experienced Master Gardeners are likely to receive invitations to speak before groups.

Therefore, the Master Gardener should understand the following:

- Please do not seek payment for speaking appearances that involves the presentation. Your work is much appreciated by the Florida Extension Service and your local area gardeners who have received or will receive your council

Florida Master Gardeners are advised not to advertise their name or their place of business, nor to be listed on the advertisements of business places as Master Gardeners.

This is a University of Florida/Florida Extension Service public service program providing unbiased information.

- Appearing as a commercial activity, having association with commercial products, or giving implied University of Florida/Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business is improper
- Master Gardeners deal **only** with **homeowner-type** questions. The Extension Agents themselves respond to all commercial or professional growers' problems

In making recommendations which include the use of chemicals (e.g., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardeners are to

- Pass a special pesticide exam
- Follow published Extension Service recommendations
- Please do not give recommendations based on personal experience
- Do not answer questions concerning commercial horticultural recommendations. These are to be referred to the local County Extension Agent