

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Changing Lives

When you support Extension, for every dollar invested in Master Gardener Training and Certification, the county receives thirty dollars in community service.



Contact:

Department of Horticulture
N-318 Ag Sciences Center
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40546-0091
859 257-2909

<http://www.uky.edu/hort/>

Extension Master Gardeners envisioned the West Kentucky Botanical Garden in Owensboro. It consists of nine gardens. Master Gardeners assist in maintaining the facility. The koi pond is in the Children's Garden.

The Master Gardener Program Contributes to Economic Development In Daviess County

The vision of the Daviess County Master Gardeners turned an 8-acre soybean field into a tourist destination generating \$260,000 annually in visitor admissions.



extension.ca.uky.edu

“...the Gardens enhances the quality of life and makes the Owensboro/ Daviess County area more competitive in attracting and retaining businesses and a qualified workforce.”

CEO of the Owensboro Economic Development Corporation

The Kentucky Extension Master Gardener Program began in the late 1980's in a few urban counties. Today the program is active in 42 Kentucky counties. Master Gardeners play a vital role in assisting local Extension offices in providing information to citizens on lawn and garden issues by phone and/or at Extension offices, public meetings, demonstration gardens, and in partnerships with civic organizations and schools in the community. These volunteers also assist with teaching horticulture to beginning gardeners, and help people explore environmental options for managing lawns and landscapes. The Kentucky Extension Master Gardener Program is open to all adults in the community (periodic background checks are required of all county Extension volunteers). The shared interest creates a comradery among volunteers that leads to social interaction over and above the volunteer service.

In 1993, Daviess County Master Gardeners envisioned a botanical garden for horticulture and environmental education. An eight-acre soybean field, donated to the City of Owensboro, has been transformed into the West Kentucky Botanical Gardens. The nine established gardens include Fruit and Berry, Rose, Daylily, Iris, Ornamental Grass, Herb, Japanese, Children's and Ericaceous. Over 8,000 visitors participated in educational programs during the past five years. The “Dazzling Daylilies Festival” was named as one of the Top 20 Events in the Southeast by the Southeast Tourism Society.

The Botanical Gardens receives over \$260,000 annually from visitor admission and annual membership. Master Gardeners play a vital role volunteering over 3,300 hours annually. They develop and maintain the gardens and conduct educational programs.

Kentucky Extension Master Gardeners are trained and certified volunteers. The training, by the local county Extension office often with involvement of Extension specialists from the University of Kentucky and Kentucky State University, involves around 40 hours of classroom instruction. The instruction on such topics as botany, soils and fertility, pest and pesticides, and plant specific topics including lawns, gardening, annual and perennial flowers, trees and shrubs, plant propagation, and more takes place over 12 to 15 weeks. Short homework assignments ensure that trainees



The Dazzling Daylily Festival is listed in the top 20 events by the Southeast Tourism Society.



The Gardens rely on Master Gardener volunteers for planting and maintenance.

are mastering the topics and passage of an end-of-course exam is part of the certification process. Trainees give back 40 hours in volunteer service to the community for their initial certification the first year. To renew certification, volunteers contribute 20 hours of volunteer service annually and participate in 10 hours of continuing education. In 2016, over 1,400 volunteers contributed in excess of 43,000 volunteer service hours valued at over \$900,000 (independentsector.org, 2017) providing research-based horticulture information in over 83,000 Kentucky residents each year.

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability.