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# TEXAS MASTER GARDENERS

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## Fall 2025 Class Application Packet

This year we will again have in-person classes, while being prepared to adjust for any reason as needed. While we will be together in a classroom environment, most instructors will be teaching you remotely, coming into our classroom online as part of the exceptional state-coordinated Texas Master Gardener training program. You'll be learning "alongside" other counties' future Master Gardeners receiving instruction from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's Program Area Specialists.

### **Instructions – Complete the following documents:**

- "Master Gardener Application"
- "Video, Film, and Photographic Image Release Form"
- "Volunteer Agreement"

All information requested must be provided for your application to be favorably considered. We have a limit of 25 applicants that will be accepted.

**Return all documents with your payment by 2:00 pm on July 31, 2025, to:**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension  
Attention: Brandy Rader  
1402 Band Road – Suite 100  
Rosenberg, TX 77471

Documents may also be scanned and emailed to Brandy at:  
[Brandy.rader@aq.tamu.edu](mailto:Brandy.rader@aq.tamu.edu)

**June 2025**

**Dear Master Gardener Applicant,**

Thank you for your interest in the Texas Master Gardener Program in Fort Bend County. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with 184 members dedicated to community horticulture education.

Please read this letter carefully, then complete and sign the enclosed Master Gardener Application, Video/Photographic Release, and Volunteer Application forms. Once received, we will send instructions for the required background screening, per Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Youth Protection Standards. All adult volunteers (18+) must pass this check before program confirmation.

Submit your completed forms and payment by 2:00 pm, Friday, July 31, 2025. You may email, mail, or drop them off at our office during business hours. Payment options include PayPal, check, or exact cash. The training fee is \$250 per person or \$420 for two sharing a textbook. You'll receive the full-color Texas Master Gardener Textbook before classes begin. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis, with preference given to Fort Bend County residents. We will notify you of your status by Monday, August 18, 2025. Class size is limited.

**About the Program:**

The Master Gardener Program extends Texas A&M AgriLife Extension's educational reach by training volunteers to teach horticulture to the public.

Classes will run for 12 weeks on Thursdays from September 4 through mid-November at the Fort Bend County Extension office in Rosenberg. Orientation will be held on Tuesday, September 2. Sessions are mostly 9:00 am–1:00 pm, with hands-on activities 1:30–3:30 pm. Please arrive by 8:45 am daily. Bring lunch for the 30-minute break. Attendance is required for all classes. Instruction is led by state experts and certified Master Gardeners, with weekly readings, quizzes, and ongoing guidance.

Volunteering is essential. You must complete 50 hours of approved service within 8 months of the first class (deadline: May 4, 2026). Volunteer opportunities include demonstration gardens, helpdesk support, public outreach, plant sales, and more. You may begin volunteering once classes begin.

Upon completing training and volunteer hours, you become a Certified Texas Master Gardener. To maintain certification annually, you must complete pre-approved: 24 hours of volunteer service and 12 hours of continuing education. We support your ongoing growth through our programs and by approving external educational activities.

**Who We're Looking For:**

People eager to learn and share knowledge through speaking, writing, gardening, and outreach. No prior expertise required—you'll gain skills through training.

If you're interested in education only and not volunteering, consider our Grow Your Own Gardening and Landscape Success Lecture series.

Thank you for your enthusiasm to help Fort Bend County grow with science-based gardening knowledge.

If you have further questions, please email Brandy at [brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:brandy.rader@ag.tamu.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brandy Rader".

Program Coordinator

7/2025

Program Coordinator – Fort Bend County Master Gardeners

**TEXAS MASTER GARDENER APPLICATION**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, 1402 Band Road, Suite 100, Rosenberg, TX 77471

**Please complete all Sections of this Application thoroughly!**

**Section I - Who are you & how do we contact you?** Please print legibly:

Date of Birth (month and day only): \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nickname (what do you want to be called): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day): \_\_\_\_\_ (Night): \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: (IMPORTANT) \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section I - Getting Acquainted!**

**Please initial your agreement to the following:**

☐ I understand that I am expected to attend Orientation as a prerequisite for taking the Master Gardener Class. Orientation is scheduled for **September 2, 2025**, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. The purpose of Orientation is to acquaint you with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the role of Texas Master Gardener volunteers in support of Extension and the Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.

**Section II - Your Experience**

**PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS.**

1. Number of years living in Fort Bend County: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Where did you garden before living here: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you presently employed, and if so, where at, and what is your title?

\_\_\_\_\_  
If you are retired, how long have you been retired, where are you retired from, and what was your title?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please describe your horticulture and gardening experience: (any personal, volunteer, or work experience): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How did you learn about the Master Gardener Program? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. List group affiliations or volunteer organizations you are or have been involved in (garden clubs, community gardens, plant societies, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

7. List your volunteer experience; be specific about length of service and about your roles and responsibilities:

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8. Other skills, interests or experience: (please check all that apply)

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|---|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Computers/ IT       | <input type="radio"/> Drawing/Illustrating | <input type="radio"/> Research/Data Collection |
| <input type="radio"/> Website Development | <input type="radio"/> Writing/Publishing   | <input type="radio"/> Public Speaking/Teaching |
| <input type="radio"/> Artwork/Displays    | <input type="radio"/> Proofreading         | <input type="radio"/> Other _____              |
| <input type="radio"/> Photography         | <input type="radio"/> Marketing/Fundraisin | <input type="radio"/> Other _____              |
| <input type="radio"/> Accounting          | <input type="radio"/> Bookkeeping          |  |

9. Please provide specific information for the above checked categories:

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10. If you are able to speak, read, or write a language(s) other than English, please list: (including American Sign Language) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Why do you wish to become a Texas Master Gardener and what does being a volunteer in your community mean to you?

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12. Any other information about your skills and abilities you would like us to know?

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**The Fort Bend County Master Gardener training program duration is eight (8) months. Upon completion of all requirements, on May 4, 2026, participants will be certified as Texas Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners then re-certify annually through volunteer service and continuing education.**

- ☐ I desire to be a Master Gardener volunteer in Fort Bend County. I understand that Texas Master Gardeners are trained volunteers - community educators, who share their horticultural knowledge and gardening experience with their fellow citizens.
- ☐ I will volunteer a minimum of 50 hours in Extension initiated educational programs during the period September 2025 through May 2026.
- ☐ I will complete the classroom training course.
- ☐ I understand to re-certify annually, a minimum of 24 volunteer hours and 12 hours of continuing education is required in Extension sanctioned programs.
- ☐ I agree to a background screening - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service volunteer requirement.

### **Section III - Statements of Agreement**

**Please read, initial / sign and date where indicated:**

- ☐ I understand that the Texas Master Gardener program is a program sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.
- ☐ I understand that as an Intern/Associate in class, I represent – Fort Bend County, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, The Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc., and The Texas A&M University System and will adhere to their policies and guidelines.
- ☐ I understand that the title of Texas Master Gardener is valid only when participating in a Master Gardener program being conducted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. When an individual ceases active participation in the Master Gardener program and/or does not meet recertification requirements, the individual's certification as a Texas Master Gardener becomes void.
- ☐ I understand that graduates of the Texas Master Gardener Program should not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Texas Master Gardener at a place of business unless that location is designated as a Master Gardener educational activity location by the local Extension office. Texas Master Gardeners must not use the title, in any form of advertisement. Implying Texas A&M AgriLife Extension endorsement of any product or place of business is improper. The Texas Master Gardener program is a public service program operated by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to provide unbiased information, and the Texas Master Gardener title is to be used only when doing **unpaid volunteer work** in this program.
- ☐ Participants are required to complete a minimum of 50 hours of class training, and a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service prior to certification/graduation, which is approximately 8 months after the first-class date. Thereafter, to maintain certification, Certified Texas Master Gardeners in Fort Bend County must complete 12 hours of continuing education (CE) and 24 hours of volunteer service every year.

**Liability Release:**

☐ I understand that as a participant in the Texas Master Gardener – Fort Bend County volunteer program (“program”) I hereby **release, discharge, and agree to hold harmless** the following: the program and its sponsoring state agencies, their agents, employees, officers and successors from and against the program and sponsoring state agencies, their successors, employees, or officers for all personal injuries (including death), known and unknown or damage to property caused by or arising out of activities performed under the Texas Master Gardener Program.

**Volunteer Standards and Commitment:**

☐ I wish to become a Texas Master Gardener in Fort Bend County. I want to be accepted in the Texas Master Gardener training program offered by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. ***I understand that, in exchange for the Master Gardener class training made possible through Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, I will complete all of the required classes and complete the required minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service to the Texas Master Gardener program in Fort Bend County.*** I understand that I will become a Certified Texas Master Gardener when I have completed all of the requirements for Master Gardener classes and the 50 hours of volunteer service prior to the certification date. I also understand that to maintain my Certification, I must complete 12 hours of Continuing Education and 24 hours of volunteer service every year. **The first partial year's requirements will be prorated.**

**Youth Protection Standards Background Check:**

☐ To protect everyone, all Applicants must agree to submit to a background check as a condition of membership in the Texas Master Gardener program. The cost of which is included in the fee for the Fall 2025 Texas Master Gardener Class. All completed forms are confidential. You will receive an email with instructions.

**Photograph & Contact Information: (name, address, phone/cell, email)**

☐ I hereby grant The Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc., its sponsors, advisors and volunteers, the right to utilize my photograph and my contact information in connection with the Class Roster and Volunteer Management System (VMS) Roster. I authorize The Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc., to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically for the intended purpose of sharing with The Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc. membership. The Class Roster and VMS Roster are not for political or commercial use, but for the exclusive and sole use of the organization and its members.

☐ I understand that through good-faith efforts, my information will be used as intended. I hereby agree to have my photograph and contact information in stated Rosters.

**Applicant Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

**Video, Film, and Photographic Image Release Form**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I authorize Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc. to record and photograph my image and/or voice, for use by the Fort Bend County Master Gardener program or its assignees, in research, education, and promotional programs. I understand and agree that these audio, visual, digital, film, and/or print images may be edited, duplicated, distributed with or without charge, reproduced, broadcast, and/or reformatted in any form and manner without the payment of fees, in perpetuity.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement

We value your dedication to the Texas Master Gardener program and recognize the importance of your satisfaction and growth in this volunteer role. To ensure mutual understanding, please review the expectations outlined below and confirm your agreement by signing at the end of this form. This signed agreement must be submitted to the county Extension office and renewed every three years. Failure to adhere to the terms of this agreement may result in the loss of your Extension Master Gardener certification.

As a volunteer trained by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in the field of horticulture, I understand that I am responsible for sharing research-based information with the public on behalf of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. To become a certified Master Gardener, in exchange for receiving 50 hours of Master Gardener training from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, I commit to the following:

- Complete a minimum of 50 hours of volunteer service supporting horticultural programming efforts in **Fort Bend County** within one year.
- Maintain active status as a Master Gardener Volunteer by completing **24** (minimum 20) volunteer hours and **12** (minimum 10) continuing education hours annually after my intern year.
- Provide a record of my volunteer service as directed by the State Master Gardener Coordinator using the Volunteer Management System (VMS).
- Comply with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Background Check policy, renewing the background check every three years.

For further details on the Master Gardener program, volunteer expectations, and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension policies, please review the [Texas Master Gardener Management Guide](#).

## As a Texas Master Gardener Volunteer, I Agree To:

- 1. Exhibit Professionalism:**
  - Always demonstrate a positive, professional attitude toward the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Master Gardener Program, the State Master Gardener Office, fellow volunteers, employees, and clients.
- 2. Fulfill Responsibilities:**
  - Perform duties responsibly and in a timely manner.
- 3. Avoid Conflicts of Interest:**
  - Refrain from using my Master Gardener status to promote commercial activities or private businesses.
  - Volunteer efforts at my place of employment will not be considered as service hours for the program.
- 4. Provide Accurate Recommendations:**
  - Use only Texas A&M AgriLife-approved information and recommendations on pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, or cultural practices when functioning as a Master Gardener



volunteer.

**5. Handle Personal Expenses:**

- Cover my transportation and related expenses for volunteer activities (tax deductions may apply with proper documentation). Check with the local CEA or Extension Master Gardener Coordinator for assistance policies.

**6. Uphold Ethical Standards:**

- Avoid harassment, abuse, unsafe behavior, or illegal activities.
- Dress appropriately and use respectful language.
- All work produced by a Master Gardener—whether text, written or spoken content, images, photos, or illustrations—should reflect the Master Gardener's own thought, research, and self-expression. Attribute external sources for any work (written, spoken, or visual) to avoid plagiarism or copyright infringement.

## **Regarding Extension Master Gardener Coordinators and County Extension Agents (CEAs):**

- Acknowledge Extension's responsibility for establishing program standards, setting direction and priorities, and ensuring projects align with local needs.
- Refer commercial horticulture inquiries to the CEA or other Extension staff.

## **Regarding Fellow Volunteers:**

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

## **Regarding Clients:**

- Provide quality, unbiased service to the public, regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, gender identity, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

## **Extension Service Commitments:**

I understand that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service employees are expected to uphold the highest standards of respect and ethical behavior toward all. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service holds its employees accountable for delivering the following:

- Provide training, supervision, and direction to Master Gardener volunteers through the local county Extension office.
- Communicate program expectations and responsibilities clearly.
- Match volunteer skills and interests with opportunities within the county.
- Support Master Gardener volunteers and the local Master Gardener Association.
- Offer continuing education and access to horticulture reference materials.
- Uphold and cultivate trust between staff and volunteers.
- Reassign or terminate volunteers if necessary to uphold program policies, procedures, guidelines, and values.

## Grievance Policy:

In the event of a dispute or concern, volunteers should:

1. Communicate with their county agent who will consider all positions and determine what is best for the program.
2. If you have a conflict with your agent, it is expected that you will visit with the agent first about your perspective and try to resolve the situation with them.
3. If unresolved, contact Jayla Fry, Texas Master Gardener Coordinator, for further resolution. You will be contacted within two weeks.

## Volunteer Disclaimer:

I understand that as a volunteer, I am not an employee of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, will not receive compensation or benefits, and am not covered by workers' compensation laws. I also acknowledge that either party may end the volunteer relationship at any time, for any reason, without prior notice.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understand the Texas Master Gardener Management Guide and agree to abide by its guidelines.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Agent Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

