

General Meetings & Update Training

Penn State Master Gardeners in Cumberland County meet every other month to stay in touch on current and future activities. They hold a recognition dinner, a plant exchange, a summer picnic, and a holiday party. Master Gardeners also attend gardening seminars and conferences to keep up-to-date with the latest in horticultural research.

Being a Master Gardener is a great way to meet fellow gardening enthusiasts and volunteer your time to help other people.

How Can You Become a Penn State Master Gardener in Cumberland County?

If you have a strong interest in gardening, a willingness to learn and a keen desire to help others, consider becoming a Penn State Master Gardener in Cumberland County. Contact the County Extension Office to find out more details about the program and when the next training session is scheduled.

Becoming a Master Gardener involves a considerable amount of time and effort. It is only for those avid gardeners who are willing to make a long-term commitment to volunteer service. Not all applicants are accepted; the selection process includes a written application, a written test of your general gardening knowledge, and a personal interview.

Once accepted into the program, you will expand your knowledge of gardening by attending a minimum of 42 hours of top-notch training by expert horticulturists. The classes are typically held once a week in the fall and run for three hours each. There is a cost to cover your Master Gardener Manual and other training expenses.

When you have completed the training, you will discover just how much you learned by retaking the initial exam. You will share your newfound knowledge by preparing and giving a short presentation on a suitable gardening subject to your classmates and other Master Gardeners.

In the first year following the training, you are required to log at least 50 hours of acceptable volunteer service. A portion of your time will be spent working on a garden project with your classmates.

In subsequent years, the volunteer service requirement drops to 20 hours minimum, with eight hours of continuing education each year. Most Master Gardeners find it easy to fill this requirement because of the many educational programs and projects taking place throughout the year.

Penn State Extension

Cumberland County

310 Allen Road, Suite 601
Carlisle, PA 17013

717-240-6500

Toll Free: 1-888-697-0371 x6500

Fax: 717-240-6548

Email: CumberlandExt@psu.edu

<http://extension.psu.edu/cumberland>

Facebook.com/Cumberland Extension

David Swartz

District Extension Director

dls19@psu.edu

Annette MaCoy

Extension Educator, Consumer Horticulture

Master Gardener Coordinator

ahm11@psu.edu

ahm8.04/1.06/7.07/1.08/5.08/5.09/2.10/7.11/2.12

An OUTREACH program of the College of Agricultural Sciences

Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Penn State Extension

A Guide to the

Penn State

Master Gardener

Program

in

Cumberland County



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A Sampling of Master Gardener Volunteer Activities in Cumberland County

Penn State Master Gardeners are volunteers trained by Penn State Extension in plant and soil science, integrated pest management, pesticide safety, plant propagation, planting, pruning, and more. They provide a link between their community, Penn State University, and Penn State Extension by using their talents and energies to teach people about horticulture.

Penn State Master Gardeners in Cumberland County help educate people in a variety of ways. Here are just some of their activities.

The Mansion Garden at Kings Gap

This beautiful educational display garden, now in its 20th year, is located at Kings Gap, a DCNR environmental education and training center on South Mountain.

Situated at the top of the mountain and enclosed within the stone walls of the original mansion garden, herb and knot garden beds, native shade, meadow, and woodland gardens, a pond, and a compost demonstration area provide education and beauty year round.

Each year, the Master Gardeners improve and expand the plantings, perform regular plant maintenance, and conduct programs and tours to educate visitors about plants and gardening.

Horticulture Therapy

Health care professionals recognize the therapeutic effect plants and gardening can have on ill, elderly, and disabled individuals. The Master Gardeners help residents of Claremont Nursing & Rehabilitation Center with their vegetable garden and other planting projects, including a bird & butterfly garden and container gardens. The Master Gardeners also provide therapeutic gardening craft, herb, and plant workshops at retirement and care facilities in the area.

Plant Fest & Sale

This annual gardeners' bonanza, held on the third Saturday in May, offers a plant sale that includes herbs, vegetables, native perennials, and treasured plants from the gardens of Master Gardeners.

Educational displays and information, a plant clinic, a book sale, and a gardener's yard sale round out the event, which serves as one of the main fundraisers for the Master Gardener program in Cumberland County to fund its educational outreach programs and activities.

Garden Tour

This annual event is on hiatus in 2012. In three previous years, Penn State Master Gardeners opened their private gardens to visitors to share their knowledge, expertise, and love of plants. Educational displays and information at each garden enhanced the tour for visitors.

In 2012, Master Gardeners will be participating in the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra's Showhouse event with an herb garden and educational presentations.

Plant Clinics

To help homeowners and home gardeners diagnose lawn, landscape, and garden problems, the Master Gardeners conduct plant clinics at local public libraries and farmers' markets throughout the summer months. The Master Gardeners use their knowledge and expertise to identify the problem and make an environmentally sustainable recommendation for treatment.

This same identification, diagnosis, and recommendation service is provided at the Penn State Extension office in Carlisle throughout the year, by phone or walk-in visit, for gardening and insect questions and problems.

Trial and Idea Garden

The Master Gardeners plant and maintain this educational demonstration garden located on the grounds of Claremont Nursing & Rehabilitation Center. Each year, flowering annuals and vegetables are grown and evaluated for reliable performance, ease of maintenance, and beauty to provide home gardeners with a list of proven choices for their own gardens.

Since 2000, the garden has expanded to include native perennials, pollinator-friendly plants, a rock garden, a compost area, a shade garden, low maintenance shrubs, and a 9/11 memorial Red Oak tree.

The Master Gardeners plant and maintain the garden, as well as offering educational events for the public during the growing season.

One-on-One Plant Problem Diagnosis

Homeowners and novice gardeners will often call on their Master Gardener friends and neighbors to help them make the right tree, shrub and flower selections, diagnose plant problems, and solve problem site situations.



Allen Road Gardens

These Master Gardener demonstration gardens are located at the Cumberland County Service Center on Allen Road in Carlisle, which houses Penn State Extension in Cumberland County. Native plants and plants for four-season interest are found at the Back Entrance and Alcove Gardens. A green roof shed and two new rain gardens on tap for 2012 demonstrate water conservation.

Community Gardening

Penn State Master Gardeners foster community gardens, encouraging urban and low-income households to become successful growers of vegetables, fruits and flowers. The Master Gardeners mentor and educate gardeners at local community gardens. At the Dickinson College Community Garden, they have created educational demonstration areas, including a blueberry patch, an herb garden, and pollinator-friendly plantings.

Workshops, Displays, and Speakers Bureau

Penn State Master Gardeners staff informational booths and put together educational displays on a variety of gardening topics at horticultural events and community festivals.



The Master Gardeners offer gardening workshops and demonstrations to the public that provide unbiased, research-based information on best management practices for ornamental and edible gardening. High quality, low-cost annual programs include:

- *Ready, Set, Grow!* in March
- *Sustainable Gardening Series* in April
- *Fall Garden Day* in September

The Master Gardeners are available to speak on a variety of horticultural topics to garden clubs and community organizations for a reasonable fee.

Youth Programs

The Master Gardeners offer a Youth Summer Garden Camp at the Penn State Extension office in Carlisle, for youth ages 7-12. During five sessions held every two weeks, campers learn and grow with the Master Gardeners through hands-on gardening, science, arts and crafts, and journaling. Master Gardeners also teach plant science and gardening skills to students at school events and after-school clubs.