

How to Become an Extension Master Gardener

(By: Katelyn Barthol, Marais des Cygnes District Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent)

The Extension Master Gardener Program was designed and managed by Kansas State University to further the mission of bringing education to the public through the Extension Service. Every year we recruit new members to share our training from K-State Research and Extension in the field of horticulture. The program was locally adopted in 1996 in Miami County. In 2014 when Miami County and Linn County joined together to form the Marais des Cygnes Extension District, we became the Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardeners.

Since the program started locally in 1996, over 140 people have been trained as Extension Master Gardeners and the organization currently has over 55 active members. We are currently recruiting to fill our 10-member class and would love to have you as a member of the Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardener Class, training in the Fall of 2019.

What are the requirements? (simple)

1. You will need to be able to attend the basic training classes, held in Olathe at the Johnson County Extension Office. Classes are held from Tuesdays, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm from September 17 through November 12, 2019.
2. By completing the training, you agree to donate back 40 hours of volunteer time within the first year.
3. You are responsible for covering the \$100 cost for your materials and training. (Scholarships may be available.)
4. A love of gardening and of being around people with like interests.

You do **NOT** need to be a seasoned gardener or have any education other than being able to read and comprehend presented information.

Training classes consists of lecture and Q & A with the instructors, all of whom are leaders in their fields. This year's topics include:

1. Soils
2. Botany / Woodies
3. Flowers / Turf
4. Wildlife / Fruit
5. Entomology / Pesticides
6. Vegetables / Landscape
7. Woody Plant Materials / Plant Pathology
8. Communications / Tree ID

What does the Marais des Cygnes Extension District Master Gardener program consist of?

- A horticulture & gardening "Hotline" is held on Mondays & Thursdays from 8 am to Noon at the Paola Extension Office. Master Gardeners answer questions, evaluate plant samples, and various other things for people that call or stop by to get their questions answered.

- Continued opportunity for further education – We have advanced trainings throughout the year covering a wide variety of topics.
- Garden Projects – We currently have three gardens that our Master Gardeners maintain. They are the Miami County Courthouse Gardens, our K-State Research and Extension Trial Garden, and the Extension Office Garden at the Marais des Cygnes Extension District Office in Paola.
- Working with Youth – We work to educate and get local youth interested in gardening by sponsoring the Seeds For Kids program, helping with Ag Day, and working with 4-H on various projects.
- Social – Having some fun while getting to visit and discuss gardening.
- And many others!

For more information, contact the Marais des Cygnes Extension District – Paola office at 913-294-4306. Applications can be obtained at both the Paola and Mound City Extension offices or online at www.maraisdescyignes.ksu.edu. Applications are due back to the Marais des Cygnes District by July 8th.