



**Virginia Cooperative Extension
Chesterfield County**

P.O. Box 146
9501 Lori Road
Chesterfield, VA 23832

Phone: 804-751-4401 • Fax: 804-768-7576 • vce@chesterfield.gov

Hello! Thank you for your interest in becoming a Chesterfield County Cooperative Extension Master Gardener (MG) volunteer! A *Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener (VCE-MG)* is an individual who acts on behalf of VCE as a volunteer educator within his or her community after receiving specialized training in environmental horticulture through cooperative programming with VCE. Master Gardeners are trained and volunteer in their local Virginia Cooperative Extension office. Here are some more frequently asked questions about the program:

Why should I become a Master Gardener?

- You will learn about horticultural topics such as botany, soil, plant propagation, lawns, plant pathology, entomology, trees, vegetables, fruit, pollinators and landscape design from expert presenters with years of experience.
- You will meet and work with other VCE-EMGs with similar interests.
- You'll be assigned a mentor: a current Master Gardener who will help introduce you to the program.
- You will have the opportunity to share your knowledge and love of gardening with the community in a wide range of programs.
- You will have access to numerous opportunities for continuing education.

What do Chesterfield County Master Gardeners do?

Although our programs have adjusted to new safety regulations due to COVID-19, Chesterfield MGs continue to be active in programs such as:

- The Master Gardener Virtual Help Desk
- Designing, developing and maintaining the Demonstration Garden & Indoor/Library Garden
- Maintaining the demonstrate bee hive
- Volunteering in community gardens to harvest & donate produce
- Researching, writing and sharing educational content through social media
- Presenting classes & programs on a variety of horticultural topics

We continue to adapt our programs to the new normal – there are many ways to safely volunteer!

How can I become a Master Gardener?

In 2021, due to COVID-19, the annual VCE-MG training class will be conducted virtually, in partnership with other VCE units in the greater Richmond area. Training is comprised of 50 hours of classroom instruction + 50 hours of volunteer time in approved programs. At the completion of both requirements, successful candidates will graduate as VCE-MGs. To maintain standing as an MG, each volunteer must complete 20 hours of service in approved programs + 8 hours of continuing education every year following their graduation.

There is a one-time fee for VCE-MG training of \$200.00, due at the time of acceptance into the class. Accepted applicants will receive instructions for registration & payment of fees.

The fee covers items including:

- Virginia EMG program administration/support fee
- Criminal background check

- Master Gardener Manual (your textbook for the course)
- A selection of reference materials & supplies needed for the class and for your future volunteer activities

To complete the class, you must have access to a computer with an Internet connection, microphone, and speakers. These items are not included in the class fee.

I want to learn about horticulture, but I'm not able to volunteer at this time. What are my options?

If you are a professional looking for additional education but are not interested in volunteering with VCE, please consider the Virginia Certified Horticulturist program offered through VNLA (www.vnla.org) or the horticulture technology program at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (www.jsr.vccs.edu).

Are you ready to apply? Please review these important dates for Chesterfield County:

In 2020:

- October 30th, 2020, 4:30 PM – Deadline for 2021 Master Gardener course applications
- November 16th – 20th – Virtual Interviews with current Master Gardeners & Extension staff
- December 7th – 11th – Accepted applicants will be notified. Class fees due no later than December 11th.

In 2021:

- January 11th – 15th – Class kits will be available for pick-up at the Extension Office
- January 21st, 9:00 AM – Virtual Orientation Course (2 hours)
- January 25th, 9:00 AM – Class Begins
 - Class will be held virtually each Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday at 9:00 am. Each class will last approximately 2 hours. Classes will be recorded for later viewing if you miss a live presentation. Each class will include a quiz. Trainees must complete all classes & quizzes by Thursday, March 18th, 2020 in order to complete the classroom section of the course.
- March 9th, 9:00 AM – final group class
- March 18th, 9:00 am – Chesterfield County class wrap-up & next steps

Please complete and return the attached Chesterfield County Cooperative Extension Master Gardener (MG) program application by October 30, 2020 at 4:30 pm. Please answer all questions fully. **A Criminal Background Screening** is required by Virginia Cooperative Extension for all volunteers before your acceptance to the program. You will receive instructions to complete of the background screening following the interview process. We look forward to hearing from you!

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact the Chesterfield Cooperative Extension office at (804)751-4401/TDD (800) 828-1120 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating. Edwin J. Jones, Director, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg; M. Ray McKinnie, Administrator, 1890 Extension Program, Virginia State University, Petersburg.



Chesterfield Master Gardener Volunteer Application

Please print this form, complete the information in its entirety.

Mail applications to the Chesterfield VCE office at P.O. Box 146, Chesterfield, VA 23832

Applicant First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Application Year: 2021

A. Contact Information (please print)		
Address (Street, City, State, Zip)		
Home Phone	Cell Phone	Do you use text messaging? Y/N
Work Phone	Email Address	
Emergency Contact Name		
Emergency Phone (Day)	Emergency Phone (Evening)	

B. References		
1. _____		
Name	Phone	Relationship
Street, City, State, ZIP		Email
2. _____		
Name	Phone	Relationship
Street, City, State, ZIP		Email

C. Availability				
Please mark an "X" to indicate days/times you are available for volunteer work.				
	Weekdays		Weekends	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
January - March				
April - May				
June - August				
September - October				
November - December				

Please note: Chesterfield County will present virtual classes for the 2021 program in cooperation with other area VCE units. Classes will begin with a virtual orientation on Thurs, Jan 21 and conclude with a virtual wrap-up on Thurs 3/18. Virtual classes will be held on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday mornings from 1/25 – 3/11, beginning at 9:00 am each day. *Classes will be recorded and may also be viewed after scheduled class times.*

D. Previous Volunteer Experience

Organization	Type of Service	Types of Activities

E. Memberships in Garden, Horticultural, or Conservation Organizations

F. Voluntary Disclosure

This information will be kept in a confidential manner and accessible only to authorized personnel. A “yes” answer does **not** automatically exclude you from registering for the **Chesterfield County** Extension Master Gardener program.

Have you ever had any criminal convictions including moving traffic violations? **Yes** ___ **No** ___
If “yes” to any question above, please describe:

I understand that criminal background screenings or reference checks may be conducted on me at any time during the application process or during volunteer service of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE).

Signature _____ **Date** _____

G. Chesterfield County Enrollment Agreement & Media Release Statement

Media Release Statement

The Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University/College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) periodically uses electronic and traditional media (e.g., photographs, video, audio footage, testimonials) for publicity and educational purposes. By my signature on this form, I acknowledge receipt of this document and give permission to the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and its designee to use such reproductions for educational and publicity purposes in perpetuity without further consideration from me.

I understand that I will need to notify Virginia Tech/College of Agriculture and Life Sciences if any changes to my situation occur that will impact this media release permission.

PLEASE INITIAL: **Yes** _____ **No** _____

Enrollment Agreement

- I agree to abide by all policies and procedures of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and Chesterfield County.
- I am volunteering my time to further the educational purposes of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE).
- I understand that Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of age, color, disability, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status or any other basis protected by the law. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. I hereby certify that all of the entries on this application are true and complete.
- I understand that any falsification of information herein constitutes cause for dismissal.

Signature, Volunteer Applicant

Date

Printed Name: _____

****In addition to this form, Virginia Cooperative Extension policy requires that all volunteers have a current criminal background check on file.**

H. Interests & Skills Questionnaire

It takes many people with diverse skills to run all the units of the Virginia Extension Master Gardener program. We are ALL volunteers. On this page, please indicate any of your interests and skills by answering the following questions.

1. How did you hear about the Chesterfield County Master Gardener Program? (Check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Friends or family	<input type="checkbox"/> Past participant in Master Gardener Programming	<input type="checkbox"/> Chesterfield County or Virginia Tech Website	<input type="checkbox"/> Social Media Post (Facebook, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/> Referral from a Master Gardener	<input type="checkbox"/> Previous Member of a Master Gardener Group	<input type="checkbox"/> Poster at Chesterfield County Library	<input type="checkbox"/> Extension Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional Advertising (newspaper, television, magazine, radio)		<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____	

2. Why do you want to become a Master Gardener volunteer?

3. What description best suits you? (check one)

- Beginning gardener
 Experienced gardener
 Professional horticulturist
 Specialty gardener (i.e., orchids, roses, vegetables), please list: _____

4. Help us to help you succeed in the Master Gardener Program by ranking all the topics below according to your level of interest (10 = very interested, 5 = somewhat interested, 0 = no interest):

<input type="checkbox"/> Animal/Gardening for habitat	<input type="checkbox"/> Annuals	<input type="checkbox"/> Arts & crafts
<input type="checkbox"/> Bees/butterflies/insects	<input type="checkbox"/> Birds	<input type="checkbox"/> Botany
<input type="checkbox"/> Bulbs/corms/rhizomes	<input type="checkbox"/> Composting/organics	<input type="checkbox"/> Design
<input type="checkbox"/> Disease/pest management	<input type="checkbox"/> Edibles/vegetables	<input type="checkbox"/> Flower arranging
<input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse	<input type="checkbox"/> Herbs	<input type="checkbox"/> Working with at-risk youth
<input type="checkbox"/> Houseplants/tropical plants	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration garden maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Native plants
<input type="checkbox"/> Perennials	<input type="checkbox"/> Photography	<input type="checkbox"/> Propagation
<input type="checkbox"/> Pruning	<input type="checkbox"/> Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Roses
<input type="checkbox"/> Office management	<input type="checkbox"/> Shade plants	<input type="checkbox"/> Shrubs and trees
<input type="checkbox"/> Soils	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel/tours	<input type="checkbox"/> Turf care/ establishment
<input type="checkbox"/> Water/bog gardens	<input type="checkbox"/> Water quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Website/computer work
<input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking/ Displays	<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input type="checkbox"/> Xeriscaping
<input type="checkbox"/> other plant specialties (write in below - bonsai, African Violets, orchids, daylilies, iris, camellias, maples, etc.)		

5. Please list any specialized gardening skills / knowledge (xeriscaping, water gardening, organic vegetable gardening, etc.):

6. Below are some descriptions volunteer opportunities that Master Gardeners do for their community. Please check off as many opportunities that are potentially of interest to you.

- Answering a homeowner's questions at our Master Gardener Virtual Help Desk
- Promoting Master Gardener programming and events at a farmer's market or fair
- Conducting a site evaluation at a client's home and helping them assess their lawn or landscape growing conditions
- Writing a gardening article for a local paper or our newsletter using research-based information
- Coordinating an educational event for the public such as a seminar or tour of a local garden
- Presenting a garden related topic for a ½ hour to full hour talk at a local library or for a garden club
- Interacting with children through a horticultural educational activity
- Maintaining a demonstration garden of vegetable growing practices for the public
- None of these are of interest to me.

Other: _____

I. Other Skills/ Interests

Please circle your skills and list proficiency in the following areas (examples of areas that could be addressed are provided)

Computer Proficiency	
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't use a computer
<input type="checkbox"/>	I use a computer for email only
<input type="checkbox"/>	Some familiarity with computers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Extensive use of computers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
Computer Skills	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Data entry
<input type="checkbox"/>	Desktop publishing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Web design/management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Microsoft Word
<input type="checkbox"/>	Microsoft Excel
<input type="checkbox"/>	Microsoft Access
<input type="checkbox"/>	Microsoft PowerPoint
<input type="checkbox"/>	Microsoft Publisher
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social Media (Facebook, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
Arts and Publication	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Videography
<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital photography
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scrapbook design
<input type="checkbox"/>	Graphic design
<input type="checkbox"/>	Writing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Editing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proofreading

Business	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance/auditing
<input type="checkbox"/>	Marketing/advertising
<input type="checkbox"/>	Program management
<input type="checkbox"/>	Catering
<input type="checkbox"/>	Event Planning
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting Coordination
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:
Training and Leadership	
<i>For any previous experiences, list age of clientele, group name, and group size</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teaching
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leading groups (scouts, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Leadership training
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public speaking
Language	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other language spoken:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comfort in conducting programming in this language:

J. Demographic Information (Optional; for record keeping purposes only)

- Gender
 Female Male
- Ethnicity
 Hispanic Not Hispanic
- Race
 Caucasian (white)
 African American
 American Indian
 Asian
 Other
- I Live:
 On a farm
 Rural area or town under 10,000 population
 Town or city of 10,000 to 50,000 population
 Suburb or city over 50,000 population
 City over 50,000 population
- Highest level of education: _____

-----**For VCE Internal Use Only**-----

Date Volunteer Application received by VCE:	_____
Date of interview:	_____
Date of Background Screening:	_____
Application requires further action:	Yes _____ No _____
Applicant met qualifications?	Yes _____ No _____
Date acceptance letter sent	_____
Date rejection letter sent	_____
Signature, VCE Representative	_____ Date _____