ROCKBRIDGE EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

Introduction





Virginia Cooperative Extension
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

Updated 08/2026

Welcome to the Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener training program. The Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program is a volunteer education partnership with Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) dedicated to working with the community to encourage and promote environmentally-sound horticulture practices through sustainable landscape management. **The EMG training program provides you with the organizational and horticultural training to launch community horticulture education programs to benefit your locality.**

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As an EMG you are an educator working on behalf of Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) and are expected to work within VCE policy to promote, inform, and work with communities, leaders, industry and individuals presenting programs on all aspects of horticulture, including turf landscape, vegetables, trees and shrubs and pest management practices.

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Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

- Sharing Knowledge
- Empowering Communities

Vision

- To be the Virginia Cooperative Extension volunteer organization extending horticultural and environmental outreach across the Commonwealth

Core Values (Internal & External)

Respect

- The environment, each other, and those we serve

Accountability

- Wise stewardship of resources
- To our organization, our community, and each other

Collaboration

- Willing to work with a diverse group to reach a common goal
- Actively seeking out partners

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Steps to Becoming an EMG Volunteer

- *EMG Trainee*: A student taking the course, until graduation
- *EMG Intern*: A student who has completed the theory portion of the course and is working on completing the 50 hours of hands-on field experience in horticulture-based education programs
- *Extension Master* Gardener Volunteer: One who has completed the full EMG training program – theory and internship, and is actively volunteering
- *Advanced EMG Volunteer*: One who has received specialized training in any of the advanced-level training programs and has completed the program requirements
- *Emeritus EMG Volunteer:* A dedicated EMG who "retires" due to health or other reasons after 1000 hours of service or as determined by the coordinator or Extension agent

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This course is designed to teach **best practices for home horticulture** and prepare Master Gardeners to teach these practices.

This a modularized, self-paced independent study, computer-based program developed by the Bedford Extension Master Gardeners with **edits** for the Rockbridge area by the Rockbridge Master Gardeners Class Training Team.

You will complete this course by:

- Completing a series of modules
- Participating in hands on labs
- Completing 50 volunteer hours working in Extension Master Gardener projects within one calendar year (Jan – Dec)

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Modules

- Modules are PowerPoint slides with topical content. They include required readings from the Master Gardener Handbook, horticulture theory, links to additional information found on the internet, objectives, optional readings, tests of knowledge, videos, and quizzes (open book)

- Not every module has a quiz; If a quiz is included with the module, it is **required before attending the lab**. Quizzes must be passed at 70% overall average

- Not every module has a lab associated with it

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How to Navigate

You can work through this program on any computer, or tablet.
You move through the slides (in the modules) by scrolling with the mouse or using the arrow keys (right arrow to go forward; left arrow to go backward).
You can return to the beginning of any module by clicking on the house in the lower right corner of the slide.

The program works best if you download it onto your computer / tablet.

Blue, highlighted, underlined words or phrases are links to sites on the Internet or somewhere else in the module; Click on the highlighted underlined word or phrase to get to the Internet site. To return to the module from a website, close out the file (x) from the open files bar.



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The course includes 16 modules, 19 chapters to read in the Master Gardener Handbook, 16 quizzes, and 10 hands-on labs.

Lawns
Entomology
Fruits
Herbaceous Plants
Water Quality
Habitat Gardening for Wildlife
Landscape Design
Indoor Plants (no quiz)
Native, Non-Native, Invasive Plants
Botany
Plant Propagation
Plant Problem Solving
Soils and Nutrients
Vegetables
Pest Management
Woody Landscapes and Pruning (2 sep. quizzes)

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To complete the module you will

1. Read the assigned Chapter(s) in the Master Gardener Training Manual
2. Review the module slides which includes:
   a. What you will learn in the module (objectives)
   b. A slide presentation of the topic
   c. Suggested readings on the topic
   d. Test(s) of your knowledge
   e. Lab information (if there is a lab)
3. Complete a module quiz (if required)(open book)

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Keep in mind…

As you read many different references, including web sites, keep in mind that some practices and recommendations will vary in different geographic regions of the country. If you find conflicting information in your readings, the *Virginia Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Handbook* and the Virginia Cooperative Extension web site http://www.ext.vt.edu, are the authorities to use.

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Continued Learning and Finding Answers to Your Questions

No module will teach you everything about a topic, so it is important to know how to search for reliable information. If you type a search term (like "propagation") into a search engine (like Google or Bing), you will be given many references. Each reference has a web address which identifies its "domain". Examples of web domains include:
.gov a U.S. government agency
.edu a college –level educational institution
.org a not-for-profit organization

The most reliable sites are .gov and .edu. .org is the next most reliable. .com's, commercial enterprises, may not be unbiased or research based.

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Contact Information for the Training Team

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