

2009-Computer System Requirements for the Master Gardener On-line Course

The Master Gardener On-line training course uses an on-line teaching program called Illinois Compass. Trainees can access the Illinois Compass platform through a web browser such as Netscape or Internet Explorer. Some of the files in the course are very large. If you have slow dial-up Internet access, you may find viewing the files time consuming, frustrating, and costly if done all on-line. A CD-ROM version of the powerpoint files used in the course will be provided. A PowerPoint viewer is included on the CD-ROM.

The Illinois Compass software you will use resides on a server (a central host computer) on the University of Illinois campus. You will want to be sure that your computer's settings are optimized for running an online course. Illinois Compass uses Java technology extensively. In order for Compass to work properly, you need to have the appropriate Java plug-in installed on your computer. To get the most recent version of the Java plug in for your windows computer, go to www.java.com, click on the Download Java Software Now button and follow the directions. Macintosh users receive Java updates automatically via their software update control panel. Instructions for configuration of your computer as well as installing Java will be sent to you before the course begins.

You will also need Acrobat Reader (which can be downloaded free from the Internet) to view the CD-ROM version of the Master Gardener Manual. The Master Gardener On-line course has a messaging system within the course, so e-mail access is not absolutely necessary, but for direct communication with the instructor it is recommended that course participants also have an e-mail account.

If this is your first experience with on-line learning, you may want to take advantage of the on-line Illinois Compass tutorial that you'll find out about once registered for the course. There is also a student help document available on-line.

Recommended Browsers

Not all web browsers perform properly with Illinois Compass. Please refer to the table below for the browsers supported by Illinois Compass.

Windows	Macintosh
Internet Explorer 6.0, 7.0	
Firefox 2.0, 3.0	Firefox 2.0, 3.0
	Safari 2.0, 3.0

Safari and Mozilla will usually display Illinois Compass content, but may not work properly for all of the features such as quizzing and chat. The same may be true of other browsers not listed above. We suggest that users of these browsers install the most current version of Internet Explorer as a backup if they are having problems using any o