

2009 Master Gardener Training On-line Information

The University of Illinois Extension will offer Master Gardener training On-Line as an option for those who would like to take the Master Gardener course, but due to work schedules or travel concerns are unable to attend one of the face-to-face training programs. The 2009 class will run from January 12 through May 8, coinciding with spring semester on the U of I campus.

Applicants for this course **MUST** have at least some previous computer experience and feel comfortable with navigating the Internet and using email as well as basic programs such as Microsoft Word. Please, please **DO NOT** sign up for this course if you are a computer novice! Students will need to have access to a computer for extended periods (i.e. don't count on an office or public library computer for working on the course). Computer specifications may be found on the "System Requirements" document. Please keep in mind that if these specifications are not met- the course may be hard to access and download time is slow- leading to student frustration. Please make sure that proper computer specifications and internet access are taken care of before registering for this class.

The first week of the course all enrollees will participate in an On-Line orientation session about the Master Gardener program and U of I Extension, as well as an introduction to Illinois Compass, the computer program that is the framework of the on-line course. The 12 major course units will include Botany, Soils, Plant Diseases, Entomology, Integrated Pest Management, Herbaceous Ornamentals, Woody Ornamentals, Grasses, Houseplants, Small and Tree Fruits, Vegetables and Landscaping. Each unit will include a reading assignment from the manual, a PowerPoint presentation and notes to view, external links to visit, a homework assignment and a quiz. The course also includes an obligatory discussion board tool for communication between participants and with the instructor. Participants may work at their own pace but should be aware that the course has specific deadlines for completion of homework and quizzes. Students should plan on spending between 8-12 hours per week on the course. **NO EXTENSIONS ON QUIZZES OR TESTS WILL BE GRANTED WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE INSTRUCTOR.**

Those interested in taking the On-Line course as a Master Gardener should apply through their local University of Illinois Extension Unit Office, following the same initial procedures as face-to-face Master Gardener applicants --- filling out an application form and completing an interview. Applicants must receive approval from their local Unit Director and/or Master Gardener coordinator to take the training as a Master Gardener. Master Gardener candidates must serve their volunteer hours to the unit in which they register and are accepted into the class.

Those applicants choosing Non-volunteer /personal study option may take the on-line course as well. Indicate on the On-Line Registration Form you are taking the course as: Non-Volunteer/ personal study option. Return your registration and fee to local University of Illinois Extension office for forwarding to the state office. You **cannot** change your mind later and decide to become a Master Gardener if you choose this option.

The **training fee** to become a Master Gardener volunteer is **\$250** and the fee for the non-volunteer option is **\$300**-- payable to the University of Illinois. This training fee includes a CD-ROM copy of the Master Gardener manual. Registered participants will receive their manual(s), PowerPoint CD, and course password, along with information about accessing the course for the first time prior to the start of the course on January 12.

Questions about the course may be directed to your local Master Gardener coordinator or the Master Gardener State Coordinator-Monica David, 1201 S. Dorner Drive, Urbana, IL 61801, Tel. 217-265-5256 modavid@uiuc.edu