



The Arizona Master Gardener

University of Arizona-trained gardening ambassadors to our communities

Presented by Laura Ward
Arizona Master Gardener
Maricopa County



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES
Cooperative Extension

How it Started: University of Arizona Cooperative Extensions

The University of Arizona is a Land Grant institution. Dating back to 1862, at least one college in each state was designated by Congress as a Land Grant Institution to receive the benefits of the Morrill Acts of 1862, 1890, and 1994.

The original mission of the Land Grant Institutions, as set forth in the first Morrill Act, was to teach agriculture, military tactics, and the mechanic arts so members of the working classes could obtain a liberal, practical education.

How it Started: University of Arizona Cooperative Extensions

The Smith Lever Act formalized the Extensions in 1914, establishing USDA's partnership with land-grant universities. Congress created the extension system to address exclusively rural, agricultural issues. At that time, more than 50 percent of the U.S. population lived in rural areas, and 30 percent of the workforce was engaged in farming.



Old Advertisement. Extension Service, Home Economics Division, Colorado Agricultural College

How it Started: University of Arizona Cooperative Extensions

Today, the Extension has many missions. In addition to the master gardener program, UA provides science- and research-based information on agriculture, nutritional programs, Arizona Project WET (water conservation education) pest management, consumer sciences and supports local 4-H programs.

The Master Gardener volunteer program greatly expands the outreach capability of the Extension!



The (Arizona) Master Gardener is

- A University of Arizona trained individual who completes a Cooperative Extension semester-long specialized course in gardening/horticulture.
- A non-paid volunteer who agrees to complete a specified number of volunteer hours and continuing education hours each year to remain certified.
- County-specific and local. Each county extension office has their own program. Maricopa and Pinal Counties focus on our conditions in the low desert.
- The Master Gardener provides educational leadership in home gardening, landscaping, and irrigation.
- We may or may not be experts or “masters” at any or all horticulture topics, but we are trained to help you find science- and research-based information.

The Master Gardener (Cont.)

How Master Gardeners help fulfill the Extension's educational outreach mission:

- Operate the Plant Help Desk
- Give presentations and classes to local groups, write articles, and “spread the word”
- Assist in setting up and maintaining community and school gardens
- Run programs to introduce both adults and children to gardening
- Present information at garden & trade shows and special events
- Maintain demonstration gardens which showcase plants, planting methods, composting, irrigation methods, and pest management.
- Provide advice on establishing water-wise landscaping and watering techniques
- Conduct annual plant sales, special clinics, and assist other organizations with courses

How MG's Assist the Community: Service

In Maricopa County alone, over 500 certified Master Gardeners reach out to our communities and provide a powerful impact.

In 2017, Master gardeners logged 22,562 volunteer hours and The value of the volunteer hours is over \$500,000. And that's just Maricopa County.



Master Gardeners taking a break after morning work in the demo garden. Sampling the day's harvest

How MG's Assist the Community: The Plant Help Desk

- The Maricopa County Extension Plant Help Desk provides research-based information to assist you with plant and pest problems.
- Email: maricopacountyplanthotline@gmail.com. Responses will generally be within a week
- Visit: 4341 E. Broadway Rd Phoenix, AZ 85040. Bring in a plant or pest sample. Location is in Southeast Phoenix, near Tempe.
- If a master gardener cannot answer your question, they will refer the question to University expert staff members.

How MG's Assist the Community: Plant Help Desk (Cont.)

- Monthly plant diagnostic clinics are typically held the first Wednesday of the month and are open to the public. Here you can bring in samples and ask questions about plant and pest problems.
- To view upcoming sessions, visit the MG Calendar and look for “MG Diagnostic Plant Clinic”

https://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/mgc/mg_calendar.html

How MG's Assist the Community: Classes and Presentations

- The Desert Institute of Gardening (DIG) program provides variety of classes. Most have a fee to cover expenses. New for 2019! DIG has plans to take classes on the road to be nearer to all our communities.
 - To view the upcoming classes, search the calendar for “DIG” https://cals.arizona.edu/maricopa/garden/mgc/mg_calendar.html, or click on the Maricopa Master Gardener Facebook page “events”:
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/MaricopaCountyMasterGardeners/events>
 - Upcoming DIG classes include: citrus clinics; rose clinics; grow organic vegetables; totally tomatoes; and a desert walk presentation
- We are at most of the local Home and Garden shows providing free seminars.

How MG's Assist the Community: Demonstration Garden

The demonstration garden behind the County Extension office grows food year round. The photo shows a portion of the harvest on July 24, 2018. The garden is tended every Tuesday by MG volunteers. Tuesday afternoons in the winter months and early Tuesday morning in the summer months.



July Harvest

How MG's Assist the Community: Demonstration Garden



Around the perimeter of the vegetable garden there is a herb garden, maintained by the AZ Herb Association (many of whom are MGs). The group meets on the first Saturday of the month for a weed and feed, tending the herbs.

Around the property are other examples of desert-adapted plants: agave; trees, shrubs and others. There is even a section of desert plants from Australia.

Please visit!

Demo Garden, January 9, 2018. After the hard freeze.



How MG's Assist the Community: Gardening Publications

- Master Gardeners frequently use the University's free research-based publications to assist those in need of help with gardening, trees, pests, irrigation, and other topics. These pubs are free to everyone!
- Publications are researched and written by University staff/educators.
- To see the list of gardening publications, visit:
<https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/data/master-gardener-publications-6-26-18.pdf>
- To search all the Extension publications, visit:
<https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs>

Vegetable Planting Calendar for Maricopa County (Handout)

This is by far my favorite MG publication, and I look at it at least weekly. All twelve months of the year, you can be planting something in Maricopa County.

If you are going to be planting transplants, back up your seed starting 4-6 weeks before the TS planting dates in the calendar.

What can we plant *right now*?



Native corn growth in one month during monsoon heat

Ten Steps to a Successful Vegetable Garden (Handout)

Another of my favorite publications, these ten steps help anyone be successful with their garden.

Location

Layout

Varieties

Seeds, Plants and Supplies

Soil Preparation

Planting

Irrigation

Mulching and Cultivating

Pest & Problems

Harvesting

How MG's Assist the Community: School and Community Gardens

- Master Gardeners assist in establishing, maintaining and providing advice for community and school gardens.
- Master Gardeners are always looking for fun and interesting volunteer opportunities, so if you are interested in one of the following, contact one of our coordinators to ask for assistance (See POC list).
 - Establishing a school or community garden
 - Giving a group class on a particular topic (we have experts in many areas)
 - Speaking at your gardening meeting or community meeting
 - Water-wise landscaping advice and assistance, and related projects

Would YOU Like to Join Us?

How to become a Master Gardener:

- Master Gardener courses are taught twice per year, for 17 weeks at the Maricopa County Extension Office.
- Student Interns cannot miss more than 3 classes.
- Mentors guide each MG Intern and help them through the process.
- Before being certified, Interns will complete 50 volunteer hours.
- After certification, the requirement is 25 volunteer hours per year of and 12 hours of continuing education to remain certified.
- Maricopa county has MANY opportunities to volunteer and learn at the same time. Assist with classes, teach, help in the demo garden, or work with children at the Water Festivals... there is something for everyone.

Would YOU Like to Join Us? (Cont.)

During the 17-week course, weekly classes are provided on: Botany, Plant Problem Diagnosis, Soils, Ornamentals, Pest Management, Tree Care, Fruits, Vegetables and Herbs, Plant Propagation, Turf, Desert-Adapted Landscape Plants, Cacti and Succulents, Composting, Landscape Design, Irrigation and Landscape Watering.



Would YOU Like to Join Us? (Cont.)

- A Spring session is held from January through May and a Fall session is held July through November. Classes are three hours long and meet once a week. Classes are most often held Tuesday mornings from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. We offer an evening class every other Fall session. The next evening class will take place Fall of 2020.
- Cost is \$275 and includes textbooks.

Would YOU Like to Join Us? (Cont.)

If you have an interest in environmentally responsible landscaping and gardening in the low desert AND volunteering as a University of Arizona Master Gardener ambassador to the teach others, please apply for the Master Gardener program and join us.

There are routinely more applicants for the program than class seats. Selection is not based on first-come basis, but a demonstration of a history or willingness to volunteer, a level of specific skills and knowledge of value to the program, and agreement of program policies and missions.

Master Gardener Points of Contact

- **Plant Help Desk** – For all your plant and pest questions.
Email: maricopacountyplanthotline@gmail.com. Visit: 4341 E. Broadway Rd Phoenix, AZ 85040.
Feel free to bring in a plant or pest sample. Location is in Southeast Phoenix, near Tempe.
- **Laura Ward**, Arizona Master Gardener. Feel free to contact me for any follow up questions on this presentation. lajward@gmail.com
- To request a MG speaker for your Garden Club, HOA or other organization, contact:
Sharon Dewey, MCCE Master Gardener Speaker's Bureau. Email: sdewey@email.arizona.edu
Phone: 602-827-8209
- For other Master Gardener assistance, such as help with a community or group garden project, please contact: **Yvonne Cooper**, Master Gardener Program Coordinator. Phone: 602-827-8239
Email: yvonnecooper@email.arizona.

Links

MG Facebook Page – DIG Events

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/MaricopaCountyMasterGardeners/events>

View the list of UA Extension gardening publications

<https://extension.arizona.edu/sites/extension.arizona.edu/files/data/master-gardener-publications-6-26-18.pdf>

Search through all the UA Extension publications

<https://extension.arizona.edu/pubs>

Master Gardener Training, Upcoming Course Announcement

<https://extension.arizona.edu/maricopamg> (Click on “Become a Master Gardener”). Keep checking. The notice for the next course is posted about 2 months before the class begins