

LAKELANDS MASTER GARDENERS FAQs

I'm enrolled in the Master Gardener Class of 2017. What now?

Congratulations! You are now an official Master Gardener Student.

After you have completed the Master Gardener Class in November you will be considered a Master Gardener Intern. You will be recognized for completing the class at the Annual Awards Banquet in February, 2018.

You will remain an Intern until you complete 40 hours of volunteer service, which must be completed by the end of 2018. At that point, you will become a Certified Master Gardener and be recognized at the Annual Awards Banquet in February, 2019.

When can I start earning my volunteer hours?

You can start earning hours as soon as you begin the class in August. You do not need to finish the class before you start participating in MG activities. We would love for you to become involved immediately!

What qualifies as Lakelands Master Gardener volunteer hours?

Many diverse activities and events qualify as volunteer hours, and there are opportunities during the weekdays, weekends, and evenings. The four general categories are MG Activities and Events, Continuing Education, Community Volunteerism, and Educational Volunteerism. Below are some examples of activities that fall under these four categories.

*Master Gardener Activities - MG Membership/Speaker meetings, MG Committee and Board Meetings, the Annual MG Awards Banquet and other MG social events, growing and preparing plants for, and working at the MG Plant Sale

*Community Volunteerism - Work days at the City Gardens, the City Greenhouse, MG sponsored community work days, and gardening related work at other non-profits such as schools and churches

*Continuing Education - Independent study such as watching gardening videos and television shows, reading gardening literature, attending the annual Master Gardener Symposium held every February in Greenville, visiting botanical gardens, researching for and writing articles for the Master Gardener newsletter

*Educational Volunteerism - Speaking or teaching gardening related topics at garden clubs, schools and non-profits

That's a lot. Are there any other ways to complete my hours?

Yes. Opportunities are too numerous to list. If you are wondering if an event or activity qualifies, please ask. You may find that it does qualify. Travel time to and from any event or activity also qualifies.

Unfortunately, studying for your Master Gardener classes or exam, working in your personal, family or friends' gardens, or working for a business do not qualify as volunteer hours.

This seems like a lot of discussion about volunteer hours. What is so important about volunteer hours? What if I have only a few hours?

Volunteer hours are extremely important. Our combined Lakelands MG volunteer hours are a big part of determining how much funding our area receives from Clemson, and they contribute to maintaining the current staff at our local Cooperative Extension Office.

Even if your hours seem like a small amount to you, with around 100 total members, even small amounts do add up. Three additional hours per person becomes 300 hours. Individually we may be small, but together we are mighty.

How do I report my volunteer hours?

Contact Linda Halsey, our Education Coordinator, at halseyfarm@embarqmail.com or [864-374-7253](tel:864-374-7253). She is always willing to help any member report their hours and will be glad to answer any questions you may have.

How will I know when Lakelands Master Gardener activities and events are planned?

You, along with your fellow master gardeners, will receive emails with information about MG activities and events. These emails originate from Ann Barklow at annbarklow@embarqmail.com, who volunteers her time to coordinate these email blasts. There will usually be a contact person listed in each of these emails. If you have a question about a particular email, you may contact that person. Or, if you have a question and are uncertain who to contact, then simply reply to the email and Janet will forward your email to the correct person.

Will I receive other Lakelands Master Gardener emails?

Yes. You will receive emails concerning upcoming events in the gardening community that may be of interest to you. You will also receive our monthly newsletter. The newsletter has MG related articles, and a sidebar listing upcoming events. Our emails and our membership email information are limited to Master Gardener related business. We do not share this information with any other groups, and ask that you also respect this policy.

When and where do Lakelands MG membership meetings take place?

There are a minimum of four membership meetings each year. The meetings are held the second Thursday of the month and are fairly evenly spaced throughout the year. The meetings usually begin at 6:00 pm with a short membership meeting and are followed at 6:30 by a Guest Speaker Program. The speaker program is generally open to the general public and topics vary.

Currently, our meetings are held at the Cooperative Extension Office, 105 N. University Street, or the Greenwood County Library Meeting Room, 600 Main Street South.

Information related to the meetings is included in our monthly newsletter. You will also receive an email with an informational flyer that includes the time and place of each meeting and the speaker topic.

Again, we hope you will begin attending meetings as soon as you begin the Master Gardener Class.

Can I bring a friend to the membership/speaker meetings?

Yes. We welcome anyone interested.

How do I remain an active member of Lakelands Master Gardeners? Are there any annual dues?

After you have completed your initial 40 volunteer hours and become a Certified Master Gardener at the end of 2017, you can remain an active member of Lakelands Master Gardeners by paying your annual dues and completing 20 volunteer hours each calendar year. The current annual membership dues are \$20. You must pay dues and complete 20 volunteer hours per year in order to vote on Lakelands MG ballots and continue to receive Lakelands MG emails.

Is there an additional way can I stay in touch with Lakelands Master Gardeners?

We are on Facebook. Check us out at Lakelands Master Gardeners.