

LOUISIANA MASTER GARDENER™ EXTENSION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

WHO ARE LOUISIANA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS?

Multitudes of citizens with gardening problems needing individual explanation and too few professional Extension staff members to physically answer each individual question is a dilemma facing Extension horticulturists. To satisfy this need, the Master Gardener Program was born in Washington State in 1972, enabling volunteers interested in horticulture to be trained in basic horticultural topics by Extension Service personnel and then answer questions about gardening problems and promote horticultural understanding in the community. Louisiana Master Gardeners have a desire to learn and a willingness to help others.

THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

The Cooperative Extension Service (CES) was established in 1914 to distribute information developed by the land grant universities and research stations. The function of the CES is educational in nature, providing technical resources and developmental structure whereby local residents can identify and solve their concerns. All CES services are coordinated through the state land grant university system. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service is one branch of the LSU Agricultural Center, a part of the LSU Land Grant University System (LSU A&M and Seagrant). The CES is a federal, state, and locally supported USDA program administered through each state's land grant system.

WHAT IS HORTICULTURE IN EAST BATON ROUGE PARISH?

Horticulture touches a wide audience with interests in vegetables, fruits, nuts, turfgrass, woody and herbaceous ornamentals, container plants, organic growing methods, composting, houseplants, plant propagation, herbs, environmental issues, pest diagnosis and control, landscape design, garden products and equipment, and year round gardening.

NECESSITY FOR A LOUISIANA MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

The Louisiana Master Gardener Program extends educational programs in the area of home horticulture through trained volunteer Louisiana Master Gardeners. People new to the area and homeowners new to gardening will benefit from LMGs. New information will be available to home gardeners faster as a result of the LMG program.

Teaching new gardening techniques will help reduce over-fertilization and unnecessary pesticide use. LMGs will aid in the public's understanding of Integrated Pest Management, Best Management Practices and sustainable horticulture. Exposure to the LMG program will save homeowners money and benefit the community. LMG education will teach the gardening public how to grow better plants, improve yields, reduce maintenance, conserve natural resources, and improve lifestyle and comfort. It is an express goal that each LMG volunteer will satisfy their own personal needs for becoming a LMG as they assist the gardening public and the Extension Service.

The gardening community readily accepts the LA Master Gardener Program. People are eager to learn from their peers, and as Louisiana Master Gardeners, you will have the unique position in your community to make a difference. Louisiana Master Gardeners believe that by working together they can make their community a better place to live.

Thank you for the opportunity to let me introduce you to the Louisiana Master Gardener™ Extension Volunteer Program in East Baton Rouge Parish.

Bob Souvestre
County Agent and Horticulturist, East Baton Rouge Parish