

# **Master Gardener Volunteer Opportunities**

## **Master Gardener Office**

If you enjoy learning, investigating and helping others then we invite you to come to the Master Gardener office and help homeowners with their landscape questions. You can volunteer at the main office in Fort Pierce or our south county office in Port St. Lucie. You can volunteer for an hour or all day if you would like for there is not a time requirement.

### Functions:

Answer any horticulture questions that come into the office either over the phone or in person

Perform soil tests (PH)

Research answers to questions using the internet or in resource books

Send out research based materials to homeowners if requested

### Special skills desirable:

Desire to research answers to questions

Enjoy talking to members of the public

## **Shade House**

Master Gardeners are at the Shade House on Monday and Thursday mornings.

Activities include:

Propagation of plant materials or seeds

Repotting plant materials

Plant identification and labeling

Weed, water and maintain the nursery

Sell plants to the public

Organize plant sales (twice a year)

Pricing

Weeding

Grouping plants together as labeled

**Monday mornings - 9:00 am to 12:00**

**in the Shade House behind the Extension office**

**Thursday mornings - 9:00 am to 12:00**

**in the Shade House behind the Extension office**

### Special skills desirable:

Ability to propagate and transplant (group members teach each other)

Interest in plant id

## **Nature Walk Garden**

The Nature Walk Garden is one of our Demonstration Gardens. It is a beautiful quiet area located across the parking lot on the west side of the Extension property. You can be a part of the committee as well as helping to keep the garden maintained.

**Monday mornings - 9:00 am to 12:00**  
**Meet at the Shade House behind the Extension office**

Special skills desirable:

Ability to weed and maintain the garden on a regular basis  
Plant / relocate plants after Anita and committees approval

**Front Entrance / Court Yard Garden**

The front entrance has a wonderful variety of plants and two ponds. It is the first area that visitors see when they come to the Extension office and is in need of some Master Gardener's to keep it looking good. The courtyard garden is a semi-shade garden

Special skills desirable:

Ability to weed and maintain the garden on a regular basis  
Plant / relocate plants after discussion with Anita

**Butterfly Garden**

The Butterfly Garden is on the west side of the entrance between the building and parking lot / Nature Walk garden. Our butterfly garden is always in need of a few hands to keep it inviting to our flying friends.

Special skills desirable:

Ability to weed and maintain the garden on a regular basis  
Plant / relocate plants after discussion with Anita

**Discovery Garden**

This is the newest garden enhancement to the Extension grounds. It is located inside the chain-linked fenced area next to the shade house. It is home to a variety of plants including many that do well in our area. It also has an experimental area where we will discover which new plants will do well in our area. You can be a part of the committee as well as keeping the garden maintained.

Special skills desirable:

Ability to weed and maintain the garden on a regular basis  
Plant / relocate plants after Anita and committees approval

**Landscape Retrofit Program**

Our Landscape Retrofit program is designed to help homeowners with specific problems in their landscape; a spot where nothing seems to grow, problem plants, unhealthy plants, help with right plant right place and more. We have a Port St. Lucie and Fort Pierce group of Master Gardeners available, a group of 2 to 3 volunteers go out to homeowner's properties for this service.

**Functions:**

Assist homeowners with plant identification

Offer a variety of suggested plant material that would work well in their yard

Write a follow-up letter for what was discussed / suggested; send the draft to

Wendi so it can be proofed by Anita and sent out on letterhead with any additional informational materials needed.

**Special skills desirable:**

Enjoy talking to members of the public

Desire to research answers to questions

Plant identification

Writing a short summary

**Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Yard (FYN) Recognition**

The Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program is an educational outreach program informing homeowners how they can be more environmentally friendly with their landscape care practices and how this can help protect Florida's natural environment for future generations. A homeowner's landscape has to follow "Florida Friendly Yard" principles in order to have their yard recognized.

This is often done during a retrofit. After filling out a survey Master Gardeners (2 to 3) will go out to the homeowner's property and recognize it using the FYN Yard recognition checklist. This checklist is broken up into the 9 FYN principles and the homeowner has to receive a certain number of "inches" (points) in each of the 9 categories in order to have their yard recognized (minimum of 36 inches).

The FY&N recognition forms get sent back to Kate after you complete the process so she can send them a certificate. They may choose to receive a yard recognition sign that may be placed after completion of the survey. A picture of the homeowner with their sign can be taken.

**Speakers Bureau**

This is a great opportunity for Master Gardeners to get out into the community and speak with local organizations; Garden clubs, women's groups, home owners associations etc. If there is a topic you are passionate about or one that you would like to create a presentation about and enjoy talking to groups then being a part of the speaker's bureau is an ideal volunteer opportunity. There are usually 2 Master Gardener speakers that go out at a time for this program.

Equipment; laptop, LCD projector and screen are available for loan from the Extension office. All equipment needs to be signed out ahead of time.

You will be given a form that needs to be filled out to include demographic information from the presentation audience. This form should be returned to Kate upon completion.

**Functions:**

Provide researched based information to the group you are addressing

Provide printed materials to your audience pertaining to the topic presented (copies can be made at the office)

**Special skills desirable:**

Ability to speak in front of an audience

Ability to answer questions and the desire to research answers to questions

## **School Programs**

### **School Gardens**

Local school teachers often call upon Master Gardeners for help in starting a school garden. This is a great opportunity for you to assist them with any questions they may have and a chance for you to offer your expertise in starting an appropriate garden for their needs e.g. Vegetable or Butterfly garden.

The Junior Master Gardener Program curriculum is also offered to teachers.

This is filled with activities they can do in their school garden. They are loaned the curriculum and supplemental materials for a 2 month period.

### **Water Quality – Potential Sources of Pollution Program**

Curriculum is being developed so we can take this informative program out into the local Elementary and Middle schools. We will offer hands on activities for the students educating them on the potential sources of pollution in our environment. This is another great school program that Master Gardeners can assist with.

### **Africanized Honey Bee (AHB) program**

This is a new program; being developed that will be taken out into the schools. Teachers and students alike will be educated about the Africanized honey bee through hands on activities and information on how to “bee proof your school”. We will also offer this program to homeowners through the speaker’s bureau. Educating homeowners on how to scout their landscape for signs of bee activity and the best way to “bee proof” their home.

Functions:

Provide educational information to students

Provide hands on activities pertaining to the topic area

Special skills desirable:

Enjoy working with youth

### **Fort Pierce Farmers Market**

We have a plant clinic booth that is set up at the Farmers Market in down town Fort Pierce on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month from 8 – 12 noon during season. (October – April). Usually 2 – 3 Master Gardeners volunteer each time.

Activities:

Assist with set up, tear down table and display materials

Answer horticultural questions, or get contact information to later provide a response after the topic is researched

Provide printed information (hand outs) for upcoming events etc

Special skills desirable:

Enjoy talking to members of the public  
Desire to research answers to questions – back at the office

### **Heathcote Botanical Garden**

Located at 210 Savannah Road, Fort Pierce, Fl 34982  
(772) 464 – 4672

Heathcote is home to a botanical garden displaying many subtropical plants with themed gardens and plant collections.

We do joint programming with them on a regular basis and they appreciate the Master Gardeners help whenever possible.

#### Functions:

Assist with maintenance and upgrading the garden  
Possibly lead tours

#### Activities:

Pull weeds  
Pruning  
Plant new areas  
Participate in some aspect of the tours, as guide or helper

#### Special skills desirable:

Knowledge of Heathcote plants (for tour guide)

We have a plant clinic booth at Heathcote on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday of the month from 10 – 2pm during season (October – April). Usually 2 Master Gardeners volunteer each time.

### **Oxbow Eco Learning Center**

Located at 5400 St. James Dr. Port St. Lucie, FL 34983  
(772) 785-5842

The Oxbow is an Environmental Learning Center. They have a large area of native plants and wildlife.

#### Activities:

Under the direction of the volunteer coordinator  
Pull weeds  
Pruning  
Plant new areas

### **Master Gardener Mentor**

This is an opportunity to mentor trainee Master Gardeners throughout their 12 weeks of training.

#### Functions:

To be available to answer any questions related to the training materials, tests

and assignments

To be able to direct trainee to the appropriate resources in order to get the information they need

To increase the comfort level of the trainee to feel more a part of the program by including them in volunteer opportunities

### **Marketing Committee**

The marketing committee is responsible for creating ideas that inform the public about the Master Gardener Program and what Extension offers; to include:

Displays for fairs

Brochures

Informational packets

Advertising sub committee

Writing a newspaper article for local papers or HOAs etc

### **Hospitality Committee**

Phone committee

Send out thank you cards, get well cards etc

All forms from any program need to be given to Kate O'Neill upon completion.

If you have any questions regarding any of the volunteer opportunities please

don't hesitate to call Kate @ (772) 462-1660 or email: [Kasmi@ufl.edu](mailto:Kasmi@ufl.edu)

Thank you for volunteering!