

Volunteering

Volunteer hours can be completed through various activities that could include: planting and maintaining demonstration gardens, collecting data on research projects, helping with county and State Fair activities, speaking to community groups, leading garden tours, collecting plant samples, answering phone questions, teaching youth programs, or whatever sparks your interest and utilizes your talents.

Education

Educational topics will cover a wide range of horticultural issues. Topics that have been covered during previous educational sessions include: native plants for water conservation, an in-depth look at fertilizers, turfgrass and related insects, beneficial pollinating insects, vegetable garden pests, tree and shrub pruning, pesticide safety and non-chemical pest control techniques, and small fruits and tree fruit basics. The content of the topics is focused on the home gardener, but those employed in the green industry will also benefit from the program.

Nebraska Extension in Hall County
3180 W Hwy. 34
Grand Island, NE 68801
Return Service Requested



EXTENSION

Master Gardener Volunteer Program

Central Nebraska Extension Master Gardeners Volunteers

What is an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer?

Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are people who love plants, gardening, landscaping, and teaching others. To earn the title of Extension Master Gardener Volunteer, individuals enroll in the program and receive 40 hours of education from University of Nebraska—Lincoln faculty, then volunteer 40 hours of gardening and horticulture related work. There are fees for the program which cover the educational resources and expenses.

No qualifications or prior knowledge about horticulture is needed for the class. The only requirement is a desire to learn and share a love of gardening and a commitment to teach others about horticulture.

History of Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Volunteers

The Nebraska Master Gardener Volunteer program is a horticulture related volunteer training program based in many counties throughout the state.

The program has been part of University of Nebraska- Lincoln Extension since 1976. Volunteers are trained by Nebraska Extension faculty and staff and contribute volunteer time working with their local Extension office to provide horticulture-related information to their community.

What Is Required of Extension Master Gardeners Volunteers?

Participants are required to complete 40 hours of education and 40 hours of volunteer service during the initial year of their involvement in the program, as well as pass a written exam which is embedded in the TopHat platform.

To retain the Extension Master Gardener Volunteer title, volunteers are required to annually attend 10 hours of continuing education classes and give back 20 hours of volunteer time to their local community and Extension Master Gardener projects

What's the Cost & What's Included?

New Extension Master Gardeners

The fee is **\$250*** for new Extension Master Gardeners Volunteers (EMGV). With that fee the EMGVs receive access to an online platform called TopHat, a short-sleeved T-shirt, and a name tag. The fee will also help fund handout materials, speaker travel expenses, room rental, and other costs associated with the program.

Returning Extension Master Gardener Volunteers

The fee is **\$25** for returning EMGVs. This fee covers speaker expenses, handout materials, and other costs associated with the program.

ProHort Green Industry Partners

The fee is **\$500** for Green Industry participants. With that fee the ProHort participants receive access to the TopHat platform and 40 hours of education.

***partial financial assistance is available for new EMGVs fees**



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture. University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Educational Options

TopHat

All new Extension Master Gardener Volunteers will receive access to an online platform called TopHat. Embedded in the platform are text, videos, quizzes, and much more that can be completed and reviewed at your own pace. Returning EMGVs can have access to this platform for a \$35 fee.

Zoom Classes

Zoom classes will be held Tuesday evenings February 3- March 10, 2026, 6:30-8:00 pm. Orientation is January 27, 2026.

In-Person Classes

Experts will teach on a wide range of topics related to the EMGV curriculum. Dates and times are March 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 2026 9:00 am-noon & 1:00-4:00 pm. Schedules will be posted online and are subject to change.

For More Information:

Please contact Elizabeth Exstrom at the Nebraska Extension Office in Hall County at 308-385-5088 or eeexstrom2@unl.edu for more information.

Accommodation requests related to a disability should be made no less than a week before the start of classes with Elizabeth Exstrom.