

On your mark, get ready, get set, go! With such an introduction, one might think a race is about to begin. Actually, one is. Spring 2011 will quickly be entering the race against time, and with it starts another new and exciting gardening season. Why not make this year the year you become a certified Nebraska Master Gardener?



The mission of the Nebraska Master Gardener program is to extend the outreach of the University of Nebraska – Lincoln, providing volunteers with research-based horticulture education and preparing them to share their knowledge with the citizens of the State.

In just a few weeks, for those residing in Central Nebraska, live Master Gardener Training will begin in Grand Island, Nebraska, at the Hall County Extension Office.

Beginning on March 14<sup>th</sup> the following training will occur. Classes are from 9:00 a.m. to noon, reconvening from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The content level of each class is focused on the home gardener; however, some participants in the past have been employed in the green industry.

- ▶ March 14 - Morning: Welcome and Orientation. – Elizabeth Killinger, UNL Extension Educator, Hall County - Horticulture. Afternoon: Pruning Trees and Shrubs - Sarah Browning, UNL Extension Educator, Lancaster County - Horticulture
- ▶ March 16 - Morning: Turfgrass Management- Dr. Roch Gaussoin, UNL Extension Turfgrass Specialist. Afternoon: Continuation of morning program.
- ▶ March 18 - Morning: Better by Design - Kim Todd, UNL Extension Horticulture Specialist; Afternoon: Continuation of morning program.
- ▶ March 21 - Morning: Insects, Diseases and Environmental Problems of Trees - Laurie Stephanek, Nebraska Forest Service Forest Health Assistant. Afternoon: Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels- Kelly Feehan, Extension, Educator, Platte Co.

► March 23 - Morning: Wildlife - Dennis Ferraro, UNL Wildlife Specialist;  
Afternoon: TBA

► March 25 - Morning: Pest Management: Insect and Disease ID and control in Turfgrass, Vegetables, Fruits and Ornamentals. - Dr. Stephen Wegulo, UNL Plant Pathology Dept.; Loren Geisler, UNL Plant Pathology Dept.; James Kalisch UNL Ext. Insect Diagnostician. Afternoon: Continuation of morning programs.

To become a first-time, certified Master Gardener, attendance is required for a minimum of 40 hours of education. Participants are considered Master Gardener Interns after they have completed the 40 hours of educational training and have passed an open-book test. Participants become fully certified Nebraska Extension Master Gardeners after completing 40 hours of volunteer activities. The title of Nebraska Master Gardener is retained until training sessions begin the following year at which time the title can be renewed.

Returning Master Gardeners must complete a minimum of 10 hours of continuing education and 20 hours of volunteer activities each year to remain active.

Master Gardener's volunteer hours make a definite difference. These hours can be earned through various activities including but not limited to planting and maintaining demonstration gardens, helping with county and state fair activities, speaking to community groups, collecting data on research projects, teaching youth programs as well as numerous other educational contacts.

Why not make this the year you enter the Nebraska Master Gardener race? Get ready, get set, go!

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Killinger at the UNL Extension Office in Hall County, Grand Island, NE at 308-385-5088 or [ekillinger2@unl.edu](mailto:ekillinger2@unl.edu). A Master Gardener Live Presentation brochure providing more specifics of the program can be downloaded at <http://hall.unl.edu/>