



Rutgers Master Gardener Program of Somerset County

Graduating Class of 2018

POSITION DESCRIPTION

TITLES

Rutgers Master Gardener Intern: Currently part of the Rutgers Master Gardener training class or volunteering toward certification.

Certified Rutgers Master Gardener: A volunteer who has completed all certification or re-certification requirements.

PURPOSE

To extend Rutgers Cooperative Extension's educational programs in the area of home horticulture through trained and certified Rutgers Master Gardener Volunteers. Rutgers Master Gardener volunteers assist the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station's (NJAES) Cooperative Extension in its mission to deliver un-biased and research-based horticultural information to the general public. Some examples include:

- Support the Somerset County Extension office by staffing the Rutgers Master Gardener Helpline. The Rutgers Master Gardener Helpline is a vital service through which volunteers and Extension personnel answer questions on home horticulture topics from telephone callers and visitors. These topics include but are not limited to trees and shrubs, perennials, annuals, lawns, insects and plant diseases.
- Support horticulture education programs through which county residents obtain up-to-date information from Rutgers Cooperative Extension, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences (SEBS), Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.
- Support Extension's outreach program by providing educational services to community groups in Somerset County including: libraries, parks, garden clubs, schools, health centers, government agencies, etc.

APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications for the **Class of 2018** will be reviewed for the following **criteria**:

- extent and type of experience in the program areas listed below
- history of volunteerism
- pre-test results
- interview
- references
- knowledge of and compatibility with the mission of Rutgers Cooperative Extension
- ability to work with others
- excellent communication skills, both verbal and written
- strong organizational skills
- signing of volunteer agreement and supplemental working with youth agreement (if volunteer will be working with youth)

Based on current needs, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Somerset County is reviewing applications for the **Rutgers Master Gardener Class of 2018 to seek volunteers for the following program areas**:

- **County Master Gardener Helpline / Community Events / Sustainable Landscapes**
Helpline qualifications include excellent communication skills (both written and verbal) when dealing with the public, excellent problem solving skills, ability to understand and execute policy, demonstrated reliability, strong organizational skills.
Community event qualifications include seeking out appropriate community events for Master Gardener involvement, eager to work with the public, attending events with display tables, theme planning and organizing for Master Gardener tents at 4-H Fairs, Earth Day celebrations, and gardening experience.
- **School Gardens / Habitats, Youth Programs**
Qualifications include past experience in working with youth, excellent communication skills with youth, strong interest in participating in currently active youth programs, such as Master Gardener Seed to Salad program and 4-H Fair, self-starter that is willing to pioneer new projects to engage our youth in horticulture, strong organizational skills.
- **Community Gardens**
Qualifications include excellent communications skills when dealing with the public, excellent problem solving skills, knowledge of growing and caring for a wide variety of vegetable and ornamental flowering plants.
- **Gardening with special needs populations**
Qualifications include experience in working with special needs populations and or excellent communication and organizational skills, self-starter eager to pioneer new projects.

Applicants that meet or exceed application criteria described above will be identified during the application review period and may be called for an interview. References will be checked prior to an interview.

REQUIREMENTS

- Meets all application criteria.
- Completes an intensive training program, which includes basic horticulture information, problem solving techniques, and supervised internships. Classes will include lectures, webinars and field experience. **In order to become a fully certified Rutgers Master Gardener, the Master Gardener Intern must complete 100 volunteer hours in Somerset County, as agreed to in the Master Gardener application and specified below.**
- Effectively communicate with the public by telephone, in person or in groups and in writing.

SUPERVISION

- The Extension Agent or program coordinator responsible for the Rutgers Master Gardener Program provides supervision and support to the Rutgers Master Gardener volunteer.
- The Extension Agent or program coordinator will review and assess work.
- The Agent or program coordinator will provide or appoint assistants for in-service training based on needs of the Rutgers Master Gardeners.
- Cooperative Extension will provide space, telephone and other needed support.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity program provider and employer. Contact your local Extension Office for information regarding special needs or accommodations. Contact the State Extension Director's Office if you have concerns related to discrimination, 848-932-5000, ext. 584.

TRAINING PROGRAM

SCHEDULE

The Rutgers Master Gardener Training for Somerset County will run from mid-September through March. Class cancellation due to inclement weather will extend classes into early April. Classes will be held on Tuesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. The classes will be held at the Somerset County Extension office. Other training venues, days and times may be necessary due to scheduling conflicts weather cancellation or to demonstrate class topics.

There is a non-refundable fee of \$250.00 for books, other educational materials and administrative costs. An individual or member of a family whose annual income falls below Federal Poverty Guidelines or who qualifies for assistance such as Food Stamps or Medicaid may be eligible to receive a scholarship (one available per class) that partially covers the training program fee. Contact RCE Somerset for more information.

TRAINING AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The teaching staff will consist of County Agricultural Agents, Extension Horticulturists, and faculty from Rutgers University, NJAES Cooperative Extension, Certified Rutgers Master Gardeners and industry professionals. The administrative staff consists of Extension personnel and certified Rutgers Master Gardeners.

ATTENDANCE

In order to be in good standing, a student must have a minimum 80% attendance record. If you are unable to attend class, please contact the RCE office at 908 526-6293 option 4.

TESTING

Written study guides will be assigned each week. Students are expected to complete and return all study guides the following week for evaluation. The study guides allow students to evaluate their own progress and instructors to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching. Two exams will be given during the course, one exam for the first half of the program and a second exam for the second half of the program. The two exams will be averaged for a final grade.

DIAGNOSTICS

Diagnostic classes are part of the Rutgers Master Gardener training program. This training will familiarize the student with common home and landscape problems as well as diagnostic procedures and Rutgers Cooperative Extension recommendations.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Rutgers Master Gardener students are expected to read and study assigned lesson materials and to actively participate in class.

RUTGERS MASTER GARDENER CLASS CERTIFICATE

To receive a Rutgers Master Gardener class certificate, a student must:

1. Have an 80% attendance record for class sessions and field trips. Students who miss a class session or activity must account for their absence.
2. Satisfactorily complete all class work.
3. Receive an average grade of 80% for mid-term and final exams.

CERTIFIED RUTGERS MASTER GARDENER TITLE

1. The title of Rutgers Master Gardener Volunteer is serviced marked and used for approved Rutgers Cooperative Extension programming only. **Using the title of Master Gardener for business or product promotion and/or financial compensation is prohibited.**
2. To become a fully Certified Rutgers Master Gardener; a student must have **received a Class Certificate and completed the required 100 hours of volunteer service** to the Helpline and specified teams in the Master Gardener program **within 18 months** of completing the training. Certification requirements are specified below.
3. To maintain Rutgers Master Gardener certification, it is necessary for the Certified Rutgers Master Gardener to regularly attend advanced training educational programs and participate in Master Gardener activities as specified below.

Initial Certification - Rutgers Master Gardener of Somerset County Intern 100 volunteer hours.

In order to become a certified Rutgers Master Gardener of Somerset County, interns must complete the following

Helpline: 50 hours required of all interns.

Core Outreach Programs: 20 hours in any one or combination of the following:

- Helpline (Office) – an additional 20 hours to the 50 required or Community Events (off site)
- School Gardens / Habitats, Youth Programs
- Community Gardens
- Gardening with special needs populations

Elective Programs: 10 hours in any one or combination of the following:

- Native Plant Team
- Speakers Bureau Team
- Writers Bureau Team
- Snyder Farm Team
- Tomato Tasting (before, during and after)
- Marketing and Communication Team
- Mary's perennial garden Team

RMGSC Meetings and Continuing Education: 10 hours accumulated by attending monthly Rutgers Master Gardeners of Somerset County meetings. 1 hour of Continuing education (CE) obtained per program hour at monthly meetings. No meeting in August and no CE provided for Volunteer Awards program in April.

Other Continuing Education: 10 hours by attending approved horticulture / environmental / plant related lecture or program.

To re-certify as a Rutgers Master Gardener of Somerset County

- **25 hours of outreach in program approved activities.**
- **10 hours of Continuing Education (CE) such as:**
 - Advanced training portion of general meeting
 - Designated RMG training classes
 - Approved RMG workshops
 - Rutgers Snyder Farm educational programming and research
 - Speakers Bureau public presentations
 - Rutgers Home Garden School
 - State wide RMG training meetings
 - Other RCE approved educational events