

# Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens

## Master Gardener Program

*The mission of the Phipps Master Gardener (MG) Program is to empower highly motivated and trained volunteers to share their knowledge and expertise to assist Phipps in carrying out its mission and build a stronger, more knowledgeable horticultural community, while providing a rewarding and engaging experience in an environment that values and appreciates their contributions.*

Master Gardeners are needed to support Phipps' education and outreach programs. MGs teach and write on a variety of horticultural subjects, answer gardening questions for the general public through the Dr. Phipps service, support our Homegrown and Top 10 Sustainable plant outreach programs, and represent Phipps at public events. In addition, Phipps MGs help throughout our organization, helping with greenhouse production, installation of seasonal shows, maintenance of the display gardens in the Conservatory and outdoor gardens, both at the Conservatory and the Garden Center, and other projects related to horticulture, gardening, and the environment.

*Phipps Mission: To inspire and educate visitors with the beauty and importance of plants; to advance sustainability and worldwide biodiversity through action and research; and to celebrate its historic glasshouse.*

Please review the application process, course information and program structure outlined below to see if this program is a good fit for you.

### Application Process

**1) Submit an application:** The attached application is our first chance to get to know you, so please fill the application out thoughtfully. **MG classes start March 14, 2019, and applications are due January 18, 2019.** You can submit an application by mail, fax, or e-mail.

**Mail:** Phipps Garden Center  
1059 Shady Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15232  
Attention: Master Gardener Program

**Fax:** 412/665-2368

**E-mail:** [edu@phipps.conservatory.org](mailto:edu@phipps.conservatory.org)

**2) Schedule an interview:** Within two weeks of receipt of application, you will be contacted to schedule an interview. Please be sure to check your e-mail and phone messages.

**3) Application Status and Payment:** Within 2 weeks of your interview, Phipps will contact you to let you know if you have been accepted into the program. If accepted, you will be given instructions on how to pay the class fee of \$250 to reserve your spot. Payment instructions will be included with your acceptance notification. *Do not send any payment with this application.*

**4) Attend Orientation:** If you are accepted into our MG class, you will be invited to an orientation two weeks before the class starts. This is a mandatory meeting to review expectations for the program, meet fellow classmates, receive class materials, and review expectations. **The 2019 orientation date is from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. on Thursday March 7, at Phipps Garden Center in Mellon Park (1059 Shady Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15232).**

**5.) Submit for Clearances:** All Phipps volunteers are required to obtain Act 33: Child Abuse Clearance and Act 34: Criminal Record Check. Clearances may be submitted online or by hardcopy. When submitting as a “volunteer”, there is no fee. Generally, it takes 2-4 weeks to receive results.

## Course Information

The Master Gardener class is divided up into three semesters - Spring, Summer and Fall. During the Spring and Fall semesters, classes meet weekly with one additional Saturday workshop per month. During the Summer semester, the schedule is much lighter, with trainees required to attend just one event per month.

Class times and days vary each year. **In 2019, the class will meet on Thursdays, from 6:30 – 9 p.m.** A complete schedule will be included as part of orientation, but the semesters will adhere to this general outline:

**Spring Semester:** Thursdays, March 14 through May 16 (weekly meetings, plus one Saturday morning)

**Summer Semester:** mid-May through mid-September (focus on volunteerism, with limited class requirements)

**Fall Semester:** Thursdays, Sept. 12 – Oct. 31 (weekly meetings, plus one Saturday morning)

**Location:** The majority of classes take place at Phipps Garden Center in Mellon Park, which is the center for Phipps' adult education classes. Some classes may take place at the Conservatory, or off-site.

The core of the MG class is lecture based instruction from an array of knowledgeable instructors on the topics outlined below. Students are provided with a textbook for pre-class preparation, and to keep as a reference. Hands-on and experiential learning are also utilized throughout the class. Students will also be given Phipps-specific training, enabling them to graduate from the MG class uniquely prepared to support Phipps' many educational and horticultural efforts.

### **Course topics include:**

- Soil Ecology
- Botany
- Organic Lawn Care
- Ornamental Plants
- Indoor Plants
- Small and Tree Fruits
- Vegetables
- Herbs
- Pruning
- Diagnosing Plant Problems
- Plant Propagation
- Native Plants
- Pollinators
- Landscape Design

## Program Structure

**Once admitted into the program, there are four expectations you must meet in order to qualify as a Phipps Master Gardener:**

**1) Class attendance:** Due to the self-contained structure of each class, attendance at all sessions is important. If a session must be missed, it can be made up the next year at no additional cost. Students may miss two classes and still receive Master Gardener certification.

**2) Tests:** Students are tested throughout the course to ensure they are making adequate progress. The tests will cover content in the manual, in-class lectures and workshops. Students must attain an overall average score of 75% or higher in order to pass.

**3) Independent Project:** Students will choose a topic for an independent project that they will work on over the duration of the class and present on to fellow students and guests at the end of the training.

**4) Volunteering:** Phipps volunteers typically commit to 72 hours of service each year. Master Gardeners **must** volunteer a *minimum* of **36 hours** of approved activities over the course of the calendar year in order to qualify to be a Master Gardener for one year. At least half those hours (18) must be with Phipps. The other half can be volunteered through other horticulturally appropriate activities in the community.

**Note: Continuing Education and Volunteerism:** After the first year, 12 hours of continuing education and at least 36 hours of volunteerism are required each year to maintain your Master Gardener certification.

***Each of these qualifications must be met in order to receive your Master Gardener certificate.***

We look forward to receiving your application. If you have any questions, please contact us:

Phone: 412/441-4442 x3925      E-mail: [edu@phipps.conservatory.org](mailto:edu@phipps.conservatory.org)

Master Gardener Application

## MASTER GARDENER APPLICATION

I wish to become a Master Gardener with Phipps and would like to be accepted into the training program beginning in March. I understand that if accepted into the program, I will attend the required classes and agree to donate a minimum of 36 hours of public service in the Master Gardener Program within a year. At the end of a year, if the above requirements are met, I will receive a Master Gardener Certificate.

Each year thereafter, I can renew my certification by completing at least 36 hours of public service in the program and 12 hours of update training.

<b>NAME</b>		<b>DATE</b>	
<b>ADDRESS</b>			
<b>CITY</b>	<b>STATE</b>	<b>ZIP</b>	
<b>HOME PHONE</b>		<b>CELL PHONE</b>	
<b>EMAIL</b>		<b>DATE OF BIRTH</b>	

**How did you hear about the Master Gardener program?**

**Are you a member of Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens?**     yes     no

### **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

<b>ORGANIZATION/COMPANY</b>	<b>DATE(S)</b>
<b>Please give a brief description of your position and responsibilities.</b>	

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**EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

<b>ORGANIZATION/COMPANY</b>	<b>DATE(S)</b>
Please give a brief description of your position and responsibilities.	

<b>ORGANIZATION/COMPANY</b>	<b>DATE(S)</b>
Please give a brief description of your position and responsibilities.	

**EDUCATION**

<b>COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY</b>	<b>DEGREE/FIELD OF STUDY</b>
<b>HIGH SCHOOL</b>	
<b>TECHNICAL COLLEGE</b>	
<b>OTHER</b>	

**Please briefly describe your gardening background, including how long you've gardened, and any relevant classes or trainings:**

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Do you have any other special skills or certifications that may be applicable to your volunteer work at Phipps (e.g. first aid, sign language, woodworking)?

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Phipps offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities. Please read carefully through our volunteer position descriptions on our website. Not all opportunities may currently be available. Check all that apply.

	Conservatory Docent		Science Education		Horticulture- Indoor Displays
	Sustainability Docent		Garden Railroad		Horticulture- Outdoor Displays
	Discovery Program		Special Events		Horticulture- Production Greenhouse
	Summer Camp Assistant		Greeter		Phipps Garden Center
	Homegrown		Let's Move Pittsburgh		Office

Please check the activities below that you enjoy and have experience doing.

	Vegetable Gardening		Soil Testing		Bulb Planting
	Herb Gardening		Landscape/Garden Design		Indoor Plant Care
	Perennial Garden Maintenance		Floral Arranging		Native Plantings/Local Ecology
	Tree/Shrub Maintenance		Botanical Illustration		Rain Gardens
	Composting		Cut Flower Gardening		Other:

How do you prefer to volunteer?    \_\_\_ working alone            \_\_\_ working as part of a team

Master Gardeners are asked to make a minimum commitment of 36 hours of volunteers per year. Are you willing and able to work a three-hour shift, one to two times a month?

\_\_\_yes    \_\_\_no

What is your general availability to volunteer? Please check all that apply.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
<b>Mornings</b> (usually 10 a.m.– 1 p.m.)							
<b>Afternoons</b> (usually 1 – 4 p.m.)							
<b>Evenings</b> (occasionally)							

If you are available for a limited time, please note the date range you will be available.

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**What would you bring to the volunteer program at Phipps?**

**What would make you feel successful as a volunteer at Phipps?**

**Please list one personal and one professional reference.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Name</b>	<b>Relationship</b>	<b>Phone</b>