SEVIER COUNTY
UTEXTENSION
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Prospective Master Gardeners,

The Sevier County Area Master Gardeners are excited about your interest in our program. The 2027 Master Gardener Intern class will meet on Tuesdays from February 2, 2027, through April 27, 2027. Classes will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. each Tuesday at the Sevier County Extension Office.

This course will be taught in an asynchronous, "flipped classroom" format. University materials, including lectures and selected activities, will be reviewed at home prior to class. Our required in-person sessions will focus on hands-on learning, discussion, and will occasionally include offsite field trips.

The class fee is $175, which includes course materials, the Master Gardener Handbook, and additional program resources.

We're looking forward to a great program, and we hope you'll join us. If you have any questions, or would just like some more information please feel free to contact me.

Catherine Lawson

Extension Agent I : Sevier County

ANR & 4-H, Master Gardener Coordinator

752 Old Knoxville Hwy Sevierville TN 37862

(865) 453-3695 | https://sevier.tennessee.edu/

The Master Gardener program is a volunteer service organization offered by University of Tennessee Extension. The purpose of the Master Gardener program is to train citizens to serve as horticulture educators in their communities.

The title of Sevier County Area Master Gardener is contingent upon meeting the following requirements:

- Successfully completing the Master Gardener training program
- Completing and reporting 40 volunteer service hours within 12 months of completing the training program
- Sharing only University of Tennessee–approved recommendations, rather than home remedies or non-research-based information
- Missing no more than four classes during the Master Gardener Intern Training Program in order to achieve certification
- Not using the Master Gardener name badge or title for commercial gain or to promote commercial products or businesses
- Renewing certification annually by completing required volunteer service and continuing education hours

Applications will be accepted beginning November 1, 2026, and must be received no later than January 15, 2027. Applications should be mailed or delivered to:

Sevier County Extension
752 Old Knoxville Highway
Sevierville, TN 37862

Applications may also be emailed to csams1@utk.edu.

A brief interview will be conducted in person or by phone before acceptance into the program. Once accepted, the $175 program fee may be paid in the office or online.

Master Gardeners frequently interact with children. The University of Tennessee requires all volunteers who work with children to be checked against the Sexual Offender Registry. Please note that the Background Disclosure section of this application must be completed before acceptance into the Master Gardener program.

SCHOLARSHIPS: A limited number of scholarships are available for this program. If you have a financial need that would otherwise prevent you from participating, please attach a one-page letter explaining your need and how this program will enable you to benefit others. Scholarship recipients must maintain active membership in the Sevier County Area Master Gardener Association for two years. The membership fee is waived during the first year but is the responsibility of the recipient in subsequent years.

Please complete all forms in this packet. Incomplete application packets will not be considered. This application packet includes the following forms:

- Horticulture Questionnaire
- Extension Volunteer Form
- Hybrid Training Class Schedule
- In-Person Class and Workshop Schedule

2027 Training Schedule

Feb. 2nd Opening week

Feb. 9th Welcome to TEMG and TN Geography

Feb. 16th Stewardship

Feb. 23rd Soils and management

Mar. 2nd Botany and propagation

Mar. 9th Vegetable gardens

Mar. 16th Fruit

Mar. 23rd Entomology and IPM

Mar. 30th Pathology and diagnostics

Apr. 6th Turfgrass and weed management

Apr. 13th Sustainable design and herbaceous plants

Apr. 20th Woody ornamentals

Apr. 27th Pollinators and Wildlife

AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES, AND COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GENERAL VOLUNTEER - Please select which areas of volunteer opportunities interest you.

- ☐ Beef
- ☐ Beekeeping
- ☐ Business Development
- ☐ Dairy
- ☐ Equine
- ☐ Fruits & Vegetables
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Ornamental Horticulture
- ☐ Poultry
- ☐ Row Crops
- ☐ Small Ruminant
- ☐ Swine
- ☐ Tobacco
- ☐ Other: _____

_____

MASTER GARDENER

Why do you wish to become an Extension Master Gardener Volunteer? _____

_____

_____

Do you have any experience or interests that you feel would be beneficial to the Master Gardener program?

_____

_____

Years of gardening experience? _____

Would you like to work with home gardeners? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Which of these do you consider to be your areas of expertise?

- ☐ Vegetable gardening
- ☐ Community gardens
- ☐ Trees/shrubs
- ☐ Wildlife gardening
- ☐ Ornamental ponds
- ☐ Lawns & turf grass
- ☐ Herb gardening
- ☐ Native plants
- ☐ Houseplants
- ☐ Other: _____
- ☐ Flower gardening
- ☐ Landscape design
- ☐ Diseases/insects
- ☐ Water-conservation gardening

Other volunteer experiences in your community:

1. _____
   Volunteer Position — Organization Name
   _____
   Organization Address — Organization Telephone
2. _____
   Volunteer Position — Organization Name
   _____
   Organization Address — Organization Telephone

I understand the title Extension Master Gardener is conditional upon receiving training, performing 40 service hours and reporting those hours. Tennessee Extension Master Gardeners are expected to use only University of Tennessee-approved recommendation. The Extension Master Gardener name badge and title may not be used for commercial gain or to promote commercial products or businesses.

_____
Applicant's Signature — Date

SECTION 2 - TENNESSEE EXTENSION VOLUNTEER STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Community members and families place trust in Tennessee Extension to provide quality leadership and care for all program participants, youth and adults. The opportunity to work in the community is a privileged position of trust that should only be held by those who are willing to commit to uphold behavior that fulfills this trust. **The following statement of principles is provided for all volunteers.**

In addition, as a volunteer, if you are working with youth in any Extension program, activity and event, you have been identified as a "Covered Person" for the purposes of the University of Tennessee Safety Policy 575 – Program for Minors. The following information, which is not all-inclusive, illustrates some examples of specifically expected and prohibited conduct. Engaging in prohibited behavior will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including, termination, as either unsatisfactory work performance or work-related behavior, or gross misconduct, under university policy.

1. **Ethical and responsible conduct:** In carrying out its educational, research, and public service missions, the university relies on the ethical and responsible conduct of all volunteers. Even the appearance of unethical or irresponsible conduct can be damaging to the public's trust in the university. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves fairly, honestly, in good faith, and in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards, and to comply with applicable laws, regulations, contractual obligations, and university policies. (HR0580: 1)

2. **Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Child Sexual Abuse**: Covered Persons must comply with Tennessee laws on mandatory reporting of child abuse and child sexual abuse. (HR0580: 2b)
    a. Tennessee laws mandate reporting by any person who has knowledge of physical or mental harm to a child if:
        i. The nature of the harm reasonably indicates it was caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect; or
        ii. On the basis of available information, the harm reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse or neglect.
    b. Tennessee law also mandates reporting by any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually abused, regardless of whether it appears the child has sustained an injury as a result of the abuse.
    c. A report of child abuse or child sexual abuse must be made immediately to one of the following authorities:
        i. The Tennessee Department of Children's Services (Call Central Intake Child Abuse Hotline at: (877-542-2873) or (877-237-0004).
        ii. The sheriff of the county where the child resides.
        iii. The chief law enforcement official of the city where the child resides.
        iv. A judge having juvenile jurisdiction over the child.

        University police departments are not included in the list of authorities. Reporting to university police, a supervisor, or any other university official or employee does not satisfy an individual's duty to report child abuse or child sexual abuse to one of the authorities listed above.

3. **Responsible Reporting of Suspected Violations and University Response:** Volunteers are expected to report any good-faith concern that compliance violations might have occurred, including, but not limited to, the following: violations of state or federal law or regulations; fraud in the operations of government programs; misappropriation of state or federal resources; acts that endanger the health or safety of the public or employees; and mismanagement of programs, funds, and/or abuses of authority. Volunteers are expected to report compliance concerns at the earliest possible opportunity by contacting their university contact, the next level of university contact, the appropriate campus/institute compliance officer, Office of Audit and Compliance (865-974-6611), or the Institutional Compliance office (865-974-4438). Volunteers wishing to remain anonymous should report their concerns to the State Comptroller's Fraud Hotline (1-800-232-5454). Concerns will be referred to the appropriate university office for investigation. Volunteers are expected to cooperate fully in investigations.

4. **Respect for Persons:** Covered Persons are expected to be committed to creating an environment that promotes learning, diversity, fair treatment, and respect for others. (HR0580, #3; TSU6.9)
    a. Disorderly conduct, including, but not limited to, using discriminatory, abusive, or threatening language; fighting, provoking a fight, or attempting bodily harm or injury to another employee or to any other individual or threatening physical action or injury on university property or during university activities; or other conduct that threatens or endangers the health, safety, or well-being of any person.
    b. Violation of any university policy against harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.
    c. Treat others in a courteous, respectful manner, demonstrating behaviors appropriate for a positive role model for youth.
    d. Comply with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policy. Make all reasonable efforts to assure Extension programs, activities and events are accessible to youth and adults without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability.
    e. Do not require Extension program participants to purchase materials, supplies, equipment, animals or services from any specific vendor.
    f. Teach youth/adults to provide appropriate animal care and treat animals humanely.
    g. Recognize that physical punishment is not an appropriate form of discipline for youth and will not be allowed.

5. **Respect for Property:** Obey the laws of the locality, state and nation. This means no one will:
    a. Neglect or damage university property.
    b. Steal or engage in dishonest behavior.
    c. Tamper with or wantonly destroy university data, records, or other information; gain unauthorized access to such information; disclose confidential information; or otherwise misuse university data or information.
    d. Engage in unauthorized use of university vehicles, mail services, identification and credit cards, telephones, computers, computer equipment, or other university equipment or materials. Computers and computer accounts are provided to employees to assist them in the performance of their jobs. Employees do not have a right to privacy in anything they create, send, or receive on a university computer. The university has the right to monitor, for business reasons, any and all aspects of any university computer system, including employee e-mail.
    e. Solicit, collect money, or circulate petitions on university property at any time without permission of the chief business officer or designee.

6. **Standards of Safety**
    a. Possession of firearms, explosives, or other dangerous materials on university property or during university programs, activities or events, is prohibited unless the covered person is authorized either by university policy or law to carry firearms, explosives, and other dangerous materials and it is also necessary to do so in the course of employment (police officer, R.O.T.C. personnel, etc.)
    b. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of alcohol, illegal drugs, intoxicants, or controlled substances is prohibited. As are in addition, abuse of prescription drugs while on duty; use of alcohol in a university vehicle on or off university property; possession or use of alcohol while on duty (except at university-sponsored events and other events a Covered Person is expected to attend as part of his or her duties); or attend an Extension program activity or event (reporting to work) under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol or while unlawfully using controlled substances.
    c. Refusal to obey security officials, Emergency Management personnel, or other proper authorities in emergencies.
    d. Failure to comply with safety rules, regulations, or common safety practices.
    e. Failure to report an accident involving on-the-job injury or damage to university property.
    f. Smoking in violation of university policy.

7. Compliance with Laws and University Policies

a. Behavior or conduct unacceptable to the university or the community at large.
b. Any violation of any law in the performance of duties or that affects the ability to perform duties satisfactorily.
c. Failure to comply with Tennessee laws on mandatory reporting of child abuse and child sexual abuse.
d. Failure to comply with laws regarding mandatory reporting requirements applicable to health care professionals' interactions with patients while acting within the scope of university employment.
e. Gamble on university property or during UT Extension and Tennessee State University programs, activities or events.
f. Flagrant violation or failure to observe traffic or parking regulations.

8. Work Performance

a. Failure to wear proper identification (name tag) in the prescribed manner as may be required by UT Extension, the University of Tennessee, and Tennessee State University.
b. Failure or refusal to maintain or obtain required licensure, certification, or registration.
c. The volunteer understands that he/she has no actual authority to bind or represent the university with regard to any third parties. The volunteer agrees to avoid giving the impression of having apparent authority to bind or represent the university with regard to third parties. Accordingly, the volunteer may not sign or enter into any agreement or contracts on behalf of the university.

References: University of Tennessee **HR0580 – Code of Conduct**; University of Tennessee **SA0575 – Programs for Minors**; University of Tennessee, Knoxville Campus.

SECTION 1 - TENNESSEE EXTENSION VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Level 1 volunteers should only complete Sections A - E. Level 2 and Level 3 volunteers should complete the entire form.

Tennessee Extension aims to provide a safe environment for all persons involved in Extension activities and events. This application is designed to be an information-gathering aid in order to successfully match the applicant's skills and interest with the appropriate service and needs of the organization. Answers given by the applicant may be verified. All applications will be filed in a secure location.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Must present your Driver's License or a government issued photo ID with your application

Name _____
Last First Middle Name

Home Address _____ Length of time at this address? _____
Street, Route, Apt #

_____
City, State Zip code County

Mailing Address (if different from above) _____

Email address: _____ How long have you resided in this county? _____

Telephone: Daytime _____ Evening _____

Best time to call: ☐Morning ☐Afternoon ☐ Evening

Have you previously volunteered with TN Extension? ☐Yes ☐

B. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Gender: ☐Female ☐Male Date of Birth: _____ (d/m/yyyy)

Race: (check one) ☐American Indian/Alaska Native ☐Asian ☐Black/African American

☐Hispanic or Latino ☐Middle Eastern or North African ☐Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander

☐ White ☐ More Than One Race

Are you able to speak or write in a language other than English? ☐Yes ☐No (Please list, including American Sign Language.)

C. AVAILABILITY

What length of time are you willing to volunteer? Over what time period? (Check all that apply)

_____Hrs. /week _____Hrs. /month ☐ 1-3 months ☐ 3-6 months ☐ 6-12 months ☐ Ongoing

When are you available to volunteer? (Check all that apply)

☐ Day ☐Evening ☐ Weekends ☐ I'm flexible Specific times: _____

D. AUDIENCE INTERESTS

I prefer to work directly with: (Check all that apply)

☐ Youth ☐Adults ☐Senior Citizens ☐Clientele with disabilities ☐ Other _____

If you work directly with youth, what age level(s) do you prefer? (Check all that apply)

☐ Pre-school ☐ K-3 ☐ Explorer (4th grade) ☐ Junior (5th - 6th) ☐ Jr. High (7th-- 8th)

Senior: ☐Level I (9th-10th) ☐Level II (11th – 12th)

E. ACTIVITY INTERESTS - What are your volunteer activity interests? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Teaching/ demonstrations
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Displays/exhibits
- ☐ Organizing programs/events
- ☐ Public Speaking
- ☐ Telephone/office work at county Extension office
- ☐ Writing/publishing/proofreading
- ☐ Web development
- ☐ Artworks, graphics
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ Research/data collection
- ☐ Typing/ Computer entry
- ☐ Fundraising

*If you are interested in a specific program or topic area such as 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Community Economic Development, Master Gardener, or Family and Consumer Sciences, please see Section 3 - Program Area Information Forms.

The following two sections should be completed by Level 2 and Level 3 volunteers only

F. REFERENCES - List three people, not related to you, who have knowledge of your qualifications and have known you for at least two years. Provide complete addresses and phone numbers.

1. _____
   Name | Street Address | City/State/Zip
   _____
   Day Phone Number | Evening Phone Number | Email Address | Relationship

2. _____
   Name | Street Address | City/State/Zip
   _____
   Day Phone Number | Evening Phone Number | Email Address | Relationship

3. _____
   Name | Street Address | City/State/Zip
   _____
   Day Phone Number | Evening Phone Number | Email Address | Relationship

G. BACKGROUND DISCLOSURE - A "yes" answer does not automatically exclude an applicant from becoming a registered Extension Volunteer. If there are any changes in answers to the following questions, the volunteer should immediately contact the local Extension office and notify the change.

1. Have you ever had any criminal conviction related to:
   a. A crime of violence? ☐Yes ☐No
   b. Child abuse or neglect? ☐Yes ☐No
   c. Sexual related offenses? ☐Yes ☐No
2. If yes, to any of the above questions, provide date(s), location(s), and complete name at the time(s).

I authorize contacting the references listed on this application. I understand the omission or misrepresentation of information requested may result in non-appointment or dismissal as an Extension volunteer. If appointed as a volunteer, I agree to abide by the policies of UT Extension, and the University of Tennessee, and Tennessee State University and to fulfill my volunteer responsibilities to the best of my abilities. I also understand that UT Extension, the University of Tennessee and/or Tennessee State University may contact other individuals as needed to verify my skills, background, and experience in working with Extension clientele.

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Tennessee Extension Volunteer Statement of Principles (all volunteers). I acknowledge that I have received and read the University of Tennessee Programs for Minors Safety Policy and Standards of Conduct for Covered Adults (Levels 2 & 3 volunteers).

I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, all of my statements are true, correct, complete, and made in good faith.

_____
Applicant's Signature | Date

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:	Date application was received: _____	
This applicant: (Pick one)	☐ Met qualifications for an Extension volunteer position. ☐ Did not meet qualifications for an Extension volunteer position.	Volunteer Level: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3