

La Porte County



What is Master Gardeners?

The Purdue Master Gardener Program is sponsored by Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service through the local county Extension Office.

It is a volunteer training program designed to meet the information needs of the local gardening community. Its specific aim is to provide information and technical assistance about gardening and home horticulture through the use of qualified volunteers.

How do I become a Master Gardener?

To become a Master Gardener, you must complete a Master Gardener volunteer application and agreement, be selected from a pool of applicants, complete the training program, pass an examination administered by the local Extension Educator and volunteer at least 35 hours of public service through the La Porte County Extension Office.

Priority will be given to La Porte County residents and those who will fulfill the volunteer commitment. Contact the La Porte County Extension Service for applications at 219-324-9407.

What is the connection with Purdue University?

Each state has a university designated as its land grant college. In Indiana, this is Purdue University. As the land grant college, Purdue is charged with the responsibility to do research and teaching on agricultural and horticultural issues in Indiana. Much of the informal teaching is performed by the Purdue College of Agriculture, through the Extension Service, which has an office in each county in Indiana.

Each county has a person designated as the Extension Educator – Agriculture & Natural Resources, who works with the people in that community to answer the agriculture and horticulture questions. If there is interest, the Extension Educator can organize a Master Gardener program. Not all counties offer a Master Gardener program. Currently, there are Purdue Master Gardener Programs in 86 Indiana counties.

Why should I become a Master Gardener?

Through the Master Gardener training sessions, you become knowledgeable about a wide array of gardening subjects. This knowledge will increase your skills as well as enable you to assist the public with questions and problems involved with gardening. As a Master Gardener, you will work extensively with the public and have the opportunity to participate in organized volunteer activities and/or to develop programs within your community.

What is the cost?

The cost will vary from county to county and is subject to change. The 2019 Purdue Master Gardener Training program in La Porte County will cost \$200 per person which includes a 642-page training manual (25 chapters), other class materials and fourteen weekly class sessions. Additional benefits include delicious refreshments and new friendships gained by networking with other class participants and a Master Gardener mentor.

What type of training will I receive?

The training program will cover a wide variety of topics including: soil science, plant nutrition, plant science, insect identification and pest control, disease identification and control, pesticide safety and use, vegetable gardening, fruit production, herbaceous ornamentals, trees and woody ornamentals, lawns, weeds, animal damage and invasive plant species.

Training will be held over a period of 3 months in a series of 14 sessions, each 3 hours in length starting in September. Participants are expected to attend all training sessions. Follow-up training and advanced training will be arranged as needed.

What is a typical class like?

Most people would tell you “Fun!” The class starts with a few announcements, followed by an hour or so of instruction. After a refreshment break in mid-class, it’s back to learning. Many of the instructors are local experts or Purdue University Extension staff trained in specialty areas.

Instructors often give a review quiz at the end of the session, which can be taken home and completed. Answers to the quiz may be discussed the following week.

What if I only want some gardening advice?

Some people want the information from the Master Gardener class, but do not wish to do the volunteer work. Rather than signing up for the Master Gardener program, these people should let the Master Gardeners know they would like classes offered on gardening tips. If this situation meets your needs, contact the extension Office and let them know what classes or topics you might be interested in.

What is the volunteer commitment?

The type of volunteer work done will be based on a mutual agreement between the Master Gardener and the local Purdue Master Gardener Program Coordinator. Types of volunteer work might include writing articles for the paper, coaching individuals at community gardens, speaking to garden clubs, school children or other groups or preparing materials for other Master Gardeners to use. The possibilities are endless. LaPorte County Master Gardeners have set up and staffed booths at various shows, garden centers and Farmers’ Markets; worked with Habitat for Humanity and local parks departments; answered horticulture questions on the Garden Hotline; and held seminars for the public.

For more information contact:

Gene Matzat, La Porte County Purdue Master Gardener Program Coordinator

Extension Educator – Agriculture & Natural Resources

Purdue Extension Office – La Porte County

2857 W. State Road 2, Suite A

La Porte, IN 46350

Phone: 219-324-9407

E-Mail: ematzat@purdue.edu

Website: www.extension.purdue.edu/laporte