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Master Gardener Training 2021

Like most, I will be glad when 2020 is over. I just hope that when it's over we will have some form of normalcy. Anyways, Master Gardener Training- well it's pretty much a wash for this year. So what is the plan? Well, training will be available through our on-line training program which is offered from January through March. So that means if you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener or know someone that is, 2021 will be your first chance to train. The good news is: the on-line training program allows you to work at your own pace (over a 3 month period) to get the required 40 hours of training. So let's back up for a moment to the beginning and answer a couple of questions:

How to become a Master Gardener

As a Master Gardener you serve your community in a variety of ways, and in turn you receive training on many aspects of horticulture while making meaningful relationships and having enriching experiences.

What does it mean to be a Master Gardener?

As horticultural trained volunteers, Master Gardeners extend research-based information through demonstration and educational programs using horticulture

best practices, strengthening communities and families throughout Arkansas.

Master Gardeners serve their local community by answering questions, researching specific problems, planting educational and therapeutic gardens, providing public speakers and much more.

How much time is involved?

After completing your 40-hour horticulture training you are required to complete 40 working hours and 20 learning hours during your first year. In your subsequent years you will provide only 20 working hours and 20 learning hours.

What does it cost?

The required 40 hour Master Gardener Online training fee is \$120 plus local host fee

For more information about becoming a MG, visit our website at the link below:

[Master Gardeners website](#)

If you have further questions, please contact your local County Extension Agent.

August-September Calendar:

- The Rison Farmers Market on Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. and Woodlawn on Saturday mornings.
- Stay tuned for updates.

August-September to do list:

1. Record all MG volunteer hours.
2. Continue to be diligent with the water for lawns and gardens.
3. Begin planting Fall vegetables.
4. Remove diseased plants and discard properly.
5. Deadhead annuals and perennials to keep them blooming.
6. Last call to fertilize lawns and shrubs.
7. Divide spring blooming perennials.
8. Replenish mulch.
9. Solarize weedy or diseased areas of garden 4-6 weeks.
10. Plan your Fall color.

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Leafy Greens.

“Let your smile change the world but don’t let the world change your smile.”

The benefits of growing greens in the early fall can be twofold. One, greens are healthy to eat and are excellent sources of fiber and vitamins A and C. Two, greens can help contribute to soil health throughout the fall and winter and are a popular choice to ‘feed’ your garden. When turned under in the fall, most greens replenish the organic matter in your soil and enhance earthworm and microbial activity close to the soil’s surface.

Because “Greens” are cool weather vegetables, they grow best and are the tastiest when planted in the late summer to early fall in south Arkansas or also late winter to very early spring.

Most greens grow best in well drained, medium rich soils with a pH of 6.0-7.0.

Popular greens you will find in Arkansas home gardens include: spinach, collards, kale, mustard, turnip-Rutabagas and lettuce.

When planting greens, gardeners should sprinkle seeds on a wide row and cover with a ½ inch of soil. After germination, the greens should be thinned to allow 2 to 4 inches between each plant. Providing adequate plant space helps insure productivity through increased growth and reduced incidence of disease. Don’t forget light watering is necessary for greens because their roots are anchored within the first few inches of soil.

To harvest most greens, cut them to 1 inch above the soil’s surface. This will allow the plants to quickly put on growth for another

harvest. A little warning note here: when harvesting collards and kale, gardeners should pick the outside leaves or branches, making sure to never cut the main stalk.

Shortly before planting greens, gardeners should apply composted manure or two pounds of 5-10-10 commercial fertilizer per 100 square feet to ensure nutrients are available to young plants.

Some common insect pests in greens include: leaf miners, cabbageworms, aphids, cucumber beetle, and flea hoppers. Most of these insects can be controlled fairly easily. Contact your local County Extension Agent for recommended pesticides

Below are links to Extension Fact Sheets on how to grow different greens but if you have further questions, just dial up your local Extension Agent for help.

Turnips-Rutabagas: [UAEX Publication on Turnips-Rutabagas FSA6079](#)

Mustard Greens:

<https://www.uaex.edu/publications/PDF/FSA-6072.pdf>

Spinach:

<https://www.uaex.edu/publications/PDF/FSA-6077.pdf>