

Master Gardener | Johnston County

Volunteer Opportunities for Extension Master Gardener Volunteers

The EMGV program was created to expand NC Cooperative Extension Service's capacity to meet the needs of the gardening public by providing unbiased, research-based, environmentally sound information about establishing and maintaining gardens, lawns, landscapes, houseplants, fruits and vegetables in ways that protect health and natural resources. Because of the efforts of Master Gardener volunteers, Cooperative Extension is able to have a greater impact benefiting the citizens of Johnston County and beyond.

- **Demonstration Gardens surrounding the Johnston County Center** – Location 2736 NC 210 Hwy, Smithfield. Demonstration gardeners help create and maintain a garden where community residents can see new horticulture practices at work. Job duties are to help with maintenance and continued improvement.
 - East Side Demo Vegetable Garden - Various extension agents utilize this garden to teach vegetable gardening, healthy eating, food preparation, propagation, and commercial vegetable and crop production.
 - 4-H Pollinator Garden – This is a garden located at the front parking lot of the Johnston County Center. It is a joint effort with the 4-H youth and Master Gardeners.
 - Fruit / Horizontal Beehive Demo Garden - This is a garden located at the front entrance hillside. The beehives will be used for teaching youth and handicap participants. The fruit demo garden will be utilized for teaching about growing and pruning fruit trees and small fruit.
 - All other Demonstration Gardens surrounding the Johnston County Center. (*Choice Plants-Pollinator Garden, Diamond Kelly Border, Flag Pole Garden, Employee Entrance Gardens*) Job duties are to help with maintenance and continued improvement.

- **Clayton Community Garden** – location – Clayton Community Center, 715 Amelia Church Rd, Clayton. It is located behind the Clayton Community Center.
 - The Clayton Community Garden workdays are on Mondays year-round and on Thursdays March through September. Hours are 9 AM to noon except for the hot months May through September when we start at 8 AM, although volunteers come as early or late as they need to. Volunteers include EMGV's, school groups, Boy Scouts, and any interested adults at any skill level. All garden produce is donated to many charitable organizations in Clayton including Clayton Area Ministries. Work and classes in this garden count toward EMGV hours.
 - A-Z Vegetable Gardening classes are 9 AM to 11:30 AM on Saturday mornings from March (after the time change) until late September excluding holiday weekends and the plant sale Saturday. There is no charge for certified EMGV's or EMGV trainees.

- **PAR (Plant-A-Row for the Hungry) Garden** – Location – JCC Arboretum, 245 College Rd, Smithfield. Meets Thursdays generally from 9-11 am. Volunteers include EMGV's, civic groups, school groups, at risk youth/young adults, and interested adults at any skill level. The educational component teaches organic methods with an emphasis on education of pests, disease, divisions, specific cultivars, environmental impacts, weeds, and pruning. There is no charge for any of these activities. All garden, orchard and gleaned produce collections are donated to many charitable organizations around the county. Work and classes in this garden count toward EMGV hours.
- **Mobile Plant Clinics** are held mainly on the weekends at various locations in Johnston County (Hardware Stores, Clayton Farmers' Market, and the Clayton Harvest Festival). Customers ask and receive landscape and gardening advice at these informational booths that are staffed with several Master Gardener volunteers.
- **"The Gardener's Dirt" Newsletter** – for volunteers who love to write. Keep in mind that people who read printed material distributed from the local Extension center will assume it is the official recommendation of Extension and NC State. All articles must be consistent with current research findings and literature provided by Extension. As of 2023, there over 2946 subscribers of the Gardener's Dirt Newsletter. Its success can be attributed to the help of the Master Gardener Volunteers that contribute articles each month.
- **The Customer Help Line** is located within the Johnston County Extension office. Master Gardener volunteers answer horticultural questions of incoming calls, help examine plant specimens brought in by the public, diagnose problems, and make recommendations in compliance with Extension recommendations and approved practices. Numerous resources are available to help with answering questions. Sign up to volunteer on the EMG Intranet website or on the monthly wall calendar.
- **Youth & School Gardens** – EMGV's partner with schools and the teachers and complement their curriculum to teach the kids gardening and plant appreciation. Master Gardener volunteers work with elementary grades to introduce them to gardening and how good food helps them stay healthy. Note: All youth work is to be documented in the Federal ES- 237 Report which helps to determine the amount of federal funding that comes back to NC for certain program areas. (*Participating schools: East Clayton Elementary School - "The Green Kids"*)
 - **Jr. Master Gardener class** – The Junior Master Gardener Program is a week-long national 4-H curriculum that offers a variety of engaging lessons, hands-on activities, for youth in gardening so kids can earn the Jr. Master Gardener certification.
- **Annual Plant Sale** – occurs in April. All Master Gardener volunteers participate in the annual plant sale, which help raise funds that support the Master Gardener program and extension educational projects and programs throughout the year.
 - **Crafts** – Master Gardeners have a lot of fun, making crafts to sell at the Annual Plant Sale and other venues throughout the year to raise funds that help support extension's educational programs to the public.

- **Speakers Bureau** - EMGV volunteers are often called upon to share their horticultural knowledge and interests with the public by giving talks to garden clubs and civic groups, providing workshops, and leading demonstrations or tours.
- **Therapeutic Horticulture** - EMGVs who enjoy working with people who have special needs can provide instruction in the culture of indoor plants, floral design, or container and raised-bed gardening to groups of senior citizens or other groups with special needs.
- **Marketing / Social Media / Educational Web** - Actively marketing and creating campaigns for the Master Gardener program and the promotion of educational programs. Social media is a way for people to connect, find information, and be engaged. Post things such as; events, photos (people, plants, insects, disease, and designs), frequently asked questions and their answers, pest/weather alerts, gardening tips, links to recommended resources, and descriptions and links to Extension resources.
- **Hospitality** – If you are talented in cooking and decorating? Volunteer to help provide snacks for our monthly meetings and decorations and refreshments for special outreach educational events.
- **Neighborhood Master Gardener Experts** – Are Master Gardener volunteer experts with a minimum of two years' experience as a certified Master Gardener volunteer, that are willing to meet at clients' homes face-to-face answering questions relating to ornamental horticulture, vegetable gardening, soil testing, disease, insects, weed control, and houseplants; provide advice based on Extension recommendations; and distribute appropriate publications available from Extension. All prospective contacts will be vetted first by the extension agent.
- **Symposium** – Volunteer with planning and preparing for the Johnston County EMGV's to host a gardening symposium.
- **Organizers for Educational Speakers and Tours** – help with topics, organizing and finding speakers for the educational portion of the monthly EMGV meetings and lining up regular tours of interest.
- **EMGV Student Intern Mentor** - The goal of the mentor program is to welcome students in the EMGV initial training and coach them from the time they register for the EMGV classes until they become well established in the program. The mentor's role is to familiarize new EMGVs with the program, introduce them to EMGVs, and help them feel comfortable as they attend training and begin their volunteer service. Minimum of one year experience.