

Commitment for Louisiana Master Gardener

In Louisiana, the title "Master Gardener" is to be used only and exclusively in Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener program in which trained Master Gardeners answer gardening questions and provide gardening advice. In addition to the University training, Master Gardeners can have diagnostic support via parish extension agents and state and area extension program specialists. Master Gardeners also are provided Cooperative Extension publications and fact sheets as supporting materials. Master Gardeners are expected to use the title only when doing unpaid, approved volunteer educational service in the extension noncommercial horticulture program.

Louisiana Master Gardeners are not to advertise their names or their places of business, nor to be listed on the advertisements of business places as Master Gardeners. This is an LSU AgCenter Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service public service program. Appearing as a commercial activity, having association with commercial products or giving implied University or Extension Service endorsements of any product or place of business is improper.

Individuals who are not acting on behalf of the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service are strongly urged to make every effort to minimize the appearance of being on duty before making any recommendations in the area of horticulture. Speaking "off the record" is your right; however, make sure everyone knows you are speaking for yourself and not the Extension Service.

In making recommendations that include the use of pesticides (insecticides, herbicides and fungicides), Master Gardeners must follow published Cooperative Extension Service recommendations. Use of other pesticide recommendations is not approved. When reading a recommendation to a client, you must read it in its entirety. No omissions are allowed under any circumstances. Handwritten recommendations are not approved. Questions about commercial production of crops and pest control on such crops are to be referred to the parish extension agent. This includes all areas of the green (landscape) industry.

A volunteer in training must attend at least 80 percent of the prescribed hours of instruction and pass all examinations before becoming a Master Gardener. This certification is restrictive in nature in that it is valid only when the individual is participating in the Master Gardener program and for one year only. If an individual ceases active

participation, the certification as Master Gardener becomes void and the ID badge must be returned. New certifications will be issued each year only to those individuals who make a commitment to participate for the coming year. Those not continuing in the program should be aware that if they represent themselves as Master Gardeners, they are violating their original commitment to the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

All Master Gardener volunteers must recognize the necessity for representing the parish Extension Service in a manner consistent with exemplary citizenship and leadership. Civil rights guidelines will be a normal and integral part of all phases of the Louisiana Master Gardener program.

Master Gardeners are expected to participate in all components of the planned program, respond to the reasonable requests of the agent in charge and respect the need for personal safety and the safety of others. Along with active participation, Master Gardeners are expected to uphold the standards of behavior expected of the LSU AgCenter staff.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Master Gardener program are valuable and may rightfully be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment. Once employed, and while serving as a paid employee, or if self-employed, Master Gardeners should not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Master Gardener at the place of business (unless the place of business is specifically designated as a Master Gardener event by the Extension Service.)

Experienced Master Gardeners are likely to receive invitations to speak before groups. Gratuitous payments or gifts for speaking are not a concern since such speaking activity is entirely separate from the question-answer exchange done through the Master Gardener program. Please do not seek payment for such speaking appearances.

Your work is much appreciated by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension and your local gardeners who will receive your counsel.

I have read the above policies regarding my services as a Louisiana Master Gardener volunteer and do hereby agree to work the required number of hours of service in the Master Gardener program in return for the training provided by the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

Date _____ Signature of Applicant _____

Date _____ Signature of Agent _____