



Course Syllabus

Overview

Foundations of Gardening is a 10-week online MSU Extension course that explores many aspects of gardening. Lessons include self-paced learning opportunities and live virtual lectures from experts in the field. Participants who meet the course requirements receive a certificate of completion.

This course is entirely virtual - all parts of the course can be completed online. Participants log into their D2L course to complete readings, work on assignments and obtain instructions for preparing and attending live virtual sessions. They can also use the platform to meet others in the course.

Foundations of Gardening is the prerequisite for applying to become an MSU Extension Master Gardener (EMG) volunteer, but the course is also open to those who do not wish to become an MSU EMG. For more information, see the section on becoming an MSU EMG at the end of this document.

Course Content	
10 Self-Paced Units (One per week)	Ten units composed of readings, videos, activities, and website explorations. Learning materials are completed prior to attending the live virtual class each week.
10 Live Virtual Class Sessions (One per week)	Each week a 2.5-hour webinar is taught by MSU experts in the field. Lectures reinforce and expand on content and include polls, demonstrations, and a Q&A session.
Assessments and Certificate	Weekly assessments are used to track knowledge gains. Those who achieve a score of 80% or higher on all unit post-assessments and the final exam earn a Certificate of Completion.
Social Opportunities	A virtual social discussion board provides opportunities to connect with others taking the course.
Downloadable Resources	The contents of this course are entirely online. All readings and many resources can be downloaded for use during and after the course.

The following topics are covered in this course:

- Plant Science for Gardeners
- Soils and Plant Growth
- Plant Propagation
- Entomology for Gardeners
- Plant Diseases, Pests, and Problems
- Smart Lawncare
- Gardening with Flowers
- Trees and Shrubs
- Growing Fruits and Vegetables
- Environmental Gardening

Course Expectations

Accessing the course

After payment for the course is complete and a participant is enrolled in the course, the course will be visible, but contents will not open until the official start date. Once the course opens, participants can see the first unit and begin steps to complete it. This will repeat for all ten units. At the completion of the course, course materials will be available for an additional six weeks, at which time access to the course will end.

Introductory session

One week prior to the start of class, there will be a live zoom meeting to familiarize participants with the content and structure of the course, course requirements, and Zoom webinars.

Assessments

Each unit begins with a pre-assessment (quiz) to measure a participant's current knowledge. The pre-assessments are not graded; therefore, it is best that they be taken without looking up answers. When the preassessment is complete, the unit learning materials will open. The unit ends with a post-assessment that is graded. Participants are eligible to take the final examination if they achieve a score of 80% or higher on all ten post-assessments. There are two attempts on the post-assessments. A participant who achieves a score of 80% or higher on the final examination will earn a Certificate of Completion. This is a prerequisite to apply to become an MSU EMG.

Attendance at the live virtual class

The live virtual class reinforces what was learned in the self-paced learning materials by exploring some of the more complex topics in that unit and applying concepts. It is an integral part of the Foundations of Gardening course; therefore, it is optimal to attend all ten live virtual classes. Recordings will be available when circumstances make it difficult to attend. Each live virtual class will be led by MSU experts in the field and will conclude with a Q&A session. After each live virtual class ends, the expert(s) will be available to answer questions via email for the duration of the course.



Technology requirements

This course will have links to other websites and documents, some of which are in PDF format. It is recommended that you have the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader installed on your computer. The webinars use Zoom, a free video conferencing service. Instructions on how to download and use Zoom will be posted on the main page of the Foundations of Gardening course.

Is this course right for me?

This course may be a good fit for you if:

- You are interested in learning about science-based gardening concepts for personal and professional reasons.
- You are comfortable learning in an online environment.
- You have weekly time available for the duration of the class. Self-paced work averages 4- 5 hours per week and the live session is 2.5 hours. Units open weekly, not all at once, hence the need for regular weekly time.
- You have access to a computer with the technology requirements listed above.

Applying to Become a MSU Extension Master Gardener

If you are a participant who is interested in applying to become an MSU Extension Master Gardener (EMG) volunteer, it is important to know that Foundations of Gardening is the prerequisite gardening course. For questions about the process to become an MSU EMG, contact MSU Extension staff for more information. Do not start any of the steps below until you receive guidance from MSU Extension staff.

Items needed to become an MSU Extension Master Gardener include:

- ✓ A Certificate of Completion from the Foundations of Gardening course. (Valid for three years).
- ✓ Completion of the MSU Extension Volunteer Screening Process and acceptance as an “Active Gold” volunteer (please do not initiate the screening process on your own).
- ✓ Enrollment and completion of an MSU Extension Volunteer Onboarding Course (availability varies by location).
- ✓ Completion of 40 volunteer hours on an approved MSU EMG project by November 30 of the year following the completion of the MSU Extension Volunteer Onboarding Course.



Contacts

Questions related to the MSU Extension Foundations of Gardening Course:

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Questions related to the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program:

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