



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Oct. 14, 2009**

**Stephen Dubik, Master Gardener Coordinator, 301-590-2836**

## **Time to Apply for Master Gardener Training Program** **Improve Your ‘Green Savvy’ Gardening Skills and Knowledge**

Montgomery County residents interested in learning environmentally sound gardening practices and sharing the information with others can apply now to join the 2010 Montgomery County, Master Gardener training program.

The five-week course begins on January 26, 2010, and continues through March 5, 2010 (depending on possible snow days). Classes meet Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m.–3 p.m. at the University of Maryland (Montgomery County) Extension office located at the Agricultural History Farm Park, 18410 Muncaster Rd., Derwood, MD. The training fee is \$280 and includes textbooks. Faculty and staff of the Extension office and the University of Maryland present horticulture lectures and demonstrations that cover cultivating trees, ornamentals plants, fruits, vegetables and herbs; identifying pests and diseases; and managing turf, soil and land.

“The class provides a great opportunity for home gardeners, landscape workers, and nursery salespeople to increase their gardening knowledge by learning from local experts,” said Steve Dubik, Horticulture Consultant and the county’s Master Gardener Coordinator.

The requirements to become a Master Gardener are: attending a two-hour orientation, completing course work and a final exam, and performing 45 hours of volunteer service in the first year. In addition, participants must have access to a computer to download university fact sheets. Once qualified, Master Gardeners maintain their status annually by completing 10 hours of additional training and volunteering at least 25 hours. Volunteer opportunities include maintaining demonstration gardens, answering telephone queries, assisting at plant clinics, speaking to community groups, and providing therapeutic horticulture to residents of nursing homes and students in special education classes.

**Registration deadline is December 31, 2009. Class size is limited and filled on a first-come, first-served basis. To request an application, or for more enrollment information, call 301-590-2836.**

There are approximately 300 active members of the Master Gardeners organization in Montgomery County and each volunteers an average of about 50 hours annually. The non-profit program falls under the auspices of Montgomery County government and the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. It is open to all regardless of race, color, gender, disability, religion, age or national origin.

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