

ISU Extension offers ProHort Certification Option to Master Gardener Training

Written by Joy Venhorst
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Iowa Master Gardeners (MG) find many ways to volunteer in their communities, from answering horticulture questions that come into county offices to helping manage farmers' markets and community gardens. Public plantings in many Iowa communities are visual signs of the many volunteer hours Master Gardeners provide.

Master Gardener training has been offered in Iowa by Iowa State University Extension since 1979. Over the years, more than 10,000 Iowans have received instruction on a wide range of horticulture and related topics and in return provided a specified number of hours doing volunteer outreach through ISU Extension.

However, there are Iowans that would like to have the training, without the commitment of providing community service. To better serve this group of people, ISU Extension Scott County is offering the ProHort Certification for the first time this year. The ProHort Certification program will be delivered through the Iowa State University Master Gardener training program this fall in three locations. It is different from the Master Gardener program because it is a fee in-lieu-of volunteer service version of the program.

"ProHort participants will train alongside Iowa Master Gardeners," said Jennifer Boussetot, Iowa MG coordinator. "However, without the volunteer commitment, participants do not become Iowa Master Gardeners."

The Iowa Master Gardener (MG) training includes sessions on animal ecology, botany,

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entomology, fruit culture, herbaceous ornamentals, home landscape design, houseplants, integrated pest management/pesticides, landscape plants, plant pathology, soils, turf grass management, vegetables and weed management.

Upon completion of the program requirements, ProHort participants receive an official ProHort Certificate of training from Iowa State University, which may be displayed in a place of business.

To find out more about the ProHort Certification program being offered in Scott County this fall, contact Duane Gissel, ISU Scott County Extension 563-359-7577.

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