**CCE** **Columbia and Greene Counties**

**Master Gardener Volunteer Training Hybrid Course Syllabus Spring 2024**

**Facilitators:** Xandra Powers, Donna Alese Cooke

**Class Assistants:** Kathryn Schneider, Patricia Esposita, Dorian Hyland, Linda Levitt, Nancy Winch, Frieda Pearce, Robin Smith

**Virtual Office Hours:** Virtual office hours will be held on Zoom, most Wednesday evenings from 7-8pm. Please check the “News & Updates” section in Moodle for scheduled office hours.

**Email:** Xandra: xandra.powers@cornell.edu, Donna: dmc72@cornell.edu

**Welcome!**

Welcome to the CCE Columbia and Greene Counties Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) hybrid training program. We are pleased that you will further develop your talents and enthusiasm for gardening as you help Columbia and Greene Counties CCE provide opportunities that put knowledge to work in our communities, in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being.

**About CCE Columbia and Greene Counties MGV’s**

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Columbia and Greene Counties prepare Master Gardener Volunteers to provide educational outreach and gardening activities that draw on the horticultural research and experience of Cornell University. Master Gardener Volunteers receive research-based instruction and are kept current through advanced training and experience in environmental horticulture. In return for their training, Master Gardener Trainees agree to share their knowledge through approved CCE Columbia and Greene Counties community service, in our on-site demonstration gardens, and Community Horticulture activities. After completing the course and volunteering as an Intern for 150 hours, you will become a Master Gardener Volunteer.

Part of your training will include a thorough orientation into the CCE Columbia and Greene Counties Association, Community Horticulture and Master Gardener Volunteer program. You can choose your volunteer hours as you wish, in any of the areas listed below that fit your needs and interests. However, there is a requirement to help maintain the on-site demonstration garden and volunteering on the Horticulture Diagnostic Hotline. Each year you will also be required to continue your ongoing education through approved professional development offerings. Master Gardener Volunteer service hours consist of:

* Providing educational outreach to the community on how to grow and care for trees, flowers, shrubs, fruits, vegetables and lawns.
* Volunteering at our annual Spring Gardening Days, assisting with workshops, exhibits, plant sale and other event functions, teaching workshops.
* Educating the public through our Speakers Bureau at public libraries, senior centers, garden clubs, schools, and other community groups.
* Volunteering at Fairs and Farmers Markets.
* Being present at your county CCE office to answer inquiries that come in through the Horticulture Diagnostic Hotline.
* Maintaining the on-site Demonstration Gardens at CCE’s offices in Acra and Hudson.
* Vegetable Variety trials
* Seed to Supper
* Much, much more, as your program grows!

**What to Expect**

This year’s course will begin in early March 2024 and end in Early June 2024. Over a 12-week period, you will learn through online, in-person, and virtual experiences. Anyone enrolled in this course is expected to participate in all learning activities and submit assignments on a timely basis. Plan to dedicate about 3-5 or more hours per week for the online preparation as mentioned above, including discussion forums and tasks as assigned. Keeping yourself well organized and current with assignments will help you get the most out of this course. You will get from the course what you put into it!

**Online Learning**

Each week, students will learn at their own pace, asynchronously, in the Moodle Learning Management System. It is expected that you will complete assigned pre-work prior to each weekly in-person session, as there is content that will build upon this foundation.

**In-person Sessions**

We will meet in-person as a whole group, three Saturdays each month. Meetings will be scheduled at either of our county offices for in-person lectures, hands-on activities, gardening, and field trips, dates are listed below. Attendance for in-person sessions is required.

Prepare the week before through online readings, videos, and lectures by Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension specialists, learning activities, knowledge self-checks and a deeper exploration of web resources. Coming to each session prepared is essential in helping you better understand each topic and gives you an opportunity to ask questions and increase your knowledge.

**Virtual Office Hours**

There will be virtual Office Hours each week, which is an opportunity to ask questions and engage with fellow classmates and course facilitator(s) about the current content and issues you are studying. Presentations that relate to the course content may be scheduled during Wednesday evening Office Hours. Attendance is recommended, however they will be recorded and added to Moodle for future refence. Please check the “News & Updates” section in Moodle for scheduled office hours.

**Course Timetable at a Glance**

A detailed Course Schedule will be provided with topics, due dates, and assignments.Unless otherwise noted, virtual Office Hours will take place on Wednesdays, 7-8 pm, and in-person sessions will take place on Saturdays, from 9:00am to 3pm.

**February 25: Week One**

* Moodle Course opens on Sunday, February 25
* Wednesday, February 28: Office Hours (Zoom), 7-8pm
* Saturday, March 2: In-person 9am-3pm
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Welcome/Orientation/ Introduction**
    - Section 0.1 Adult Learning and Peer Learning Networks
    - Section 0.2 Community Engagement and Action Projects

**March 3: Week Two**

* Wednesday, March 6: Office Hours (Zoom), 6:30-8pm
* Saturday, March 9: No In-Person Class
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Module 1: The Fundamentals**
    - 1.1 Plant Biology Botany
    - 1.2 Right Plant Right Place

**March 10: Week Three**

* Wednesday, March 13: Office Hours (Zoom) 7-8pm
* Saturday, March 16: In-person 9am-3pm, CCE Hudson Office
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Module 1: The Fundamentals**
    - 1.3 Beneficial Insects
    - 1.4 Plant Pathology

**March 17: Week Four**

* Wednesday, March 20: No office hours
* Saturday, March 23: In-person 9am-3pm, CCE Acra Office
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Module 2: Food Gardening**
* 2.1 Nutrition, Food Safety and Food Security
* 2.2a Vegetable Gardening
* 2.2b Vegetable Gardening
* 2.3 Fruit Gardening

**March 24: Week Five**

* Wednesday, March 27: Office Hours (Zoom) 7-9pm
* Saturday, March 30: No In-Person Class
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Module 3: Ornamental Plants and Ecosystems Services**
* 3.1 Woody Plants
* 3.2 Herbaceous Plants
* 3.3 Lawn Care and Ecosystems Services

**March 31- April 6: Spring Break**

* Wednesday, April 3: No office hours
* Saturday, April 6: No in-person

**April 7: Week Six**

* Wednesday, April 10, Office Hours (Zoom), 7-8pm
* Saturday, April 13, In-person 9am-3pm**,** CCE Acra Office & Field Trip
* Weekly Topic:
  + **Module 4 Problem Solving**
    - 4.1 Problem Solving: Integrated Pest Management

**April 14: Week Seven**

* Wednesday, April 17 Office Hours (Zoom) 7-8 pm
* Saturday, April 20, In-person 9am-3pm, CCE Acra Office
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Module 4 Problem Solving**
    - 4.1 Problem Solving: Integrated Pest Management
    - 4.2 Pesticide Use and Reading Labels
* 4.3 Troubleshooting Food Crops and Ornamental Plants

**April 21: Week Eight**

* Wednesday, April 24: Office Hours (Zoom),7-9pm
* Saturday, April 27:In-person 9am-3pm, CCE Hudson Office
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Module 4 Problem Solving**
    - 4.4 Troubleshooting Pests in the Home & Garden
  + **Module 5: Management Strategies/Issues**
    - 5.1 Organic Waste Management: Composting

**April 28: Week Nine**

* Wednesday, May 1, Office Hours (Zoom), 7-9pm
* Saturday, May 4,In-person 9am-3pm, Field Trip
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Composting**
  + **Module 5: Management Strategies/Issues**
    - 5.2 Soil Amendments and Fertilizers

**May 5: Week Ten**

* Wednesday, May 8 Office Hours (Zoom), 7-8pm
* Saturday, May 11, In-person 9am-3pm, Field Trip
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Module 5: Management Strategies/Issues**
    - 5.3 Invasive Species for Gardeners
    - 5.4 Gardening in a Warming World

**May 12: Week Eleven**

* Wednesday, May 15, Office Hours (Zoom), 7-8pm
* Saturday, May 18, In-person 9am-3pm, CCE Hudson Office and in the Garden
* Weekly Topics:
  + **Container Gardening**
  + **Module 6: Facilitated Learning**
    - 6.1 Adult Learning and Community Engagement
    - 6.2 Youth Development and School Gardens

**May 19-31: Final Weeks**

* **Finalize Action Projects**
* Wednesday, May 22, Virtual Action Project Showcase Presentations during Office Hours (Zoom), 7-8pm
* Wednesday, May 29, during Virtual Action Project Showcase Presentations Office Hours (Zoom), 7-8pm

**June 1: Graduation**

* Saturday, June 1: In-person 9am-3pm, Action Project Showcase Presentations and Graduation

**Course Objectives**

*Upon completion of this course, participants will:*

* Prepare to be peer educators who build relationships with community audiences.
* Integrate local experience and research-based knowledge in teaching the

community to manage gardens, lawns, and landscapes, emphasizing environmental stewardship.

* Understand the science and impact of climate change as it relates to local gardening conditions, determine solutions that address these changing conditions, and have a better understanding of the importance of native plants and impact of invasive species.
* Recognize the interrelationships between soil, air, water, plants, insects and animals, and apply “right plant, right place” practices.
* Apply strategies to build and protect healthy soils, recycle nutrients, and conserve and protect water resources.
* Distinguish different growing methods and demonstrate the use of organic approaches in growing fruits and vegetables.
* Interpret plant and insect problems and providing solutions using Integrated Pest Management practices.
* Collaborate with others to develop educational outreach materials for the community.

**Lessons, Learning Activities and Evaluation**

* **Learning activities** will consist of online resources, videos, presentations, and web resources that focus on each topic. Weekly tasks will be posted in Moodle and will be made available a week or two before the topic is reviewed in our in-person session. Some topics may include an online discussion forum in Moodle, where you will be prompted to answer questions, and interact with one another to gain a better understanding of the topic.
* **Required Readings**: There is no text to purchase. Required readings are online in the Moodle course, printed materials distributed in class, and other references.
* **Optional Reading & Exploration**: A list of optional resources to explore will enrich each topic within each module.
* **Evaluation:** Quizzes, Knowledge Self-Checks, Reflective Journals, and other evaluative tools will assess your understanding of each topic. Assessments vary by topic and will be offered both online in Moodle and during in-class sessions.
* **Action Project:** The action project is an opportunity to cultivate your peer educator skills, by developing an educational activity of your choice. Explore a gardening topic that is important to you, or one you wish to learn more about. Your project will be a tangible product with clearly defined and communicated benchmarks that you will describe, and the reach. Depending on your skills and interests. You may wish to create a presentation, garden renovation, a hands-on activity, an article, a factsheet, or another educational product.
* **Journal Entries**: Within each module of topics, you will be asked to write a journal entry. The purpose of the journals is a time to reflect on what you have learned so far, and how this knowledge will help you become a better gardener, CCE Volunteer, and environmentally sound citizen. This is a self-reflective learning activity, not a sounding board! Suggested writing prompts will be posted in Moodle; however, you are free to explore your own topics if they relate to the course. Most importantly, how you will use this information in your future as a MGV and successful home gardener. Journal entries are written in a Word Doc and uploaded into Moodle.
* **Grading:** While there are no grades assigned for this course, most assignments and projects will be evaluated, and based on the corresponding rubric, if available.

**Snow Dates & Emergency Closing Policy**

In the event an in-person session is cancelled due to emergency or weather, a notice will be posted in Moodle in the News & Updates Section (at the top of the homepage of the course), which automatically sends notification to your email. Please check with Moodle if you are unsure about class cancellations. A system of phone call/text message notifications will be set up by class assistants.