



Consumer Horticulture Programs: Gardening in Michigan

Public gardening education to improve lives and communities while protecting Michigan's natural resources

According to the National Gardening Association, 70 percent of households engage in some type of gardening. Taking into consideration 2010 census data of Michigan households and average number of people per household, this equates to a potential consumer horticulture audience of over 6.7 million Michigan citizens.

In 2015, over 16,000 Michigan residents were reached through MSU Extension consumer horticulture educational efforts.

The statewide consumer horticulture team consists of Extension educators, program instructors and Extension Master Gardener coordinators who work together to provide the various types of educational programming. In addition, specially trained Extension Master Gardener volunteers expand access to MSU research-based horticulture information via the toll-free MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline, Ask an Expert and Smart Gardening outreach.

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Consumer Horticulture team members collaborate on the following statewide initiatives to maximize impact and deliver environmentally-friendly, science-based gardening practices. These initiatives provide gardeners increased accessibility to MSU Extension resources.

Master Gardener Program

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Program is a horticulture education and volunteer leader training program that connects gardeners across the state to MSU faculty members and resources. It is aligned with the national standards for all Extension Master Gardener Programs offered through land-grant universities across the country.



- Extension Master Gardener volunteers undergo a rigorous 14-week training program that provides in-depth education in many aspects of horticulture:
 - › Plant science, soil science, trees and shrubs, flowers, vegetables, fruit, soil, integrated pest management, diagnostics, indoor plants, lawns, household and nuisance pests, and protecting water resources through environmentally-friendly gardening practices.
- Participants who complete the training showcase what they learned by educating others through community volunteer projects.
 - › Focus areas include environmental stewardship, improving food security, and improving community and youth development through gardening.
- Annual recertification of volunteers ensures high caliber volunteers equipped to provide solutions for today's gardening public.

Toll-Free Lawn and Garden Hotline – 1-888-678-3464

Extension consumer horticulture educators and highly trained Extension Master Gardener volunteers educate callers on best management practices for plants and pests of the home, garden and landscape.

- The state toll-free hotline operates five days a week through collaboration of six MSU Extension offices to provide assistance to all Michigan residents.

CONTACT US

1-888-678-3464

<https://ask.extension.org/ask>

Smart Gardening

MSU Extension's Smart Gardening initiative helps gardeners at any knowledge level to adopt environmentally-friendly practices. Using focused themes of smart plants, smart lawns and smart soils, Smart Gardening leads gardeners along a continuum of learning through educational opportunities from short interactions to intensive training.

- Education is delivered through multiple communication methods including web, video, print, radio and in-person classes.
- Volunteers are equipped and taught how to engage local communities, which exponentially multiplies impact.
- Smart Gardening messages continually adapt to statewide and community needs.
 - › In 2015, smart gardening for vegetables and gardening to protect and enhance pollinators messages were added.

Gardening in Michigan – www.migarden.msu.edu

The Gardening in Michigan website provides easy access to home gardening information. Tip sheets, videos and other resources are available on vegetable and herb gardening, backyard fruit production, trees and shrubs, integrated pest management, indoor plants, pests, pollinators and a variety of other topics. Additional resources include:

- Complete set of downloadable Smart Gardening tip sheets.
- Michigan Fresh tip sheets for using and preserving fresh fruits and vegetables.

Ask an Expert

Michigan residents can ask gardening questions 24/7 and quickly receive expert answers through the online, mobile-friendly eXtension Ask an Expert (AaE) system.

- Gardeners can search our database, upload pictures and ask University experts a wide variety of questions.
- Users can be confident that research-based solutions are accurate and unbiased.

Soil Test Self-Mailer and Nutrient Interpretation – www.msusoiltest.com

MSU Extension provides soil testing and nutrient interpretation to enable gardeners to be more environmentally responsible.

- Tapping into our unique, home gardener, soil test self-mailer and soil test interpretation website allows easy access to affordable soil testing with customized fertilizer recommendations.
- Equipped with this information, an educated gardener can have a healthy, productive garden without over-applying nutrients that may pollute streams, lakes and groundwater.



"Twelve years with MSU Extension has been a wholesome, rewarding, educational and joy-filled experience. Interactions with so many outstanding people have developed my personal skills in leadership, community networking and cooperation. Thank you very much." – Master Gardener Program participant

Local Programs

Consumer horticulture team members provide hundreds of local programs to address locally identified needs.

- Programs may be one-time classes, series of classes or workshops and cover a wide range of gardening topics.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity employer, committed to achieving excellence through a diverse workforce and inclusive culture that encourages all people to reach their full potential. Michigan State University Extension programs and materials are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status. Issued in furtherance of MSU Extension work, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Jeffrey W. Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension, East Lansing, MI 48824. This information is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names does not imply endorsement by MSU Extension or bias against those not mentioned.