Would You Like to Be a Master Gardener?

David W. Marshall directs environmental education programs for the Leon County Extension of University of Florida IFAS, http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu/

Thursday, January 24, 2008
Tallahassee Democrat

Would you like to learn more about plants and gardening in the north Florida area? Would you like to devote time to helping others learn how to have a more environmentally-friendly landscape? Then the 2008 Leon County Extension Master Gardener volunteer class may be just the thing you’re looking for.

The Leon County Extension of University of Florida IFAS is a cooperatively funded educational program to provide Leon County citizens with solutions you can use in everyday life. Visit the Solutions for Your Life website at http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu to get a better idea of the various programs.

Right now we are looking for Leon County citizens who want to participate in our Master Gardener volunteer program. The main focus of this program is to help other people learn to have more Florida-Friendly yards, yards that incorporate the nine principles of our Florida Yards & Neighborhoods program, http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/

If you volunteer, we will give you a considerable amount of training. So, you learn much more about plants and gardening in north Florida yourself. But you will also help others to learn as you serve as a volunteer.

The training this year will be in monthly classes from 9:00 a.m – 1:00 p.m. The first class is Thursday, February 21. There will also be monthly workdays in the demonstration garden. The first of these is Thursday, March 17, from 9:00 a.m. until noon. See the schedule at the end for the complete list. Or visit the website at http://leon.ifas.ufl.edu for more detailed information, a complete schedule, and application form. The class should fill fast, so return your application soon.

Each month you will be given homework assignments and resources, which will be posted on the website. So, access to a computer and internet are essential for the class. Part of the class will be outside, hands-on in the garden. You must be able to tolerate the
weather and do the normal things a gardener does… dig, plant, weed, spread mulch, prune, etc.

In addition to the monthly classes and the thirty-six hours of volunteer service through the garden workdays, you will be expected to complete an additional thirty-nine hours of volunteer service over the course of the year. This may be additional time in the garden activities and tours. Or it may be involvement in the Florida Yards & Neighborhood projects, teaching or consulting to help other people to have more environmentally-friendly yards. After you have received sufficient training, some of you may also help answer phone calls in the office. Or, you can help with the 4-H or school activities we offer for youth.

Master Gardener certification will be awarded to you one year from the time you start your training, provided that you have successfully completed the requirements of participation. Over the course of the year, you will get to know a number of very nice people with similar interests. You will learn many new plants and techniques that you can use in your home landscape and garden. You will also have the opportunity to make a difference in the community through your volunteer work and shape the local landscape.

Feb 21     Monthly meeting: Planting, Soils, Mulching
Mar 13     Monthly meeting: Watering Efficiently, Fertilizing Appropriately
Mar 17     Demonstration garden workday
Apr 10     Monthly meeting: Right Plant, Right Place in the Demo Garden
Apr 21     Demonstration garden workday
May 8      Monthly meeting: How Plants Work (Basic Botany), Pruning
May 19     Demonstration garden workday
June 12    Monthly meeting: Lawns
June 16    Demonstration garden workday
July 10    Monthly meeting: Trees
July 21    Demonstration garden workday
Aug 14     Monthly meeting: Managing Yard Pests Responsibly
Aug 18     Demonstration garden workday
Sept 11    Monthly meeting: Vegetables & Herbs
Sept 15    Demonstration garden workday
Oct 9      Monthly meeting: Right Plant, Right Place in the Demo Garden
Oct 20     Demonstration garden workday
Nov 13     Monthly meeting: Recycling, Providing for Wildlife
Nov 17     Demonstration garden workday
Dec 11     Monthly meeting: Invasive Plants
Dec 15     Demonstration garden workday
Jan 8, 2009 Monthly meeting: Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Checklist
Jan 19, 2009 Demonstration garden workday
Feb 12, 2009 Monthly meeting: Planting, Soils, Mulching
Feb 16, 2009 Demonstration garden workday

###