



NMSU COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, CONSUMER AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Valencia County Cooperative Extension Service
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Dear NMSU Extension Master Gardener Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Valencia County Extension Master Gardener (VCEMG) Program. Enclosed is an application as per your request. The completed application must be returned to the Extension Office no later than Monday, January 2, 2018.

The VCEMG program is sponsored by the Cooperative Extension Service of New Mexico's Land Grant University: New Mexico State University. The purpose of the program is to serve the educational needs of Valencia County's urban (non-commercial) horticultural community. Local experienced gardeners are provided specialized horticultural training in exchange for a minimum of 40 hours of volunteer service throughout the following year as directed by the Extension Agriculture Agent or Interim VCEMG Agent Advisor. The program offers an opportunity for experienced gardeners to gain research-based knowledge, while sharing their knowledge and expertise in the community. Training topics include soil management, fruit and vegetable production, entomology and pest management, plant pathology, weed identification and control, botany, landscape design, tree care, turf selection and management, and much more.

Becoming a certified VCEMG requires serious dedication. The program begins with approximately 50 hours of training sessions over a 14-week period. Training classes are not a beginning gardening course. It is assumed you know the basics of gardening in central New Mexico's challenging environment and are willing to learn the latest horticultural information available. In fact, I suggest applicants have a minimum of 5 years gardening experience, with at least 2 of those years in Valencia County or similar areas. The purpose of training is not to teach you how to garden, but rather to enable you to provide science-based gardening advice specific to Valencia County.

As a VCEMG trainee, your first task will be to attend training sessions and maintain a 70% average on all written exams (each topic has a corresponding exam). In addition, VCEMG trainees and veterans must complete a minimum of 40 hours in horticulture educational community service projects approved by the Valencia County Extension Agriculture Agent per program year. Other volunteer duties may include clerical duties and committee work. Volunteer hours are due to the Extension Office no later than October 1, 2018.

Training classes will be held at the Extension Office (404 Courthouse Rd., Los Lunas) each Monday for 14 weeks beginning Monday, January 8, 2018 from 1:00 to 5:00 pm. Attendance at all 14 classes is strongly encouraged because trainees are required to take all exams. If you are unable to attend a training session, it is your responsibility to make up the exam and obtain class notes.

New Mexico State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action educator and employer. NMSU and the US Department of Agriculture cooperating. If you are an individual with a disability who is in need of an auxiliary aid or service to participate in any activity, please contact the Valencia County Cooperative Extension Service Office @ (505) 565-3002.

TRACK I: Master Gardener Application

Each VCEMG trainee is required to pay a \$150.00 application fee. Upon certification and completion of the program requirements, \$50.00 will be reimbursed. The last day to drop from the program with a full refund is February 1, 2018, application fees will not be reimbursed after that date. Please make checks or money orders (no cash) payable to Valencia County Extension Master Gardeners. Due to space limitations, only 15 trainees will be accepted into the 2018 VCEMG program, based on qualifications.

TRACK II: Course Audit ONLY

There are limited slots available for those who want to audit classes (applicant is not applying to become a VCEMG but would simply like to learn more about gardening). Preference is granted to local horticulture and agriculture industry professionals. Auditors who complete all exams and maintain a 70% average will receive a certificate of training from NMSU-Valencia County Cooperative Extension Service. The auditor fee is \$250.00; refunds are prorated by the number of classes held at time of refund request.

I hope this brief description of the VCEMG program proves to be helpful in your decision. I look forward to receiving your application. Feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss what you feel you can contribute to this worthwhile service program.

Sincerely,

J. Newton McCarty

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