Do you have a green thumb?
Do you love to learn?
Would you like to give back to our community?
Would you like to join a dynamic group of gardeners?
If you answered “yes” to any or all of these questions, you could be a Master Gardener. Volunteers with the University of Maryland Extension, Master Gardeners teach people good gardening techniques. Through talks, workshops, demonstration gardens, plant clinics, events and a dozen projects across the county, Master Gardeners share what they know and help others.
Master Gardeners dispense gardening advice at the City Farmer’s Market and help girls grow vegetables and confidence at San Mar Children’s Home. They teach women at W House how to grow their own food and give patients a lovely respite in the therapeutic gardens at Western Maryland Hospital Center.
Old meets new in the Master Gardener program. At our historic 4-square and medicinal gardens at the Rural Heritage Museum, Master Gardeners give gardening history lessons. Nearby, they teach the latest growing techniques for vegetables, herbs and native plants at our Ag Center demonstration garden.
Our goals are to learn, teach and grow. Becoming a Master Gardener starts with 40 hours of training from University of Maryland experts and a few local specialists. This
Horticulture 101 program covers the basics from soil to composting, bugs to botany and weeds to wildlife.

From this grounding in horticulture grows knowledgeable advice that helps us teach our neighbors safe, effective, environmentally smart ways to garden that build healthier gardens and communities.

You’ll find Master Gardeners teaching about bugs at Boonsboro Days and working with kids at the Ag Expo’s AgVentures tent. You’ll see us sharing container gardening tips at the HCC Flower and Garden Show and teaching visitors how to preserve flowers at the Charlie Brown Christmas Tree event in Williamsport. We are everywhere.

And we are always looking for ways to make our green thumbs greener. Master Gardener programs such as Bay-Wise train Master Gardeners to share ideas for protecting the Chesapeake Bay. Ongoing training keeps Master Gardeners up-to-date on the newest techniques from growing green roofs to managing invasive pests.

Did I mention that we have fun? While we are learning and teaching and sharing and growing, we are enjoying each other’s company immensely. Master Gardeners are good people, committed to helping each other as we help others. Our love of gardening connects us and friendships grow quickly.

I hope you’ll consider becoming a Master Gardener. I became one ten years ago and highly recommend it. E-mail or call me to learn more. We are now accepting applications for our 2013 training class set for Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from February 14 to April 18 here at the Washington County Ag Center. Class size is limited, so apply early. I’d hate for you and your green thumb to miss out.
Annette Ipsan is the Extension educator for horticulture and the Master Gardener program in Washington County for the University of Maryland in Washington County. She can be reached at 301-791-1604 or aipsan@umd.edu.

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