



2023 Manitoba Master Gardener Training Program Links and FAQ

Supporting the January 11, 2023 Online Presentation

Links:

For the Manitoba Master Gardener landing page on the University of Saskatchewan website, go to gardening.usask.ca/mmga. To register for courses, scroll down to “Certification,” click on “Required courses,” and select the course(s) you want.

For the Gardening@USask general website, go to gardening.usask.ca. Our program can be found under “Certificates & degrees.”

For detailed information about the Manitoba Master Gardener program and practicum, go to mgmanitoba.com and click on “MG Program,” or go directly to mgmanitoba.com/mg-program.

For the recording of the January 11, 2023 Program Information Event, go to mgmanitoba.com/mg-program and scroll down for the link, or go directly to www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wk-IEOuXhHg.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: How long do I have to complete my training and the practicum or internship?

A: Interns have five years to complete their courses and exam. Within that period, they’re expected to complete their practicum within a two-year period.

Q: Are there textbooks required for the courses?

A: No, there are no formal textbooks required for the USask MG training program. Instead, within the Manitoba Program Certification course, you will find eight hours of pre-taped videos that serve as textbooks for the courses in the program. Often there are printable pdf’s that cover the material in the classes.

Q: What do you mean by “intern” and “internship”?

A: Master Gardener interns are people who have begun but not yet completed their training as Master Gardeners. Their internship is the 40-hour volunteer practicum that is required before they can take their exam and certify as a Master Gardener. Interns receive a free two-year membership in the MMGA.

Q: Is it possible to take one or two of the offered courses without committing to the whole program?

A: Yes, certainly. Some people start by signing up for only one or a few courses to see how they like them, but of course we hope that everyone will complete them all. Please note that it’s only when you register in the course “Manitoba Master Gardener Training Program” that we will

know you're interested in certifying as a Manitoba Master Gardener. We receive an automated email that you have registered. You will then be invited to join the Manitoba Master Gardener Association with all of its privileges and resources and with no membership fee for two years.

Q: Are the Master Gardener courses tax-deductible?

A: Unfortunately, no, they do not meet the government rules for tax-deductible status.

Q: Are there any bursaries or scholarships?

A: If you are a member of the Steinbach and Area Garden Club, you can apply for the Fred Kaita Master Gardener Bursary (sagardenclub.com/resources/f/our-founding-member-fred-kaita). It should be noted that the U Sask program is relatively low in cost compared to other Master Gardener training programs and a very good value at only \$805 for 62 hours of online classes plus in-person support.

Q: After I finish the USask courses, how long do I have access to the videos and course content for future use?

A: You have open access for one year after you enroll in each course. If you need longer in order to prepare for your exam, this can be extended by contacting Vanessa at gardening@usask.ca

Q: Can you tell me more about the exam?

A: The exam is multiple choice and offered online. The questions are selected from the very same study questions you will find at the end of each course – there are no surprises! You are also able to retake the exam as many times as you feel you want. The system saves your scores until you are satisfied with your mark. Each time you take the exam the questions shuffle but are still all drawn from the study questions at the end of each course.

Q: Do students receive a certificate from the University of Saskatchewan after succeeding on the exam?

A: No, students receive a transcript from the U Sask showing that they have successfully completed the training. This transcript, together with successful completion of the 40-hour volunteer service practicum through the MMGA, plus the payment of the MMGA annual membership fee of \$25 if your free intern membership has expired, results in your being awarded a signed certificate from the MMGA.

Q: How do I get courses I have completed from the former Assiniboine Community College (ACC) program recognized to continue toward certification as a Manitoba Master Gardener?

A: Vanessa Young, Manager of Gardening at USask, will be able to help. She will assess your situation and outline steps by which you can continue to complete the training program without having to repeat courses you have already done. As each situation can be different, please contact Vanessa directly at gardening@usask.ca.

Q: I am a new gardener. My interest is in food gardening and your program seems more general. Will this program be helpful to me?

A: The Master Gardener Program is a general introduction to horticulture and it does not focus on any one area. However, the course content helps to improve overall knowledge of gardening fundamentals. Even if you start with an interest in food gardening only, it is possible that you may soon broaden your interests, perhaps to attracting pollinators to your food garden, improving your soil, planting native flowers, or controlling insect pests. General information from this course can be helpful in all respects.

In addition to the Master Gardener training program, USask offers a Prairie Horticulture Certificate where you can focus on food gardening. This is a two-year part-time program. One of the four study streams that you can choose within the program is Food and Vegetable Production. For more information visit gardening@usask.ca.

Q : I am a plant scientist working in agriculture research, and a trained crops breeder, who is interested in becoming a Master Gardener. Am I eligible for exemptions in the training program?

A: Exemptions are provided in the training offered by USask in certain circumstances. Please contact Vanessa at gardening@usask.ca to discuss your situation. In other situations, if you hold a current Prairie Horticulture Certificate or recent Horticultural degree, you may be able to enroll in the Manitoba program certification course and simply challenge your exam – or you may take specific courses to strengthen your knowledge before challenging the exam. Professional communicators, such as teachers, may qualify for an exemption for the Communications course. However, in each situation, please contact gardening@usask.ca to discuss the specifics with Vanessa.

Please note that even in the case of an exemption, you are still required to pass the examination and fulfill the MMGA's 40-hour volunteer service practicum in order to certify as a Manitoba Master Gardener.

Q : Do Master Gardener organizations elsewhere in Canada accept transfers from qualified Master Gardeners from other provinces?

A: The MMGA accepts transfers of certified Master Gardeners from other provinces, on the basis of a personal interview. Vanessa indicates that in her 15-plus years managing the USask MG program, Saskatchewan MGs have always been accepted into MG associations in other provinces.

Q : Is there just one level to the training, or is there also an advanced level?

A: At present there is only the basic training program designed to ensure you have the core horticultural knowledge to function effectively in the community education role of a Master Gardener. The MMGA Education Committee has discussed the idea of offering a second tier of training, as some other Canadian MG associations do; this is a possibility for the future. However, there are currently many resources to help you continue your lifelong learning – other courses offered by U Sask, sessions put on by the MMGA and other MG associations across Canada and the U.S., or you can check the Resources list published and updated regularly by our Education Committee: [Sustainable Gardening Resources – Manitoba Master Gardener Association \(mgmanitoba.com\)](http://mgmanitoba.com).

Q : If I consider myself to be a beginner gardener, would I still be encouraged to become a Master Gardener?

A: Many people who enroll to become a Master Gardener are experienced gardeners seeking to take their knowledge to a new level and to share their expertise while continuing to learn with other gardeners. However, perhaps related to the new interest in home gardening, today some MG interns begin as less experienced gardeners. Most important in your decision is the strength of your personal desire to learn more and to share up-to-date knowledge. If you start with less experience, you will find that all you learn - both in the training courses and through choosing wisely in your practicum - will help you leap forward in expertise in much less time than if you hadn't chosen to become a Master Gardener. You will find the Master Gardeners you meet through your study group, if you join one, and on community projects will be eager to answer your questions and help you learn effective sustainable gardening techniques. You will be welcomed and encouraged, and so we hope you will consider becoming a Master Gardener. The Master Gardeners you meet will be the first to tell you, "No one knows everything about gardening!"

Q: I live outside of Winnipeg. Am I able to complete my volunteer hours in my local community without having to come to Winnipeg?

A: Of course. You can select volunteer opportunities that fit the MMGA practicum guidelines from local community projects - or design your own community project! The guidelines are outlined here: [MG Practicum – Manitoba Master Gardener Association](http://mgmanitoba.com). If you have any questions about

whether a project you are thinking of qualifies, before you take it on, please contact:
volunteers@mgmanitoba.com.

Q: I have a project at my school with my students that needs support in the summer. Would that work as a practicum project?

A: That sounds like a great project, especially if you involve your students and perhaps their families, and not just involving you working on the gardens alone. Gardening education is a key role of Master Gardeners in their communities.

Q: Can volunteering in a for-profit business qualify for acceptable volunteer hours?

A: No, volunteer hours cannot be accrued by volunteering with for-profit businesses. Volunteering for not-for-profit organizations or community projects is generally acceptable. If you are unsure about a possible practicum idea, please contact the MMGA Volunteer Coordinator at volunteers@mgmanitoba.com.

Q: Do activities like writing articles, doing presentations, and serving on an MMGA committee count towards the volunteer requirement?

A: Yes, activities like these count towards both the 40-hour internship requirement and, later, when you are a certified Master Gardener, your annual 20-hour volunteer commitment.

Q: If a volunteer opportunity is not listed on the MMGA website, how can I get approval to use it towards my practicum?

A: Contact volunteers@mgmanitoba.com with your question.

Thank you for your interest in the Manitoba Master Gardener program!

FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE CONTACT: training@mgmanitoba.com