Frequently Asked Questions About the Home Horticulture/SC Master Gardener Online Course

Will I automatically become a SC Master Gardener if I take this course?
You will not earn the title of Clemson Extension Master Gardener simply by taking the online class. The online program was developed to meet the needs of two groups of students:

1. Those who do not have the time or flexibility to attend the in-person class and who do not wish to perform the volunteer service associated with being a Master Gardener. The online course allows this group of students to complete the course and earn a certificate of “Home Horticulture”;

2. Those students where local in-person classes are either full or unavailable. To move beyond the “Home Horticulture” certification and become a certified Clemson Extension Master Gardener, students must take and pass an end of course exam. At that time, students will be put in contact with their local Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener Coordinator to arrange the fulfillment of the volunteer obligation of 40 hours/year in a Clemson Extension Service Office.

What if I change my mind later and want to become a certified Master Gardener?
Students must complete the end of course exam (available online) by June 6, 2017. To take the exam once the deadline has passed requires a $30 exam fee. Once you have successfully completed the exam, your instructor will network you with the appropriate Clemson Extension Agent to complete the volunteer service.

How many people are enrolled and will I get to know the other students?
The maximum number of students in this class is 40. Students are encouraged to interact via discussion forums.

What is the registration deadline?
You may register up to one week before the course begins. However, late registrants will pay a late registration fee and will not receive the Master Gardener Manual in time for the beginning of the course.
What will I learn in this class and how will I learn it online?
Topics covered in the training include basic botany, plant physiology, entomology, plant diseases, soils, water, woody plant care, sustainable gardening, herbaceous ornamentals, turfgrass, fruit and vegetable gardening. Topics in the online Home Horticulture/SC Master Gardener training are organized into modules that consist of videos, reading assignments, discussion boards, quizzes and activities.

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How does new material become available?
Each week the instructor for the class will release a new module or topic. Students will have the entire week to finish the content before the next module is released. Modules will remain open until the end of the course for students to access.

Do I need to be at my computer at a particular time or day?
This course is facilitated by a Clemson Extension Agent but it is asynchronous - in other words it doesn’t matter what time of day you log on because the content is waiting for you and your schedule. Sessions are not scheduled at specific times so students may proceed through the entire course at their leisure. It is recommended that students work through one module per week to keep up with the rest of the class.

What if I don’t finish the modules at the end of twelve weeks?
The modules will remain open until June 6, 2017. This will allow time to either finish the modules or to go back through course content before taking the final exam if you elect to do so.

How will I know I am registered in the course?
A confirmation email will serve as your receipt. Prior to the course a Master Gardener Manual will be shipped to the address provided.

Once registered, how will I get access to the online “classroom”?
The course officially begins on the start date of January 31, 2017. Your instructor will email you with detailed directions, including the link to the classroom and step-by-step instructions on how to enroll yourself in the course.

Enrolling is different from registration and requires that you set up a user ID and password within the Moodle classroom housed on eXtension.org, the site that hosts our class content. If you haven’t received these directions by the day the course begins, please check your spam folder before emailing the instructor.
What is eXtension?
This is the national internet-based collaborative space for content that is developed by Land Grant Universities, through Cooperative Extension Services throughout the United States. You can find out more about them at http://about.extension.org/about/

What is “Moodle”?
“Moodle” is an open source Content Management System. It is software that has been authored over time by multiple programmers. This means it is stable, constantly changing (though these changes are announced so don’t worry) for more efficiency and reliability. It is hosted by eXtension.

If I have questions or technical problems during a session, how will they be answered?
The course facilitator will work hard to answer class content related questions in a timely manner. He or she may designate a certain day to interact with students, grade forum responses or answer questions. Please respect that course facilitators are not available all the time! They are full time employees with many duties in addition to this course. If you have technical difficulties, be sure to use the Moodle Help email feature to get assistance. We do not provide computer support.