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THE GRAPEVINE

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MASTER GARDENERS ACCEPTING NEW APPLICANTS!!!

It's that time of year again, time to dust off the Master Gardener applications and spreading the word about the next class.

WHAT is a Master Gardener? Do I have to be a gardening expert to take the Master Gardener course? Why would I want to be a Master Gardener? What does a Master Gardener do? These and many other questions come to mind when Master Gardener training is mentioned. Let me try to clarify a few of these points.

A Master Gardener is a person who has a thirst for knowledge about home horticulture, you know, all that stuff growing around your house - the lawn, the shade trees, the shrubs, the garden, the fruit trees, and even your houseplants. It is a person who wants to know things like; which tomato does best in Kansas, what are the best shade trees to plant in a small yard, what kind of fertilizer is best for my fescue, when should I prune my lilac, and how do I get rid of moles that are tunneling throughout my yard.

And things like; how many apple trees do I need for good fruit production, how about peaches and pears, will raspberries do any good here, what can I do to improve the soil in my garden/flower beds/yard, do I need to add lime to my soil, what can I do to control ticks, fleas, and chiggers in my yard. Let's not forget about bagworms. What about herbs, and did I mention crabgrass, or dandelions. How many hours of sunshine should you have on your water garden? How much sun does your vegetable garden need?

This is just a small sample of some of the questions that commonly come up in the everyday world of home horticulture. A Master Gardener is not a person who knows all the answers to these questions, but someone who wants to know these answers and wants to learn where to go to find out the answers to other questions just like these.

WHY would anyone want to become a Master Gardener? Well, first to gain the aforementioned knowledge, and second, to share this information with friends, neighbors, and other people in the community. Past classes of Master Gardeners have participated in such projects as the landscaping and planting of the courthouse grounds, conducting a tomato taste test at the Butler County Fair, routing traffic and taking surveys during the Household Hazardous Waste Collection day, and provided assistance during the county fair with the horticulture judging contests and judging of the horticulture exhibits. There's also the Numana community garden that Butler County Master Gardeners are involved with along with the Augusta Community Garden which both help local communities with donations to those in need.

HOW do I become a Master Gardener? By simply filling out an application form at the Extension office (we will even mail it to you) and being available to attend twelve training sessions between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM on Thursdays from September 12th to December 12th. Thanksgiving is excluded along with the week of October 24th.

IN EXCHANGE for over 40 hours of comprehensive training in home horticulture you will be asked to give back 40 hours of volunteer service to the horticulture programming efforts of the Butler County Extension office. There is a fee of \$110.00 to cover the cost of the program and educational materials, but what a small price to pay for what you receive. Sessions on landscaping, gardening, fruit

and nut production, lawn care, insect and disease control, organic methods, soil management, annuals and perennials, nuisance animals, plant propagation, houseplants and more are all part of the program.

ANYONE that thinks they might be interested in taking the Master Gardener training should call 321-9660 or come down to the Extension office at the 206 N. Griffith(the fairgrounds) and pick-up an application. And if you can't do either of those then you can access our website and print one off at: <http://www.butler.k-state.edu/horticulture/master-gardener.html>

Stress to Trees and Shrubs is Cumulative

Stress is cumulative. In other words, trees and shrubs can be affected by stresses that happened up to several years in the past. Recent stresses in Kansas include winter damage as well as the extremely dry winter of 2017-2018 which often resulted in damaged root systems. This damaged root system may have been further weakened due to too much rain this spring. The excess water harmed root systems due to saturated soils driving out oxygen. Roots need oxygen as much as they need water. Though the roots were able to keep up with moisture demands during the cooler spring weather, they may not have been able to keep up when the weather turned hot and dry. Such trees and shrubs may suddenly collapse and die or slough off branches they can no longer support. I have never seen lilacs collapse due to stress like they have this year. This does not mean that all of our plants are doomed. As a matter of fact, plants that have survived thus far into the growing season will likely make it. Also, some plants are just better adapted to our tough Kansas conditions and have suffered little to no harm. However, it is a good idea to check the overall health of your trees. So how do you tell? One of the most important clues in determining the health of your trees is the amount of new growth that tree has produced. A healthy tree should have a minimum of 4 to 6 inches of new growth each year and usually much more. Check branches with the tips in the open and not shaded by the tree itself. Anything less than 4 inches on the majority of branches suggests the tree is under a great deal of stress. So, how do you tell where the new growth stops? Look for a color change in the stem. New growth is often greener than that from the previous year. There is also often an area of what looks like compressed growth where growth transitions from one year to the next. Lastly, look at leaf attachment. Leaves are only produced on current seasons' growth. Therefore, new growth stops where leaves are no longer attached directly to the twig but to side branches. However, pay attention as leaves may appear to be attached directly to last year's growth but are actually borne on short spurs. If you look closely, you can tell the difference. All this clue tells you is whether a tree is under stress or not. It does not tell you what is causing or has caused poor growth. This year, the most common cause by far is environmental stress caused by the excess rain this spring. So, what do we do for trees under stress? The most important practice is to water as needed.

Peonies with the "Measles" and Powdery Mildew

The weather this summer has resulted in many peonies catching the "measles" and/or powdery mildew. Measles: Measles is a disease, also known as red spot, that causes distinct, reddish-purple spots on the upper leaf surfaces. These spots often coalesce and become large, reddish purple blotches on the upper leaf surfaces but are a light brown color when viewed from the underside of the leaves. The spots on stems will merge and form streaks that are reddish brown. Powdery Mildew: Plants infected with powdery mildew look like they have been dusted with flour and can lead to death of the leaves. This disease isn't as common in Kansas than Measles but does show up at times. Sanitation is the best control for both these diseases. Remove all diseased tissue, including stems, at the end of the growing season. Actually, all foliage can be removed in mid-August with no harm to the plants as the plants will be essentially dormant. Foliage that has already died should be removed now. Mulch that contains plant debris should also be discarded and then replaced with fresh mulch. Reducing the source of the inoculum will reduce the chances of another severe outbreak next year.

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