

New Master Gardener class coming

The Ohio State University Extension has a tradition of providing information and programs to farmers, but many may not realize it provides consumer horticultural information and programs to homeowners. The Master Gardener volunteers is an example.

The program was created for those who want to learn more about yards and gardens, and who are willing to share that knowledge with others.

It provides intensive training in horticulture to volunteers, who assist with educational programs at the Extension office.

The program originated in Seattle in 1972. The agriculture extension agent for Washington State University in King County used the expertise of volunteers to more effectively reach the gardening public.

The program became the Master Gardener volunteers and was adopted by the other land grant universities. It began in Ohio's urban counties during the late 1970s, but now exists in 62 of Ohio's 88 counties.

The program started in Hancock County in 1992 and has grown to 50 members.

You may have seen the Hancock County Master Gardener volunteers teaching classes at the library; answering questions at garden centers, home shows, and the county fair; participating in the Danger Zone programs during the Fourth of July celebration at the fairgrounds; and providing guidance and training at the community gardens.

You may have read their gardening articles Saturdays in *The Courier*. They have responded to over 500 community horticultural questions during the past year.

The volunteers attend monthly meetings, participate in field trips, and interact with other gardeners.

A Master Gardener just needs a desire to learn.

Consider becoming a Master Gardener if you want to learn more about plants and gardening, are willing to participate in practical and intensive horticultural training, enjoy sharing knowledge with others, and are willing to serve as a volunteer educator.

A new Master Gardener class



**EDWIN
LENTZ**
COUNTY AGENT

will meet at the Hancock County Agricultural Service Center from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Tuesday from Feb. 2 to March 29.

Each participant will receive 50 hours of education on soils, fertilizers, botany, entomology, plant pathology, vegetable gardening, fruit production, annuals and perennials for the landscape, herbs, and other horticultural subjects.

The knowledge obtained will be used to complete the last step

of becoming a certified Master Gardener volunteer, 50 hours of community service.

A \$150 fee covers the cost of instruction, Master Gardener manual, and handouts. Sessions will be taught by horticulturalists from the Ohio State University Extension.

Because of the hands-on nature of many sessions, class size is limited and registrants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Obtain a registration packet by contacting Bill Jones at 419-722-8149, wjones@bright.net, or the Ohio State University Hancock County Extension office at 419-422-3851, lentz.38@osu.edu.

An enrollment meeting will be held at 10 a.m. Jan. 19 at

the Hancock County Extension Office. The registration packet may be turned in at this meeting. For those who cannot attend the meeting, the packet needs to be delivered to the Extension Office before Jan. 19.

It will probably be several years before the class is offered again in Findlay.

Lentz is extension educator for agriculture and natural resources for The Ohio State University Extension Service in Hancock County. He can be reached at 419-422-3851 or via email at lentz.38@osu.edu.

Lentz can be heard with Vaun Wickerham on weekdays at 6:35 a.m. on WFIN, at 5:43 a.m. on WKXA-FM, and at 5:28 a.m. at 106.3 The Fox.