



MISSISSIPPI MASTER GARDENERS EXTEND UNIVERSITY KNOWLEDGE

Challenges

- There are over 600,000 single-unit, homeowner households in the state, and many of these have interests in gardening and home horticulture.
- There are not enough professionals to educate every homeowner about home horticulture issues.
- In many cases, homeowners must rely on advice that has little to no factual basis and may harm the homeowner's landscape, result in unnecessary expenditures, and devalue not only their property, but other properties in the neighborhood.

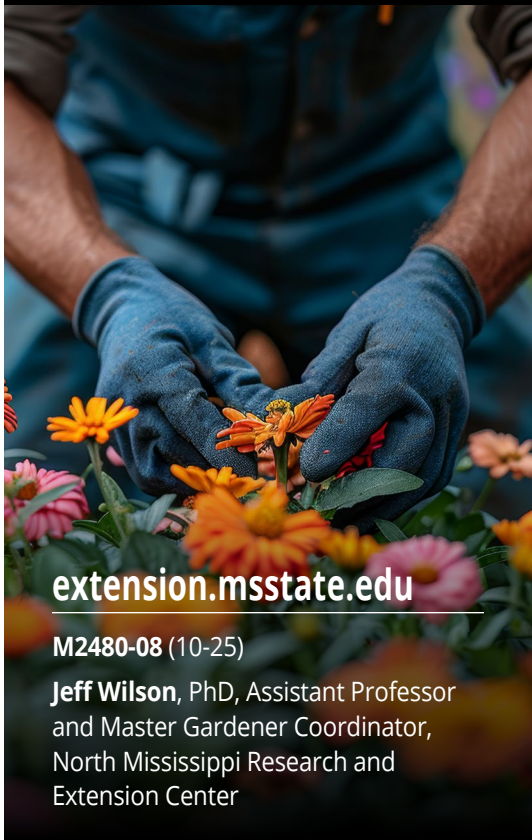
EXTENSION RESPONSE

The Mississippi Master Gardener program provides rigorous training to volunteers and extends the knowledge of the university beyond the reach that is possible by Extension faculty and agents.

- In 2024, 238 people underwent 40 hours of training in a variety of horticulture subjects to become certified as Master Gardeners. In addition, these individuals agreed to contribute at least 20 volunteer hours to maintain their certifications.
- Currently, there are **874** certified Master Gardeners who have completed **18,846** hours of education to remain certified and increase their skills.
- In 2024, these individuals participated in **22,435** events where they assisted **155,386** people.
- They contributed a total of **55,361** service hours and drove **512,528** miles to conduct one-on-one technical support, fundraisers for the program, presentations, special projects, and youth activities.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- Independent Sector, a nationally recognized research organization, values an hour of volunteer time in Mississippi at \$27.01 for 2024.
- The estimated value of volunteers' time is **\$2.3 million**.



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TAKING CARE OF WHAT MATTERS