DATE: December 28, 2010

TO: People Interested in the 2011 Master Gardener™ Program

FROM: Chip Bubl
OSU Extension Faculty
Agriculture/Community Horticulture

SUBJECT: Preparing for Master Gardener™ Training in Clatskanie

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Master Gardener™. Let me tell you a little of our Master Gardener™ (MG) program. This year, the class will be held in Clatskanie. The first part of the program involves your taking 55 hours of classroom training. The fee for materials and a reference manual is $75.00. After training is completed in May, you, as a certified MG member of our staff, will help us conduct various gardening educational activities in Columbia County. These "hands-on" activities serve to reinforce the classroom sessions. We expect you to give us as many hours in teaching others or assisting community horticulture projects as we give you in your training. Read the rest of this letter and if you decide to enter our program, send your check or money order made out to OSU Extension.

Oregon has had a Master Gardener™ training program since 1976 and it has grown to more than 2000 MG volunteers across the state. This year, 250 MG's in the metro area received certificates of graduation showing that they had taken the training and had given an equal number of volunteer hours sharing their skills. Of those graduates, more than half have worked with us more than one year, some have been in the program for 16 years.

The program's objective is to develop a group of horticulturally-trained volunteer teachers. Our goal is to help as many home gardeners as possible and we need your help to do this. If you have a real interest in gardening, a little experience, and an interest in helping others, we can find plenty of opportunities for you.

Now, about classes. You will attend classes one day per week for 13 weeks. Classes will start the week of March 8, 2011. We will have class every Tuesday in Clatskanie at the Faith Lutheran Church. Classes run five hours each day starting at 9:30 a.m. and ending at 3:00 p.m. We will break for a half-hour lunch. A draft list of classes is enclosed. A complete schedule will be sent to those who register.
Many newcomers to the OSU MG program ask, "Do you teach organic gardening?" To which I must answer, "Yes and no." Let me explain. MG's are volunteer staff of Oregon State University. As such, you will be in a consulting role to give unbiased, research proven information whenever possible. Our job is to provide the best information possible and let the public make the choice. For example, if you get a question on black spot of roses, you would discuss the life cycle of the disease, the cultural controls (pruning, sanitation, resistant varieties, etc.) and pesticide options using either “organic” or conventional products. We try to work concepts of resource sustainability into the training sessions. We prefer Master Gardeners™ who are open minded enough to work with people where the people are.

Master Gardener™ activities can include educational seminars, demonstration gardens, community gardens, a Spring Garden Sale, a weekly radio show, work with youth groups, helping assist new gardeners, and programs on gardening topics. It is possible to design new educational outreach efforts that mirror your particular interest.

I am enclosing a registration form. **If you are interested, fill it out, enclose your $75 materials fee and mail it back.** When we get your signed form, we will put you on our mailing list to receive any additional mailings about classes and other MG activities.

**Return the form and payment by February 15th to:**
- OSU Extension Service
- Columbia County Office
- 505 N. Columbia River Highway
- St. Helens, OR 97051

CEB:vk
2011 MASTER GARDENER™ TRAINING
PLANNED CLASSES (not ordered by date yet)

- Intro to Master Gardener™ Program
- Garden basics: Climate, soil, and botany for gardeners
- Soils and fertilizing gardens
- Planning for community gardening education/projects.
- Pruning
- How plants reproduce: propagation and the gardener
- Edible landscapes: Vegetable gardening
- Edible landscapes: Fruit gardening
- Plant problem diagnosis
- Pesticide safety + Integrated pest management
- Insects – good and not so good including household pests.
- Identifying and managing weeds
- Lawn and ornamental landscape care
- Plant disease diagnosis and management
- Miscellaneous topics: (composting, vertebrate pests, organic gardening, etc.)