

Master Gardener Scholarship and Events

by Barbara Wagner and Carolyn Cull
Erie County Master Gardeners

Are you interested in trees, native plants and pollinators, vegetable gardening, cross pollinating plants, plant disease detection and prevention, beneficial insects, and helping the environment? Do you want a career in plants, agriculture, or the environment or are you a weekend gardener who wants to be well-informed? If either of these is true, Master Gardeners may have a program to help.

If you are looking to pursue higher education for a career in horticulture, agriculture, environmental studies, forestry, landscaping, or a closely related field and are a resident of Erie County graduating in 2024 or a graduate of past years, you qualify to apply for a scholarship from Master Gardeners. This year we are offering two \$1000 scholarships in these fields.

Last year we had two winners: one from Perkins High School planning to pursue Environmental Science at Bowling Green State University and one from Sandusky High School pursuing a degree in Greenhouse and Nursery Management and Landscape Horticulture at The Ohio State University at ATI in Wooster.

Unique to our scholarship is allowing students to re-apply for scholarships throughout their collegiate years. One past student received the scholarship several years as he pursued a Bachelor's and Master of Science Degrees in Turfgrass Horticulture from The Ohio State University.

The deadline to apply for the scholarships is April 15, 2024. Complete information including the application is available at <https://go.osu.edu/CkYK> or by searching "Erie County Ohio Master Gardener Scholarship."

If you are a weekend gardener, our annual plant sale may be of interest to you. The plant sale is held the second Saturday of May (this year May 11) at the Erie County Fair Grounds. Master Gardeners will sell a variety of plants and be available to answer questions. Scholarship funds come from the proceeds of the plant sale.

Plants available will include vegetables and perennials like Hosta, Shasta daisies, black-eyed Susans, day lilies, sedums, and yarrow. There will also be canna tubers for sale. Master Gardeners will be available to discuss options for your gardens.

Another opportunity for volunteering is at Back to The Wild. Back to the Wild, under direction of Master Gardeners, is now growing food for their animals. Master Gardeners have helped them design raised beds for animal friendly vegetables as well as get a hoop house to extend the season. Volunteers are needed to help water, weed, and harvest the crops. Please contact Back to the Wild. Master Gardeners will provide training.

Master Gardeners are also involved with the Community Garden plots at Osborn Park of the Erie Metroparks. Past talks with gardeners have led to drainage improvements at this area of the park and Master Gardeners will be available in the summer on Thursday evenings to discuss problems and solutions with gardening.

Finally, you may want to consider training to be a Master Gardener. Master Gardeners initially take 50 hours of classroom training by OSU Extension and then must complete 50 volunteer hours over the ensuing year. Training topics range from botany to soil to lawn, houseplants, fruits, vegetables, and more. After the initial year, we continue to get annual education and volunteer hours.

The next Master Gardener Class will begin in September at EHOVE. If you would like to be a Master Gardener Volunteer, please call the OSU Extension office at 419-627-7631. The office will take your name and basic contact information. A Master Gardener will contact you when the application window is open.