

Gardening and Horticultural Education

For many of us expanding our gardening and horticultural knowledge is a key reason for belonging to a horticultural society. We learn from each other and from experts who speak at our meetings. If you want to learn more and in more depth there are lots of opportunities.

A great reason to take gardening courses is that for 6 long months, November to April we can't do much gardening in our climate, so taking courses during the winter provides an opportunity to learn how to become better gardeners when we can't learn by doing outside.

Both the Toronto and the Royal Botanical Gardens in Hamilton offer courses in the evenings and on weekends.

If you want to learn but like most of us can't commit to a fixed classroom schedule, distance education is the easiest way. Distance education used to be called correspondence courses where both the students and the instructors corresponded by mail, that is snail mail not email.

Today's distance education is completely on-line, you can log in to your course whenever is convenient for you 24 hours a day.

On line courses

Information about becoming a Master Gardener is available on the Master Gardeners of Ontario website <http://www.mgoi.ca> Courses are offered by two Canadian universities Dalhousie and Guelph.

The Dalhousie University MG program is 4 courses: up to 6 months is allowed to complete each course. The courses are The Art of Gardening, Maintaining the Garden, Plant Identification & Use and The Science of Gardening

<http://www.dal.ca/faculty/agriculture/extended-learning/programs-courses/master-gardener-training.html>

The University of Guelph MG program is 3 courses each 13 weeks long. The courses are Cultural Practices for Plants, Introduction to Plant Identification and Growing Plants

<http://www.guelphhort.com/>

The University of Guelph offers many other horticulture related courses which can all be taken separately or as combinations of courses that complete a certificate.

The Horticulturist Certificate- This certificate is designed especially for gardeners wishing to enhance their knowledge and skills relating to residential gardens.

Sustainable Urban Horticulture Certificate- Focuses on the environmental, social and economic implications of horticulture in our cities.

Sustainable Urban Agriculture Certificate- Individuals and professionals interested in producing food in an urban environment will learn both theory and practical skills to support agricultural sustainability

Sustainable Landscapes Certificate- learn design tactics and resource management strategies to retain or enhance naturalized landscapes. Gain knowledge in tree health as it relates to both the individual plant and woodland communities.

<http://www.guelphhort.com/certificates>

Humber College also offers on line courses: these courses are especially designed for the home gardener, Annuals for Garden and Container, The Healthy Garden, Hardy Perennials for Gardens, Flowering Bulbs for the Garden, Flowering Shrubs for the Landscape, Lawn and Turf Management, Basic Botany

<http://www.humber.ca/onlinelearning/>

I took my Master Gardeners qualification courses through what was previously the Nova Scotia Agricultural College now part of Dalhousie University. The courses are not difficult and I really liked the option of taking 6 months to complete each course. I have also taken many of the Guelph Certificate courses and enjoyed them all.

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If you have garden questions please contact us at streetsvillehort@hotmail.com check out our website at www.streetsvillehort.ca