

## Extension's 2020 Master Gardener Trainings, Two Sites Available



**Mary Jane Frogge**  
Extension Associate,  
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If you have a strong interest in gardening and enjoy helping others, you are invited to become a Nebraska Extension Master Gardener volunteer.

This program will increase your knowledge and understanding of horticultural topics such as:

- Best cultural practices for growing flowers, vegetables and turf.
- Plant disease and insect pest identification.
- Control methods.
- Much more.

Instructors are Extension specialists, educators, associates and horticulture professionals.

To become a Master Gardener volunteer, you must attend all training sessions, pass an examination and volunteer for



Extension educational programming. Volunteer opportunities include answering gardening questions from the public, teaching 4-H youth gardening, assisting at the county or state fair, and assisting community garden participants among many others.

Training class size is limited. Those participating in the 2020 training class must pay a \$190 materials fee. There are two options for Master Gardener Training in Lincoln.

**Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County** Master Gardener 2020 training program, which will begin in February.

Training hours are 9 a.m.–4 p.m. and the training sessions will be held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center. For additional information, contact Mary Jane Frogge at 402-441-7180. Application deadline is Jan. 17. Apply online at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/hort/othrlink.shtml>.

**Nebraska Extension Campus-Based** Master Gardener 2020 training program will begin in January. Training hours are 6–9 p.m. and the training sessions will be held at the University of Nebraska East Campus. Application deadline is Jan. 17. For more information, contact Terri James at 402-472-8973. Apply online at <http://mastergardener.unl.edu/master-gardener-application>.

Do not miss this opportunity to increase your gardening knowledge and the chance to share with others in the community.



January is a good time to review your vegetable garden plans. Perhaps a smaller garden with fewer weeds and insects will give you more produce.

Avoid heavy traffic on the frozen, dormant lawn. The crown of the plant may be severely damaged or killed.

Brush snow from evergreens as soon as possible after a storm. Use a broom in an upward, sweeping motion. Serious damage may be caused by heavy snow or ice accumulating on the branches.

To prolong bloom, protect poinsettias from drafts and keep them moderately moist.

Turn and prune house plants regularly to keep them shapely. Pinch back new growth to promote bushy plants.

Check all house plants closely for insect infestations. Quarantine gift plants until you determine they are not harboring any pests.

January is a good time to order flower and vegetable seeds. Many varieties sell out early.

Add garden recordkeeping to the list of New Year's resolutions. Make a note of which flower and vegetable varieties do best and which do poorly in your garden.

Use sand instead of salt for icy spots on the sidewalk.

Feed the birds regularly and see that they have water. Birds like suet, fruit, nuts and bread crumbs as well as bird seed.

Check young trees and shrubs for rodent or rabbit damage. Prevent injury with fencing or protective collars.

When reviewing your garden catalogs for new vegetable varieties to try, an important consideration is improved insect and/or disease resistance. Watch also for drought-tolerant types.

Analyze last year's planting, fertilizing and spraying records. Make notes to reorder successful varieties as well as those you wish to try again.

Check stored fruits and vegetables such as potatoes and apples for bad spots which may lead to decay. Remove and use those which show signs of spoiling. Separate others into slotted trays or bins to increase air circulation and reduce decay possibilities.

## Childcare Professionals — Considering Outdoor Play in Winter?

**Jaci Foged**  
Extension Educator,  
Lancaster County

"I don't want to play outside," said no child ever.

Did you know watching the weather is part of a child care professional's job? If it is too hot or too cold outside, the children in their care could be in danger. The average temperature in Eastern Nebraska in January is a high of 33°F and a low of 13°F. According to the Iowa Department of Public Health wind chill and heat index charts, providers should use CAUTION when the air temperature is between 11°F and 39°F.

I know what you are thinking: "What does using CAUTION look like?" First of all, we need to inform parents and caregivers about our intentions when it comes to outdoor play including the time frame and temperature. This is best done at the time of enrollment. It is wonderful to have an outdoor play policy included in the child care hand-



Use caution when the air temperature is between 11°F and 39°F.

book. Families can then read about and appreciate this aspect of quality child care and why it is important in the program. If you need some help writing a policy on physical activity, you can contact your local Extension office. Know the facts about why outdoor play (rain or shine) is important for healthy growth and development of children. Ask parents and caregivers

to provide proper clothing for the weather. This should include: hats, gloves, a warm coat that zips or buttons, snow boots and snow pants when needed. It is a good idea to have a few extras around in case they are forgotten or misplaced. It is a good idea to ask caregivers to consider donating old clothing items like these to your child care program. Remember, toddlers and preschoolers should be attempting to dress themselves, but the child care provider must ensure they are properly dressed before heading out in the cold.

Is it OK for kids to take their gloves off outside when it is cold? The answer depends on the temperature, but for those of you working with young toddlers and preschoolers, you can count on this happening. You may have to spend the entire outside time putting little Suzie's gloves back on, but that is your job — so do it! Parents and caregivers have every right to be upset if you do

not. Parents are not there to help their child, thus they expect their child care provider will. This is a great teaching opportunity for the child as well. Talk with her about why we need to wear gloves and role model that you have yours on too. Make sure to communicate with families about the importance of the gloves and practice putting them on during an indoor activity, so the child can learn to help themselves.

Make sure you stay out only as long as the children are engaged and playing. Depending

on the temperature, you may spend three times as long dressing for outside time as you do actually participating in outside time — and that's OK! Getting dressed is a crucial part of every child's personal and social development.

Hand washing is the number one way to prevent the spread of illness. When you bring the children in from outside, make sure to have them wash their hands with warm soapy water for as long as it takes them to sing the ABC's (or about 20 seconds).

### Upcoming Early Childhood Trainings

Nebraska Extension teaches several early childhood development classes for child care providers. Listed are upcoming classes held at the Lancaster Extension Education Center, 444 Cherrycreek Road (unless location otherwise noted). For additional information or to sign up, contact Jaci Foged at [jfoged2@unl.edu](mailto:jfoged2@unl.edu) or 402-441-7180. Some registration forms are at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/family>.

**Lincoln Early Childhood Conference** — Saturday, Feb. 29, 8:45 a.m.–3 p.m. Registration begins at 8:15 a.m. This conference is sponsored by the Southeast Early Learning Connection. Cost is \$25. A light breakfast and lunch provided. 6 in-service hours. Register and pay online at [www.esu6.org](http://www.esu6.org) by Feb. 21. For more information, contact Cara Small at [carasmall@esu6.org](mailto:carasmall@esu6.org) or 402-761-3341.

**Look Who's Hatching** — Wednesday, March 25, 6:15–8:15 p.m. Cost is \$10. 2 in-service hours. Register by March 16. Learn how to implement Nebraska Extension's curriculum, "Look Who's Hatching," in your program. Participants will have the opportunity to hatch chicks in their own program using an incubator on loan from Extension for an additional fee of \$50.