



# The Junior Master Gardener® Program



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## ➤ Program Description

- The Junior Master Gardener® (JMG®) Program is a 5 year old 4-H youth gardening program that was started by the Texas Cooperative Extension Service.
- The JMG® program is supported by a curriculum that contains both individual independent study activities for youth and group activities for the JMG® teacher or leader to use with their JMG® group. The curriculum is made up of 8 chapters including plant growth and development, soils and water, ecology and environment horticulture, insects and diseases, landscape horticulture, fruits and nuts, vegetables and herbs, and life skills/career exploration.
- JMG® offers horticultural/environmental science education and leadership and life skill development through fun and creative activities. The program utilizes schools, volunteers, Cooperative extension networks, and other youth organization to educate these young gardeners. In addition, the JMG® program incorporates service learning and volunteerism enabling young people to make a positive contribution to their home, community, and country.
- The JMG® program currently has over 12, 218 registered youth in public/private/home/schools, after-school programs, summer camps, and other organizations in 29 states, 2 countries, working toward their certification.

## ➤ Program Purpose:

- Develop leadership skills.
- Identify community needs/volunteer opportunities.
- Peer and cross generation mentoring
- Foster personal pride and responsibilities.
- Increase knowledge in horticultural education.



## ➤ Program Goals:

- Building youth leaders by utilizing environmental science as a vehicle to develop academic skills, character education, and service learning.
- Enhancing reading, writing, science, and math skills through "hands-on" and applied learning.
- Providing certification and recognition for youth for attaining personal goals.
- Utilizing peer teaching and cross generational mentoring for program delivery.
- Improving the health and nutrition of youth through gardening and nutrition education.
- Providing a strong and positive link between public and higher education to collaboratively prepare youth for tomorrow's workplace through career exploration, school to work programs, and basic life skill enhancement.

# Junior Master Gardener® Curriculum

- **Chapter 1. Plant Growth and Development**  
Participants will learn how plants grow and make our world a better place.
- **Chapter 2. Soils and Water**  
Participants will get their hands dirty and learn how soil and water are important to plants and all living things.
- **Chapter 3. Ecology and Environmental Horticulture**  
Participants will get the big picture of how people, plants, and animals all depend upon each other and how they can help to take care of our environment.
- **Chapter 4. Insects and Diseases**  
Participants will find out what's bugging them and their plants by exploring the world of insects and plant diseases.
- **Chapter 5. Landscape Horticulture**  
Participants will learn how to create and take care of beautiful gardens, and how to attract birds, insects, and other creatures to their backyards or neighborhoods.
- **Chapter 6. Fruits and Nuts**  
Participants will learn about many different kinds of fruits and nuts, and make fruit smoothies, raisins, and even peanut butter.
- **Chapter 7. Vegetables and Herbs**  
Participants will learn to grow many different kinds of vegetables and herbs and how to cook them in some yummy dishes.
- **Chapter 8. Life Skills and Career Exploration**  
Participants will learn more about themselves, their friends and their school, and discover how to make plans for the future.

# Starting the JMG® Program in Alabama:

## ➤ Advantages of the JMG® Program

- A new and exciting 4-H program that is a perfect fit for public/private/home schools, after-school programs, youth clubs and organizations, and/or public/botanical gardens.
- Teaches basic life skills while exploring areas of horticulture and nutrition.
- Integrates all subject areas (science, math, writing, and reading).
- Program curriculum easily matches most state curriculum.
- Flexible in use: No lengthy set guidelines or long-term commitment is necessary in order to participate. Certification is encouraged but not required.
- Provides and adds new and fun activities to teachers' lesson plans.
- Incorporates community service projects and teaches leadership.
- Make use of and encourages the support of volunteers; it is a perfect match with the Master Gardener Volunteer program.
- Awards and recognizes youth for their efforts and program completion through certificates, medals, and JMG® merchandise.
- Explores and utilizes computer technology: Features an interactive web site, [www.jmgkids.org](http://www.jmgkids.org), to serve as a place for more student learning and an additional resource for teachers.
- Is lead and actively run by teachers and volunteer leaders rather than by county agents.
- Promotes and supports multi-state Cooperative Extension efforts.



## ➤ Disadvantages of the JMG® Program

- Some funding is necessary to fully support the program's cost of youth handbooks, teacher guides, awards, etc.
- Requires the support and participation of the teachers and the educational system.