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For Immediate Release

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Become A Master Gardener
By Linda Langelo Golden Plains Area Extension

The Colorado Master GardenerSM program in the Golden Plains Area is accepting applications this fall with a November 13, 2015 deadline. In 2016 the program will run over a two-year period. The training will be provided in the first year with payment up-front and half of the required volunteer hours due by October 31, 2016. In the second year, the rest of the volunteer hours are due with a \$25 fee for reenrollment.

Classes are taught in different counties within the Golden Plains Area by distance education only if there are a minimum of four students per county. If there are less than four students enrolled per county, there will be travel involved. Classes start January 28, 2016 through April 7 on Thursdays during the day starting at 9 am to noon for the morning and from 1 pm – 4 pm for the afternoon. The class on April 7, 2016 is a local class which may cover entomology, other related topics and orientation to the code of conduct and CMG requirements.

Those accepted into the program will receive eleven weeks of training on plant care and have the opportunity to work with other gardeners from the Golden Plains Area who volunteer in the community. The Colorado Master Gardener program is ideal for gardeners who wish to increase their knowledge of horticulture and help others learn the joy of successful gardening.

In addition to receiving training from Colorado State University professors, specialists and horticulture agents, master gardeners learn on the job as they perform 50 hours of volunteer work during the first growing season and 24 hours every year after to keep the master gardener status. Volunteers help Extension in the community by the following types of projects:

- answering questions on garden care
- provide education through teaching classes
- writing news articles
- working with special audiences
- maintaining demonstration sites
- helping with the community garden
- helping with gardening projects for 4-H, FFA and other organizations

In the Golden Plains Area our Master Gardeners have helped do all of the above listed projects as well as keep the Plant Select®, xeric and native plant gardens, provided horticulture projects for those elderly and disabled, created flower container gardens, raised funds, and other various projects.

Statewide, the value placed on the time donated by the 1,600 plus master gardeners in 36 county-based programs generate more than \$1.4 million.

With the Colorado Master Gardener Program there are two educational options listed as follows:

- **Colorado Master Gardener Certificate** – those who volunteer will be permitted to do a minimum of 25 hours the first year after all the class work and 25 hours in the second year and pay \$25 for a reenrollment fee.
- **Colorado Garden Certificate Student** – involves no volunteer time. Please read below.

The Colorado Master Gardener program also can be a stepping stone toward a career in horticulture. You can enroll in this program without having to pay back any volunteer time. You would earn a title of **Colorado Garden Certificate Student**. This program is recognized by the green industry as a great vocational education course. The Colorado Master Gardener program is open to all including persons working within the green industry as well outside of the professional field. Many people considering a career in the green industry start with this master gardener training as an all-around introduction to advanced plant care.

If gaining knowledge and helping others through horticulture is of interest to you, the Colorado Master Gardener program is an ideal volunteer choice. Please contact Linda Langelo at Colorado State University Extension Office in Julesburg at 970-474-3479 between 8am and 4:30pm for further details such as the cost. I look forward to hearing from you.

Colorado State University Extension in the Golden Plains Area provides unbiased, research-based information about 4-H youth development, family and consumer issues, gardening, horticulture and natural resources. As part of a nationwide system, Extension brings the research and resources of the university to the community. The Sedgwick County Extension is located at 315 Cedar Street, Julesburg, CO. 80737.

For more information visit www.ext.colostate.edu.

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Colorado State University Extension is your local university community connection for research-based information about natural resource management; living well through raising kids, eating right and spending smart; gardening and commercial horticulture; the latest agricultural production technologies and community development. Extension 4-H and youth development programs reach more than 90,000 young people annually, over half in urban communities.