

Master gardener classes to begin

For individuals who are interested in becoming a certified expert in all things related to home gardening in Monmouth County, the Master Gardener program may be a great way to begin the new year. The deadline to apply is Jan. 2.

“Each Master Gardener trainee receives in-depth, hands-on training in horticulture from the best in the field – Rutgers University and Brookdale Community College faculty, as well as Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service professional staff,” Freeholder Lillian G. Burry said. “The program includes plant biology, propagation, soil science and pest control.”

After completing classroom and hands-on training, Master Gardeners share their knowledge by conducting garden lectures, demonstrations, school and community gardening projects, telephone diagnostic service for callers, and research.

To become a Master Gardener, an applicant must live in Monmouth County, be

available to attend 10 weeks of classes and make a commitment to provide gardening information and services to the community.

Classroom sessions will be held from February through May on Tuesday and Thursday or Friday mornings. The first class is Feb. 21. At the conclusion of the classes, Master Gardener trainees are required to give 60 hours of volunteer time in horticultural projects and answer calls on the county’s “horticulture helpline.” Those who complete the training become certified Master Gardeners.

An application can be downloaded at www.visitmonmouth.com. Click on the Department link to the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service. An application may also be obtained at the Cooperative Extension Service office at 4000 Kozloski Road, Freehold Township, or call 732-431-7260 to request an application be mailed. There is a \$250 fee to cover materials and program costs.