# MENTORING

Mentoring is designed to pair new members with existing members to integrate the new members into the County Master Gardener Program. New members may feel lost after graduation, and mentoring will help their transition into the group. The following are suggested strategies for implementation of mentoring in the County Program. \*The word “mentee” does not appear in the dictionary. However, we have chosen to adopt the word and believe it accurately reflects the new member in that relationship.

1. A Mentoring Chairman and/or Co-Chairman will be appointed to facilitate the mentoring process.

2. Each new Master Gardener will be paired with an active Master Gardener. The mentor-mentee\* relationship is expected to last one (1) year.

3. Mentors can be solicited by newsletter, e-mail, telephone, or other appropriate means. A sample solicitation letter may be found in the Program Guide.

4. A graduation party or potluck meal is recommended at the end of the training course to enable new and active Master Gardeners to become acquainted.

5. Time spent in mentoring activities should be counted and turned in as part of work hours.

6. It is recommended that mentors carry out the following functions:

• Meet the mentee during the Master Gardener training. It is suggested that the initial contact occur the first day of class, if possible.

• Read the new member bio sheet to become familiar with the information provided by the mentee. A sample bio sheet may be found in the Program Guide.

• Inform the mentee of the time, date and location of lectures, gardening seminars and other garden-related events. Encourage attendance.

• Wear name badge at all functions. When possible, also wear Master Gardener attire.

• Seek out mentees at the monthly meetings to make them feel welcome and included. Introduce the mentee to other members. Ask the mentee to sit with you and your friends at the meeting.

• Be certain the mentee is knowledgeable about each project. A tour of projects may be helpful.

• Help the mentee select a project on which to work. Introduce mentee to project chair.

• If possible, accompany the mentee on the first project workday.

• Be certain the mentee is receiving e-mails or messages from the organization about local, regional and statewide Master Gardener meetings.

• Telephone the mentee at least monthly to answer any questions.

Having a mentoring process in place has proven to be an excellent way to retain members. Each county is encouraged to develop such a process. County 76 members are available to answer each county’s questions about creating a mentoring process.