

Free Helpline for Gardening Questions

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Help is only a free phone call away for home gardeners planning a garden, concerned about pest control or searching for suitable cultivars for their plant hardiness zone.

The University of Vermont (UVM) Extension Master Gardener Helpline is open for calls from Vermont and northern New Hampshire gardeners four days a week. Questions may be phoned in between 9 a.m. and noon, Monday through Thursday.

The toll-free number is (800) 639-2230. Chittenden County callers should call (802) 656-5421.

Walk-ins are welcome during regular helpline hours. The office is located at 201 Jeffords Hall on the UVM campus.

Questions also may be submitted through an on-line form that includes an option for providing photos. The form may be found at <http://go.UVM.edu/ask-a-master-gardener>.

The helpline is staffed by certified Master Gardeners who completed an intensive 13-week horticultural course and internship to earn their certification. They are trained to answer questions about soil bed preparation, vegetable and fruit gardening, annuals and perennials, lawn care, trees and shrubs, composting, insect pests, plant diseases and other home horticultural topics.

In addition, gardeners may send in samples of insects and diseased plants for identification. For instructions on how to submit these, go to www.UVM.edu/mastergardener. Click on "Garden Help." The UVM Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab, located at 262 Jeffords Hall, offers soil testing for home gardens. For information, visit www.UVM.edu/pss/ag_testing. The cost for a basic nutrient test is \$14, payable when the sample is submitted.

Commercial growers should contact the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic at (802) 656-0493 or e-mail Ann Hazelrigg, clinic coordinator, at ann.hazelrigg@UVM.edu regarding a pest or disease issue.