TOGA / VIMS
MASTER OYSTER GARDENING COURSE
JUNE 2020

Course dates and application forms will be made available in the spring 2020. If you’d like to be added to an email notification list about the course – contact khudson@vims.edu.

Cost - The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (a.k.a. the License Plate Fund) has granted sufficient funds to cover the cost of facilities and printed course materials for the 2020 course. This significantly reduces the cost for applicants to just $40 – to cover food and beverages during the 2-days.

Program History and Purpose - The purpose is to provide a steady stream of highly trained volunteers who can lead TOGA’s outreach mission. The first Master Oyster Gardener (MOG) course was held in 1998 and graduated nineteen enthusiastic MOGs. Nine further courses have been held in subsequent years each with roughly 15 to 20 students.

What do MOG's do? MOG’s lead TOGA’s outreach mission through their dedicated volunteer service. Opportunities include newsletter or website support, assisting oyster gardeners, outreach events, float building, research projects, special committees and board membership.

Course Details - The MOG course takes place on 2 consecutive Saturday’s in June at VIMS, Gloucester Point. The course is taught by a variety of knowledgeable experts including VIMS faculty and staff, State officials, and experienced TOGA MOG’s. The course is a mix of presentations and hands-on laboratories with lots of time for discussion. The content generally consists of basic oyster gardening skills; oyster biology and life history; oyster diseases; understanding the various “critters” that live in and around oyster gardens; and the regulatory and human health issues surrounding oyster gardening. Attendees will also get a start-to-finish look at the oyster cultivation process at the VIMS oyster hatchery.

Applicant Criteria - In order to qualify, the individual must:
- Have a VMRC oyster garden permit.
- Agree to attend the course in its entirety.
- Have been growing oysters for a minimum of one year.
- Be willing to commit to helping TOGA respond to questions from gardeners, including site visits.
- Be willing to assist with at least 3 TOGA events or activities.

Interested, curious and have questions? Please contact one of the following:
- Karen Hudson, VIMS, khudson@vims.edu, (804) 684-7742
- Terry Lewis, TOGA President, lewistmn@msn.com, 804-693-2687
- Doug Schaefer, TOGA VP candidate, subiceguy@hotmail.com, 804-580-1456
- Vic Spain, President Emeritus/Engineer, vicspain@rocketmail.com, 804-642-6764