

**Airbnb: the freedom of travel on any budget.**

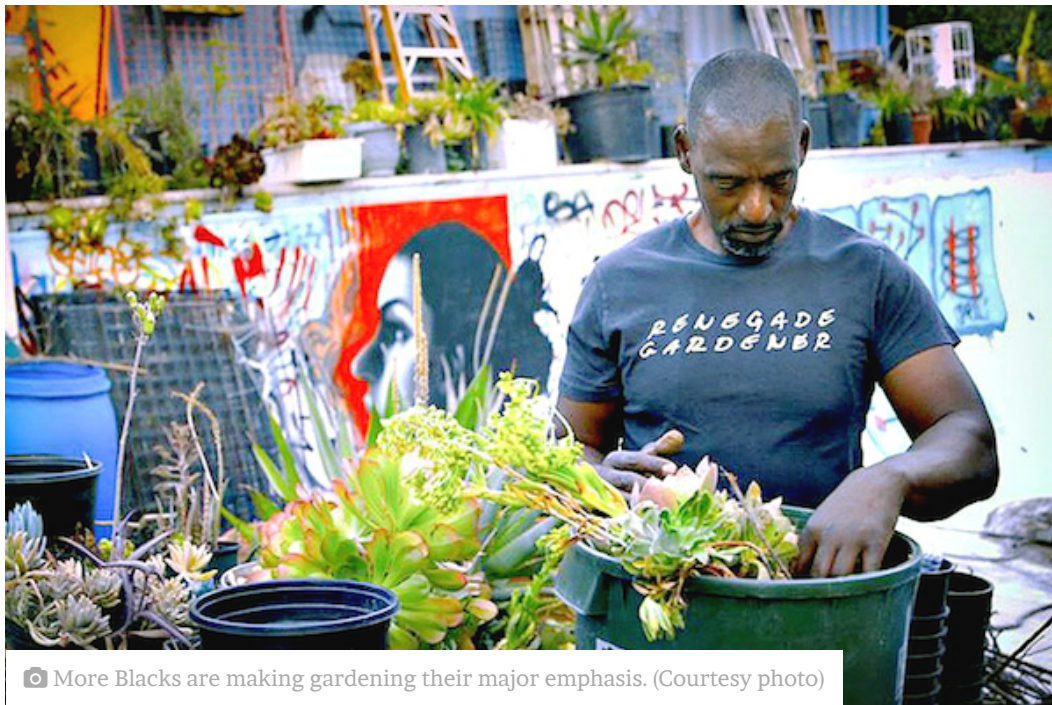


Black Experience Community Editor's Pick Food

## Blacks, Minorities Encouraged to Apply for UDC Gardener Program



Stacy Brown   • December 12, 2018  0  489  1 minute read



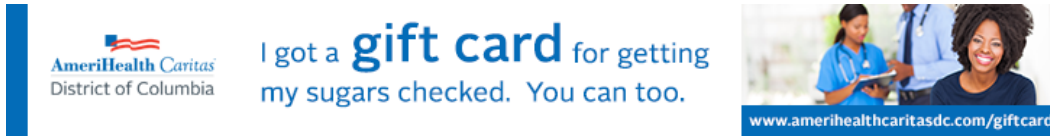
 More Blacks are making gardening their major emphasis. (Courtesy photo)

The nation's first African-American landscape architect, David A. Williston, got his start in 1896 at Cornell, one of the first universities to open its doors to Black men and women.

But Williston didn't exactly start a trend for African Americans in the field of gardening, however. What a published report in 2005 noted still holds true today: "The labor force in the green industry is dominated by minorities, especially Hispanics. But for degreed horticulturists involved in the propagation and production of plants, the design and care of gardens and the supervision of crews, the landscape is still overwhelmingly White."

It's a dilemma that the University of the District of Columbia has continued to do its part in solving.

The College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES), of the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), again will offer the D.C. Master Gardener Program, encouraging African Americans and other minorities to participate.



“We have students from every single ward and I will tell you right now that one-third to one-quarter are African American,” said Sandy Farber Bandier, UDC’s Master Gardener program coordinator. “We have it opened to everyone and it’s funded by the USDA, so we have to reach out to everybody.”



The program’s mission is to train and educate participants on effective and sustainable horticultural practices, landscape problem solving, and vegetable and ornamental growing, on a small and large scale. Participants must complete the online Master Gardener Program Application by Friday, Dec. 21.

Currently, there are 45 spaces in each cohort that will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis, Bandier said. Applicants will receive a notice within two business days of their application status. Two weeks before the first class, participants must attend one of the mandatory orientations.

Curriculum topics include botany, soils and fertilizers, hydroponics/aquaponics, landscape design, fruit and vegetable gardening and more.

“Upon completion of all coursework and 50 hours as a volunteer intern, each student will be issued a Master Gardener Certificate,” Bandier said.

The program is open to DC residents only and they’re not required to possess any previous gardening experience.

Bandier said the city is staunchly behind the program.

“Mayor Muriel Bowser gave the university money and the designation for the university is equity imperative,” Bandier said. “I’ve been here 17 and a half years we had a Master Gardener Program where I had a partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation in DC and young men who had their GEDs

were able to get the training and hands-on lectures and they got certified and then hired at DPR.”

Mandatory orientation and training sessions will begin in January for the program and the winter program begins in February.

“When people come to my class, you really don’t realize the different fields out there in horticulture and agriculture,” Bandier said. “It could lead to a lot of great things.”

*For more information about the program or to apply, go to [www.udc.edu/causes/land-grant/center-for-urban-agriculture-gardening-education/master-gardener-program](http://www.udc.edu/causes/land-grant/center-for-urban-agriculture-gardening-education/master-gardener-program).*

Tags: gardening, Stacy M. Brown, UDC, University of the District of Columbia, horticulture, Sandy Farber Bandier



The banner features the LITE logo on the left, which consists of a stylized lightbulb with the word "lite" inside. To the right of the logo, the text reads: "Do you identify as a Trans woman or on the Trans feminine spectrum? Take part in the LITE Study!". Further right, it says "Earn up to \$450" in large, bold, pink letters. On the far right, there is a photograph of three diverse young women wearing sunglasses, and a blue button with the text "JOIN TODAY!" in white.