COORDINATORS COMMENTS

Master Gardeners-
2015 will mark the 40th anniversary of the Master Gardener program in Illinois. The state Master Gardener advisory committee and I would like to celebrate our 40 years by putting together an Illinois Master Gardener history. We are hoping that Master Gardeners (with the assistance of staff) will compile the history of the program in their counties. We have some volunteers who have received their 20, 25 and 30 year pins and also some staff who have been involved with the program for many years. These folks would be a wealth of information to interview for stories of the early years of the program.

Here are some suggestions of what you might want to include in your history:
- Year of the First Training and when MGs were trained as well as how the training was done and what was taught
- Number of MGs in the program in the beginning and now
- Coordinators/educators who have led the program and how they influenced the program and volunteers
- County projects or programs (elaborate on 2-3 key projects and their impact) - or explain how the projects have evolved over the years
- Committee chairs/leaders/advisory committees and their impact
- Special events in the county or recognition events
- Awards won (other than state MG awards)
- Testimonials (i.e. memories of members, role the program has played in their lives, praise from clients etc.)
- Newspaper articles or brochures

You may use pictures as part of your history but please don’t send single picture files - we may ask for those later.

We are asking counties to compile their histories and submit them via email to Monica David by January 2, 2015 if possible. I prefer a single file (Word or pdf). The histories will be used to create online scrapbooks and publicity items and to share our rich history with stakeholders.

Monica David, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Coordinator

2015 STATE CONFERENCE TO BE HELD SEPTEMBER 17-19 IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

The Master Gardeners of Madison, Monroe and St. Clair counties invite you to join them for fun and education next September at the Hilton Garden Inn in O’Fallon Illinois. The conference will feature 2 days of classes plus hands-on sessions. Classes will feature topics which will interest both Master Gardeners AND Master Naturalists. Tours will highlight the best of local Horticulture and Natural Resource areas, nurseries and gardens.

Keynote speaker for the conference is Rosalind Creasy, author of 18 popular gardening books. Rosalind’s first book, The Complete Book of Edible Landscaping, won the Garden Writers Quill and Trowel award and coined the term “Edible Landscaping” which is now a part of every gardener’s vocabulary. She was awarded a 2011 American Horticulture Society Book Award for her updated book titled Edible Landscaping. She is a garden and food writer, photographer and landscape designer with a passion for vegetables and ecologically sensitive gardening.

Save the date - more details about conference 2015 will be forthcoming!
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH FOR EXCELLENCE AWARD APPLICATIONS
DUE JAN. 1, 2015

Search for Excellence (SFE) is the recognition program of Extension Master Gardener (EMG) volunteer work throughout the United States, Canada and South Korea. SFE has seven categories in which Master Gardeners may demonstrate their outstanding contributions to their communities. All SFE applications must show that significant learning took place, whether by the EMG or the general public with whom you are involved. Illinois MGs have had 7 first place and 4 second place winners in the past!!

The seven categories for projects are:
- Youth programs
- Demonstration Gardens
- Workshop or Presentation
- Community Service
- Innovative Projects
- Special Needs Audiences
- Research (Applied Scientific Methodology)

Applications must be written by Master Gardeners but approved and submitted by staff members. Projects must be simple to replicate, have an educational component and show impact. In recent years, reviewers have selected winners based heavily on evaluation and impacts. It is very important to include this in your application. You must also strictly adhere to the application instructions. If you think a project from your county might be eligible, first talk to your MG Coordinator or educator. You may find more information on how to submit your application at http://mastergardener.unl.edu/imgc2015

Please contact Monica David at modavid@illinois.edu before submitting your application. I have had experience judging applications in the past and may be able to give you suggestions on your application.

Winners will be expected to provide a short (3 minute) talk about their project at the International EMG conference Sept. 22-25, 2015 in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The state office will have limited funds to assist award winners with conference expenses.

2015 MINI-GRANTS APPLICATIONS
DUE JAN. 31, 2015

The Master Gardener Mini-grant program uses funds generated from the state conference silent auctions to fund county Master Gardener projects around the state. In 2014 the state advisory committee chose 10 projects to fund and allocated close to $5,000. The winning projects were from DuPage, Effingham, Macoupin, Madison, McHenry, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Warren and Winnebago counties.

The program was designed in 2012 to supply start-up or continuation funds for your local endeavors. Existing projects or new projects will both be considered for grant funds. Maximum grant is $1200 but most grants will be for smaller amounts of money. Grants will be awarded annually. A maximum of 1 grant per county per year. The state office will reimburse unit offices for expenses up to the amount of the mini-grant. The grant funds are to be used for horticulture programs which meet the goals of Extension and the Master Gardener program.

The state advisory committee will NOT fund these items: technology, permanent building structures, space rental, honorariums, liability insurance, utilities or mechanically driven equipment.

Selection of the winners will be weighted heavily to those projects which demonstrate impact and follow-up evaluation. Preference will be given to programs which make multiple contacts with their audiences– rather than single day events. Please be accurate and complete when writing a budget as we want to fund as many projects as possible. If you ask for more money that you expect to spend, this will result in less money available for other counties.

Winners will be expected to write a brief summary of the project to be used in the Imagine newsletter and for impact reporting.

Applications are due to the state office by January 31 of each year. The state Master Gardener advisory committee will judge the applications and winners will be announced on March 1. Applications MUST be written in collaboration with Extension staff and Master Gardeners. The instructions and application can be found on the state website under “For IL Master Gardeners”.

INTERNATIONAL
MASTER GARDENER
FARMER TO FARMER PROGRAM
The USAID instituted the Farmer-to-Farmer Program (F2F) in 1985. The current 2009-2013 program was extended in the 2008 Farm Bill, changing its name to the ‘John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program” in honor of one of the pilots killed September 11, 2001 and of former Congressman Bereuter, who initially sponsored the program. The Farmer-to-Farmer Program provides technical assistance to local farmers in developing countries. The program taps the expertise of volunteer farmers, retirees, and agribusiness professionals from across the US states who want to contribute overseas. In its 21 year history, it is estimated that the Farmer-to-Farmer Program has had over 12,000 volunteers who have contributed over $34 million worth of volunteer time, with close to one million beneficiary families.

This is the first time that Catholic Relief Services (CRS) will be involved in the program. They bring to the table long term presence in East Africa as well as relationships with grass roots organizations. They are proposing to place 375 volunteers in 500 volunteer assignments over a 5 year period. They will work with 350 host organizations and intend to train over 19,000 farmers. Their goals are to 1) Improve household livelihoods and nutritional status 2) Link small holder farmers to existing value chains 3) Strengthen resilience to shocks such as droughts and 4) Preserve and enhance natural resources for rural communities. The CRS F2F program is the only one that combines collaborations with US based partners as a part of the program design. US partners include American Agri-Women; Foods Resource Bank; National Association of Agricultural Educators; National Catholic Rural Life Conference and U. of I College of ACES.

The countries chosen for this program are Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia. Volunteers will be assisted by CRS staff with pre-departure preparation and on return to the States. F2F assignments are not paid but expenses such as airfare, lodging, meals and in country transportation are covered by CRC. Assignments are currently available in Tanzania to assist small holders with GAP training, safe use of pesticides and IPM skills.

Master Gardeners that are interested in learning more about potential volunteer opportunities should contact Oliver Ferguson, ACES International Program Coordinator at ofergus@illinois.edu or visit farmertofarmer.crs.org

NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES AWARENESS WEEK
February 22 – 28, 2015

PARTICIPATE IN EVENTS ACROSS THE NATION to raise awareness and identify solutions to invasive species issues at local, state, tribal, regional and national scales. Locate an invasive species event in your state or county. Plan your own event using the NISAW Toolkit – where and when it works for you!

Plan to attend 3 days of events in Washington DC
- NISAW Awards Ceremony
- Reception and Briefings on Capitol Hill
- Expert Webinars on prevention, early detection and rapid response and control
- Expert Webinar on USDA grants for work on invasive species
- Federal Agency Invasive Species Program “Open House”
- Invasive Species Kids Day

Check www.nisaw.org for the NISAW Toolkit for planning local events and the NISAW Event Locator – as well as more specific dates, details, and further developments!

2015 FIRST DETECTOR WORKSHOPS
New topics on current and emerging invasive plants, pathogens, and insects will be covered. Each location will have sessions covering brown marmorated stink bug, viruses in ornamental plants, invasive plants and their management as well as a session devoted to discussing invasive pest pathways. These in-depth training sessions will cover material that includes: identification/detection, life cycle/biology, hosts, sampling, management, and commonly confused look-a-likes. Participants will also be given an opportunity to take part in hands-on activities to learn about the topics in more detail. Plan on joining us in one of these locations – more information on how to register will be available in the coming months.

January 29 – Collinsville
February 3 – Wheaton
February 4 – DeKalb
February 11 – Mt. Vernon
February 12 – Charleston
February 18 – Macomb
February 19 – Moline
February 26 – Bloomington
Travel truly can open up one’s eyes to a completely different world and can be life-changing. This certainly was my experience when I visited South Korea this past month. I saw many great and inspiring things occurring in this country. How did I end up in South Korea, you may ask? Well, earlier this year I sent in a proposal to speak at the 2014 Korean Master Gardener International Conference to be held at GyeongGi-do Agricultural Research and Extension Services (GARES) in South Korea. And my proposal was accepted! So on September 21, I made the 13 hour flight to Seoul, South Korea to attend the conference and give my presentation on ‘Partnering to Create Youth Gardens’.

The idea to start a Korean Master Gardener program was passed along by Dr. Ann who at the time was a grad student at University of Kentucky. Ann was a native of South Korea and learned about the Master Gardener program here in the U.S. and thought that it would be an excellent program to bring to South Korea. A partnership was formed and now South Korea has volunteers who have been trained and are making a difference in their communities. Several representatives from GARES have also attended Master Gardener conferences here in the U.S. and then decided to hold an international conference of their own this year.

The first Korean Master Gardener conference was held at GARES, which is a research station about an hour south of Seoul, the capital city. GARES conducts research on a variety of agricultural crops in Korea like rice, roses, fruit trees, cacti and succulents, to name a few. They are continually producing new varieties and technologies to help improve agricultural production in South Korea. Many of the directors and researchers at GARES were our personal interpreters, tour guides, and confidants throughout the conference and I can’t thank them enough. They were the most amazing hosts and every single person we met was incredibly nice and grateful to have us there. I can’t say enough about everyone involved with this conference.

The conference consisted of 2 days of presentations and demonstrations, including a Jr. Master Gardener Demonstration, kitchen garden design contest, poster sessions, and a welcome dinner and celebration with the most expansive offering of food I’ve ever experienced! I would estimate that there were about 100-125 people in attendance at the conference, with about 20 of us from the U.S. Speakers came from Germany, Japan, and various U.S. states to speak at the conference including Illinois, Kentucky, Washington, Ohio, Nebraska, Virginia, and North Carolina.

Following the conference, 2 days of tours were planned. We visited numerous community gardens in the GyeongGi-do area, two different school and youth gardens, a traditional open-air market, and a Korean folk village. It was great to learn more about the history of Korea and gain some insight into gardening practices there.

The part of South Korea we were in was very urban. The city of Seoul is the 3rd largest metropolitan area in the world with over 25 million people. High rise apartment buildings are a very common sight in every direction you look. And because the majority of people are living in apartments, residents don’t have much space in which to garden. You could see just driving around the city, that residents would take any available plot of land and create a garden on it though. Even along the roadways, food production was anywhere possible. Because of this, the community gardening concept was pretty popular there as well. (continued on page 5)
KOREAN INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE CONTINUED

A large theme of the conference was focused on urban agriculture and horticulture, as one of the goals of GARES is to promote and educate more urban farmers. It was interesting to learn more about this topic and hear about the tension arising between the rural and urban farmers. Apparently, the rural farmers are concerned about the growing urban farming movement. One speaker informed us that if Seoul had to live off its current food supply, they could only survive for 3-4 days. So I’m not sure that the tension is really warranted, because there seems to be plenty of need for more food production.

Reusing any materials they could was also very common in the gardens we saw. Containers could be made out of whatever materials were available, like plastic bags or Styrofoam shipping containers.

The plant life in South Korea was quite similar to what we have here in Illinois because they have a similar hardiness zone. Many of the vegetables, fruit trees, and flowers they grew we could also grow here in Illinois. A few crops that were interesting to me included the jujube fruit tree, which tasted like a miniature apple, and I noticed a lot of sweet persimmon trees, which weren’t quite ready to harvest yet. The fields looked just a bit different as well, as their main field crop is rice. They also had an interesting way of staking their trees throughout the city which seemed like a little overkill and would be labor intensive. But I’m sure they have due cause to do it that way.

Overall, I still kind of get chills thinking about what a great experience this trip was. I am very thankful to the organizers of the trip and to my administration for allowing me to make this wonderful, enlightening trip. Now I can’t wait till my next opportunity to experience a new country and way of growing!

More photos can be viewed here: http://goo.gl/uGOA1w
Candace also created a movie documenting the experience here: http://goo.gl/xJ7QOe

HUMANS, BEES, & POLLINATION SERVICES IN THE CITY: THE CASE OF CHICAGO, IL

Abstract: Despite the global trend in urbanization, little is known about patterns of biodiversity or provisioning of ecosystem services in urban areas. Bee communities and the pollination services they provide are important in cities, both for small-scale urban agriculture and native gardens. To better understand this important ecological issue, we examined bee communities, their response to novel floral resources, and their potential to provide pollination services in 25 neighborhoods across Chicago, IL (USA). In these neighborhoods, we evaluated how local floral resources, socioeconomic factors, and surrounding land cover affected abundance, richness, and community composition of bees active in summer. We also quantified species-specific body pollen loads and visitation frequencies to potted flowering purple coneflower plants (Echinacea purpurea) to estimate potential pollination services in each neighborhood. We documented 37 bee species and 79 flowering plant genera across all neighborhoods, with 8 bee species and 14 flowering plant genera observed on average along each neighborhood block. We found that both bee abundance and richness increased in neighborhoods with higher human population density, as did visitation to purple coneflower flower heads. In more densely populated neighborhoods, bee communities shifted to a suite of species that carry more pollen and are more active pollinators in this system, including the European honey bee (Apis mellifera) and native species such as Agapostemon virescens. More densely populated neighborhoods also had a greater diversity of flowering plants, suggesting that the positive relationship between people and bees was mediated by the effect of people on floral resources. Other environmental variables that were important for bee communities included the amount of grass/herbaceous cover and solar radiation in the surrounding area. Our results indicate that bee communities and pollination services can be maintained in dense urban neighborhoods with single-family and multi-family homes, as long as those neighborhoods contain diverse and abundant floral resources.

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http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10531-014-0752-0
REFLECTIONS FROM OUR ITALIAN GARDEN ROAD TRIP

Master Gardeners, University of Illinois Extension staff and garden lovers joined Monica David in September for a trip to Italian Gardens. Gordon Boak, a trip participant and New Jersey Master Gardener wrote this article for his local Master Gardener newsletter and he agreed to share it with Illinois Master Gardeners.

Among the 27 voyagers on the Italian road trip were MG from Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, and of course Illinois. The itinerary started in Venice, wound thru Verona to Lake Como, then to Sienna and Florence. One or two gardens a day still left ample time for individual exploration but also showed us clearly the difference between and Italian/French gardens (precise, geometric, with classical statuary evoking man's control of nature), and English gardens (a sylvan 'natural' woodland inviting contemplation of nature).

Among the things we learned:
- The flower in the crest of Florence is not a lily. It is an iris.
- Virginity in Italy is relative not absolute. Thus being virgin is not as good as being extra virgin. At least in olive oil.
- One mature olive tree will produce about 1 liter of oil. Extra virgin oil is pressed within 6 hours of harvest and only from the best trees in the vineyard.
- The iconic columnar Italian cypress tree, Cupressus semivirens, can grow to 30 feet and 200 years old. They are often planted along roadsides because their roots grow straight down and thus don't lift the pavement.
- Italians will espalier anything: roses, vines, fruits, and not just against a flat wall. They also use 3D templates such as hemispheres or cones. Ivy is espaliered on houses as a decorative design element.
- Wine may have been known to the Etruscans before 800 BC. Wines in Italy are classified as Vini (generic; table wine); Varietal (a specific type of grape); IGP (geographically protected areas from which the wines come. Think champaign in France.); DOP (protected designation of origin; a cut above IGP); Classico (a DOP from the oldest parts of the vineyards with a history of excellence); and Cru which is an unofficial self designated category vintners use to imply a still greater quality. By dint of diligent sampling, the NJMG contingent can report extensive first hand (and mouth) experience across the entire classification system. We now know that even the best Chianti classico is harsh compared to the nebbiolo grapes used in Barolo and Barbaresco wines.
- Everyone knows of Venice's gondoliers and canals. But did you know you cannot drive about the island? So laundry is delivered and garbage is collected by boat. Taxis are boats. Concrete for construction is delivered by boat (actually a barge). And so forth.
- History is everywhere. Ruins of moats and walls, and castles abound in cityscapes and countryside. The same lovely Tuscan sunlight of autumn which enchanted 19th English painters and us has also shown in turn on Etruscans, Romans, Lombardi, Austrians, Turks, French, Germans, and Americans as each has come and gone.

Venice's Capello Malipiero Barnabo garden is a city garden facing the Grand Canal. The Contessa Anna Barnabo, a charming age 80 or so, lives there in a palazzo overlooking her garden. Every morning she looks down on her garden from her bedroom window and decides what needs to be improved or changed. She invited us all to visit. Which we did. She is a self taught gardener who after 1/2 century has created a lovely pocket horticultural masterpiece. For what she has done see http://thedecoratingdiva.com/venetian-secret-garden-barnabo-palazzo/. Given her horticultural skill and public dedication to gardening, we bestowed upon her the title of unofficial Master Gardener. Since she speaks no English, we explained the nature and goals of the Master Gardener program thru translations. Since I speak no Italian, I have no idea what was actually said, but she was not at a loss for words. And as a symbol of our appreciation of her efforts we gave Anna my almost new Master Gardener cap. Which she donned and we solemnized on film.
RESEARCHERS DISCOVER RUST RESISTANCE GENES IN SUNFLOWER
Two genes that protect sunflowers against rust disease have been discovered by Agricultural Research Service (ARS) scientists. Molecular geneticist Lili Qi at the ARS Sunflower and Plant Biology Research Unit in Fargo, North Dakota, and her collaborators discovered that the genes, R13a and R13b, confer resistance against all rust strains tested to date.

Rust is a serious fungal disease of sunflowers grown around the world. The disease can significantly reduce sunflower yields and has been increasing in severity in North America in recent years. In 2013, U.S. farmers produced more than 2 billion pounds of sunflowers, worth more than $757 million. Sunflower seeds are predominantly grown as an oilseed crop, but some varieties are specifically grown as “confection” varieties, meaning their kernels are for eating, either raw or roasted.

An economic and environmentally friendly method to control rust is to use resistant cultivars and hybrids. Developing genetically resistant hybrids is the preferred approach for disease management, but few widely effective resistance sources to sunflower rust have been identified.

In an annual field survey conducted by the North Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service and the U.S. National Sunflower Association, sunflower rust was found in 60 to 70 percent of surveyed fields. Kernels infected by rust can be damaged and discolored and are therefore unlikely to meet grading standards established by the industry for confection sunflower seeds. The rust resistant lines should be very useful to breeders who want to develop rust-resistant commercial sunflower hybrids.

ARS is the chief intramural scientific research agency of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, and this research supports the USDA priority of promoting international food security. For more information on this research visit the ARS site at http://www.ars.usda.gov/is/pr/2014/140717.htm

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FREDERIK MEIJER GARDENS AND SCULPTURE PARK
I was recently on a trip to Upper Michigan to view and photograph the fall colors. On our way home we stopped in Grand Rapids to visit the Meijer Gardens. This garden is a rare treat for any garden enthusiast and I highly recommend a visit if you are in the area.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park opened in April 1995 after 13 years of planning and fundraising by the West Michigan Horticultural Society. In 1990, Fred and Lena Meijer were asked for their support. Meijer Gardens includes Michigan’s largest tropical conservatory; five indoor theme gardens; outdoor gardens such as a woodland shade garden and a perennial and bulb garden; nature trails and boardwalk and one of the nation’s most significant sculpture galleries.

The Sculpture Park features significant works of art within a variety of natural settings connected by waterways, meandering paths, lawns, meadows and quiet walkways. More than 50 major works by masters such as Auguste Rodin, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Louise Bourgeois, Mark di Suvero, Richard Serra, Roxy Paine and others are featured in the sculpture garden.

The Lena Meijer Children’s Garden is one of the most interactive children’s gardens in the country. Here children can look through viewing ports to answer questions about sculpture, dig into the sand quarry to uncover information about fossils and build bridges over the Great Lakes water feature.

Chrysanthemums and More! is the largest of its kind in Michigan. Indoors, the Seasonal Display Greenhouse features a cascading chrysanthemum-covered wall as the main focal point.

The Richard and Helen DeVos Japanese Garden is undergoing a total renovation and is expected to reopen in June 2015.

http://www.meijergardens.org/
WHITE FRINGETREE MAY BE A HOST FOR EMERALD ASH BORER

The emerald ash borer, which is destroying ash trees in a large swath of the nation, has apparently spread to a different tree, according to a researcher at Wright State University. Professor Don Cipollini has found that the invasive green beetle has apparently begun to attack white fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*).

Ash belongs to the genus *Fraxinus* which is one of the genera grouped in the olive family (Oleaceae) as is Syringa (lilac), Forsythia, Ligustrum (privet)...and *Chionanthus* (fringetree). Early host preference studies suggested EAB was limited to only Ash.

Cipollini, who has studied emerald ash borer for nearly 10 years, has been working with colleagues to come up with new strains of ash trees that would be resistant to the insect. With colleagues and students, he has co-authored seven publications on the insect, with several others in review or preparation. “It appears that emerald ash borer is eating more than ash trees,” Cipollini said. “It may have a wider host range than we ever thought in the first place, or it is adapting to utilize new hosts. This biological invasion is really something to worry about. It’s having drastic ecological and economic consequences, and you can’t always predict what’s going to happen.”

He discovered that borers were also attacking white fringetree in August when he acted on a hunch. Cipollini was examining some white fringe trees that had been planted by the Yellow Springs Tree Committee near his home in the southwestern Ohio village when he spotted a telltale borer exit hole with the characteristic “D” shape on one of the trees. Cipollini collected the larvae, took them back to his lab and put them under the microscope. The larvae were consistent with those of emerald ash borer — from the bifurcation of the pronotal groove to the abdominal segments becoming increasingly trapezoidal.

He then sent photos of the larvae and a larval specimen to experts at the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), an arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. On October 14, 2014, the USDA Systematic Entomology Laboratory (SEL) at the Smithsonian confirmed partial adult and larval specimens recovered from the white fringetree (*Chionanthus virginicus*) as emerald ash borer (EAB) (*Agrilus planipennis* Fairmaire).

Based on these findings, APHIS PPQ is conducting studies on whether EAB is able to complete its lifecycle on white fringetree as a host, which will take several months. APHIS is also revisiting research on whether other members of the Olive family can serve as hosts of EAB and whether this is a local phenomenon. APHIS will engage national, state, and industry partners as part of the regulatory decision making process should APHIS officially declare white fringetree as an EAB host and the plant and its parts as regulated articles under the regulations, quarantine, and detection aspects of the EAB program.

View the entire article at *Entomology Today* at http://entomologytoday.org/2014/10/10/emerald-ash-borer-may-have-spread-to-different-tree/