



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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Coordinators Comments

As you volunteer in your communities this summer please keep in mind the importance of using your title correctly. When Master Gardeners in Illinois are volunteering, they should always refer to themselves as “**University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners in XXXX County**”. Simply saying: “I am a XXXX County Master Gardener” is not really correct. Using your complete title is a good form of advertising for your local Extension office and all of the programs it offers, as well as the University. The University gives credibility to your title. It shows that the University acknowledges your training, your expertise and your responsibility to distribute only research-based information.

It is important to protect the integrity of the Master Gardener title. Use your title only when performing unpaid educational programming. Please remember that Master Gardeners must **NOT** use their title in any form of commercial advertisement. It is improper to endorse any product or place of business. Once an individual ceases to actively volunteer, they should refer to themselves as a “University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Alumnus”. Please help our protect our program by following these rules.

Correction to Recognizing Volunteers for “Time Served”

In the last issue of the *Imagine*, I listed volunteers who had passed the 1000, 2000, 3000 and 5,000 hour service levels during 2007. I inadvertently left one name off the list. **Roxie DeShane** in Rock Island County reached the 1000 hour level with her volunteer time for 2007. Congratulations to Roxie! I have had several questions about why I didn't recognize all the volunteers who are over these service levels. In fairness to everyone, I have decided to only mention the volunteer names on the year they reach a service level— and not every year thereafter.

 Monica David, MG State Coordinator

Conference 2008 Registration Underway

Registration for the 2008 Master Gardener conference, “Pathways to a Greener Illinois” began on June 15th. Early bird registration for Master Gardeners and 1 adult guest is from June 15th to July 31st. On August 1, registration prices increase and we will open the registration to the public. Registration will only be available online this year at www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg. Please remember that the conference costs are based on filling our sleeping room block at the Westin. We have reserved sleeping rooms at a rate of \$109 but you must reserve before August 20 to receive the discount.

Silent Auction

We need your help to make the 5th annual Silent Auction a success. We are looking for donations of artwork, sculpture, paintings, books, garden tools, garden gifts, etc. The profits from the auction benefit the State Master Gardener office for expenses such as the *Imagine* newsletter. You may send your donation or bring it to the conference, but please contact Sarah Navrotski, sarahnav@illinois.edu at the DuPage County office **BEFORE THE CONFERENCE** to let her know what you will be donating.

Digital Photo Contest

Now is the time to start snapping pictures for the Illinois State Master Gardener Photo Contest. There are Four Categories of entries in the contest: **Plants, Wildlife, Master Gardeners at Work & Illinois Public Gardens**. Master Gardeners can submit one image per category, and only one image per entrant will be selected to win. Only amateur photographers are allowed to enter and they must submit the entry. Photos must be taken between August 24, 2007 and August 20, 2008.

All entries must be submitted electronically via e-mail to Sarah Navrotski, sarahnav@illinois.edu before August 21, 2008. Images must be submitted as a mail attachment in jpeg format and should be a minimum of 1200 x 800 pixels. The top entry in each category will receive \$25. All entries will be displayed in a slide show at the convention.

2009 International Search for Excellence Awards

It is time to submit your favorite teamwork project for an international award. Four projects from Illinois counties have won SFE awards in past years: 2007-Macon County "WAND Gardens"; 2005-Champaign County Idea Rose Garden and Vermilion County First Tuesday Gardening Classes and in 1999- Champaign County Idea Garden. Lets keep up our tradition of winning by nominating some of our outstanding projects.

Search for Excellence is the recognition program of Master Gardener volunteer work throughout the United States and Canada. Search for Excellence has seven categories in which Master Gardeners can demonstrate their outstanding contributions to their communities: youth programs; demonstration gardens; workshop or presentation; community service; innovative projects; special needs audiences and research (applied scientific methodology).

The Search for Excellence program is designed to recognize outstanding group projects, not an individual who does outstanding work. Projects will be judged on their merit from work done between the years 2006-2008. A goal of SFE is to share the excellent ideas and programs so that they can be replicated by other MG groups. A SFE program is one that is easy to use and fits well for the situation it is intended for. Your application should explain how this project augmented learning, increased knowledge, or changed practices to enhance quality of life. These impacts could be economical, environmental, educational, health, community-based, etc.

Winners will be expected to provide a short (3 minute maximum) talk about their project at the International MG Conference to be held in Las Vegas, March 22-26 2009. This presentation can be done in person by a designated representative or by sending a pre-recorded video.

SFE project applications should be written by Master Gardeners and not Extension staff. The application need to be signed by your County Extension staff member who will also send verification that all participating MGs are currently active. He/she will forward the application to Monica David, IL Master Gardener Coordinator at mo-david@uiuc.edu.

Applications and instructions maybe found on the IL MG website under MG resources or at http://www.extension.org/pages/IMGC_Search_for_Excellence

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION IS OCT 1, 2008.

Master Gardener Advisory Committee Openings

The state Master Gardener advisory committee is looking for three Master Gardener volunteers– one each from the Southern, EC and WC Extension regions. The term is for three years and the committee meets 4 times per year. These meetings are in February, May, September (at the state conference) and November. Committee members may attend the meetings in person or by tele-net. The state committee is made up of 2 staff and 2 Master Gardeners from each of the five Extension regions along with the state coordinator.

The goals of the committee are:

- * To serve as advisory council to the state coordinator
- * Encourage equitable distribution of state Master Gardener resources
- * Recommend minimum standards for core training
- * Strengthen and support state education and training
- * Increase awareness of the program
- * Support an annual conference
- * Recommend policies and guidelines for the program

If you would be interested in applying for one of the openings (you must be from the S, EC or WC region), talk to your local coordinator. There is an application form on the website at www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg , on the MG resources page. Please fill out your application and take it to your local coordinator for their approval. A supporting letter from your county director, MG coordinator or educator must accompany your application.

Applications are due to the State Office by August 8.

Costa Rica 2009 Trip Planned

Do you like visiting private and public gardens surrounded by mountains, volcanoes or the picturesque Pacific coast? Do you enjoy traveling with fellow gardeners while you explore up to 500,000 new plant species in a botanical paradise? If so, then join Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator Monica David on an 11 day trip to Costa Rica, January 17-27, 2009. Trip highlights include a visit to Ileana Tehran's private orchid garden; La Paz Waterfall Gardens; La Selva Biological Station and rain-forest trails; a chocolate tour; Collin Street Bakery Pine-apple Farm; Arenal Volcano and Hanging Bridges; Hidalgo Ecotermals Hot Springs; Manual Antonio National Park, Elise Kientzler Botanical Garden and much more. The full itinerary may be found on the Illinois Master Gardener website at www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg For more information or to book the tour, contact Hidden Treasures Botanical Tours, L.L.C. at 573-445-3097 or info@hiddentreasuresbotanicaltours.com

Results of MG Impact study

In 2007, the MG state office conducted an online survey of Master Gardeners one or two years post training. The goal of this survey was to measure long term impacts of the training as well as the volunteers involvement in the program. One hundred forty eight volunteers from forty different counties in all regions responded.

First, the survey asked the participants to rate their usage of practices BEFORE they were in the program and AS A RESULT of things learned in the program. Listed next are some of the results from this part of the survey.

Following recommendations on soil test reports:

- 72% almost never followed recommendations before entering program
- 70% sometimes or often followed recommendations as a result of program

Choosing plant varieties that are know to be resistant to insects and diseases:

- 72% almost never or only sometimes chose resistant varieties before entering the program
- 84% often chose resistant varieties afterwards

Installed landscape plants properly:

- 54% almost never or only sometimes installed plants properly before entering the program
- 95.3% often installed plants properly afterwards

Pruned landscape plants properly:

- 77.1% almost never or sometimes pruned properly before entering the program
- 84.7% often pruned properly afterwards

Identify an insect, disease or weed problem before deciding on a control measure:

- 79.4% almost never or only sometimes ID the pest before control, before entering the program
- 79.3% often ID pest before control afterwards

Using pesticides only according to the label directions:

- 64.7% often used pesticides according to the label before entering the program
- 91% often used pesticides according to the label afterwards

Kept records of pest occurrence for later reference:

- 85.4% almost never kept records before entering the program
- 72.6% sometimes or often kept records afterwards

Kept records of results of control methods for later reference:

- 84.1% almost never kept records before entering the program
- 70% sometimes or often kept records afterwards

Recycled organic materials thru mulching and composting:

- 35.8% often recycled before entering the program
- 67.1% often recycled afterwards

The second part of the survey looked at the opportunity of the Master Gardeners to teach gardening practices to others in the community. Below are some of the most relevant results.

Question: *I have had the chance to teach the following gardening practices:*

- * Choosing landscape plants based on conditions- 73% sometimes or often
- * Choosing disease/insect resistant plants- 74.7% sometimes or often
- * Installing plants properly- 77.7% sometimes or often
- * Mulching- 79.1% sometimes or often
- * Pruning- 71.6% sometimes or often
- * Water saving strategies- 55.4% sometimes or often
- * ID pest before control- 68% sometimes or often
- * Using pesticides by label directions- 66% sometimes or often
- * Recycling organic materials- 66.9% sometimes or often

Lastly, the survey wished to gain data on whether the experiences of the Master Gardeners with the program may have helped them improve their skills for working with others. Again the results were positive as shown below.

Question: *My involvement with the Master Gardener program has helped me to*

- * Communicate better- 74.6% somewhat or very much
- * Work more productively in a group- 76.3% somewhat or very much
- * Willing to accept more challenges- 87.2% somewhat, very much or a great deal
- * Set goals more effectively- 73% somewhat, very much or a great deal
- * Reach goals more effectively- 73% somewhat, very much or a great deal
- * Acquire information better- 91.9% somewhat, very much or a great deal
- * Solve gardening problems- 83.8% very much or a great deal

Work is currently underway on a national level to develop an evaluation instrument which could be used by all the states. In any case, more evaluation and impact reporting will be necessary in the future.

Home, Yard & Garden Pest Guide

The 2008 edition of the *Home, Yard and Garden Pest Guide* has just recently become available. This handbook is written for the homeowner– to assist in management of weeds, diseases and insect pests associated with lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers, vegetables and fruit as well as insect pests indoors. Non chemical as well as chemical control options are provided. **THIS MANUAL IS THE ONLY REFERENCE TO BE USED BY MGS TO GIVE OUT CHEMICAL PESTICIDE RECOMMENDATIONS IN ILLINOIS!** Check with your local MG Coordinator to see if the volunteers in your county are permitted to give pesticide recommendations to home gardeners. Remember– never give pesticide recommendations to commercial clients (refer these to a local educator)! The new *Home, Yard and Garden Pest Guide* is available for \$24.95 plus shipping and handling at pubsplus.uiuc.edu/C1391.html

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