



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

Vol. 9 No. 3
May-June 2008

Coordinators' Comments

Illinois Master Gardener Statistics for 2007:

3355 Master Gardeners in Illinois

164,176 total volunteer hours

40,397 continuing education hours

Value to the citizens of Illinois: \$3.081 million

This figure is based on the value of \$18.77 per volunteer hour from the Independent Sector.

Congratulations to every Illinois Master Gardener volunteer and each county program in the state for contributing to this impressive total.

At the time of this writing, the University of Illinois Extension is facing financial hardships due to state funding issues. \$12,800,000 in state funds for the fiscal year 2008 for county board match have been vetoed or not released. \$1,659,400 for 4-H Youth Development Educators and \$5,055,000 in the Cook County Initiative have also not been released. Extension faces the possibility that monies for fiscal year 2009 may not be funded, or may only be partially funded. Extension as a whole is facing possible cutbacks in staff and programming statewide and in fact several Master Gardener Coordinators in Cook County have already been terminated.

Is there good news as well? Yes I definitely think there is. The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program has many friends and supporters in Illinois. The final outcomes of these cuts have not been determined and we need to tip the balance in our favor. A ground swell of support for Master Gardeners and Extension is increasing daily around the state. Therefore, I am asking each and every one of you to contact your local Illinois senators, representatives and the governor. You can call, write a letter or send a Fax. You can also write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Things to include would be success stories of your local projects and how the Master Gardener program has personally affected you and members of your community. You may want to contact the local organizations you partner with for your

volunteer projects. They might be willing to send letters of support to legislators as well. DO NOT include any negative comments about the legislature or the governor. The time for finger pointing is long past— we need to focus on making the public and the legislators aware of the value of our program to the citizens of Illinois. We really need to “Toot our Horn” now more than ever. Thanks to those of you who have already sent letters and made calls. However, in order to keep this issue in the forefront of the legislators minds, we need to keep sending letters and writing articles until our mission succeeds.

One group who lends enormous support to the University of Illinois Extension is Extension Partners. Extension Partners is a grassroots organization focused on the advancement of Extension and fulfilling the recommendations of the Chancellor's Commission on Extension. Visit their website at www.extensionpartners.org for more information about this organization and the current funding situation for Extension. Posted on the website (under Legislative Issues) is a template you can use to write a letter to the editor for a local newspaper.

Keep those letters coming and above all the keep the faith. This program and your volunteer efforts are definitely worth it!

 Monica David, Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator

BeeSpotters Needed

Wild honey bees and bumble bees are in decline in many states due to viral, bacterial, and fungal infections as well as mites and insecticides. Researchers at the University of Illinois are beginning a new initiative to build a record of honey bee and bumble bee abundance and distribution in Illinois. Master Gardeners and other citizen scientists are being recruited to identify bees, post photographs and enter geographic information about wild bees seen in backyards, parks or other Illinois locales. Please consider becoming a BeeSpotter for this program. It is easy to do... just visit the website at <http://beespotter.mste.uiuc.edu> and set up an account to record your bee sightings.

Important Dates

May 20: In the Footsteps of Linnaeus, Field Museum, Chicago, IL. Botany Curator emeritus William Burger will explain how the structure of flowers and the Linnaean system allow for the ID of more than 350,000 species of plants. Following the presentation, Field Museum scientists will display their recent botanical discoveries and share how they identified and named these extraordinary finds. Contact Arielle Adams by 5-16 to register: 312-665-7136 or aadams@fieldmuseum.org

June 8: “How Our Gardens Grow” Gardenwalk, Decatur, IL. Six Decatur area gardens will offer self-guided tours. The walk features a wide variety of garden styles from cottage gardens to an authentic Japanese garden to a prairie-style garden with natives. The walk also features Fairview Park where Macon County Master Gardeners have labeled 57 different tree species. 11 am to 4 pm, rain or shine. Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 the day of the walk. 217-877-6042 or web.extension.uiuc.edu/macon.

July 12: McHenry County Master Gardener Gardenwalk The tour begins at the McHenry County College, Crystal Lake, at the Master Gardener Demo Garden. The walk then features six gardens in the Crystal Lake and Woodstock area including a hobby farm with day-lilies, hostas and wildlife garden; a multi-acre whimsical garden with a garden railroad; an 1800's farmhouse with an herb and secret garden; and a yard with a bridged stream. Each stop will feature a demo by Master Gardeners and the Demonstration Garden will host a plant sale. Tickets are \$10 in advance; \$15 after June 30. Purchase tickets through the college (815-455-8697) or at the gardens on the day of the event.

July 16-19: Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference, Wyndham Milwaukee Airport Hotel, Milwaukee, WI. Six tours available including shade gardens and gardens housing native plants; a handicapped garden and a garden by a recognized rosarium. Speakers include Michael Weishan (late of PBS' Victory Garden), Ed Lyon (Director of the Janesville Rotary Garden) and Gene Rothert (enabling garden author and manager of the CBG Buehler Enabling Garden). A multitude of choices for break-out sessions.

Registration is now open on the website:
<http://sewmg.encampus.com/>

Chairperson's Chat

Well, if everyone out there is thinking like the Master Gardeners in my county, it is time to get back into the garden. We have all had a long, hard winter. There have been school closings, office closings, ice storms, and record snow falls. But one bright side event is that another Master Gardener training year is drawing to a close. Those in the classroom have finished and are ready to start 'Helping Others Learn to Grow'. Their eagerness has been fostered by 11 weeks of training that has given them new knowledge, encouragement, and confidence to become an active member of their local Master Gardener program. So congratulations to all our new graduates.

In the meantime many of our Master Gardeners, both seasoned and new (noticed I didn't say old and new) are looking ahead and starting to put the garden plans they made during winter into action. Master Gardeners have their seeds started in their basements or sun porches. Volunteer teams are getting organized to start clean up on their community gardens. Help Desks and Plant Clinics are beginning to respond to the questions of local homeowners. This is time of year that we become even more visible within our communities. This is our chance to let our communities know about the Master Gardener program and all that you have to offer. Monica David just released information that the Illinois Master Gardeners gave back the equivalent of \$3.08 million to your communities last year through your volunteer hours. You are definitely making a difference in your communities. Keep up the good work.

 Karen Durtschi
MG State Advisory Committee Chairperson

Perry County Master Gardeners Air a Film on Lasagna Gardening

In Perry County, Illinois, the local 4-H Club was looking for a new community service project so they contacted the assisted living facility, Manor at Mason Woods, in Pinckneyville to see if they were interested in having a garden. In the first year of planting, the club discovered that growing plants in clay soil could be difficult. The Perry County Master Gardeners were asked to assist in the project and they suggested the students create a lasagna garden. The garden did so well the first year that now it's being expanded to include more vegetables. The Pinckneyville community makes a day of the planting event, bringing children and adults together to get the land ready and plant the vegetables. To watch a film clip of the Master Gardeners and kids in the garden, visit this WSIU segment:
<http://www3.wsiu.org/television/infocusarchive/detailinf.php?record=112>

Fresh from the Farm

Communities across the nation are fighting the increased incidence of childhood obesity and Type II diabetes. With funding from USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), a group in Illinois is promoting environmental sustainability and healthy eating habits in the youngest Americans.

Gary Cuneen founded the advocacy group Seven Generations Ahead (SGA) in 2001, located in Oak Park, Ill., to find local solutions to global environmental problems. The group offers a comprehensive "farm-to-school" program called Fresh from the Farm.

"Fresh from the Farm is very focused on promoting healthy eating habits among children," Cuneen said. "We're trying to connect children to the earth and the source of their food, and in the process, teach them the link between nurturing their bodies with healthy food and nurturing the environment through growing food in ecologically healthy ways."

Healthy, sustainably grown food items are not marketed to children as effectively as fast food items, which have limited nutritional value. Seven Generation's Fresh from the Farm program reconnects students, parents, and teachers in the Chicago metro area with the joy, value and importance of eating a well-balanced and healthy diet.

The group teaches children the health and environmental benefits of eating fresh, locally grown and organic food. This is accomplished through nutrition education. The students are exposed to fresh fruits and vegetables at weekly tastings and experience the joy of food during hands-on activities like planting, harvesting and composting on the farm. The healthy eating habits developed during the program are carried over into lifelong healthy eating habits.

Recent program evaluations show that students' knowledge about healthy eating and locally grown foods has increased significantly, and parents and students are reporting greater awareness about the importance of eating fresh fruits and vegetables and are reporting increased consumption of healthy foods as well.

In addition to educating students, the Fresh from the Farm program offers teacher training and parent education. Teacher training is aligned with Illinois education standards. Teachers are provided nutrition education and information on curriculum activities centered on organic food, global food traditions and learning to enjoy food with the five senses. The program also hosts Parent-Child Healthy

Eating Nights. These events bring children and parents together to sample healthy food choices. The parents also receive valuable information on health trends, nutrition information and healthy eating habits in the home.

Fresh from the Farm is a resource to connect school districts with local farmers. Fresh from the Farm's procurement specialist works with local school districts to bring local, fresh produce to school lunch tables, and supports menu development and marketing and publicity strategy development.

In collaboration with the Oak Park River Forest High School Food Service, the Fresh from the Farm program has piloted healthy school lunch fundraisers to encourage the incorporation of healthy vegetables, fruits and grains in the Oak Park District 97 elementary and middle school lunch program.

The healthy pilot lunches were so well received by students and parents that the pilot has been incorporated into the district's school lunch program, which now incorporates healthy lunch offerings with whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables and occasional offerings of local and sustainably raised produce.

CSREES funded this research project through the Community Foods Project program. Through federal funding and leadership for research, education and extension programs, CSREES focuses on investing in science and solving critical issues impacting people's daily lives and the nation's future. For more information, visit www.csrees.usda.gov.

 By Stacy Kish, USDA CSREES

Garden Crusader Awards

This year Gardeners Supply will award more than \$15,000 in cash and products to individuals across the country who are using gardening to make a difference in their communities. The award categories are: education, urban renewal, restoration and feeding the hungry. To learn more about the awards, and how to nominate a gardener, visit www.gardeners.com and click on the community tab for an online application. You may also call 1-888-239-1553 or email crusader@gardeners.com. Application deadline is June 15, 2008.

PATHWAYS TO A GREENER ILLINOIS



2008 Master Gardener Conference

The Westin
Lombard, IL.
September 11, 12, 13

The Master Gardeners of the North Central region invite you to learn about environmentally friendly and ecologically sustainable methods for gardening through excellent classes and tours to “Green” destinations. Join us in Lombard for new gardening strategies and the opportunity to share project successes with fellow volunteers.

View all the conference details on our website at <http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/conference%202008.htm>

Master Gardener Digital Image Contest

Now is the time to start snapping pictures for the Illinois State Master Gardener Conference for 2008. From flowers to vegetables, from deer to wasps, Master Gardener projects and great garden spots in Illinois, find the category that best fits your image and submit it today!

There are four Categories of entries in the contest:

Plants: Images should include plants.

Wildlife: Images should include wildlife such as insects, mammals, reptiles, etc.

Master Gardeners at work: Images should include Master Gardener's or a product of their work.

Illinois Public Gardens: Images should display a shot of any Illinois public garden or natural area.

Master Gardeners can submit one image per category. Only one image per entrant will be selected to win. Only amateur photographers are allowed to enter and the original photographer must submit the entry. Photos must be taken between August 24, 2007 and August 20, 2008. Please do **not** have the date imprinted on your photo. Image size should be a minimum of 1200 x 800 pixels. No panoramic images allowed and images should be in their natural color. If individuals are close enough to recognize in a photo, then a photo release form must be submitted with the entry and include the signature from the subject.

All entries must be submitted electronically via e-mail to sarahnav@uiuc.edu before August 21, 2008. Images must be submitted as an email attachment in jpeg format. The **file name of the photo** must contain the Category of Entry (Plants, Wildlife, MGAW, IPG), the Entrant's Name, and County. Example: “**Plants, John Photographer, Kane County.jpg**”. Mail only one image per e-mail and the subject line must state “**Master Gardener Digital Image Contest.**” Entries not adhering to the above guidelines will not be considered. It is the sole responsibility of the entrant to make sure the image is received. The Master Gardener Digital Image Committee is not responsible for computer errors.

Entries will be judged prior to the Illinois State Master Gardener Convention by a panel of three judges. The top entry in each category will receive \$25. All entries will be displayed in a slide show at the Master Gardener Convention. The top 12 entries will be developed into a calendar. By submitting an entry you give permission for the digital image to be used for display, in a University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Calendar, and in a slide show at the Illinois State Master Gardener Convention.

Garden Tours a Highlight of Conference 2008

All Day Tours:

Chicago Center for Green Technology; Smart Home: Green and Wired at the Museum of Science and Industry and Lurie Gardens at Millennium Park-The tour begins at the model building of green technology for the nation, then heads to the museum to view the 2,500 square foot environmentally friendly “smart home” and its sustainable gardens. After lunch (included) at the museum, the tour will head to the world famous Lurie garden in Millennium Park.

Midwest Ground Covers; Country Garden Cuisines and Planter’s Palette– Roy Diblick will lead a tour of the gardens at Midwest Ground Covers highlighted by a visit to the conifer and rose gardens as well as the perennial trials. The second stop will feature an herbal lunch and a tour thru the herb gardens at Country Garden Cuisines. Lastly– shop till you drop at Planter’s Palette– annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs.

Half Day Tours:

Cantigny Park-A morning tour of the Idea Garden as well as a greenhouse/production tour.

Ball Horticultural Company– The second morning tour features the gardens at Ball and viewing the new varieties. Tour includes the All-American Selections trials and the Circle of Sustainable Growing program.

Private Gardens Tour– The first stop on this afternoon tour is Trudi Temples’ garden. Trudi’s garden has been featured in many gardening magazines. Second stop is the charming garden of Kim Ogdon with a Painted Lady Victorian home.

Green Earth Institute and Lyman Woods– This afternoon tour visits the organic farm at Green Earth Institute and then stops at Lyman Woods for a tour of the “Green Roof” and the oak woods, meadow and restored wetlands.

Disease and Insect Hands-on Workshop– Participants will provide their own transportation and meet at the Morton Arboretum for an afternoon workshop tour of the arboretum followed by hands-on work in the diagnostic lab.

A Wide Variety of Classes will be Featured

Three nationally known speakers top our impressive list of presenters:

Melinda Myers: will present our keynote address “Growing Environmentally Friendly Landscapes” plus a breakout session on “Small Space Gardening”.

Dan Heims: “Shade Gardening with New Perennials” and “Four Fabulous Genera: *Pulmonaria*, *Tiarella*, *Heuchera* and *Hercherella*”

Ellen Ogden: “Cooking from the Garden” and “They Don’t Grow That Anymore”

Other classes by our outstanding speakers include Clematis for Northern Gardens; Putting Your Garden to Bed, Homeowner from Hell; Garden Structures-Wattle Fences and Tuteurs; Tropicals; Terrariums (make and take); Saving the Earth with Native Landscaping; Nature Journaling; Designs for All Seasons; Facelift for Your Garden; Absolutely Beautiful Containers; Rain Gardens; Organic Lawn Care; Changes in IL Bird Communities; Urban Composting; Water Conservation; Enabling Garden Design; “Green Youth Farm: Growing Teenagers from the Ground Up” and much more. You can even follow the “Green Tract” for classes on sustainability issues and wise use of resources. Visit the conference website for bios and more class information.

We Need Your Help for our Silent Auction!

We need your help to make the 5th annual Silent auction a success. We are looking for donations of artwork, sculpture, paintings, book, garden tools, garden gifts etc. The profits from the auction benefit the State Master Gardener office for expenses such as the Imagine newsletter and manual revision. You may send your donation or bring it to the conference but please contact the Master Gardener office (modavid@uiuc.edu) BEFORE THE CONFERENCE to let them know what you will be donating.

Plan to Join us in Lombard, IL.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Westin Lombard at a conference rate of \$109/night for a King or double room. Call 888-627-9031 or book your room online by going to the conference website at: <http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/conference%202008.htm> If you call, please mention the “University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Conference” - to receive the discounted rate. Please remember that total conference costs are based on filling our reserved sleeping room block. Rates at nearby hotels are similar or higher than our conference rate at the Westin. Please help us keep costs at a minimum by staying at the conference hotel!

The conference registration materials will be posted on the website.

Online registration will open on June 15th. More details in the July-Aug Imagine.

PAR is a Success in Illinois

A recent article in the Quill and Trowel, the national newsletter for the Garden Writers Association, highlighted the Sangamon–Menard Unit Plant A Row Project. The Master Gardeners have been active with this program since 1999 and through their efforts 240,000 pounds of produce have been collected in the last eight years. In 2007 alone, 47,492 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables were collected for food pantries and soup kitchens in 21 counties in central Illinois. Master Gardeners have formed successful partnerships with the Central Illinois Foodbank, commercial growers, a business, a church and the nearby village of Chatham.

Volunteers recognized that PAR is not only about growing and harvesting produce but also about proper produce handling techniques and preventing food waste. PAR team members talked to food pantry representatives, timed harvest to food distribution hours to ensure freshness and provided Extension-approved information and recipes.

PAR volunteers made it convenient for commercial growers and individuals with too many fruit trees to share their bounty by providing a collection service for produce that might otherwise go to waste. Similarly, Master Gardeners regularly collect produce from vendors at the local Farmers Market at the end of the day each Saturday.

In 2006, PAR volunteers started a campaign with the local office of AIG Corporation, beginning with an informational brochure and free plants and seeds. Employees were asked to grow some extra vegetables and the volunteers collected the produce. The giveaways and collections provided opportunities to discuss horticultural successes and failures and interest people in gardening. 4,500 pounds of produce were donated for a pantry located near the business.

In 2007, Hope Presbyterian Church parishioners initiated a dedicated PAR garden. Young and old church volunteers planned, planted and harvested 550 pounds of fresh produce for a food pantry previously supplied only supplied clients with non-perishable items. Through the efforts of one Master Gardener, the Village of Chatham provided land for a dedicated PAR garden in 2005. The village also provided free water, seeds and supplies and a small budget. Annually this garden provides about 2,000 pounds of produce.

This successful project was a winner of a 2007 Illinois Master Gardener teamwork award.

Recognizing Volunteers for “Time served”

It is time to recognize those volunteers who have reached volunteer hours milestones with the addition of their 2007 hours. (Please note that the state office has only been collecting hours since 2000). Please join me in recognizing those volunteers who have reached the 1000, 2000, 3000 and 5000 hours service levels. Thank you to one and all!

Greater than 1000 hours:

Roy Baker
(Madison-St. Clair)

Bill Klopfenstein
(Madison-St. Clair)

John Beeftink (CBG)

Don Kniepkamp
(Madison-St. Clair)

Sue Benn (CBG)

Joe Knoll
(Madison-St. Clair)

Mary Borecki (CBG)

Paul Kochendorfer
(Lake)

Irene Bradley (CBG)

Anna Mattis (LaSalle)

Phyllis Brussel
(Champaign)

Constance McCarthy
(Winnebago)

Patt Caldwell (Carroll)

Bob Naugle
(Sangamon-Menard)

Diane Chesko (Kane)

Joe Pasteris (DeKalb)

Carol Cook
(Madison-St. Clair)

Mary Spiewak (Lake)

Sid File (Fayette)

Laurence Trower
(Moultrie-Douglas)

Donald Funk (CBG)

Mary Ucello (McHenry)

Debbie Johnson (Lake)

Barb Wych (Boone)

Greater than 2000 hours:

Howard Bressler (CBG)

Elaine Juhl (CBG)

Nancy Reise (CBG)

Barbara Savitt (CBG)

Charlyn Schweingruber (CBG)

Greater than 3000 hours:

Paul Barrett (LaSalle)

Diana Husband (Cook South Suburban)

Linda Smith (McLean)

Greater than 5,000 hours:

Janice Cook (CBG)

2009 Costa Rica trip

A botanical trip to Costa Rica is in the works for Illinois Master Gardeners in late January of 2009. The trip will be led by a botanical expert and will feature gardens, parks and natural areas in northern and central Costa Rica.

The final itinerary and prices will be available by mid-May and on the MG website at

www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/



National Pollinator Week

In 2007, National Pollinator Week was officially declared by the U.S. Senate in order to recognize the importance of pollinators to ecosystem health and agriculture and to support efforts to increase awareness about pollinators. The 2nd National Pollinator Week happens on June 22-28, 2008. Events occur nationally but are organized locally. The Pollinator Partnership (www.pollinator.org) helps local groups to organize events across the country.

Here, at the University of Illinois, we have the perfect venue to host National Pollinator Week: the new Pollinator Discovery Center, scheduled to open this summer! The goals for National Pollinator Week are to partner with the community to promote a better understanding of pollinators, to show people how they can monitor and conserve pollinators in our area, and to provide a continuing forum for pollinator awareness.

Proposed activities at the U of I include:

- Native Bee identification workshop
- "How to Use BeeSpotter"-the new bee monitoring site created at the U of I
- "How to Create a Pollinator-friendly Garden"
- Bumblebee nest box construction
- Pollinator art exhibit
- Great Sunflower Project promotion
- Pollinator scavenger hunt
- Colony collapse disorder lectures
- Pollinator/flower matching games/crafts

Visit the pollinator website (www.pollinator.org) for information about National Pollinator Week; specific information about pollinators and colony collapse disorder; Nature's Partners-a pollinators curriculum for youth grades 3-6; free factsheets to download and other educational resources on pollinators.

Perennial Plant Association Conference

Friday and Saturday, August 22 and 23rd
Madison Marriott West, Madison WI

Coming to Madison this August is an opportunity to attend a two-day gardening event, Exploring the World of Perennial Gardening put on by the Perennial Plant Association. This is the first central region "mini" symposium that PPA is offering and it is open to all gardeners.

August 22 starts off with educational classes:

Perennial Garden Management the Organic Way presented by Paul Tukey of People, Places and Plants from New Gloucester, Maine

Hortus Mustus presented by Jim Nau of Ball Seed Co.

Gardening with Conifers presented by Gary Whittenbaugh, past regional director with the American Conifer Society

Catch the Wave with Ornamental Grasses presented by

Dr. Mary Meyer, University of Minnesota Arboretum

Proven Perennials for Northern Gardens presented by

Richard Hawke from the Chicago Botanic Gardens

Bringing your Perennials Up Right presented by Dr.

Laura Deeter, Ohio State University

Activities on Saturday, August 23 are outside visiting some great garden stops in Madison plus a peek at three private gardens. Start the day at Madison Farmer's Market followed by two retail stops - America's Best Garden Center and the Flower Factory. After lunch (included) it is on to gardens not normally open to the public! Three private gardens will be open for you to view. Woodland gardens, native plantings, a rock garden, water features.... these gardens have it all. The best is left for last with a tour of Madison's own Olbrich Botanic Gardens.

The conference hotel is the Madison Marriott West, 1313 John Q. Hammons Drive. The conference rate is \$129 single/double occupancy. Reservations may be made directly with the hotel at #608-831-2000. Mention the Perennial Plant Association to receive the group rate. Reservations must be made by July 21, 2008 to receive the conference rate. Pre-registration is required. The two-day program cost is \$175.00. This includes Friday lectures, Saturday tour, lunches on both days and refreshment breaks. Single day registration is available. For more information contact the PPA at #614-771-8431, or email at ppa@perennialplant.org and request a brochure. You can also contact Martha Smith, PPA Central Region Director, University of Illinois Extension; phone #309-836-2363 or email smithma@uiuc.edu

Scientific Inquiry with Butterflies

Twelve Extension Educators have put together an exciting new curriculum for ages 8-11(3rd to 5th grade) on butterfly gardening. Learning activities allow students to explore the life cycle, habitat, anatomy, survival mechanisms, and migration routes of butterflies using the principles of scientific inquiry. Each chapter contains hands-on activities with reproducible student pages. The experiential lessons are aligned to Illinois science, math and social emotional learning standards. Raising butterfly larvae in the classroom or club is a highly engaging educational experience and is a core component of this course. Incorporating the lessons with a hands-on butterfly garden is also encouraged. This curriculum may be purchased for \$12 (not including the binder) from the 4-H Illinois Clover.

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