



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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Coordinators' Comments

For most of us, gardening provides a welcome sojourn into the natural world, a sanctuary that promises relief from our hectic lives. For many of us, gardening brings back pleasant memories of our own childhood experiences digging in the dirt with loved ones. Master Gardeners venture further and extend this personal relationship with gardening to teach others about the wonders of gardening, landscaping and ecology. Many Master Gardeners have witnessed first-hand the joys of gardening with children- the thrill of exploration, the awe of discovery and the awakening of young minds to the world of learning that gardening can offer.

Leaders of youth gardening programs have little doubt about the benefits kids reap from living-garden laboratories. Research into the effects of garden-based learning is just beginning to be released. Preliminary studies show that children who participate in these programs have higher self-esteem, improved attitudes, enhanced social skills, better investigative skills and an enhanced understanding of key life science concepts. When kids garden, their attitudes towards vegetables improve, as does their preference for fruit and vegetable snacks and they demonstrate increased awareness for environmental stewardship.

I recently attended the National School Gardening Symposium and learned first-hand about many of the youth gardening projects that are going on around the country. I would like to highlight for you some of the excellent programs and projects here in our own Illinois schools and communities. Master Gardeners play a key role in many of these programs as both leaders and volunteers. Although many projects are deserving of attention, these five 2002 Master Gardener team-work award winning projects are models for future youth programs in Illinois.

CEDA Head Start Gardens (Cook South Suburban Unit) – Nineteen Master Gardeners teamed up with the Community Economic Development Association of Cook County and community members from Chicago Heights, Country Club Hills, Ford Heights and Orland Park to create school gardens for pre-schoolers and their parents. Ground breaking efforts by these groups occurred as part of the local “Make A Difference Day” efforts.

DuPage Prevention Project After-School Program (DuPage County)- A group of nine Master Gardeners developed hands-on Horticulture activities for at-risk children in six local community resource centers. 130 children learned about plants and recycling and got to make their own terrariums to take home.

Red Ribbon Planting (Knox County)- Master Gardeners in conjunction with the Knox County Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education office, Bridgeway Prevention and Knox County C.A.R.E. have assisted with two landscaped areas at the public safety building. Local students plant and maintain these gardens to memorialize the death of a U.S. Drug Enforcement Special Agent who was killed in the line of duty.

Little Sprouts Garden (Stephenson County)- Year 2002 marks the seventh year for this garden project located at the Highland Community College. About 140 children, aged preschool to 6th grade learned the basics of gardening through hands-on learning activities each summer. This program began through the collaboration of Master Gardeners, the Freeport School District-Early Childhood Education Program, the college and the local YMCA. Each class has their own garden plot to tend and additional activities include a scarecrow contest, a sunflower growing contest and personal garden signs for the plots.

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Urban Youth Garden (Macon County)- Master Gardeners work with children from Heritage (a behavioral health center) each summer at this garden. The children meet in the garden once a week for the entire summer and plant and tend their vegetables and flowers. The children were allowed to take produce home and share it with their families.

Another popular youth program in Illinois is the Junior Master Gardener_{sm} Program which began as a pilot program in 2000 and is now being offered statewide.

Junior Master Gardener_{sm} Program- Youth educators, Master Gardeners, teachers and parents are all helping youth learn about Horticulture and gardening



through the JMG_{sm} program. To date, over 1,000 children from Illinois are participating in 25 registered groups. There are also volunteers using the curriculum to run one-day workshops or summer

camps for kids. The curriculum can be used in the classroom, in after-school clubs, 4-h clubs, home school settings, daycare settings, Park District programs and public gardens (to name a few!). Currently, manuals are available for 3-5 grade and 6-8 grade students. The JMG_{sm} program offers hands-on Horticulture activities both in the classroom and in a garden setting. Volunteerism and “giving back to the community” are also significant goals of this program. Kids can work toward the goal of becoming a certified Junior Master Gardener_{sm} or complete a smaller part of the curriculum. In my role as coordinator for this program, I am ready to assist you in implementation of your program or in offering leader trainings in your region.

These are only a few of the many opportunities available in Illinois for working with youth and gardening. I encourage you to consider similar programs in your area. Seek out fellow Master Gardeners or teachers in your communities and in other counties around the state. Although we all know that working with children can prove to be a challenge, I firmly believe that the personal rewards you receive will be bountiful.

 Monica David

Spotlight on.... McHenry County Master Gardeners

McHenry County, in Northern Illinois, is proud to report that their annual Gardenfest, held April 6th this year, was a record breaker! Over 400 attendees enjoyed 25 plus seminars and guest speaker Barbara Damrosch to kick off the gardening season. Fifty five of the group's 74 members volunteered their time and expertise to pull off a fabulous day of learning.

In May, long time coordinator Margie Bjorkman, retired her title (but not her commitment!) and another Master Gardener, Brenda Dahlfors, was hired in her stead.

The Demonstration Garden located at McHenry County College had a slow start with the late freeze this spring but is currently in its glory. Some of the new areas this year are a Tropicals bed and a Knot Garden. The garden is always open to the public, and there are special "Demo Days" every other Saturday, July thru September, when gardeners are on hand to answer questions and offer advice.

Work continues throughout the year at the "Growing Together" Garden in Harvard, IL. This was a teamwork award winner at the 2001 State Conference, and so far this year, hundreds of pounds of produce have been harvested for the local food pantries.

In addition to our daily office hours, other projects include the Plant A Row project which involves several members of the group at several sites in the county, a satellite program that was developed and organized by one of the gardeners to help promote our services, Scouting, County Fair judging, work with Seniors and Youth, and providing speakers to groups throughout the county.

Currently, we are looking forward to helping out with the State Conference in Rockford, our annual Tomato Taste Test, and then selecting a new class of Master Gardeners to start in January of 2003!

 Brenda Dahlfors

Chairwoman's Chat

As your new Master Gardener Advisory Committee chairperson, I want to, first of all, thank Dave Hinde for his excellent leadership of the Advisory Committee, having served as the first chair person for the past two years. His sense of humor added greatly to the somber business at hand. Under his and Denny Schrock's leadership the Advisory Committee was kept busy developing policies for the Master Gardener Program, the specific content objectives of the classes, and the yearly agreement.

Monica David and I will be taking their places hoping to "Go, where no man (or woman) has gone before."

At the Master Gardener State Conference in September in Rockford, many interesting topics have been planned to increase our knowledge and skills. The keynote address, "Ecology and Gardening," by Prairie Ecologist Neil Diboll struck me as an area seldom discussed in the Master Gardener training program. Although Neil Diboll will address the issue of ecology to the benefits of native landscaping, I would like to share some information that I have gained about ecology.

Ecology was a term that was first introduced to me many years ago when I was working on my masters in Parks and Recreation at Indiana University. The professor, during a lab took us outdoors to demonstrate ecology. He took a rope and made a circle in a field with a diameter of three feet. In that circle he asked us to point out what we saw. We saw ants carrying food to their ant hill. Next we saw a beetle eating an insect. In another area we saw a piece of old wood that was in a state of decay with all sorts of insects crawling all over the wood and moss beginning to grow. After that demonstration he took us to a pond where we observed fish eating flies and other insects, a great blue heron catching and eating fish, a large water snake eating a frog, and vegetation and algae growing, providing food for the fish. The principles of ecology became real for us.

- * Ecology is the study of the interchanging relationships of living things to each other and to their natural community and environment
- * An ecosystem describes any area in which you will find living organisms and non-living things working together, exchanging the materials of life and using them over and over again.

- * An ecosystem has four parts: non-living or inorganic substances of the environment, producers or food makers, living organisms—mostly animals, and decomposers, the organisms that break down tissues and excretions of other organisms to simpler forms.

A book was recommended by the ecology professor for us to read, *A Sand County Almanac* by Al Leopold. Leopold talked about a set of attitudes. He said "It is behaving in a way that fits logically into the natural scheme of nature. And, it is the proper use of the knowledge of and about the environment. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

A couple of years ago I attended a lecture in Champaign by Roger Swain, science editor of the *Horticulture* magazine and narrator for PBS "Victory Garden" sponsored by the Champaign County Master Gardeners. Roger suggested that gardening means using natural forces to advantage. It means gardening in a way that preserves the integrity of natural communities, that preserves more than the well-being of the gardener."

The third major influence was teaching a unit for the Junior Master Gardener_{sm} program in Bloomington. As I was looking through the teacher's manual, Chapter 3, "Ecology and Environmental Horticulture," the chapter described ecology as balance and interactions in nature. "In nature, there is a balance between all living things. We are all interdependent, and every living thing has a purpose. Although many people think bees just cause trouble, many plants could not live without bees and other pollinators...." Disturbing a natural balance such as this can cause problems. Sometimes people do not know that their actions affect the delicate balance between people and other living things.

To summarize ecology and our role in the scheme of the planet, I have paraphrased the statement in the Junior Master Gardener_{sm} Teacher/Leader Guide about what we should do.

"We need to realize that we have a responsibility to take care of the environment and this wonderful planet that is our home."

The motto for the Master Gardener Program is, "Helping Others Learn To Grow." One way to do that is to teach others to take care of the environment; teach organic means of gardening such as composting, mulching, encourage beneficial insects, and teach about IPM where herbicides and pesticides are used only as the last resort. When we can all learn to eat healthy foods, vigorously exercise while gardening, share our experiences with other gardeners, our quality of life will increase; we will become healthier and happier. ✍ Mariellen Griffith

2002 Outstanding Master Gardener Award Winners

Sue Amatangelo	Kane	James Kessler	Madison/St. Clair
Bonny Andrewson	Macon	Paul Klecha	McLean
Jim Barry	Adams/Brown	Richard Kress	Cook
Sydney Barton	Cook	Peggy Lackman	McHenry
Judy Batson	Macon	Mary Littlejohn	Winnebago
Lyle Clary	Macon	Sherry Martin	Macon
Jon Collins	Coles	Sandra McVicker-Rosenfield	Piatt
Holli Cook	Peoria	Ruth Melulis	Cook
Mike Cottle	Macon	Charlie Nixon	Piatt
Gordon Cummings	Kane	Gary Oxford	Crawford
Judy Day	Fulton	Mike Palmer	Champaign
David Day	Champaign	Jan Patterson	Cook
Carol DeJong	Cook/South Suburban	Jeri Pollock	Lake
Judy Diehl	Winnebago	Sandy Portincaso	Ogle
Donna Eversmann	McHenry	Wally Ryan	Macon
Patricia Gee	Cook/South Suburban	Dorothy Sagaser	Crawford
Gail Graunke	LaSalle	Ed Schuckert	McHenry
Catherine Harrington	Kane	Robert Scott	Piatt
Diane Hatfield	Cook/South Suburban	Linda Smith	McLean
Ruth Hawkins	Coles	Teresa Smith	Peoria
Helen Henry	Cook/North Suburban	Fern Stinson	Macon
Kathy Hummel	Coles	Carol Strelecky	Dupage
Lori Jensen	Macon	Ross Thompson	Macon
Ellen Kangas	Dupage	Celia Turner	Lake
Barbara Keagle	Macon	Colleen Vaughan	Piatt
George Keller	Cook/North Suburban	Pat Wagner	Adams/Brown

2002 Sustained Excellence Award Winners

Wayne Allen	Knox	Laurence Lewis	Cook
Harold "Bud" Burns	Whiteside	Barbara Loar	Peoria
Carolyn Burrell	Champaign	Mary Jo Murphy	Kane
Harry Clayton	Edgar	Cheryl Pettus	Champaign
Marge Evans	Macon	Carroll "Bud" Potts	Tazewell
Carol Gittler	Cook	Mary Scheider	Stephenson
Bill Heinrich	Lake	Patrice Swanson	Peoria
Phyllis Howley	Macon	Les Voorhees	Winnebago
Bette Hughes	Champaign	Lynn Webb	Peoria
Diana Husband	Cook/South Suburban	Ernest Young	Champaign
Bill Kramer	Winnebago		

2002 Teamwork Awards

Blooming Branches (Cook Chicago)

Blooming Branches is a partnership between Extension, the Chicago Botanic Garden and the Chicago Public Library. Master Gardeners offer gardening classes in ten Chicago Public libraries from April thru November. Over 5,000 people have attended these classes.

Fourth Annual Tri-County Gardening Day (Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford)

This event was a one-day intensive educational program with over 24 classes and 39 vendors. Greater than 500 people attended this program.

CEDA Head Start Gardens (Cook South Suburban)
Master Gardeners, community workers and volunteers created school gardens in 4 local communities.

Bel-wood Therapy Garden Project (Peoria)
With the help and expertise of Master Gardeners, four courtyards were transformed to places of beauty for the residents of this long-term care facility.

Herb Garden at the Historical Society (Macoupin)
An Herb Tea garden, Culinary garden, Fragrance garden and Ornamental Garden were created at this lovely site. During special events at the historical society, more than 10,000 people have an opportunity to learn more about herbs.

Mackinaw Beautification Program (Tazewell)
Master Gardeners have planted city welcome beds with over 5,000 tulips and various trees and shrubs; reactivated the local gardening club; and begun a tree planting program for all the village berms. Special classes on trees are given to local grade schoolers.

Horticultural Therapy Activities Program
(McLean) Residents of the Westminster Village were assisted by Master Gardeners in creating flower gardens for all the residents to enjoy. Educational gardening programs were presented and special Garden Days for planting were set-up by the volunteers.

Plant A Row (Cook/North Suburban)
A beautiful garden has been planted at the Friendship Park Conservatory where Master Gardeners plant, tend and harvest for the local food pantry.

Little Sprouts Garden (Stephenson)
This children's garden is a collaborative effort of many community groups including the local community college, YMCA and school district. It has served

as a focal point to educate the community about gardening and the efforts of Master Gardeners.

Urban Youth Garden (Macon)
These youth gardens are located at the county fairgrounds where local residents can enjoy the flowers and produce planted by the children.

Multi-County Master Gardener Newsletter
(LaSalle, Bureau, Kendall, Grundy, Marshall-Putnam)
Written by Master Gardeners, *From the Garden*, is distributed to five counties. The gardening information provides helpful topics for homeowners as well as Master Gardeners.

Plant A Row (McHenry)
Three Master Gardeners have planted two gardens, one at a local church and the other a community garden, to donate produce for the PAR campaign. These gardeners also organized and manned a booth at the Gardenfest to promote their project.

Horticulture Therapy (Lake)
This Lake County project was designed to work with residents of nursing homes. The program has expanded to include residents of the Ann Kiley Center, a state residential facility for individuals with mental and physical disabilities and the Allendale School for abused or neglected children.

Windmill Park (Whiteside)
The Windmill Park project was begun in 2000 with two goals. One was to beautify and enhance the windmill, a major tourist attraction for the area and a second was to keep the park maintenance to a minimum for the city of Fulton.

Monticello Beautification (Piatt)
A small but devoted group of Master Gardeners has designed, planted and maintained 12 garden locations around the city. In addition, this group has labeled all the trees in Burke's Park for an educational project that was funded by an Illinois Power, Bright Idea Grant.

DuPage Prevention Project After-School Program
(Dupage) This program helped 130 children in local community resource centers learn about plants and recycling.

Red Ribbon Plantings (Knox)
The Knox County Master Gardeners worked with the Knox County D.A.R.E., local students and other community groups to create a garden memorial to a drug enforcement agent killed in the line of duty.

2003 Master Gardener Calendar

The 2003 University of Illinois Extension calendar will be available for purchase in early September. This 12 month calendar boasts extraordinary full-color images by University of Illinois faculty as well as Illinois Master Gardeners. Seasonal gardening tips for each month; a listing of Illinois public gardens; and maps of Illinois hardiness zones, average spring and fall frost dates are also included in the calendar. Cost of the calendar is \$12.00. **Quantity discounts will only be available until October 1, 2002.** For a preview of the calendar, check the main page of our Master gardener website at <http://extension.uiuc.edu/mg/>. Order your calendars early by calling ITCS at 1-800-345-6087. Don't forget to save those slide pictures for next years' calendar!

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Edited by

Monica David

Interim Master Gardener Coordinator

University of Illinois Extension

1007 Plant Sciences Lab

1201 S. Dorner Drive

Urbana, IL. 61801

217-265-5256

FAX 217-244-3469

m-david1@uiuc.edu



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University of Illinois Master Gardener Office
Department of Natural Resources and
Environmental Sciences
1201 S. Dorner Drive
Urbana, IL. 61801

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