



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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Coordinators' Comments

The history of the Master Gardener program from 1972 to 2005 has been written by Mary Meyer, Minnesota Master Gardener Coordinator and Professor of Horticulture. Her article includes a synopsis of national program demographics and activities; training and management; program costs; program numbers and impact, as well as the future direction and challenges for the Master Gardener program. The article may be found in *Horticultural Reviews*, Volume 33, January 2007.

The 2007 Master Gardener training season is underway with 615 new interns at 16 locations plus the online training. The current system for the trainings was devised in 2000. The rotation system was designed for the best utilization of educational staff available to train MGs, along with the goal of having no trainee drive more than 1 hour to receive training. With minor modifications, this system has remained in place since 2001.

Recently, there has been an increasing demand for horticulture programming in many counties. Some units have requested additional training locations to increase their number of volunteers. The lack of Extension educator staff to do trainings and the need for educators & coordinators to support the volunteers once training is over has generated additional challenges. In essence, we are suffering growing pains in some parts of the state!

With input from the Extension Administration, I have established a task force to study the current & future training needs of the Illinois MG program. This committee is made up of educators, county & regional directors, MG coordinators & volunteers. The group will be seeking input from around the state & will then formulate suggestions on future training goals. Above all, the committee remains committed to the importance of providing high quality training as well as continued support for you and your programming efforts. I will keep you up to date as the committee works through this complex & challenging issue.

 Monica David, IL Master Gardener Coordinator

2007 Conference to Feature Three Internationally Known Speakers

Mark Sept 6 through the 8th on your calendar! The Master Gardeners from the WC region invite you to an outstanding state conference at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, IL. Excellent tours and an outstanding lineup of speakers has been planned.

The Keynote Speaker will be Roger B. Swain, "the man with the red suspenders", recognized by millions as the host of "*The Victory Garden*", television's longest running gardening show. For 15 years Roger planted and pruned, harvested and chatted with PBS viewers across the country. More recently, he has been co-hosting *People, Places and Plants*, a show celebrating New England gardens and gardener's and featuring Roger's commentary, "Food for Thought". Since 1978 readers have been enjoying Roger's essays and articles in *Horticulture* magazine as well as his five books: [Earthly Pleasures](#), [Field Days](#), [The Practical Gardener](#), [Saving Graces](#) and [Groundwork](#). When he is not editing *Horticulture*, filming his TV series or meeting gardeners across the country, Roger can be found at work in the orchard and gardens of his New Hampshire farm. Roger's keynote address- "Planting Villages: How Gardens Make Good Neighbors" is sure to please everyone.

Steven Still, executive director of the Perennial Plant Association since 1984 and professor emeritus of Landscape Horticulture at Ohio State University will present a break-out session on new perennials and one on "Hot Picks". Dr Still is the author of the popular "Manual of Herbaceous Ornamental Plants" found on many Master Gardener's bookshelves.

Last but certainly not least, Jane Taylor, Internationally recognized expert on Children's Gardening will present two talks at the conference. Jane was the curator of the Michigan State Children's garden as well as designing numerous other children's gardens such as the Hershey Children's garden in Hershey, PA.

Watch the next issue for more details on conference 2007!

Important Dates

March 17: McDonough County Gardener's Day, Western Illinois University Student Union, Macomb, IL. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$30. Lots of educational sessions and vendors. Sponsored by the McDonough County Master Gardeners. 309-837-3939.

March 24: Gardener's Big Day, Spoon River College's Canton Campus, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The day begins with keynote speaker Dave Robson talking on "30 Things You Should be Growing". Breakout sessions include "Not Your Grandma's Annuals"; Houseplant Propagation; "The Midas Touch", Native Illinois Prairie Grasses and Designing a Rain Garden. Vendor displays and door prizes included. Fee is \$22 and includes lunch, keynote, break-out sessions, vendor displays and door prizes. Sponsored by the Fulton County Master Gardeners, Spoon River College and the Spoon River Garden Club. 309-647-6260 or 309-833-6031.

March 24: Potpourri of Gardening, Lutheran School Association, 2001 E. Mound Rd., Decatur, IL. A broad range of topics covered by local and regional specialists includes: Effective Use of Microclimates in the Garden; Earth Boxes; Home Vegetable Gardening; Attracting Wildlife to the Urban Garden and several more. Participants will be able to attend three 45-minute sessions. Cost is \$10 or \$12 at the door. Sponsored by the Macon County Master Gardeners. 217-877-6042

March 31: Dig into Spring, Sponsored by the Knox County Master Gardeners. 309-342-5108.

April 11: Annual Spring Garden Seminar, Celebrations 150 Banquet Hall, Utica, IL. 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sessions include: Colorful Shrubs & Small Trees for the 4 Seasons; Deciduous Tree Diseases; Soil & Rain Gardens and Complete Container Gardens. Cost is \$25 and includes continental breakfast and lunch. Sponsored by the LaSalle County Master Gardeners. 815-433-0707.

April 12: Annual Garden Seminar, Edgar County 4-H Fairgrounds, Paris, IL. Sponsored by the Edgar County Master Gardeners. 217-465-8585.

April 23-24: Cincinnati Flower Show Trip. The trip includes the flower show, stops at Krohn Conservatory with over 3,500 plant species and Weberdings Carvings, home to master carvers of carousel animals, garden carvings and statutes. Overnight accommodations at the Country Inn and Suites in Wilder, KY. Cost is \$200/person and includes lodging, admission costs, bus

transportation, 1 lunch and 1 dinner. Sponsored by the McLean County Master Gardeners. Contact Carol Killian 309-365-8561 or killian@dtmspeed.net.

April 28: Green and Growing Fair, Garfield Park Conservatory, 300 N. Central Park Ave., Chicago. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The day features activities for adults and children, vendors, a silent auction, hands-on demos include pruning, worm composting, tree I.D., Earth Boxes, container planting and much more. For a \$5 fee, participants may attend a lecture on Cool Season Crops or "In with the New". Parking and admission free. Sponsored by GreenNet and University of Illinois Extension. www.GreenNetChicago.org

May 2-5: International Master Gardener Conference, Peabody Hotel, Little Rock, Arkansas. Final registration deadline is April 1, 2007. <http://mg2007.uaex.edu>

September 6-8: Illinois Master Gardener Conference, Crowne Plaza, Springfield, IL.

Deadline for submission of articles for the next issue is April 15, 2007.

Registration Open for Costa Rica Trip



The itinerary is complete for a January 21-31st, 2008 Horticulture tour to Costa Rica. Join Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator Monica David and a Costa Rican Botanist on this 11 day program to visit private gardens, agricultural production locations, and native habitats. Highlights include Ms. Ileana Teran's (founder of Save Costa Rica's Orchids) private garden; La Paz Waterfalls and hummingbird gardens; CATIE— a top tropical research center with greenhouses, orchards, forest plantings, & experimental plots; a coffee plantation in the Dota region; the Wilson Botanical Garden with over 2,000 native species including palms, ferns, aroids, bromeliads and heliconias; the Esquinas Rainforest lodge and trails; Casa Orquideas Botanic Garden and an ecolodge near the ocean set amidst virgin rainforest and privately protected rainforest. The tour price of \$3,195 includes round trip airfare from Chicago, 10 nights lodging, all meals, private bus transportation, botanist guide, and all admission fees. The full itinerary may be found on the MG website— www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg
Contact Mary Kroening 573-881-6316 or Deb Till 573-445-3975 for more information.

Spotlight on Fulton County Master Gardeners

Planting The Past and Promoting the Future

2006 was a great year for the Fulton County Master Gardeners. Several key projects 'took root' with this active and enthusiastic group. These Master Gardener's coordinated efforts on a beautification project at Jones Park located in the heart of Canton, Illinois creating a lovely spot.

Working as a team, the Master Gardener's 22 members designed, installed, and maintained traditional historical plantings at the Dickson Mounds Indian Garden at Dickson Mounds, a branch of the Illinois State Museum, in rural Lewistown, IL.

"Working at the Indian Garden has been a very gratifying experience" states Master Gardener Jo Ann Block, 9 year member. Block says that in addition to the Master Gardeners, the garden periodically utilizes the efforts of Jr. Master Gardener's, 4-H'er's, and Students from nearby New Horizons School and Canton High School. Many of these students have never gardened in their lives.

Julie Lerczak, Public Programs Coordinator at Dickson Mounds Museum, shares the memory of a student who enjoyed the experience so much she returned to help at the garden after school was out, returning independently to get seeds to plant her own garden the following season. "Besides camaraderie and partnering together with the Master Gardeners, the gratifying thing is that Dickson Mounds gets over 30,000 visitors from across the nation and international places. Visitors have the story of the Indian garden related to them and are fascinated" says Lerczak. Although called an Indian Garden, Lerczak thinks that this should be called "A Garden of Ideas for People" since she often receives calls from representatives of schools and museums across the country that use this project to initiate Indian gardens in their own area.

In a continued effort to share information, the Fulton County Master Gardeners provided youngsters with helpful, yet positive critiques of their horticulture projects in both Fulton & Mason Counties, thereby promoting an interest in horticulture to local youth. Gardening for youth was conducted for school groups, reaching over 350 youth. What promise this holds!

Gardener's Big Day is an annual event which Master Gardener's help facilitate and enjoy being a part of. In

2006, 60 gardeners from the area learned about topics from hummingbirds to weeds. Elizabeth Champlin, an eleven year Master Gardener, presented a workshop on "Plants of the Bible". Gardeners Big Day is Co-sponsored by University of Illinois Extension—Fulton County, Spoon River College, Fulton County Garden Club, and Master Gardeners. This is a great combined effort and this year's event will be held on March 24, 2007.

At present, a team of Master Gardeners is working with a local school in combining the efforts of students, parents, and staff to re vamp and beautify an overlooked and overgrown courtyard area. The resulting teamwork helps to grow a stronger environment and community in many ways.

Our Fulton County Master Gardeners have a LOT of fun together, whether attending meetings and workshops, continuing education through telenets, planning an event, or working on a project. The interaction of Master Gardeners with civic, educational, and community groups promotes education, positive programming, and serves to "Help Others Learn to Grow".

 Julia Pryor, MG Program Coordinator

Dragon Lilies Honored as JMG_{sm} Group of the Month

The Jefferson County Junior Master Gardeners_{sm}, The Dragon Lilies, have been honored as the National JMG_{sm} group for February 2007. Insects being their favorite topic, they organized a butterfly release at the MG butterfly garden. Other activities included making gift pot-pourri bowls from flowers hand collected from over 30 different plants.

As the garden season started to wind down last year, the Dragon Lilies designed a "Spooky Garden Walk" for the community. They also made fruit baskets and hand delivered them to elderly residents.

The group was formed in July, 2006 and meets two Saturdays a month for 5 hours. The kids are 4th to 6th graders and all have earned recognition pins for Level I—Chapters 1 thru 4. They have exciting plans for the months ahead, including designing a wildlife habitat garden. They are currently sowing seeds in containers to plant in the habitat. Later this year, the group will travel to the Shawnee National Forest where they will adopt a hummingbird from the Illinois Audubon Society.



Tree and Shrub Handbook from the Morton Arboretum

A Book Review

The Morton Arboretum in Lisle, IL. (25 miles west of Chicago), is one of the premier horticultural sites in the United States, with a research program among the largest in the world. Their specimens include more than 3,000 different kinds of trees, shrubs and vines.

One of the highly touted arboretum publications, Tree and Shrub Handbook, now in its second edition, provides extensive well-researched information on an array of topics. For example, one section covers invasive plants. *Celastrus orbiculatus* (Oriental Bittersweet), a twining vine that is often used in floral arrangements, flourishes in open areas and roadsides where it aggressively competes for water, nutrients and sunlight. Birds are the primary purveyor of seeds but the plant spreads vigorously through suckers. The section on invasives gives details on how to identify this plant with the aid of color photographs.

Among the handbook's subjects: a list of plants not favored by deer; small ornamental trees for the home landscape with recommended cultivars and cultural suggestions; crabapples for the home landscape with 70 choices, each with indicated levels of disease resistance; small, intermediate and large trees and shrubs that tolerate wet sites; and Midwestern small and large native shrubs that attract birds.

The full-color handbook offers cultural information with specific seasonal data for each section. Winter in the Midwest can produce mounds of snow. Consequently, safety becomes an issue. Snow removal from roadways and sidewalks can play havoc with many trees and shrubs in the landscape. Sodium chloride in deicing salts used in snow removal may desiccate some plants. The handbook lists several trees and shrubs that are ideal for high salt areas such as a driveway or roadway and also offers suggestions to diminish the impact of salt. Of four ash trees planted throughout the Midwest, three have high degrees of salt tolerance and may be planted in highly exposed areas. They are *Fraxinus americana* (white), *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* (green) and *Fraxinus excelsior* (European). *Fraxinus quadrangulata* (blue) has only a moderate degree of salt tolerance and should be planted in low salt areas or where snow removal is not a priority.

Horticultural care tips in the book range from choosing an arborist to starting a basic landscape design to pruning a deciduous shrub.

For those Master Gardeners throughout Illinois who have completed advanced training in Tree Identification, this manual will prove invaluable. The 3 ring binder format allows addition of sheets for notes and a pocket for foliage specimens if desired. The manual sells for \$50 plus shipping and handling (about \$6). Call the Arboretum at 630-719-2454.

 Cheryl Pettus, Champaign County Master Gardener

Congratulations to the 2006 Graduates- Advanced Training in Tree Identification

Congratulations to the following Master gardeners who completed 24+ hours of hands-on learning last summer and fall. These volunteers used typical characteristics of buds, leaves, stems, habit, size and more to learn over 70 Illinois trees.



Champaign County: Martha Baddour, Libby Barkan, Margaret Hill, Carol McClure, Heather Miller, Marge Perry, Cheryl Pettus, Donna Skaggs, Bill Wasson, Kathleen Zanotti

Coles County: Lowell Gillespie, John Reardon, Jacqueline Record

Iroquois County: Teresa Johnson, Beth McMillen

Livingston County: Delores Woodburn

Macoupin County: Jeanette Baker, Carol Rhoads, Delbert Walk

McLean County: Candice Armstrong, Penny Feehan, Karen Gottlieb, Kay Henrichs

Moultrie-Douglas Unit: Maxi Fitzjarrald

Piatt County: Tina Wismer

Sangamon-Menard Unit: Thomas Hiler

Shelby County: Susan Holland, Fern Horn, Kathy Isley, Jeanne Schodtler, Brenda Walden

A Thank You from Louisiana MGs

Excerpts from Bob Souvestre's (Louisiana Master Gardener Coordinator) letter:

"It has been 17 months since the first of two hurricanes devastated our state leaving in their paths utter destruction and thousand upon thousands without shelter and basic needs. Much has improved and I'm proud to say that Master Gardeners played an important role in this recovery process. This was made possible by the generosity that we received from so many of you through-out the country.

Individual Master Gardeners, Master Gardener Associations, and Master Gardener Extension programs from 23 states provided assistance, both financial and in-kind, to support our Louisiana MG programs in 13 parishes.

New Jersey, West Virginia, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Virginia, Louisiana, New York, Indiana, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Maryland, Washington, Alabama, Massachusetts, California, Oregon, Minnesota, N. Carolina, Rhode Island, Colorado, Kansas and S. Carolina contributed \$11,143.20., hundreds of gardening publications to restock parish MG libraries, personal travel to Louisiana and hands-on volunteerism, and personalized gardening gloves for MGs and youth volunteers.

Donations were used to assist with a variety of community needs including:

- * New Orleans Botanical Garden 'Pelican Greenhouse' restoration
- * Animal Vegetable Garden at Audubon Zoo
- * propagation and production of herbaceous & woody landscape materials and fruit trees for reestablishing domestic landscapes
- * promoting a seminar series on hurricane damage landscape recovery
- * propagating 48 rose cultivars to reestablish the botanical garden rose garden
- * Darcy Park tree replacement
- * Butterfly Dome in Grand Isle
- * landscaping of Habitat for Humanity homes for displaced citizens;
- * restoring school landscapes and demo gardens
- * producing educational workshops and printed materials on how to re-landscape once shaded areas that now receive sun
- * Lafreniere Park Recovery and Education Project
- * Woodmere Elementary Outdoor Classroom
- * Common Ground Community Garden
- * Jean Lafitte Nature Study Park restoration

Please know that each and every one of the 1,420 Louisiana MGs thank you for all that you have done and the impact it has made on their lives and that of their fellow citizens and communities."

Chairperson's Chat

What can **YOU** do about the National Tree Deficit? Last fall I mentioned the National Tree Deficit in my 'Chairperson's Chat'. I glossed over it rather quickly and knew that as astute Master Gardeners you would refer to the website to learn more (<http://www.americanforests.org>).

With the aid of satellite imagery, cover provided by tree canopy can be observed and measured. It has been observed that tree canopy, especially over urban and suburban areas is drastically decreasing. The benefits of trees in areas of human population include cooling; reduction in pollution from noise, wind and glare; reduction in runoff and subsequent water pollution; increased wildlife habitat; and positive benefits to human health such as reducing blood pressure and stress. We benefit '**tree**mendously' from living in areas with lots of trees.

Based on these benefits the American Forests Organization, in conjunction with local foresters, has established base-lines for desired tree canopy cover. For urban areas it is 25% cover; suburban areas 60%; and commercial areas 15%. Using these guidelines and a whole lot of satellite images (www.earth.goggle.com), we have a significant tree deficit in this country somewhere around 635 billion trees.

So what can you do?

- Plant a tree.
- Give a tree as a gift (as often as possible).
- Survey your local tree canopy and share your findings in a newspaper column.
- Do a demographic survey of local trees (age, health, and species) and report those findings to local officials. Diversity counts when it comes to trees.
- Join your local tree board or start a local tree board.
- Develop a tree walk and make a brochure to highlight historic or unique trees.
- Start a tree club to acknowledge, enhance and support local tree populations.
- Hold a summer camp for tree huggers.
- Get involved with the National Junior Horticulture Association (www.njha.org/projects.html) and pull together a team of youngsters to enter the tree identification competition. (They will never think about trees the same again). Put together a display that demonstrates the dimensions of some of Illinois most colossal trees like the Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) in Sangamon County. It has a circumference of 18 ft. and a crown spread of 90 ft. How many people fit inside a circle that big? How many birds, mammals and insects live in that tree? What was Illinois like when that tree sprouted?

Get your community involved. Start with your block, your neighborhood, then your subdivision, town, township, legislative district, and the whole state.

Keep looking up!  Barbara Bates, Kane County

Master Gardener Apparel for Sale

This newsletter includes a color sell sheet and order blank for the 2007 apparel. Please complete your order form and return it with your check (payable to the University of Illinois) to your local extension office. Credit cards cannot be accepted.

Check with your local Master Gardener Coordinator for his/her deadline for submitting orders to the unit office.

Do not send orders directly to the state office.

The total price includes shipping to your local Extension office. Select your items carefully as all sales are final. **Please pick up your merchandise promptly after you are notified that the merchandise has arrived in your office. We will not be responsible for replacing damaged or missing apparel after July 15th, 2007.**

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