



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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July-August 2009

Coordinators Comments

By the time you receive your September-October issue of the *Imagine*, horticulture at the University of Illinois will no longer be a part of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences. Horticulture faculty and staff are joining with Crop Sciences to form a new department. Although the name for this new group has yet to be finalized, it will most likely be called the Department of Plant Sciences or the Department of Crop and Horticultural Sciences. Most of the Horticulture, Crop Sciences, and IPM Extension staff will be housed in this new department.

Master Gardeners across the country are leading the charge in educating the public about home gardening and feeding the hungry. One program started by a Master Gardener is called Ample Harvest. The Ample Harvest is promoting donation of excess produce from home gardens to local food pantries. The organization is also starting a national registry of all food banks to urge the public to donate produce. For more information visit info@AmpleHarvest.org.

Another exciting development is occurring in Washington D.C. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack has charged the USDA to begin a "Peoples Garden" on the mall in Washington, in front of the USDA buildings. This garden will be a demonstration garden open for the public. It has begun with plantings of vegetables and will expand to show proper landscaping and sustainable gardening techniques. Master Gardeners from the collar states (Maryland and Virginia as well as D.C) will play a major role in the establishment of this garden as well as in the educational programs given in the garden. Signage will be added later with information about Master Gardener programs throughout the United States. USDA employees are excited to be on board to assist with planting and maintaining these gardens. A number of the employees (including our national program leader Bill Hoffman) are also planning on enrolling in Master Gardener training. Stay tuned for exciting updates !

✍️ Monica David, Illinois MG Coordinator

Conference 2009 Registration Underway

Registration for the 2009 Master Gardener conference, "Nurture Nature, Nurture You" began on June 15th. Early bird registration for Master Gardeners, 1 adult guest and staff is from June 15th to July 13. On July 14th, registration prices increase and we will open the registration to the public. Registration will only be available online this year at web.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/events. We have reserved sleeping rooms at three nearby hotels. Call to reserve your room before 8-26 to receive the conference rate. See the conference brochure in this issue.

Silent Auction

We need your help to make the 6th annual Master Gardener Silent Auction a success. We are looking for donations of artwork, sculpture, paintings, books, garden tools, garden gifts etc. The auction will be held at the Master Gardener conference in Effingham. Cash or checks will be accepted— sorry but we cannot accept credit cards. The profits from the auction benefit the State Master Gardener office for expenses such as the new Master Gardener manual. You may send your donation or bring it to the conference. Please contact Sharon Kuhns, slkuhns@illinois.edu at the Coles 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, Insects, 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. All entries must be submitted electronically via e-mail to modavid@illinois.edu before August 11, 2009. 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 and exhibit at the conference.

Gardens of France- Spring 2010

If you dream of spending spring in France— visiting gardens on the French Riviera, sitting in a sidewalk café in Provence and viewing extraordinary gardens in the Loire Valley— then this garden trip is for you! Registration is open to anyone with an interest in gardens, with preference given to Illinois Master Gardeners. The trip runs April 30th to May 11, 2010.

The trip begins in Nice on the French Riviera and at the Princess Grace Rose Garden in Fontvieille, Monaco where over 4,000 roses bloom year round. Then on to the Serre de la Madone garden in Menton, France which was created by Lawrence Johnston and sits on a hillside with ancient olive trees and exotic plants. The next stop is Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild overlooking the Mediterranean and with a luxurious Italian villa and gardens. Stops at the Laboratory Factory of Fragonard where perfumes and soaps are made as well as the medieval village of Eze. Here, perched on a rocky peak above the city is the Jardin Exotique with its world renowned collection of succulents and cactus. The next day, we will have time to enjoy the lovely city of Aix de Provence with a cooking demo for our lunch. Afterward it is on to Arles for leisure time at the daily market and then to Avignon to explore the City of Popes.

The group leaves southern France by way of the bullet train to Paris. The first garden we visit in the Loire Valley is Chateau Chenonceaux created by Henri II's mistress Diane de Poitiers and his wife Catherine de Medici. The castle is built on the River Cher, where the unique beauty of its architecture reflects on the water. The garden is a masterpiece of shrubs, trees and fountains with over 40,000 flowers planted annually. Subsequently, we will visit Chateau Villandry— an imaginative re-creation of a 16th century Renaissance Garden. No trip to France is complete without a visit to Monet's masterpiece— Giverny. Near the house is a flower and vegetable garden awash in brilliant colors. The second garden has the beautiful pond and the Japanese bridge seen in Monet's paintings. The last garden on the tour is Chateau Chantilly. The French garden with its magnificent fountains and ponds was designed by Andre Le Notre who designed the gardens at Versailles. The trip concludes with a morning city tour and then free time to explore Paris.

Check the website for the final itinerary: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/events>. The cost of the trip is \$3549/person land plus \$889.50 group air. **There has been tremendous interest in this trip— so don't delay your decision! First come-first served. You must send in the booking form and deposit to hold your spot!** Contact Robyn (269-629-9248 or rgulstrom@comcast.net) for details and to reserve a spot

Master Gardener Advisory Committee Openings

The state Master Gardener advisory committee is looking for two Master Gardener volunteers— one each from the Southern and NW 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 telenet. 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 or NW region), talk to your local coordinator. There is an application form on the website at web.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.

National Children and Youth Garden Symposium

The American Horticultural Society and the Cleveland Botanical Garden are hosting the 17th annual National Children and Youth Garden Symposium on July 23-25th. The conference features keynote Will Allen, founder and CEO of Growing Power. Growing Power Inc. engages teenagers and young adults through workshops and internships to produce healthy foods for their communities. The conference also features *Seedfolks*, a theatrical production about a community garden in a diverse Cleveland neighborhood. Included in the conference registration are numerous breakout sessions, garden explorations at the Hershey Children's Garden, Cleveland Botanical Garden, Green Corps Learning Garden and a pre-symposium workshop on how to enliven a space with environmental art. Lodging is available at a university residence hall and the Glidden House Inn. For a full listing of classes, the conference itinerary and to register online go to www.ahs.org.

Student-run Farm to Supply Produce to Dining Halls

A student-run farm that went into production on campus this spring will put locally grown, fresh vegetables and fruits on the table for students and other people who eat in campus dining halls.

A cooperative venture of the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, the Horticulture Club and Students for Environmental Concerns, the farm will not only supply fresh produce for campus diners, it will also contribute to campus sustainability issues by reducing carbon emissions associated with transporting fresh produce from distant farms to campus. The farm also provides a laboratory for students to learn about fruit and vegetable farming and for researchers to investigate sustainable agriculture technology.

The horticulture program allocated two acres of farmland at the southern end of campus near the South Farms expansion for the student farms inaugural growing season, but that may increase to 5 acres next year and to 10 acres for the third year if the project is successful.

A recent graduate has been hired as the interim farm manager and two student interns will help harvest crops throughout the summer. Student volunteers have been active in the planting and harvesting and the farm hopes to have more students involved in the fall harvest. For example at this writing, 250 pounds of lettuce was picked in one day last week and sent to the residence halls. If this seasons harvest exceeds the needs of dining halls on campus, food will be given to local food banks.

The long term goal for the farm is to also produce food for delivery to other universities. The farm hopes to become self-sufficient and to sell enough produce at market rates to dining services to fund the operation. The option of canning food to extend the season is being explored. The leaders of this project envision selling produce under a university-branded label a few years from now.

The farm will extend the growing season by use of three hoop houses. It will also use low-impact production systems— minimizing pesticide usage and using natural fertilizers such as cover crops and compost.

The farms' first year of operations is being funded by a \$50,000 grant from the Student Sustainability Committee, which spends the \$5 per semester fee paid by students to support eco-friendly projects on campus.

To view an online video about the student farm visit: <http://vimeo.com/4964119>.

Master Gardener Retention Study

Thanks to the almost 700 Master Gardeners who participated in the study of Master Gardener retention in Illinois this past winter and spring. Kristin Huls, Hancock County Master Gardener Coordinator completed this survey as part of her thesis to meet her Master Degree requirements. A summary of her results follows.

Demographics of Respondents:

- 78% female, 22% male
- Age range between 26-89 (mean age of 59.74 years)
- Ethnicity: 95.7% White, 1.5% Black or African American, 1.2% Other, .6% Asian, .6% Hispanic or Latino, .4% American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Residence: 30% city, 25% rural area or small town, 18% medium town, 18% suburb, 8% farm, 1% other

Master Gardener Program Involvement: 71% Active, 11% Inactive, 8% Trainees, 7% Interns, 3% Alumni

Top Reasons for Joining MG Program (% who agreed or strongly agreed):

- 90% Enhance knowledge of gardening & horticulture
- 84% Meet others who share interest in gardening & horticulture
- 70% Help others learn about gardening & horticulture
- 67% Increase their community involvement
- 58% Program has reputation for exceptional curriculum

Top Reasons for Choosing to Remain Active:

- 95% Enhance knowledge of gardening & horticulture
- 89% Personal sense of accomplishment
- 88% Network with other Master Gardeners
- 85% Enjoy helping others learn about gardening & horticulture
- 83% Opportunity to serve their community & volunteer

Top Reasons for Choosing Not to Remain Active:

- 64% Personal commitments (work, family life, medical reasons)
- 54% Did not have enough time to dedicate to program
- 26% Not enough volunteer activities to keep me interested
- 24% The program did not meet personal expectations
- 15% Fulfillment of volunteer obligation to program

Suggestions for Improvement in the Program:

- Improve communication – Make sure all MGs are informed, make special effort for personalized communication.
- Utilize technology – Make information available online (registrations, car pools, etc.)
- Provide more educational opportunities – advanced training, “green” training opportunities
- Offer volunteer opportunities for the full-time worker (weekends, evenings, alternative methods)
- Examine MG requirements– are they consistent across the state?

Home, Yard and Garden Pest Newsletter

One of the best ways to stay current with insect, weed and disease problems in Illinois is to read the Home, Yard and Garden Pest Newsletter. This publication is available from mid-April through October of each year. The newsletter is written by University of Illinois specialists in Horticulture, Weeds, Plant Pathology and Entomology. Descriptions of current pest problems and suggested management options are given. The publication is now free-access i.e. there are no subscription costs. It is a web-access newsletter and no paper subscriptions are available. You may sign-up online to receive an email notification when the next issue has been posted. Both current and archived issues from previous years are available. The webmaster is working on incorporating a search function for the site.

The newsletter is now located at <http://hyg.ipm.illinois.edu>

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Visit the Illinois Master Gardener website: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/mg>



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