



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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Coordinators Comments

The year 2010 marks the 35th anniversary of the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program. From our beginnings in Will and DuPage counties in 1975, we have "grown" in many different ways. In 2001 we began recording hours at the state level and 80,441 hours were reported for a value of \$1.58 million. In 2009, 180,990 volunteer hours were given by over 3,500 Illinois Master Gardeners for a value of \$3.67 million. At the Upper Midwest Master Gardener conference in Rockford on September 16-18 we plan to celebrate both our award winners and our program accomplishments at our 35th anniversary party. Hope you were able to register to join us!

2010 has been a hard year for Extension staff and supporters and you are all aware of the reorganization process which is underway. We still are awaiting the appointments of both unit directors and educators. However, all is certainly not doom and gloom. We were very fortunate to have 18 horticulture educator positions reinstated in the new reorganization. Other areas of Extension did not fare as well as horticulture—a testament to the value the public places on the work you are doing in your communities. I truly believe that this came about because both Master Gardeners and citizens came to the public meetings and expressed support for horticulture and the Master Gardener program. Thanks to all of you who took the time to attend the meetings or send emails to administration.

When the dust settles on the reorganization sometime in 2011, there will be visible changes in U of I Extension. Funding issues will not be solved in the near future and therefore we must be prudent in our choices of how we spend our money and what type of programming we deliver. This is important for our staff but equally important for the projects Master Gardeners work on. **The programs that you deliver in the future must have high impact, must be relevant to citizen needs, must serve priority audiences and must meet Extension program initiatives.** The five program initiatives identified by Extension (which

meet national NIFA priorities as well) are: 1. energy and environmental stewardship 2. food safety and security 3. economic development and workforce preparedness 4. family health, financial security and wellness and 5. youth development. Can you visualize how your projects fit into these categories? Perhaps your group needs to re-evaluate some of the projects your group has "always done" and develop new ideas or revamp an existing project to fit the new goals. The example that always comes to my mind is the one of downtown or fairground beautification that was the mainstay of the program ten years ago when I first came to Extension. Granted these projects may be good marketing for your program but are they also serving an educational role? Can you update your beautification projects to promote youth involvement, demonstrate how to grow and eat healthy food, provide sustainable landscapes etc.? The types of projects that I would like the counties to pursue with the new Extension initiatives are ones such as native or low water use plant selection, rain barrel projects, education on invasives, composting projects, pot recycling, working with youth on gardening education, community gardens and teaching youth and adults how to grow healthy fruits and vegetables to combat obesity. These are the pressing issues that we must address in our programming and this is also where grant funding can be secured.

My challenge to all Illinois Master Gardeners is to work with staff members and evaluate your existing projects. Add educational elements to meet the new Extension initiatives or perhaps consider new types of programs which do. I believe that if we adapt our projects to meet community and Extensions priorities, this program will enjoy another 35 years of "Helping Others Learn to Grow"

 Monica David, Master Gardener Coordinator

2010 Silent Auction

There is still time to submit your items before the Upper Midwest Master Gardener conference in Rockford September 16-18. You may send your donation or bring it to the conference. Please contact Nikki Keltner nkeltner@illinois.edu BEFORE THE CONFERENCE to let her know what you will be donating.

Junior Master Gardener® Updates

New Online JMG Group Registration !

This fall JMG will be offering an easier way for JMG groups in each state to register. The new system will allow groups to register online and print registration and completion certificates (branded with our state Extension logo). Visit <http://jmg.4honline.com> to register your group.

2010 JMG Specialist Training October 5-7

The 2010 JMG Specialist Training Conference is a "train-the-trainer" conference that will be hosted through Alabama Cooperative Extension at Aldrige Botanical Gardens. This dynamic and intensive 2 1/2 day training conference is designed for those coordinating or supporting JMG programs at the local, county, and regional level.



This conference will serve to equip and empower attendees

with a great familiarity with the JMG program, JMG curricula and will provide the tools to grow sustainable JMG programs. In addition to a comprehensive JMG program overview, the training conference will include presentations addressing current youth gardening research findings, successfully connecting to schools, growing successful partnerships, implementation of best practices, developing community support and keys to profitable fund-raising. Registration of \$250 includes all training costs/materials, JMG Specialist Resource Notebook, meals, transportation to training location and two choices of JMG curriculum guides. Details are available at <http://bit.ly/2010JMGspecialist>

JMG Facebook and Twitter

As use of social media is growing, JMG has begun to use Facebook, Twitter and other social & electronic media to grow good kids! We invite you to become a JMG Facebook Fan - some coordinators are using this venue to promote upcoming JMG trainings/workshops!

And, if you Tweet, please let us know your Twitter ID so we can help spread your word. Follow @jmgkids, @jmg_lisa or jmg_randy to hear what's happening in the JMG and youth gardening world.

The Gardens of Cornwall and the Chelsea Flower Show May 22-June 2, 2011

Enjoy springtime in Europe while visiting some of the best gardens in England! Join Master Gardener Coordinator Monica David as she leads this tour for Master Gardeners and others who love gardening. The tour begins with a visit to London with free time to explore this great city and all the historic sites. Travelers will then have a full day to enjoy the Chelsea Flower Show, the world's best-loved and most prestigious garden-



ing event, which brings together many hundreds of exhibitors showing everything from full scale gardens to plant varieties never before seen in public. Before leaving London, the group will enjoy the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew. En route to Cornwall a stop will be made to view the Salisbury Cathedral and then Dartington Hall and Gardens. While in Cornwall, the group will visit several outstanding gardens including Trewithen House and Gardens and the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Participants will fly via helicopter to Tresco, one of the five inhabited islands of the Isles of Scilly to view the Tresco Abby Gardens. Time in Cornwall also includes visits to Trengwainton Gardens and the magi-



cal St Michael's Mount castle and gardens. Returning towards London, a stop will be made to visit Wisley Gardens, home of the Royal Horticultural Society. The flagship garden of the RHS, Wisley captures the imagination with richly planted borders, luscious rose gardens and the state-of-the-art new Glasshouse.

The tour cost per passenger (twin share) is \$3659—land cost only. Group airfare is \$1010.50 for a full trip cost of \$4669.50 The cost includes all hotels, luxury coach transportation, entrance to all the gardens, the helicopter ride to and from the Isles of Scilly, 10 breakfasts, and 6 dinners. To book the tour or for more information contact Robyn Gulstrom at 269-629-9248 or rgulstrom@comcast.net.

There has been great interest for this trip, so contact Robyn by October 15 to hold your spot. Please note that Robyn will be out of the country September 20 to October 1st and unable to answer phone calls or emails. The trip brochure may be found at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/events/default.cfm>

Costa Rica: Gardens, Rainforest and Wildlife February 4-13, 2011

Get away from the winter blahs and immerse yourself in a botanical paradise with this excursion to Costa Rica. This trip begins in the San Jose area at the magnificent La Paz Waterfall Gardens before heading to the Sarapiquí region and a chocolate tour at the Tirimbina Rainforest Center. Next up is the Corsicana pineapple farm (the famous Collins Street Bakery of Texas). The group will then depart for the San Ramon region of Costa Rica and will stop enroute to visit the Else Kientzler Botanical Garden, followed by a visit to the Nectandra Cloudforest Gardens and then Villa Blanca. On the way to the Pacific Coast, the group will stop at Orquimex, an important orchid exporter. We will stay at a lovely Pacific resort and will visit Carara National Park – home of monkeys and scarlet macaws. On the way



back to San Jose– the group will visit Garita Orchid Garden. The farewell dinner will be hosted by Ms. Ileana Teran, founder of SACRO (Saving Costa Ricans Orchids) at her private garden.

Participants of this trip will enjoy staying in ecolodges, sampling typical Costa Rican cuisine and seeing a multitude of different plant species and glorious native birds. Our guide is an outstanding bird expert and helped to co-author a popular book on the birds of Costa Rica. There will be an opportunity for an optional side trip (not included in tour price)– whitewater rafting, horseback riding or zipping over the forest canopy on a zipline. Cost per person is \$2,940 without airfare and approximately \$3,540 with airfare from Chicago O’Hare included. Single room supplement of \$690. For a full itinerary visit the Master Gardener website at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/events/default.cfm>

Email: mary@hiddentreasuresbotanicaltours.com for full information or to reserve your spot for this wonderful trip.

Green Education Foundation Update

The Green Education Foundation (GEF) is a non-profit organization that provides environmental education resources for Pre K-12 classrooms and youth groups nationwide. Curricula are available for K through high school and may be found at the GEF website <http://www.greeneducationfoundation.org/> The lessons are free but you must register in order to access them.

The Green Thumb Challenge aims to connect children with nature and the healthy benefits of gardening as part of a nationwide movement to get kids growing. All participants have an opportunity to be awarded a \$5,000 grant in recognition of their garden project. Over \$10,000 worth of prizes have already been awarded to Green Thumb Challenge participants. To date 20 schools and youth groups have won garden starter kits to jumpstart their gardens in the spring. Garden kits include: hand tools and gloves, rakes and hoes, watering cans, steel wheelbarrows, organic garden control products, a variety of planters, rain gauges, and vegetable and wildflower seed packets along with canvas bags to carry supplies. Items for the kits were generously donated by Ames True Temper, Central Garden and Pet and Costa Farms.

GEF is preparing to award a \$5,000 grant for an exceptional youth garden project! In partnership with Gardener’s Supply Company, GEF will be honoring a youth garden program that has made a significant impact on its community. Green Thumb Challenge participants may submit any of the following, or a combination.

- An overview describing your garden project
 - One video, up to ten minutes long
 - A digital portfolio, comprising up to ten photos with captions
 - Scanned artwork with descriptions
- Videos, photographs and scanned artwork should be uploaded to the Green Thumb website. **The deadline is September 30th, 2010.**

Important Dates

October 9: Dig Into Fall 2010-Fall Gardening Workshop, Knox Agri Center, Galesburg, IL. Check in begins at 8 am and the keynote at 8:30 am. The keynote will be Jeff Johnson from Sunnyfield Greenhouse and Garden Center. Attendees may choose 2 breakout sessions– either Native Trees or Deer Control and Sedums or Shade Gardens. There is a \$15 registration fee– due by October 6th. Register online at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/knox>. Sponsored by the Knox County Master Gardeners.

APHIS- Plant Protection and Quarantine

The United States is under attack from alien invaders, but they're not from outer space. They're foreign plant pests, diseases, and weeds, and they're feasting on and infesting America's agricultural and natural resources. They all have one other thing in common: They are causing or are likely to cause harm to the economy, the environment, or human health. Some scientists estimate that the economic impacts from invasive species exceed \$1 billion annually in the United States. This is on top of the damage they cause to hundreds of millions of acres of native ecosystems and associated native plants and animals.

Just how damaging are invasive species to America's farmland and natural ecosystems? These hungry pests grow and spread rapidly, disrupting the areas they invade by:

- Pushing out native species;
- Reducing biological diversity;
- Killing forest trees;
- Placing other species at increased risk of extinction;
- Altering wildfire intensity and frequency;
- Damaging crops;
- Closing foreign markets to U.S. products from infested areas; and,
- Costing millions of dollars in treatments to industry and government.

Keeping these pests and diseases out of the country is the number one priority of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS' Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) program is a key part of this effort. PPQ safeguards U.S. agricultural and natural resources from risks associated with the entry, establishment, or spread of agricultural pests and diseases, as well as invasive and harmful weeds. In this battle, PPQ works very closely with its many partners at the Federal, State, county, and local levels and at universities and nongovernmental organizations.

To support this complex mission, PPQ:

- Partners with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to prevent the introduction of agricultural pests and diseases at U.S. ports of entry;
- Develops quarantine policies and regulatory requirements for agricultural commodities and plant resources;
- Establishes requirements for and facilitates the safe import and export of agricultural products;
- Monitors and surveys throughout the country for pests and diseases;
- Prevents, detects, manages, and if possible, eradicates foreign pests and diseases in the United States;
- Develops scientifically advanced, environmentally sound methods to respond to plant health threats; and,
- Collects and analyzes pest data, both in the United States and overseas, to identify and evaluate pathways for the introduction and movement of invasive plant pests and weeds.

Through these activities, PPQ protects America's agriculture and the environment against pest and disease threats. This helps to ensure a diverse natural ecosystem and an abundant and healthy food supply for all Americans.

The simplest and most important thing Master Gardeners and homeowners can do to help fight invasive species is to prevent their introduction and establishment. Invasive organisms can easily be transported on living plants or fresh products such as fruit. Many pests can be found in recently killed plant material including firewood, lumber, and wood packaging material. Avoiding the long-range movement of these materials is a simple way to slow the spread of pests. Buying only certified, pest-free nursery stock is also a good idea.

August 2010 was designated by the USDA (NIFA) as official Invasive Plant, Pest and Disease Awareness Month. Please continue to educate our clients about invasive pests and lead the way by example in your lawns and gardens.

Illinois Master Gardener website: <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg>



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