



# Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,  
News and Education

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## Coordinators Comments

The old adage "change is hard" certainly applies to University of Illinois Extension these days. Recently, the list of new unit directors was made public. The list of educators who have been rehired is due to be released soon. Educators and County Directors as well as other staff who have made great contributions to this program may not be rehired and others will be relocated to new units. We will sorely miss these colleagues and wish them well in future endeavors. The Master Gardener program will continue in spite of the reorganization process and in the coming months we will have to create strategies to adapt to the changes. Thanks to all volunteers for their patience and support throughout this process.

Beginning very soon we will be introducing the new Master Gardener online reporting system. Master Gardeners from Chicago and surrounding counties have been using this system for several years. I realize it is not the most opportune time to introduce a new system – but the benefits of this system are many. In the long run, this system will make reporting volunteer and continuing education hours more efficient and it will yield better data on the impact of our program. Master Gardeners will have the ability to input and check their hours at anytime. Local coordinators will be able to run reports easily for county boards and other funders. Reports can be run by event, category, zip code and location. Contact reporting will allow us to get a better idea of the numbers of people we are reaching through our programs. Regional and state reports can easily be put together to promote sharing of program ideas across unit boundaries, to show volunteer hours given on a project and for use in national impact reports.

At a recent national MG Coordinators meeting, we discussed online reporting systems for Master Gardeners. About 40% of all states are currently using these types of programs and many more are in the development stage. The results countrywide are positive– Master Gardeners like being able to report their hours online and staff like the time saving and the ability

to generate impact data.

Plans for the Illinois system are to train staff later this fall and winter and then to introduce the system to volunteers in early 2011. We are in the process of inputting contact information for all of the active Master Gardeners across the state. The system is easy to use– even for those who are NOT a computer whiz. If you do not have access to a computer– a proxy will be assigned to enter your hours. Tutorials and help will be provided to those who need it. 2011 will be a learning year for everyone. However, once the system is fully implemented, the offices will no longer accept your hours on a paper form (or a cocktail napkin!). \*\*\*\*Note– for 2010 volunteer hours we will still have you report your hours as we have done in the past.

Here is a preview of how the system works. Volunteers will record volunteer hours, continuing education hours and update their contact information on the browser-based system. Volunteer projects in the system are divided into 10 pre-determined categories such as gardens, information services etc. Within each category, local office staff will create their own subcategories. For example under gardens, your unit may have a native plants demo garden or a Plant-A-Row garden. Master Gardeners will report hours under categories and also against events (examples like the Aurora Farmers Market or the Springfield Garden Walk). Periodically your coordinator or another staff member will review and accept your hours. Continuing education hours will be reported against approved events which are in the system– like the Hort telenet series or the state conference sessions. The local staff will put local continuing education events into the system for reporting but Master Gardeners may also suggest continuing education events for approval by their county coordinator. Volunteers will be responsible for keeping their contact information and hours reporting up to date. Each volunteer will have a login and password. Your private information will not be shared on a public website. Please watch for information on training and using the new reporting system!

 Monica David, Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator

## Conference 2010 a Huge Success

Thanks to the Master Gardeners from Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago counties for hosting the Upper Midwest Conference recently in Rockford IL. The speakers and tours received rave reviews from the 465+ attendees. Illinois Master Gardeners played host to 11 gardeners from Iowa, 20 gardeners from Minnesota and 44 gardeners from Wisconsin. The keynote speaker and his address on "Sugar, Sex and Poison: Shocking Plant Secrets Caught on Camera" seemed to be especially popular with the attendees.

**Thanks to your generosity the annual silent auction brought in \$4,460.25.**

We honored 37 Outstanding Master Gardeners, 13 Sustained Excellence Winners and 13 Teamwork projects at the awards banquet. Look for their names later in this newsletter and on the MG website under "News and Updates".

Speaker handouts for most of the sessions and a Power-Point about the county projects submitted for the networking activity may be found on the conference website at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/conference2010/>

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## 2011 State Conference to Feature "Back to Our Roots"

July 7 and 8th, 2011

Plan to join us on campus in Urbana on July 7th and 8th for the 2011 Illinois Master Gardener conference. This conference will be a change from our norm and will strive to reconnect Master Gardeners to our research base and the educational faculty on campus. Work on the conference has just begun but we anticipate offering tours on Thursday and Friday mornings and then class sessions on those afternoons. This will be a two day conference with our annual awards banquet on the evening of Thursday July 7th. Tours will most likely feature stops at the greenhouse and conservatory facilities; the U of I Arboretum (Idea Garden, Hartley Trial Gardens and Japan House and gardens); the new energy farm; the sustainable student farm; the pollinarium and bee research; the vet school poison garden; the pomology and vegetable research plots and much more. We are lining up faculty and Extension staff to present classes and workshops as well. Please mark your calendars and save the dates to join us for this great networking and learning experience.

## 2011 International SFE Awards



Search for Excellence is the recognition program of Master Gardener volunteer work throughout the United States and Canada. Search for Excellence has seven categories in which Master Gardeners can demonstrate their outstanding contributions to their communities. All SFE submissions must show that significant learning took place (i.e. they must show impact!), whether by the Master Gardeners or the general public they were involved with. The Search for Excellence program is designed to recognize outstanding group projects, not an individual who does outstanding work. It is now time to submit your projects for these awards!

Awards are given out in seven categories: youth programs; demonstration gardens; workshop or presentation; community service; innovative projects; special needs audiences (senior, disables or Horticultural Therapy) and Research (applied scientific methodology). Projects will be judged on their merit for work done between 2008 and 2010, but each project must have been in place for a least a full year during that time period. All projects should be practical, easy to replicate, original and creative and must meet the mission and goals of Extension. Consider nominating one of your projects—those who have won state teamwork awards might be good choices. If you have questions about submitting an application contact Monica David [modavid@illinois.edu](mailto:modavid@illinois.edu)

The applications are to be written by Master Gardeners but they must be sent by an Extension staff member who also verifies that all volunteers involved are in good standing with their programs. Winners will be asked to give a short presentation and prepare a poster for the 2011 International Master Gardener conference to be held in West Virginia in October, 2011. Second and third place winners will be announced but will not be asked to give a presentation. All winners will be asked to prepare a blog post about their projects for the National EMG blog.

Applications and supporting paperwork must be submitted in electronic format to Monica David, [modavid@illinois.edu](mailto:modavid@illinois.edu) by **February 1, 2011**. For the application, guidelines and information about past winners go to the National Master Gardener website at <http://www.extension.org/pages/>

## 2010 Sustained Excellence Award Winners

Mary Jane Bohall	Bloomington, McLean County
Fran Cella	Elgin, Kane County
Alice Erickson	Hinckley, DeKalb County
Karen Gottlieb	Bloomington, McLean County
Kay Henrichs	Bloomington, McLean County
Margie Karl	Mapleton, Peoria County
Cathie Leszinske	West Chicago, DuPage County
Barbara Lindholm	Clare, DeKalb County
Debbie Malinowski	Hawthorn Woods, Lake County
Anna Mattes	Ottawa, LaSalle County
Mary Smith	Charleston, Coles County
Mary Spiewak	Mettawa, Lake County
Barbara Wych	Belvidere, Boone County

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### 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 a chocolate tour at the Tirimbina Rainforest Center. Next up is the Corsicana pineapple farm followed by a visit to the Else Kientzler Botanical Garden, then on to the Nectandra Cloudforest Gardens and 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.

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](mailto:mary@hiddentreasuresbotanicaltours.com) for full information. **Hurry as this trip will close before the holidays!**

## 2010 Outstanding MG Award Winners

Joyce Allen	Charleston, Coles County
Kerry Allen	Kansas, Edgar County
Cathy Bandeko	E. Peoria, Peoria County
Sandra Bidner	Carlock, McLean County
Lu Clifton	Davis, Stephenson County
Marjorie Cook	Maroa, Macon County
Tom Dahlfors	Woodstock, McHenry Co.
Steve DeBerg	Marengo, McHenry County
Jaci Dixon	Bloomington, McLean Co.
Jan Dunham	Belvidere, Boone County
Anita Duray	Freeport, Stephenson County
Jean Ewaldz	Rockford, Winnebago Co.
Mary Ewaldz	Rockford, Winnebago Co.
Joy Gulotta	Esmond, DeKalb Co.
Pat Haile	Belle Rive, Jefferson County
Jan Hanson	Bartlett, DuPage County
Janet Hart	Brimfield, Peoria County
Tom Hiler	Springfield, Sangamon/Menard Unit
Stanley Huffman	Charleston, Coles County
Pat Jurgens	Arthur, Moultrie/Douglas Unit
Pat Kraft	Woodstock, McHenry Co.
Bev Krams	Arlington Heights, Cook No. Suburban Unit
Jerri Lott	Pearl City, Stephenson Co.
Shey Lowman	Leaf River, Ogle County
Kathy Moore	Heyworth, McLean County
Don Nekrosius	Oak Park, Cook County
Barbara Nieders	Quincy, Adams-Brown Unit
Sandy Pecori	Springfield, Sangamon/Menard Unit
Barbara Pence	Sycamore, DeKalb County
Margaret Rhoads	Caledonia, Boone County
Mary Sapienza	Palatine, Cook No. Suburban Unit
Sandy Shriver	Decatur, Macon County
Joyce Stemp	Wheeling, Cook No. Suburban Unit
Becky Stephens	Sandwich, DeKalb County
Shirley Swarhout	Decatur, Macon County
Jana Waite	Champaign, Champaign Co.
Margaret Burns Westmeyer	Chicago Heights, Cook So. Suburban Unit

## 2010 Teamwork Awards

### **Emerald Ash Borer/Ash Tree Inventory– Boone County**

This partnership involved local and county government, IDA, the parks, the conservation district and MGs. The volunteers surveyed and evaluated all ash trees on public and right of ways in the entire county. Tree locations were plotted by GPS. EAB education was delivered to the volunteers and to the communities thru this project.

### **Spring Into Gardening-Coles County**

This well-planned workshop of educational sessions by educators and others reached maximum capacity early and served not only to educate but to increase awareness of MGs. The volunteers partnered with the Coles County Council on Aging to use the new LifeSpan Center and with local businesses for support.

### **Chicago Heights Public Library After School Fun with Nature-Cook South Suburban**

This team planned and delivered nature related programs to children who attend the library after school and during the summer as a safe haven. The children who were primarily Hispanic learned about butterflies, worm composting, *Trees are Terrific* and other activities such as using microscopes.

### **Gardener's Pathway-DeKalb County**

This popular annual one day event features 18 classes by Extension and local Horticulture experts, a keynote address, an exhibit hall with gardening information, products and displays, a Help Desk and door prizes. Around 200 gardeners attend each year. DeKalb MGs partner with Kishwaukee College to sponsor the event.

### **Taking on Giants-Ford/Iroquois Unit**

These volunteers held monthly "Garden Visits" in their Idea Garden after each of the telenet series. The group reached out to youth via library programs on Monarchs. They worked with the elderly at the Gilman Healthcare Center to create raised accessible container gardens for vegetables and they presented classes for residents.

### **Gardener's Big Day-Fulton County**

Nearly 1,000 residents have attended this workshop over the last 10 years. Hort experts deliver talks based on a theme chosen by the group. In 2009 the event featured innovative speakers and featured a luncheon presentation on using local herbs. Displays on local projects highlight the volunteer's work in the community.

### **Downtown Beautification-Kane County**

MGs parent a bed in downtown Geneva as part of the effort to "Green" the city. This effort includes church groups, garden clubs, youth groups, and MGs to promote environmental stewardship. In 2007 this group incorporated edibles like Swiss chard and kale into the garden. The bed is a great place to answer homeowner questions.

### **Master Gardener Help Desk– Macon County**

The Help Desk receives over 1,000 calls annually. This team created a Help Desk manual which covers everything from handling specimens to using microscopes to common questions and their answers. Training sessions for MGs included a segment on customer service. The Help Desk is now a favorite place for volunteers to work.

### **Sarah's Garden at the David Davis Mansion-McLean County**

Sarah's Garden is a 138 year old treasure which has undergone a research-based restoration by this team. Historical records and photos were used to ID original plants and the MGs harvest seed and propagate heirloom plants. MGs provide education as tour guides, consultants and by use of a brochure and PowerPoint about the garden.

### **Rain Barrel Workshops-Moultrie/Douglas Unit**

This team created classes for the public to build their own rain barrels and to learn about conserving water. These events showed clients how to conserve water, help the environment, reduce waste in landfills and provide chemical free water for gardens. Workshops were presented in several locations in the county.

### **Arrowhead Ranch Hort Education– Rock Island County**

Arrowhead Ranch is a facility for at risk youth as an alternative to prison. The project began with renovation of an abandoned greenhouse and continued with installation of a vegetable and herb garden. The youth were involved with renovating the orchard as well as planting and harvesting potatoes and pumpkins.

### **St. Bridget's Church Community Garden-Winnebago County**

The goal of this project was to grow food for the hungry and engage youth and parishioners in the garden. A new JMG® group worked in the garden while learning about tool safety and how to grow food. Many adults have become involved as well. In 2009 over 500 lbs of produce was donated to the Plant-A-Row for the Hungry program.

### **Lincoln Home National Historic Site Living History Heirloom Garden-Christian County & Sangamon/Menard Unit**

MGs joined with the National Park Service to create a mid-19th century kitchen garden at the Harriet Dean House. Volunteers researched 1860s plants and tools to create the garden. The education committee made fact sheets on the plants and volunteers served as docents in the garden. About 7,232 people visited the garden in 2009.

## 2011 MG Training Sites\*\*\*

Location	Starting Date
Bloomington	January 26
Chicago Botanic Garden	January 12
Champaign	January 25
Charleston	January 12
Chicago– Garfield Park Conservatory	January 4
Danville	January 31
Decatur/Springfield	January 20
Edwardsville cluster	January 11
Freeport	January 20
Galesburg	January 18
Joliet	January 7
Mt. Vernon	January 20
Naperville	January 4
Ottawa	January 19
Oregon	January 21
Quincy	January 19
Woodstock	TBD
Online Training	Mid-January

Note\*\*\* The training schedules for these sites are tentative at this point due to changes in personnel and Extension reorganization. When the educator positions have been filled and announced, the schedules will be completed and posted on the website at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/> Please contact your local coordinator to attend these classes as continuing education.

### Two Excellent Reference Websites

**Vegetable Varieties for Gardeners:** Gardeners visit this site and report what varieties perform well - and not so well - in their gardens. Other gardeners visit to view the variety ratings and read the reviews to decide which might work well for them. Growing guides on all crops available. From Cornell Extension.  
<http://vegvariety.cce.cornell.edu>

**Bugwood:** A database system of over 133,000 images for educational use at no cost. The focus is on species of economic concern– insects, diseases, invasive plants and more. All images are reviewed for content and quality. From the University of Georgia Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health.  
<http://images.bugwood.org>

## 2011 International MG Conference

*Color it Green in a Wild & Wonderful Way*

The West Virginia University Extension Service and the West Virginia Master Gardener Association invite you to join them at the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference, October 11 -14 in Charleston, West Virginia.

Join them in sharing gardening information, history and Appalachian culture. The event will provide opportunities to learn gardening techniques that will help increase biodiversity, control exotic weeds, make the most of native plants in the landscape and improve gardening methods. Pre and post tours will help you discover the splendor of the Appalachian Mountains and the beauty and history of West Virginia.

Keynote speakers include Anna Ball and Joe Lamp'l. Anna is President and CEO of the 105-year-old Ball Horticultural Company, which specializes in all aspects of horticulture, including breeding, biotechnology, production, and marketing of hybrid flower seeds and other floriculture crops. Anna received her bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado and her MBA from Northwestern University. "Green" gardening expert and author Joe Lamp'l is the author of *The Green Gardener's Guide*. Joe's interest in gardening and the environment can be seen in his writings and on his website "joegardener.com." Joe's style of speaking enables him to present complicated topics in a manner that is easily understood by all. A nationally known speaker and environmental steward, Joe will educate and entertain conference guests.

The International Master Gardener Conference will be held at the Charleston Convention Center. Several nearby hotels (within walking distance of the conference center) have blocks of sleeping rooms reserved for conference attendees. For full information about the conference- visit the website at <http://imgc.ext.wvu.edu/> You can also sign up for twitter updates on the conference at this website.



## U of I Receives \$1.5 million for Sustainability in Ornamentals Research

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) awarded a \$1.5 million grant today to help University of Illinois researchers establish guidelines for increasing environmental, social, and economic sustainability in ornamental crop production systems.

Lead researcher Ryan Stewart of the U of I Department of Crop Sciences said a major concern of greenhouses, nurseries and other ornamental crop production systems is waste generation due to the use of plastic pots.

"The Green Industry uses plastic pots to establish plants," he said. "Unfortunately, the main source of material to make these pots is petroleum. Biocontainers appear to be an excellent sustainable alternative to petroleum pots. Also, growers love the idea of marking up the retail price of a plant by having it available on the shelf in a garden center."

Biocontainers utilize plant-based fibers, plant or animal proteins and recycled byproducts. Examples include containers made out of sterilized cow manure, wood pulp, coconut coir, rice straw, peat moss, rice hull and proprietary bioplastics developed by horticultural companies.

Stewart is collaborating with researchers at seven other universities throughout the country on the project, which is titled "Impact and social acceptance of selected sustainable practices in ornamental crop production systems." Their first order of business is to generate a life cycle analysis for each biocontainer, Stewart said.

"We will evaluate the biocontainers from cradle to grave. In other words, we're going to measure all the energy inputs and outputs related to their processing, production, and distribution," he said.

The biocontainers will then be evaluated in greenhouses and containerized nurseries. Stewart said the containers will be run through automated greenhouse production systems to see how they will fare in automated planting and filling stations. After plants are inserted in them, they will also evaluate how the biocontainers are affected by overhead irrigation.

"In a conventional production system, plants and the containers that hold them experience a lot of stress," he said. "These biocontainers, particularly in a nursery setting, need to be tough to withstand the mechanical damage they'll be subjected to. We've done some preliminary work and it appears that some of the biocontainers might not make the cut. However, many appear to be very promising."

After studying the pots and the plants grown in them in the greenhouses and nurseries, researchers will evaluate

how the plants perform after being transplanted into the landscape. Can these plants grow normally in a biocontainer? How do they degrade in the landscape?

"A huge issue surrounding these pots is whether they can be planted directly into the ground without impairing plant growth," he said. "If these pots allow the root to grow down through the container, that's a win-win situation for all."

Of course, in the end, it will come down to the numbers. Economists collaborating on the project will study the data generated and evaluate the economics and sustainability of these biocontainers to form recommendations.

"We want to help industry leaders make critical decisions on the use of sustainable practices related to container choice and irrigation management based on solid data and research," he said. "There is great interest in producing ornamental crops more sustainably. If a biocontainer made of cow manure or other biodegradable materials can survive in an automated production system, growers will be able to sell both the plant and the pot."

NIFA awarded more than \$46 million through the Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI), which was established by the 2008 Farm Bill to support the specialty crop industry by developing and disseminating science-based tools to address the needs of specific crops.

Specialty crops are defined in law as "fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including floriculture." Funded projects address five focus areas: 1) to improve crop characteristics through plant breeding, genetics and genomics; 2) to address threats from pests and diseases; 3) to improve production efficiency, productivity and profitability; 4) to develop new innovations and technologies and 5) to develop methods to improve food safety.

"The specialty crop industry plays an enormously important part in American agriculture and is valued at approximately \$50 billion every year," said Roger Beachy, NIFA director. "These projects will be key to providing specialty crop producers with the information and tools they need to successfully grow, process, and market safe and high-quality products."

Collaborating researchers include Guihong Bi of Mississippi State University, Robin Brumfield of Rutgers University, Michael Evans of the University of Arkansas, Tom Fernandez of Michigan State University, Robert Geneve and Rebecca Schnelle of the University of Kentucky, David Kovacic of the University of Illinois, Genhua Niu of Texas A&M University, and Sven Verlinden of West Virginia University.

## U of I Sustainable Student Farm

Students experienced for themselves the value of farm-fresh produce at the University of Illinois Sustainable Student Farm's first open house in September.

U of I students were invited to tour the student farm and learn how produce is grown and harvested to meet the demands of campus dining services.

In addition, campus chefs prepared delicious creations using student farm produce and created side-by-side comparisons of farm-fresh produce versus grocery store produce.

"I overheard students wondering why the farm-fresh tomatoes were so red and thought they had been colored," said Dawn Aubrey, U of I senior assistant of dining services. "While this was not a typical response from the students, it was an honest question posed by some of the students who were unfamiliar with gardening and farming."

Some of the goals of the open house were to introduce students to opportunities to get involved in the student farm while showing off the advantages and need for locally grown food, said Bruce Branham, U of I professor of crop sciences.

"The Illinois Climate Action Plan (iCAP) has a goal that local food (produced within 100 miles of campus) use reach 30 percent of the campus total by 2015," Branham said. "We would like the student farm to be a significant part of that total."

Aubrey is looking forward to the expansion of the student farm and hopes to collaborate in the future on preservation methods.

"The student farm produce is fresh, flavorful and nutrient-packed," she said. "The quality is outstanding and when compared to commercially grown produce, there is a stark contrast in flavor. Additionally this supports our commitment to sustainability with the produce being grown using organic methods and traveling a mile from farm to kitchen."

Branham said 250 students attended the open house, creating tremendous enthusiasm and support for the farm's future.

"The student farm has a tremendous value to U of I," Aubrey said. "It's an academic laboratory providing practical experience for students who may pursue farming. It also provides students with exposure to fresh produce from growing methods to sustainable practices. It takes the education from the head and translates it to the hands."

## The First Lady's Fall 2010 Kitchen Garden Harvest

The rain stopped and the sun came out just in time for the First Lady's Fall 2010 Kitchen Garden Harvest. Joined by more than 30 students from Washington, DC's Bancroft and Tubman Elementary Schools, the First Lady and several world-renowned chefs spent the afternoon in the White House garden digging up sweet potatoes, clipping herbs, picking tomatoes, and admiring the pumpkins before sitting down to enjoy a fresh salad from the garden.

The school-children were paired with chefs Daniel Boulud and James Kent as well as several White House chefs. Armed with large baskets and wheelbarrows, they



scoured the garden for peppers, broccoli, tomatoes, lettuce and other fall vegetables. The First Lady joined them, rolling up her sleeves, to dig up enormous sweet potatoes, including a near record-breaking four pounder, and to pick deep purple eggplants.

The children and the First Lady admired the pumpkins growing in the garden – just in time for Halloween. The kids also got a lesson in food preservation, with a garden-side pickling class from Executive Pastry Chef Bill Yosses. The festivities continued when the children joined the famous chefs to slice and dice vegetables for a garden salad meal.

The White House garden is part of the *Let's Move* Initiative which seeks to end childhood obesity within a generation through improved nutrition and increased physical



activity. In the spring of 2009, the First Lady and students from the DC area broke ground for the garden and since then nearly 1,600 pounds of food has been harvested.

The produce is used in the White House but is also donated to local area food banks. The White House Garden has inspired communities across the country to plant similar gardens at schools, in abandoned lots, and in community spaces.

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

Time is running out to reserve your spot for this outstanding trip as we must begin to send payments abroad and confirm hotels. The trip highlight is the Chelsea Flower Show, the world's best-loved and most prestigious gardening event, which brings together many hundreds of exhibitors showing everything from full scale gardens to plant varieties never before seen in public. The tour begins with a visit to London with free time to explore this great city and all the historic sites. Before leaving London, the group will enjoy the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew. While in Cornwall, the group will visit several outstanding gardens including Trewithen House and Gardens; the Lost Gardens of Heligan; Trengwainton Garden; the magical St Michael's Mount castle and gardens and the Tresco Abby Gardens on the Isles of Scilly. Returning towards London, a stop will be made to visit Wisely Gardens, home of the Royal Horticultural Society.



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 **no later than November 10th** at 269-629-9248 or [rgulstrom@comcast.net](mailto:rgulstrom@comcast.net). The trip brochure may be found at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/events/default.cfm>

## Vertical Gardens as Living Walls

On the recent garden trips to Paris, our travelers were fortunate to see the vertical gardens at Les Halles in Avignon as well as vertical gardens near the Eiffel Tower in Paris. These new vertical garden spaces are all the rage in Europe and have now spread across the “pond” to North America. Avid and aspiring gardeners, frustrated with little outdoor space, are looking at their walls and noticing something new: more space.



Vertical gardens began as an experiment in 1988 by Patrick Blanc, a French botanist intent on creating a garden without dirt. Blanc is still the leading authority on construction of these gardens, although a number of companies around the globe are selling ready-made systems and all-in-one kits for gardeners. For those who prefer to leave it to professionals, landscape designers can build vertical gardens for a hefty fee. The commercial kits differ from Blanc's original designs which included a tubular steel frame, two felt layers which act as the growing media for the roots, and irrigation tubes to allow water and nutrients to drip from the top edge of the wall.



Blanc has created several vertical gardens in the states including one in Racine WI for the SC Johnson Co. He has plans underway for vertical gardens at the Phoenix Botanical Gardens and the New York Botanical Garden. There is also a vertical garden by a different designer at the “Liquid House” exhibit at the Discovery World in Milwaukee. Urban Habitat Chicago is working on a vertical garden (due to be completed winter 2011) at Fulton and Kedzie streets in Chicago. The vegetated walls will cover a 36 unit residential building with a food pantry which serves 800 families per week.

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



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