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2010 Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference sponsored by Master Gardeners from Boone, DeKalb, Ogle, Stephenson and Winnebago Counties.

2010 Illinois Master Gardener Awards

September 17, 2010
Clock Tower Resort
Rockford, Illinois
This year marks the 35th anniversary of the University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program. We gather tonight to honor the extraordinary efforts of all the Master Gardeners who have dedicated themselves to bettering their communities and the lives of others through sharing their knowledge of horticulture. Over the past 35 years our program has grown and expanded as we have developed creative and relevant ways to “Help Others Learn to Grow”. The challenge we face over our NEXT 35 years is to help Illinois citizens conserve our natural resources, garden in an environmentally friendly manner, strive to eliminate invasive pests and learn how to produce healthy food for our society.

Today, we are pleased to recognize thirteen Teamwork Projects and 50 individuals for their superior contributions. Strong individual effort was shown by our State Outstanding Master Gardeners, nominated by local Master Gardener coordinators for the leadership and service they provide to Master Gardener programs. Fewer than 2% of active Master Gardeners in the state receive this award annually. Individual effort is also highlighted through the Sustained Excellence Award winners, previous State Outstanding Master Gardeners, who continue their dedicated service and leadership. The Master Gardener Teamwork Award recognizes groups of Master Gardeners who work together to accomplish a common goal for the betterment of their communities.

Please join me in congratulating the 2010 award winners and Happy 35th anniversary to us all!

Monica David
University of Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator

Lincoln Home National Historic Site
Living History Heirloom Garden
(Sangamon-Menard Unit and Christian County)
Dennis Suttles, Bharati Jhaveri, Kathy Homa, Ken Hage, Randy Thomas, Diane Grottola, Gary Trammell, Shirley Wilson, Bev Vost, Ruth Nonneman, Susan Cressy
Christian County
Sharron Taft, Jean Shuler, Mary Grace Given, Midge Kendle, Jennifer House, Gwen Podeschi

Master Gardeners joined with the National Park Service to create a mid-19th century kitchen garden at the Harriet Dean House in the Lincoln Home Historic Site. Volunteers first researched 1860s period documents to plan the garden. The tool committee had a local blacksmith make period tools and others were ordered from a company that makes these tools. The plant selection committee chose period vegetable, flower, herb and grape plants—each met the criteria required by the National Park Service. The education committee made a notebook and fact sheet on each plant in the garden. A local Eagle Scout constructed a picket fence around the garden and high school botany students started the plants. Once the garden was planted, volunteers served as docents four days per week. Approximately 7,232 people visited the garden in 2009 and about 700 pounds of produce was donated to the Grace Lutheran Church Food Pantry through the Plant-a-Row program.
Arrowhead Ranch Hort Education
(Rock Island County)
Kent Ackerman, Mike Kerkove, Richard VanderLeest
Arrowhead Ranch is a facility for at risk youth that are sent to the program as an alternative to prison. These three volunteers worked with the youth at least three days a week teaching them about plants and inspiring the youth to pursue possible career goals in horticulture. The project began with renovation of an abandoned greenhouse. When the weather warmed the kids put in a vegetable and herb garden near the kitchen. During this time, 600 almost dead geraniums were donated and the kids along with their mentors nursed them back to health—healthy plants were given to visitors on Mother’s Day and sold at the Nursery School. The Master Gardeners presented educational lessons to the kids including using microscopes for learning about insects, cells and creatures in pond water. Other activities included planting and harvesting potatoes and pumpkins and renovating and pruning the orchard.

St. Bridget’s Church Community Garden
(Winnebago County)
Jerry Hartz, Ed Lynch, Constance McCarthy,
Sue Richards, Eric Taylor, Jeff White
In 2009, six Master Gardeners began work on a community garden at St. Bridget’s church in Machesney Park. The goal was to grow food for the hungry and to engage parishioners and students at the school in this project. The Master Gardener team quickly laid out a garden, tilled a large bed and acquired donations from area nurseries and local growers. A new garden club was established using the Junior Master Gardener® curriculum and twenty five students signed up for the classes. The youngsters learned about how to grow food and other topics such as basic tool safety. Many parishioners and parents have become involved in the garden and in 2009 over 500 pounds of produce was donated to the Plant-a-Row for the Hungry program.

Outstanding Master Gardener Award Winners

- Joyce Allen
- Kerry Allen
- Cathy Bandeko
- Sandra Bidner
- Lu Clifton
- Marjorie Cook
- Thomas Dahlfors
- Steve DeBerg
- Jaci Dixon
- Jan Dunham
- Anita Duray
- Jean Ewaldz
- Mary Ewaldz
- Joy Gulotta
- Pat Haile
- Jan Hanson
- Janet Hart
- Tom Hiler
- Margaret Burns Westmeyer

- Joyce Allen
- Kerry Allen
- Cathy Bandeko
- Sandra Bidner
- Lu Clifton
- Marjorie Cook
- Thomas Dahlfors
- Steve DeBerg
- Jaci Dixon
- Jan Dunham
- Anita Duray
- Jean Ewaldz
- Mary Ewaldz
- Joy Gulotta
- Pat Haile
- Jan Hanson
- Janet Hart
- Tom Hiler

- Stanley Huffman
- Pat Jurgens
- Pat Kraft
- Bev Krams
- Jerrie Lott
- Shey Lowman
- Kathy Moore
- Don Nekrosius
- Barbara Nieders
- Sandy Pecori
- Barbara Pence
- Margaret Rhoads
- Mary Sapienza
- Sandy Shriver
- Joyce Stemp
- Becky Stephens
- Shirley Swarthout
- Jana Waite
- Margaret Burns Westmeyer
Joyce Allen (Charleston, Coles County)
Joyce has risen to the top as a valuable leader in Coles County. She has served as chair of the Idea Garden—overseeing planning and the work schedule as well as planting and labeling for all eight gardens. Joyce was elected Vice-President where she oversees monthly meeting programs and field trips.

Kerry Allen (Kansas, Edgar County)
Kerry hit the ground running after her training, serving as Vice-president in 2008 and then President in 2009. She has led efforts for the annual “April in Paris” Garden Seminar. Kerry shares her knowledge with others as she answers client questions and she started a blog for her fellow volunteers.

Cathy Bandeko (East Peoria, Woodford County)
Cathy’s most impressive contribution may be the development of the courtyard garden at Germantown Hills Middle School. She teaches many youth classes on gardening and works alongside the youth as they tend the garden. Cathy also designed and produced color plant maps for the ICC demo garden.

Sandra Bidner (Carlock, McLean County)
Sandra’s great organizational skills came into play as chair of the annual Home, Lawn and Garden Day and the Educational Presentations Committee. In this role she coordinates the 2nd Thursday classes for the Master Gardeners and public, as well as the Speakers Bureau.

Lu Clifton (Davis, Stephenson County)
Lu is a diligent worker and led the effort to resurrect the Lake Summerset Prairie where she secured funding and cooperation to install a sign and a demo garden. Lu writes pertinent and timely articles for the Journal Star and other weekly papers. She also assists with the annual ‘Joys of Gardening’ program.

Marjorie Cook (Maroa, Macon County)
Margie is a strong leader. She was instrumental in documenting procedures for the Garden Walk manual and developed a new ticketing procedure for the event. Margie is a member of the local Advisory Committee and is involved in revising and improving the Speaker’s Bureau for Macon County.

Sarah’s Garden at the David Davis Mansion (McLean County)
Lyn Ash, Mary Jane Bohall, Jaci Dixon, Kay Henrichs, Sharon Jaeger, Donna Thiel, Robin VanDermay, Debbie Vick
Sarah’s Garden is a unique 138-year-old treasure which has undergone a time-consuming, research-based restoration by this team of Master Gardeners. In 2001, Horticultural Historians researched the David Davis Collection at the IL State Museum and developed a plan for a documented, authentic restoration. Since that time 74 Master Gardeners have volunteered as consultants, researchers, tour guides & garden hosts. Historical records and photos were researched to ID original plants in the garden and MGs harvest seed and propagate heirloom plants to maintain the garden closely to its original state. Volunteers plant, weed and tend the garden as well. Education is a focus of this project and the volunteers give tours to many diverse groups. They have produced a listing of all plants and their locations as well as an onsite journal. A tri-fold brochure and Power Point are used for both education and to promote the garden. Since 2006, over 3,432 visitors have seen this gem of a restoration site.

Rain Barrel Workshops (Moultrie-Douglas Unit)
Maxi Fitzjarrald, Pat Jurgens, Ann Short, Vicki Clark, Don Dallmier, Margie Delheimer, Aly Barry, Barbara Burlew, Jamie Isaacs, Kim Riedel, Lori Anderson
The Master Gardeners of the Moultrie Douglas Unit were anxious to put on a program that showed clients how to conserve water, help the environment, reduce waste in landfills and provide chemical free water for gardens. Their rain barrel project accomplished all of these goals. Securing a source for the barrels was a challenge. Once this obstacle was overcome, the volunteers began classes to teach the public about water barrels and how to conserve water. Participants were also allowed to build their own barrels. The Master Gardeners purchase barrels and supplies, sort supplies into stations for workshops, practice making and improving the barrels and then teach others how to construct them. These workshops have been offered in several locations in the counties to serve more clients and promote Extension.
**Downtown Geneva Beautification**  
(Kane County)  
Charlene Reynolds, Jan Faulkner, Sue Gould,  
Catherine Harrington, Barbara Leonard  

Since 2005, Master Gardeners have “parented” a bed in downtown Geneva as part of the Geneva Beautification Committee’s effort to green the city. In 2007, the Beautification Committee won a Governor’s Home Town Award for this project. This effort involves church groups, garden clubs, youth groups, Master Gardeners and others to promote beauty, environmental stewardship and safety in the community. In 2007, the Master Gardeners took a new approach to their bed by incorporating edibles such as Swiss chard, lettuce, kale and nasturtiums. Because the bed is right outside a Starbucks, the volunteers answer many plant questions while they work and the garden bed has been a great marketing tool for both Extension and the Master Gardeners.

**Master Gardener Help Desk**  
(Macon County)  
Fern Stinson, Virginia Schuler, Vennetta Joliff  

The Help Desk in Macon County receives over 1,000 calls annually but it can be an intimidating experience for both new interns and seasoned volunteers. A team of Master Gardeners was formed to implement training sessions for all volunteers and to create a comprehensive manual that included everything a volunteer needed to know to provide excellent service to clients. The group worked over 10 months to publish a Help Desk manual and it includes everything from how to handle specimens, how to answer questions, how to use the microscopes, how to record client information and answers, approved sites for reference and much more. Quizzes were developed that focused on the manual as well as common client questions from previous years. The training sessions also included a segment on customer service with role playing and examples. As a result of the groups efforts, the Help Desk is now a pleasant place to work and many veterans have returned there to volunteer again.

**Thomas Dahlfors**  
(Woodstock, McHenry County)  
Tom has an addictive personality and is involved in literally every project in his county! Tom stepped up at the end of his internship and took over coordination of one of the food pantry gardens and he is the acting chair of the Rotary Garden. He has been an member of both state and local Extension councils.

**Steve DeBerg**  
(Marengo, McHenry County)  
Steve is a thoughtful and knowledgeable leader. He discovered that vegetables are his passion and took the reins of the Harvard Garden, a food pantry garden in McHenry County. He coordinates all aspects of this garden & helped to install a water system. Steve teaches others about grapes & wine production.

**Jaci Dixon**  
(Bloomington, McLean County)  
Jaci is invaluable to her fellow volunteers as she leads several key projects in McLean County. She is chairperson of the Bloomington Adopt-a-Pot, a leader of the Community Cancer Center Gardens and part of the leadership team for the Illinois Plastic Pot Recycling Initiative.

**Jan Dunham**  
(Belvidere, Boone County)  
Boone County has benefited greatly by Jan’s expertise and commitment. Jan provides well-researched answers at the Help Desk and County Fair. She took a lead role in the Emerald Ash Borer/Tree Inventory project and she has taken over the management of one section of the Demonstration Garden.

**Anita Duray**  
(Freeport, Stephenson County)  
Anita has taken a leadership role at the Taylor Gardens at the Stephenson County Historical Museum where she has worked to oversee expansion and restoration of the gardens plus the addition of a butterfly garden. Based on the garden, she has developed three educational programs for the public.

**Jean Ewaldz**  
(Rockford, Winnebago County)  
Jean uses his expertise as an American Rose Society Rosarian to lead several projects in Winnebago County. He led the restoration of the historic rose gardens at the Tinker Swiss Cottage. Jean also provided expertise & leadership at the Sinnissippi Rose Gardens & gives numerous classes to the public on roses.
Mary Ewaldz (Rockford, Winnebago County)
Mary uses her expertise as an American Rose Society Rosarian to lead several projects in Winnebago County. She led the restoration of the historic rose gardens at the Tinker Swiss Cottage. Mary also provided expertise & leadership at the Sinnissippi Rose Gardens. She gives numerous classes to the public on roses.

Joy Gulotta (Esmond, DeKalb County)
Joy is active in twelve projects and leader of six of those! She chairs the therapeutic horticulture program for residents at the DeKalb County Nursing Home and leads the planning committee for the Gardener’s Pathway educational event. Joy also leads the team which planned and planted the Littlejohn School Children’s Garden.

Pat Haile (Belle Rive, Jefferson County)
Pat has been a Master Gardener for eight years and for several of those she has served as recording secretary for the group. Her passion is her work at Green Tree, an assisted living center, where she has a monthly garden club with residents and designed and installed raised beds for them to plant.

Jan Hanson (Bartlett, DuPage County)
Jan is a well respected leader in her group. She is an active team leader for the Worms in the Classroom program. In 2008, Jan chaired the team of volunteers for the decorating committee at state conference. She is also active at the Kline Creek Farm Education Garden, the Help Line & the Speakers Bureau.

Janet Hart (Brimfield, Peoria County)
Janet exhibits qualities of responsibility & authority and is in high demand as a Speaker’s Bureau member. She has written articles for the Peoria Journal Star and has coordinated the work at the Heart of Illinois Fair. Recently Janet has chaired the Crittenton Center Crisis Nursery kids vegetable garden.

Tom Hiler (Sangamon-Menard Unit)
Tom is always ready to help and has provided leadership for two different Plant-a-Row gardens, resulting in the donation of more than 9,000 lbs. of produce. He also assists with garden therapy programs at two nursing homes. He is leader of the IL Farm Service Agency 2,000 square foot vegetable garden.

Taking on Giants
(Ford-Iroquois Unit)
Lorene Benbow, Anita Boomgarden, Bill Pool, Cynthia Swanson, Mary Dickinson, Diane Oberneufemann
This small but dedicated group of volunteers decided to tell residents who they are, where they are and what they do and used their Idea Garden as the vehicle to do just that. All members of the group were involved in all aspects of the garden. To encourage county residents to visit the garden and see good Hort practices in action they held monthly “Garden Visits” after the telenet sessions. The MGs included youth in their efforts by presenting a program about Monarchs at the library near the garden. The group took their message on the road to the Gilman Healthcare Center where they worked with residents to create accessible raised bed container gardens for growing vegetables. They also presented programs such as planting succulent gardens to residents. This project has brought both increased visibility and more requests for services from these volunteers.

Gardener’s Big Day
(Fulton County)
JoAnn Block, Jane Brewer, Robert Burnham, Freda Burnham, Elizabeth Champlin, Judy Day, Paul Dillefeld, Kathy Edwards, Sally Hart, Nancy Hebb, Phyllis Jarvis, Bob Keene, Carol Kohler, Mary Lou Kuchan, Linda Lane, Karen Lowe, Kay McCance, Terry Meade, Pam Merrill, Julia Pryor, Beverly Reffett, Jackie Trotter, Mary Virag, Sue Walters
The goal of this educational day is to be a source of good horticultural information for the citizens of Fulton County–a mainly rural area. For the 2009 event (the 10th annual) the MGs brought in an innovative group of speakers and included a luncheon presentation on using local fresh herbs entitled “Slow Food: from Italy to Your Table”. Sessions included “What is That Darn Weed”, “Irish and Italian Garden Design for Illinois”, Hummingbirds, Illinois River Wetlands, Mushrooms and Photography. Master Gardeners shared digital images of their own garden spaces in a Power Point show. Displays on local projects shared information. Gardener’s Day 2009 marks the inclusion of nearly 1,000 people who have attended this event over the last ten years. This project is a good team builder and an excellent way to market the Master Gardener program.
Chicago Heights Public Library
After School Fun with Nature
(Cook South Suburban Unit)
Margaret Burns-Westmeyer, Maureen Guger, Terry Leal, Sue McCarthy, Al Guger, Deborah McGovern, Linda Anderson

Beginning in 2009, this team of Master Gardeners has been planning and delivering nature-related programs to children who attend the library after school and during the summer as a safe haven. The audience is predominantly Hispanic (65%) and ranges in age from K to 5th grade. Topics for lessons have included Monarch butterflies; worm composting, Trees are Terrific; Invite a Bird to Dinner and more, with each activity being interactive. The youth examine leaves, flowers, insects and worms under microscopes. Children are given information to take home about other activities related to nature and how to become good stewards of the environment. The youth are well behaved and always greet the volunteers when they see them in the community.

Gardener’s Pathway
(DeKalb County)
Joe Pasteris, Joy Gulotta, Jean Reitan, Ray Lobmeyer, Janice Weber, Robin Larson, Ron Peabody, Ron Johnson, Kris Stefani

The DeKalb County Gardener’s Pathway in 2010 was titled “A Fresh Look at Green” and was the eleventh annual event sponsored by this group of volunteers. This one day event features 18 different workshops by Extension and local horticulture experts; a premier keynote address; an exhibit hall featuring gardening information, products, displays and vendors; a Hort Help desk; continental breakfast; garden lunch and door prizes. The Master Gardeners partner with Kishwaukee College who provides marketing, registration services and space for the event to be held. This event is attended by 200 gardeners each year and is a highly anticipated event by gardeners in this part of the state.

Stanley Huffman (Charleston, Coles County)
Stanley has given expertise to numerous projects, especially with the Plant-a-Row program at Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center. He researched & planned a medicinal herb garden at the historic Rutherford House in Oakland. Stanley also led the group in bringing youth gardening to the Salvation Army site.

Pat Jurgens (Arthur, Moultrie-Douglas Unit)
Patti is the unsung hero in the Moultrie-Douglas unit. She has led the work at the Eberhardt Village Nursing Home as well as the Dorothy B. Jurgens Park next to the office. Patti helped to proof the new Master Gardener manual and is a leading force in the Garden Walk.

Pat Kraft (Woodstock, McHenry County)
Pat jumped in to help as soon as she completed her internship and took on the role of chair of the Demonstration Garden, requiring coordination of a dozen “bed heads”. In 2009, she was elected president of the group. Pat is also a gifted writer and speaker—she writes a monthly column for the newsletter.

Bev Krams (Arlington Heights, Cook North Suburban Unit)
Bev’s leadership skills have been extensively utilized in the Kids on Track program where she was in charge of program planning and execution, including teaching classes and writing the curriculum. Bev volunteers at many Information Tables and helped to compile the new Master Gardener directory.

Jerrie Lott (Pearl City, Stephenson County)
Jerrie’s easy going personality and down to earth style make him a trusted resource for staff and clients both. He is a knowledgeable leader on the Helpline and he has worked with the media on radio and newspaper interviews. Jerrie is also a leader in the planning of the ‘Joys of Gardening’ program.

Shey Lowman (Leaf River, Ogle County)
Shey is a born leader! In 2008 she organized all aspects of a plant sale fundraiser for her Master Gardeners. She serves on the state Master Gardener Advisory Committee, as chair of the local Extension Council and as a rep to the NW region Advisory Council. Shey used her skills to prepare PowerPoint shows and talks for community groups throughout the county.
**Kathy Moore (Heyworth, McLean County)**
Kathy is well respected for her willingness to listen before making decisions, a skill which has helped her as a member of the Advisory Board and chair of the committee which plans trainings. She is also chair of the Member Relations Committee which oversees the newsletter, garden walks and a garden photo contest.

**Don Nekrosius (Oak Park, Cook County)**
Don is a good communicator and he brings this skill to all his projects. He has served as a leader at the Smart Home Garden, working with children at special events and giving a tool care workshop for MGs. Don is also leader for the Macy’s Flower Show project, both as a docent and with the planning committee.

**Barbara Nieders (Quincy, Adams-Brown Unit)**
Barbara is a gardening superwoman! She has coordinated and been involved with every aspect of the Veterans Home Garden—the Memorial Garden, Purple Heart Garden and the Boulevard. She initiated the Porch project at the county fair and assists with the Gardener’s Palette event.

**Sandy Pecori (Springfield, Sangamon-Menard Unit)**
Sandy is an active member of the Demonstration Herb Garden where she is the “basil expert”. She assists in the planning and planting of these gardens as well as educational events. Sandy has been a three year member of the Advisory Committee and assists with garden therapy and the Shed Sale.

**Barbara Pence (Sycamore, DeKalb County)**
Barbara brings her organizational skills to the leadership role of the therapeutic horticulture group. She also contributes to the gardens at the County Rehab and Nursing Center— at the Alzheimer’s and Herb Gardens. Barbara writes publicity articles for events, maintains the websites and creates displays.

**Margaret Rhoads (Caledonia, Boone County)**
Margaret is a true ambassador for Extension. She has been heavily involved with the Help Desk & took over leadership of the Dye Garden. Margaret showed her talents at the Autumn Pioneer Festival, an event with the Conservation District & is serving on the education committee for a local school garden.

**Emerald Ash Borer/Ash Tree Inventory (Boone County)**
Jamie Braden, Charles Brown, Richard Butler, Judy Cotugno, Jan Dunham, Beverly Eick, Richard Eick, Sandy Erickson, Judy Ernest, Cathie Everson, Jane Gallick, Charlene Halgren, Nancy Jacobson, Barbara Johnston, Mitzi Kelly, Elaine Lucietto, Robert Nilles, Christine Pawelko, Margaret Rhoads, Dixie St John-Ewert, Shirley Steinkamp, Cindy Stowell, Carl Swanson, JoAn Todd, Barb Wych
In 2009 the Master Gardeners in Boone County partnered with county and local government officials, the parks, conservation districts, Extension educators and the IDA for the purpose of developing a coordinated response plan to EAB. To begin, the MGs set up a training to learn signs and symptoms of EAB, ID of ash trees, what information to collect and how to use a hand held GPS. The group then divided into teams to inventory ash trees located on all public and township right of ways in the entire county. All the data that was collected was given to the county GIS Dept. who plotted the data onto county maps. Trees were color coded to reflect the trees condition—dead, declining or healthy. The county is using this study to determine the allocation of resources to combat EAB. The volunteers have also educated the public along the way as evidenced by their “Watch Your Ash Tree” t-shirts seen at all community events.

**Spring into Gardening (Coles County)**
Max Davis, Paula Enstrom, Glennie Hamel, Kathy Hummel, Karen Jackson, Kate Lutz, Phyllis Schultz, Juanita Sherwood, Marsha Overton
In 2008, a dedicated group of Coles County Master Gardeners began to plan a workshop to provide educational information to residents, promote Extension Master Gardeners and to raise funds for future projects. The group networked with the Coles County Council on Aging to use their new LifeSpan Center in exchange for guidance on plantings around the facility. Community businesses supplied materials for registration folders. The event reached maximum capacity early which pleased the volunteers. Attendees were pleased with the educational sessions by University of Illinois educators and the silent auction was a huge success.
Mary Sapienza (Palatine, Cook North Suburban Unit)
Mary is a compassionate and patient supervisor of residents at Little City, a community for developmentally or physically disabled adults. She works with the residents in the greenhouse and with sharing information about plants. Mary has been a leader in all aspects of the Kids on Track program.

Sandy Shriver (Decatur, Macon County)
Sandy has a “let’s get it done” attitude and has taken a leadership role in the rain barrel project and the annual Tomato Taste Panel. He was instrumental in working with a local metal shop to get special parts needed for the rain barrels and he presents rain barrel workshops around the state.

Joyce Stemp (Wheeling, Cook North Suburban Unit)
Joyce has shown extreme dedication to the Indian Trails Public Library Youth Garden where she set up a “Giving Garden” for youth. She led the youth in planting vegetables in six beds and the group donated over 50 pounds of produce to the food pantry. Joyce is also active in the Kids on Track program.

Becky Stephens (Sandwich, DeKalb County)
Dependable, competent, hard working and goal-oriented all characterize Becky. She is co-leader of the therapeutic horticulture programs at the Shabbona Nursing Home & the DeKalb County Nursing Home. Becky is also active on the Hort Help Desk and is a valued member of the Advisory Board.

Shirley Swarthout (Decatur, Macon County)
Shirley’s dedication and attention to detail helped her as co-chair of the Herb Garden at the Decatur Public Library. In 2007 she was the publicity chair for the Garden Walk and she revamped the ticketing process and educational materials. Shirley helped to formulate a budget for the unit as the Advisory Board treasurer.

Jana Waite (Champaign, Champaign County)
Jana is a role model for her peers and a leader in several projects. This year she was co-chair of the annual Garden Walk. Jana works in multiple areas in the Idea Garden– the Tropical Garden, Theme Garden and East Border Garden. She shares her love of gardening as a mentor or “Garden Buddy” for new interns.
Margaret Burns Westmeyer  
(Chicago Heights, Cook South Suburban)
Margaret has effectively leveraged her role on the Chicago Heights Beautification Committee to form a win-win relationship with Master Gardeners. At the local library she led an effort to provide environmental stewardship programs for youth thru gardening activities. Margaret works with special needs audiences and the local food pantry.

Mary Spiewak (Mettawa, Lake County)
Mary is busy in Lake county with the information service, mentoring Habitat for Humanity homeowners, and helping with plant clinics and the Speakers Bureau. She showed her leadership skills on the Master Gardener Advisory Committee where she organized field trips and garden walks. In 2004, Mary took on a major reorganization of the resources in the MG volunteer room. She has created a database of reference books, reorganized files, compiled a list of frequently used phone numbers and updated the soil lab lists. Mary has also served as a member of the Plant Sale Committee and the Lake County Extension Council.

Barbara Wych (Belvidere, Boone County)
Barb has been a cornerstone of the Boone County program where she leads with passion, dedication and commitment. Barb served on the State MG Advisory Committee for six years and is also a part of the Extension Council for Boone County. Last year Barb took on a leadership role with the Emerald Ash Borer project– one which inventoried all ash trees on public land in the county. She is a frequently requested speaker for the local Speakers Bureau and has assisted a local elementary school in converting a weed infested courtyard into an outdoor living classroom. Barb has earned the title “Expert” for her excellent work on the Help Desk.
Debbie Malinowski (Hawthorn Woods, Lake County)
Debbie is very dedicated to her volunteer work and has been involved in almost every project at Lake County. In 2005-2006 Debbie was a member of the local Advisory Committee. In 2004 she became a member of the Garden Committee which plans and maintains the demonstration gardens around the office. For four years, Debbie has been a leader of the Recognition of Achievement committee as a representative for the Master Gardener program where she helps plan an all-Extension volunteer recognition event each year. Debbie was also responsible for MGs becoming involved with Habitat for Humanity and she personally mentors homeowners.

Anna Mattes (Ottawa, LaSalle County)
Anna has volunteered over 1,000 hours as a University of Illinois Master Gardener. Anna’s leadership is most evident at the Ottawa Washington Square project where the gardens have been redesigned to recall mid-19th century typical plantings. Anna answers questions and teaches others in this garden. She also teaches numerous gardening classes; writes articles for the local newsletter; works at the Saturday Farmer’s Market booth answering client questions and does a radio talk show on a local station where citizens call in gardening questions on the live radio. Anna takes time to be a member of the Ottawa Tree Board which governs removal and planting of trees on public property.

Mary Smith (Charleston, Coles County)
Mary has given her time and talents to Coles County for ten years. She was the chairperson for the Visionary Committee which had the responsibility to REV UP (review, energize and vision the future) for her unit. Mary led the group in revising by-laws, creating a pictorial directory including state and local program information as well as volunteer opportunities. This committee also initiated a one day educational event called ‘Spring into Gardening’ which received excellent feedback from attendees. Mary is also active in the unit fundraiser, the Mattoon Herb and Garden Festival and she was a member of the 2009 state conference planning committee where she helped with the Coles County tour.

Sustained Excellence Award Winners

Mary Jane Bohall  Barbara Lindholm
Fran Cella  Debbie Malinowski
Alice Erickson  Anna Mattes
Karen Gottlieb  Mary Smith
Kay Henrichs  Mary Spiewak
Margie Karl  Barbara Wych
Cathie Leszinske

Mary Jane Bohall (Bloomington, McLean County)
Mary Jane is best known for her leadership at Sarah’s Garden at the David Davis Mansion. She coordinates this project and directs the restoration, maintenance, education and interpretation efforts. She has instituted a daily journal, has been instrumental in researching the garden with local horticultural historians and has promoted the propagation of heirloom plants in the garden. Mary Jane is also chair of the Client Services committee and in 2008 received the McLean County Master Gardener of the year award. She is a mentor for new interns and works at many community projects such as Holton Homes, Mayors Manor, Pot Recycling and the ODC Garden.

Fran Cella (Elgin, Kane County)
Since accepting the responsibilities of lead mentor at the Help Desk, Fran has trained all the interns under her tutelage. She also reviews all the client call sheets looking for correct diagnosis and thorough replies and has started a “things you need to know” binder for the volunteers who work the Help Desk. In 2004, 2008 and 2009 Fran won the Cauliflower Ear Award – for the Master Gardener who logs the most hours at the Help Desk that year. Fran has also served on the Kane County Master Gardener Advisory Council, has done presentations with the Speakers Bureau and prepared questions for public meetings related to Extension reorganization.

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Debbie Malinowski
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Mary Smith
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2010 Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference
Alice Erickson (Hinckley, DeKalb County)
Alice is active in nine projects and six committees! She is an eight year project leader of therapeutic horticulture at the Shabbona Care Center and a four year Help Desk project leader. She developed a mentoring program so that the interns would have a positive experience and provides them with procedures, techniques and information to work with clients. Alice is also involved with the Tallgrass Prairie Project at Shabbona State Park and is the coordinator of the Boutique Shop at the annual garden walk and plant sale event. Alice is a 5 year member of the Century Club– for those who volunteer over 100 hours annually in DeKalb County.

Karen Gottlieb (Bloomington, McLean County)
Karen is often the first one to volunteer in her county and she plays a leadership role as chairperson of the Public Relations Committee. She is a team leader for the “Growing Gardeners” children’s garden which is done in cooperation with the Normal Parks and Recs Department. Karen has also served as editor and co-editor of the Master Gardener newsletter for the last five years. She has put in many hours of work developing speeches and PowerPoints for talks with youth, ODC clients, public groups at the Sugar Grove Nature Center and the Second Thursday Gardening programs. Karen can also be found answering questions at the plant clinic or on the hotline.

Kay Henrichs (Bloomington, McLean County)
Kay was voted McLean County Master Gardener of the year for 2009 and ran unopposed for the president-elect role this spring. She is chairperson of the Member Development Committee where she began a routine interview process for prospective trainees and initiated a mentoring program for their success once training was completed. Kay led the development of a tour for children at Sarah’s Garden which included different educational stations. Kay is well known for her presentations and she has given talks at the Sugar Grove Nature Center, Second Thursday classes, Unity Center, ODC and Normal Parks and Rec to name just a few.

Margie Karl (Mapleton, Peoria County)
Margie has been a leader on the Master Gardener board in Peoria county– establishing the position of projects coordinator to monitor ongoing projects and then later writing guidelines for volunteer service and officer job descriptions. Margie was group president in 2009 and helped to increase publicity for group events and to produce a user-friendly protocol for the Help Line. She planned and chaired Peoria Counties' first Junior Master Gardener program. She has also chaired the Speakers Bureau, designed a garden courtyard for the nursing home and chaired the ICC Landscape and Garden Day.

Cathie Leszinske (West Chicago, DuPage County)
Cathie has worked on many projects during her ten year tenure as a Master Gardener but her passion has been to lead a team of volunteers on the Graue Mill project. The Graue Mill is a working grist mill from the 1850s that has been restored to provide programs for children and adults. The Mill plantings highlight native historically correct plants. Cathie was a leader for a pilot program titled “Farming: Then and Now” which teaches youth about Hort and farming practices today versus in the 1850s. She was the Vendor chairperson for the 2008 state conference and for several years Cathie has helped with the core course training of new Master Gardeners.

Barbara Lindholm (Clare, DeKalb County)
Barb is a cornerstone of the DeKalb County program, as evidenced by her winning the Robert Brown Family Award for DeKalb County’s Outstanding Master Gardener in 2009. Barb takes great pride in the annual plant sale which she helped to develop and organize and which is a huge fundraiser for the county. For eight years, Barb has also been the project leader for “How Does Your Garden Grow”, a gardening column printed in the Daily Chronicle from April to October. She is also involved with the DeKalb County Nursing Home project which includes three parts– an outdoor interactive garden for residents; year-round therapeutic gardening projects and a new Alzheimer garden.