

Illinois Master Gardener IMAGINE

INFORMATION ♦ NEWS ♦ EDUCATION



Volume 13 No. 2
March-April 2012

COORDINATORS' COMMENTS

Many thanks to all of you for reporting hours on the online volunteer reporting system. If you have not learned how to use the system- now is the time to do so as no more paper copies will be accepted at the state office. ID cards will be mailed out later this month to Extension offices.

The final statistics for 2011 are:

Volunteer hours: 190,196 (the equivalent of 91 full-time staff)

Continuing education hours: 41,000 (estimated)

Number of active MGs and interns: 3440

Value of volunteer service (based on the value of a volunteer hour of \$22.25 from the Independent Sector): \$4.23 million dollars.

Estimated pounds of produce donated to PAR and the needy: 180,000 lbs

2011 new Master Gardeners trained: 683 including 130 online

These are impressive figures! Your individual hours may not seem impressive to you but when all the volunteers report their hours we have some great impact to show to county boards and funders.

On another topic- I always have requests for more online continuing education opportunities. Hopefully you are checking the MG website for new postings. Here are 3 good classes to investigate:

1. The Great Lakes Vegetable Working Group video on insect natural enemies. It can be viewed at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r1EYCEvAgnY>.
2. The EAB University developed by Purdue, Ohio State, Michigan State Universities and the National Forest Service. There are free webinars which include presentations on EAB, Asian Longhorned Beetle, Thousand Cankers Disease and more. To access the webinars go to this website: http://www.emeraldashborer.info/eab_university.cfm
3. "Introduction to Diagnostics for Master Gardener Volunteers: Approaches to Plant Pest Diagnostics" is available for Extension Master Gardeners to take as continuing education for a \$10 fee. Visit the eXtension website: campus.extension.org and set up an account using the "Create an account" link on the left side of the page. It's free, easy and secure. Once you have that account created (you will receive an email with confirmation and a password), log into the eXtension site, scroll through the available course categories and select Master Gardener. Then select "Introduction to Diagnostics," and pay for the course. Once payment is complete, you can view the course website and get started.

Monica David, Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator

APPAREL SALE OPENS MARCH 7

It's time once again to order your Master Gardener apparel and merchandise. Along with this newsletter (it is also posted on our website) is a sell sheet. We will still offer the old favorites such as patches, T-shirts, polo shirts, and denim shirts. New items for 2012 include mens and ladies long sleeve twill shirts, mens and ladies dri mesh polos, fleece vests and jackets, a cooler, flower pot mugs and scoop neck tops for ladies. All items contain an embroidered logo except for T shirts, tank tops and the scoop neck top for ladies which have screen printed logos.



Please select carefully. All sales are final and there are no extra items for exchanges. **All ordering will be done online at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/news/default.cfm>** Credit cards and checks will be accepted for payment. All prices include shipping to your county/unit office. **Final date to order is Friday April 13, 2012. No late orders will be accepted.** Please allow 6-8 weeks after the April 13 deadline for delivery of items.

2012 MASTER GARDENER MINI-GRANT WINNERS

Thanks to all the counties who submitted applications for the 2012 Master Gardener mini-grants. We received 31 applications with a total request for over \$26,000. Unfortunately- we could only fund 10 of those projects as our budget is around \$5,000. This figure is based on the yearly amount generated from the annual silent auction held at state conference. The Master Gardener state advisory committee selected the winners based on the clarity and completeness of the application; the project's consistency with the Extension and Master Gardener missions; practicality, usefulness and relevance of the project; potential number of people impacted and the educational value of the project. The committee also looked closely at how the applicants followed instructions; the completeness of the budget narrative and the evidence of a well-designed procedure for evaluating the project and showing impact. Winners will submit a brief summary of their projects and its evaluation and impacts by January 31. This summary will be used in the *Imagine* newsletter, on the state Master Gardener blog and for reports to stakeholders. The next round of applications will be due January 31, 2013. Before that date- I will place some of the outstanding applications submitted this year on our website so you will understand what the committee is looking for when they choose the winners.

Congratulations to all our mini-grant winners!

WINNER	PROJECT	AMOUNT AWARDED
CHAMPAIGN COUNTY	<i>Backyard Winter Gardening: Building and Using Low Hoop Tunnels to Extend Your Season</i>	\$460
COLES	<i>Enabling Garden</i>	\$430
DEKALB	<i>Sycamore History Museum at Engh Farm</i>	\$600
LAKE	<i>Sustainable Educational Edible Display Garden</i>	\$800
MADISON	<i>Veggies and Herbs Squared: Gardening in Small Spaces</i>	\$1000
MCDONOUGH	<i>Gardening 101 "Roots & Shoots"</i>	\$495
PEORIA	<i>Western Greenway</i>	\$390
PIKE	<i>Shastid Home Heirloom Garden</i>	\$205
SCHUYLER	<i>Rushville Community Garden</i>	\$284
VERMILION	<i>Douglas Discovery Garden Raised Vegetables Beds and Vineyard</i>	\$600



NGA RELEASES NEW ENVIRONMENTAL LAWN & GARDEN SURVEY

by Susan Littlefield

National Gardening Association conducted its first Environmental Lawn and Garden Survey in 2004. Concerns about global warming, climate change, our carbon footprint, and all things "green" have continued to increase since then. Our newly released 2011 Environmental Lawn and Garden Survey includes updated research on attitudes about the importance of maintaining lawns and landscapes in an environmentally friendly way, opinions about how environmentally friendly current lawn and landscape practices are, how knowledgeable homeowners are about how to maintain their lawns and landscapes in an environmentally friendly way, and new research about the market for chemical and organic fertilizers and insect and weed controls.

Clearly the concept of using environmentally friendly gardening practices is important to many. 79 percent of all U.S. households said that it was important to them that residential, commercial, and municipal lawns and landscapes be maintained in an environmentally friendly way. This was, however, a drop from the 89 percent who felt this way three years prior, in 2008.

But a disconnect comes when the number of people actually using environmentally friendly gardening practices is tallied. In both 2011 and 2008, only 3 percent of all households said they were extremely knowledgeable about how to maintain their home lawns and landscapes in an environmentally friendly way, and 11 percent said they were very knowledgeable. In 2011, 62 percent of all households said they were somewhat, not very, or not at all knowledgeable about how to maintain the lawn and landscape at their home in an environmentally friendly way, compared to 70 percent in 2008.

A representative sample of U.S. households that have a lawn or landscape to maintain were provided with a list of 12 lawn, garden, and landscape practices and asked to check which practices they plan to follow at home this year. While they were not labeled specifically as being "environmentally friendly," all of the practices are recommended methods for creating and maintaining an environmentally friendly lawn and landscape. In 2011, only 2 out of 12 practices were planned to be followed by more than 50 percent of households.

Why don't more people use environmentally friendly natural or organic gardening methods? The top reason given, by 33 percent, was simply that they had never thought about gardening this way. Others thought these methods were too expensive (28 percent); not effective enough (12 percent); too much work (11 percent); or too time consuming (9 percent).

It's clear that changes are needed on a number of environmental fronts to reduce the impact of the way we live, including the practices people use to maintain their home lawns and landscapes. NGA's view is that good environmental stewardship begins at home. That's where individuals can have a direct impact. People tell us that environmentally friendly lawns and landscapes are important to them. To help them put these values into practice, NGA is committed to providing gardeners with the practical, "doable" information they need to grow and maintain successful gardens and landscapes that enhance and protect the environment. With our comprehensive information about environmentally friendly lawn and landscape practices available in our email newsletters, Website content and school curriculums, our goal is to increase the number of gardeners who cultivating both plants and a concern for our natural world.

THE GARDENS OF SPAIN

Only four spots still remain for the Master Gardener trip to the glorious gardens of Spain. The trip runs September 10-22, 2012 and will visit the cities and gardens of Granada, Cordoba, Seville, Ronda and Madrid. Gardens included in the trip are the Alhambra Palace and Generalife Gardens in Granada; the Royal Palaces of the Alcazar in Cordoba; Plaza de Espana and the Gardens of Murillo in Seville; the Alameda del Tajo Gardens and Palace of Rhonda and the rose garden Parque Buen Retiro in Madrid. The trip also features the UNESCO World heritage Segovia and free time to explore Madrid.

Tour price is \$3,999 per person land only and airfare is \$1150. Visit <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/events> to view the entire itinerary. Contact Robyn Gulstrom to hold your spot- rgulstrom@comcast.net or 269-629-9248.

SMA ANNOUNCES 2012 URBAN TREE OF THE YEAR

The Society of Municipal Arborists (SMA), comprised of 1400 urban forestry professionals worldwide, has chosen Accolade elm (*Ulmus* 'Morton') as its 2012 Urban Tree of the Year. The selection was adaptable to a variety of harsh growing conditions and has strong ornamental traits. The Tree of the Year Program has been running for 17 years and past honorees include goldenrain-tree (2011), redbud (2010), Chickapin oak (2009), black tupelo (2008), baldcypress (2007) and Kentucky coffeetree (2006).

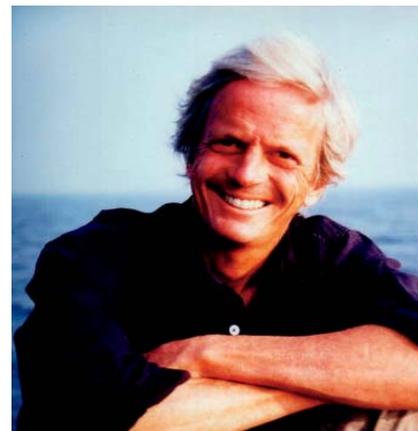
Accolade elm is hardy to USDA Zone 4 and be expected to reach 40 to 60 feet in height and 35 to 40 feet in spread. It is praised by city forestry professionals for its toughness and beauty. Cornell Urban Horticulture Institutes Director Nina Bassuk says- "Accolade is one of the most vigorously growing trees we have ever planted in Ithaca, New York. Its sibling from the same cross, Danada Charm™ ('Morton Red Tip') is also exceptionally speedy. When young, Accolade is somewhat gangly with numerous limbs growing up and out, but not long ago, I saw the original mature Accolade at the Morton Arboretum and it was spectacular, reminiscent of the tall arched form of the American elm. It also has handsome dark green summer color and reasonably good yellow fall color. These hybrid elms have become deservedly popular. They are resistant to DED and reportedly resistant to elm yellows as well. They are easy to plant bare root and have a large, highly branched root system. Like other elms, they are highly tolerant of alkaline soil and wet or dry soil conditions. The only danger is of over-planting as their ease of transplanting and vigorous growth in the face of difficult conditions makes them the default tree for tough spots."

SMA press release- January 6, 2012 by Michelle Sutton

MORTON ARBORETUM PRESENTS SPRING GARDEN PARTY

On March 31 and April 1 the Morton Arboretum will sponsor a Spring Garden Party at its Thornhill Education Center. Saturday will feature tours of the naturalistic garden beds or the unique shrubs and trees in the garden. The keynote address "An American Beauty: Using Prairie Plants in Gardens and Landscapes" will be presented by Lynn Steiner, garden writer. Other sessions on that day include Outstanding Native Shrubs and Woody Vines; Gardening with Wildlife in Mind and Lessons Learned from 60 years of Gardening. Sunday April 1 features interactive workshops such as Trees, Shrubs and Wildlife; Planning, Planting and Tending A Rain Garden; Garden Wisdom: from Garden to Table and New Flowering Shrubs for the Midwestern Garden.

Register today to save your spot. mortonarb.org/education or call 630-719-2468.



ELIOT COLEMAN- KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR CONFERENCE 2012

Eliot Coleman, well recognized national expert on organic gardening, will be the keynote speaker for conference 2012 to be held at the Crystal Lake Holiday Inn and Conference Center in Crystal Lake, IL. Eliot has more than 40 years of experience in all aspects of organic farming, including field vegetables, greenhouse vegetables, rotational grazing of cattle and sheep, and range poultry. He is the author of *The New Organic Grower*, *Four Seasons Harvest* and *the Winter Harvest Handbook*. Four Season Farm is an experimental market garden in Harborside, Maine, owned and operated by writers Barbara Damrosch and Eliot Coleman. The farm produces vegetables year-round and has become a nationally recognized model of small-scale sustainable agriculture.



CONFERENCE 2012 OFFERS EXCITING TOURS AND CLASSES

The 2012 Master Gardener Conference promises to be one of the best yet! The conference will be held September 6-8 at the Crystal Lake Holiday Inn in Crystal Lake IL. The McHenry and Lake County Master Gardeners have chosen “Our Common Ground” as the theme for this year’s conference so join us as we share our common interests in gardening as well as learning how to sustain our gardens through wise environmental choices.

Registration for the conference will open May 1.

CLASS SESSIONS

Friday and Saturday will open with an early morning session on Yoga for Gardeners each day. Friday September 7th features a keynote address by Eliot Coleman- well known organic gardening expert (see the information on page 4 of this newsletter). Breakout sessions will feature classes on Grapes; Tropical Punch; Shrubs; Eat the Weeds; Bee Keeping 101; Creating a PowerPoint Presentation; Four Season Harvest; Fairy Gardens; Invasives, Roses; Medicinal Herbs; Hostas, Wine Making; Lawns and much more.

Saturday classes begin with a general session by Rory Klick on Sustainability titled “Isn’t Horticulture Already Green?” Class sessions follow with topics such as Community Gardening; Heirlooms; Culinary Herbs; Native Trees; Insects; Native Plants; Bonsai (hands-on); Backyard Fruit Trees, Vermicomposting (hands-on) and more.

TOURS

Thursday September 6th is tour day and we have a tour for every gardener and every gardening interest!

ALL DAY TOURS

Tour 1- This tour highlights commercial composting, environmental achievement and organic farming. Join this group to visit Midwest Organics (commercial composting); the Lake County Central Permit Facility (rain gardens and a green roof) and Temple Farms Organic (sustainable organic agriculture).

Tour 2- Tour two features a host extravaganza, abundant vegetables and a sesquicentennial farm. This tour will feature Als Auto Body and Arboretum (400+ hostas); the Harvard Growing Together Community Gardens (McHenry MGs) and The McEachran Homestead (circa 1910 farm and vineyard).

Tour 3- Join this group to view historically significant Lake Michigan estates. The tour features Crab Tree Farm; the Craig Bergman Home and Studio and the Mettawa Manor and Gardens. These estates are sure to WOW you!

HALF DAY TOURS

Tour 4- This morning tour features the Cherry Lane Farm owned by Market Day founder Trudi Temple as well as a great wholesale nursery- HOFFIE nursery

Tour 5- This second morning tour features the Volo Bog- the only “quaking bog” in Illinois to have an open water center. The second stop is the McHenry County Master Gardeners demonstration garden- 8,000 square feet of display gardens.

Tour 6- Join this group for an afternoon trip to Rich’s Foxwillow Pines Nursery (over 2,500 cultivars of woodies, hostas, daylilies and conifers). Then on to the Rotary Garden at the McHenry County office with 17 raised beds. The trip ends with a visit to the Loyola Ecology Campus for a view of different habitats and biodiversity at its best.

Tour 7- This afternoon tour focuses on restoration projects and bird watching. Visit the Citizens for Conservation and view their 367 acres of prairies, savannas and woodlands and then on to Baker Lake- a treat for avid bird watchers.

OPTIONAL PRE AND POST CONFERENCE TOURS

Available September 5- 1 to 5 pm or September 9- 8 am to Noon. These tours will feature kayaking on the Nippersink Creek. Paddle through Glacial Park for 7 miles with stops for discussion by your guide about restoration work, habitats for endangered species and other sites of interest.

IMPORTANT DATES

March 10-18: Chicago Flower and Garden Show, Navy Pier, Chicago, IL. Garden displays, shopping and lots of educational sessions. <http://chicagoflower.com>

March 17: Weekend Gardener, Gateway Convention Center, Collinsville, IL. 8:30 am-2:45 pm. Choose from 16 exciting workshops including: Native Plants; Backyard Pond Maintenance; Daylilies; Tree and Shrub Pruning; Beneficial Insects; Herbs; Landscape Design and much more. Classes will be taught by local gardening professionals, Master Gardeners, and University of Illinois Extension staff. Lunch will be provided. Pre-registration is required. 618-650-7050.

March 17: Gardener's Day, Western IL University Student Union, Macomb, IL. 9 am to 3 pm. Some of the topics are: Wildlife Damage Management; Garden Ponds; Plants In and Around; Living Wreaths; New Varieties of Annuals; Fruit Trees; Bird Gardening; High Tunnels for Home Gardens; Invasive Plants; Ages and Stages of Gardening; and Gourds. Registration includes break out sessions, lunch, handouts, door prizes and vendors. \$40 includes lunch- register before 3-12. Sponsored by the McDonough County MGs. 309-837-3939.

March 17: Gardener's Day, Cherry Hills Baptist Church, Springfield, IL. 8:00 am to 12 pm. Nine one-hour seminars will be offered in three sessions by MGs, Extension specialists and local horticulture experts. Topics include Spring Wildflowers; Gourds; Herbs; Grapes; Seed Starting; Pruning; Soils; Bees and Vegetable Gardening. Fee is \$10 before March 9 and \$12 at the door. Sponsored by the Sangamon- Menard MGs. <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lms> or 217-782-4617.

March 19-April 23: Spring Series of Home Horticulture, Monday evenings 7-9 pm, Rock Island Extension Office, Milan, IL. Series of workshops costs \$25 or \$3 per workshop. <https://webs.extension.uiuc.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=6394>.

March 24: "Think Spring" Horticulture Workshop, Black Hawk East College. 9 am to Noon. Continental breakfast at 8:30 am. Topics include "Flying Flowers" (Butterflies) in Your Garden; Vegetable Gardening and New Plant Materials for 2012. Sponsored by the Henry-Stark MGs. <https://webs.extension.uiuc.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=6393>.

March 24: Garden Day, Jacksonville Extension Office 9 am to Noon. \$10 per person. <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/ccgms/>

March 24: Spring Garden Symposium: Create an Engaging Garden, Rotary Gardens, Janesville, WI. 8 am to 4 pm. A jam packed day of sessions including Patterns and Rhythms in the Garden by Tim Gruner curator of the Anderson Gardens; Creating Story Gardens by Evelyn Hadden; Gardening for Kids by Norm Lownds curator of the Michigan State Childrens Garden and Sensory Gardens by Mark Dwyer from the Rotary Botanical Gardens. \$75 for general public includes box lunch, sessions and resource materials. www.rotarybotanicalgardens.org or 608-752-3885.

March 31: Gardeners Big Day, Dickson Mounds Museum, Lewiston, IL. 9 am to 4 pm. \$24 includes lunch, great speakers, workshops, vendors, displays and much more. Session topics include The History of Gardening in Illinois; Shady Characters; Healthy Soil, Healthy Produce; Healthy You; Growing in the Imperial Valley; Moles; Vertical Gardening; Native Plants; Bargain Gardening; Disease and Diagnosis and the Trouble with Trees. Sponsored by the Fulton County MGs, Dickson Mounds Museum and the Spoon River Garden Club. <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/fmpt/> or 309-547-3711.

April 12: April in Paris, Edgar County Fairgrounds-II Hwy 1 North, Paris, IL. Four educational sessions include Dr. Tom Turpin on "Good Bugs, Bad Bugs"; Sandy Mason on "Why is my Evergreen Turning Brown?"; Mary Liz Wright on "Eating Green with a Twist" and Theresa Bach on "Bringing Beauty to Paris". \$25 fee includes lunch. Sponsored by the Edgar County MGs. 217-465-8585 or <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cce/>

April 14: Gardenfest 2012 Ready Set Grow, McHenry County College, Crystal Lake, IL. 7:30 am to 4 pm. . Choose from over 30 class sessions including Community Gardening; Tree Pruning; Quilt Gardening and Vegetable Garden Insect Pests. Enjoy keynote speaker Ed Lyon, Director of the Allen Centennial Gardens in Madison, Wisconsin, as he addresses recent changes in gardening as America's number one recreational activity. \$40 includes lunch, vendors and exhibits. Sponsored by the McHenry Co. MGs and McHenry Community College. 815-459-0638 or <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lm/mchenrymg/>



2012 Upper Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference

July 19-21 at the UMN Landscape Arboretum in Chanhassen, MN

Every two years, the Upper Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference is hosted by WI, IL, IA, or MN. In 2012, it's our turn here in Minnesota, and we are excited and proud to be hosting the conference at the world-renowned Minnesota Landscape Arboretum.

The conference will also feature a vendor fair, a silent auction with proceeds going toward the Jr. Master Gardener program in Minnesota, book signings, Minnesota Wine Opening Reception and a Minnesota Buffet Banquet featuring speaker Dr. Ed Schneider, Arboretum director.

The class sessions are diverse and exciting and focused around research in the Midwest! Some are classroom-based, some hands-on, some a little of both.

Registration is now open.

We hope you'll join us!

<http://hennepinmastergardeners.org/events/upper-midwest-master-gardener-conference>

THINK GREEN

The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener program and 4-H have teamed up to present the "Think Green" program for youth in Illinois, which will be formally launched in March 2012. The "Think Green" Program engages youth in investigating how living things interact with each other and with their environment. This program includes three tracks: 1) worms, 2) butterflies, and 3) insects. All three tracks are aligned to Illinois State Goals and follow a sequence of four 40-60 minute investigations in which youth practice observation skills, conduct hands-on investigations with living things, explore different life cycles, identify how living things function/adapt/change, and compare how living things interact with each other and with their environment. The hands-on science inquiry activities will be facilitated by University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners and 4-H volunteers with related subject-matter expertise. Lessons are drawn from the Junior Master Gardener® curriculum, as well as, the University of Illinois Extension curriculum, *Scientific Inquiry with Butterflies* and *Adventures of Herman the Worm*.

This program could be done in a school, after-school, or agency setting. The target audience is 3rd-5th grade students. Groups may choose to participate in one or more of the four-session tracks (e.g. worms, butterflies, insects). While the program may be adapted for use in single events, such as a conservation day, teachers/leaders who commit to engaging youth in the five-session program will receive additional resource materials, including: Fandex flip field guides for bugs and a copy of, *One Small Square: My Backyard*, by Donald Silver. All youth participants will receive a personal "Think Green" magnifying glass.

A kick-off webinar to introduce "Think Green" will be presented on Monday March 12 at 1:30 pm. Contact your local MG Coordinator if you are interested in this program and wish to attend.

DUPAGE COUNTY CONVALESCENT CENTER WINS REEVE QUALITY OF LIFE GRANT

The Bloomingdale Garden Club, in collaboration with its partner, the University of Illinois Extension DuPage Master Gardeners, is proud to announce it has received a \$10,748 Quality of Life Grant from the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation Quality of Life Grants Program, to benefit the Residents of the DuPage Convalescent Center (DPCC) in Wheaton, IL.

The collaborative proposal, Gardening Year Round, focuses on Therapeutic Horticulture, and essentially extends the gardening season to residents of DPCC.

Three primary components comprise Gardening Year Round is to provide Garden Craft Projects during the “non-traditional gardening months” of January, February, March, November, and December; Design and installation of a new wheelchair-accessible Cutting Garden of Everlastings in spring 2012. Harvests of dried flowers will supplement the Garden Craft Projects; and the Master Gardeners from U of I Extension DuPage will extend their Gardening Lessons to these “non-traditional gardening months.” These lessons will provide opportunities that support, reinforce, and challenge residents’ cognitive abilities.

The DuPage Convalescent Center serves more than 300 residents ranging in age from 23 to 106 who have long-term medical needs and/or various disabilities. Throughout its history, the Center has added new programming to encourage the residents to remain vigorous and to engage them intellectually, physically, and creatively. An essential part of this programming is recreational therapy, which includes Therapeutic Horticulture. The “Resident Garden” at the Center has undergone tremendous transformation and growth. Today the garden is 11,525 sq. ft. It has nine wheelchair-accessible raised beds totaling more than 700 sq. ft. plus smaller areas dedicated to additional vegetables, herbs, and flowers. The Garden also features a 60 sq. ft. Sensory Garden, vertical plantings, a shade garden, pergola, fountain, and container gardens, providing a beautiful setting for the residents and their families to get outside and enjoy nature.

The Bloomingdale Garden Club is proud to support Therapeutic Horticulture for DPCC residents. Since 2010, the Bloomingdale Garden Club has donated flowers and supplies, along with funds for the purchase of a new greenhouse. The Garden Club has also committed 10% of the proceeds from its 2012 Flower/Plant Sale to help establish the DPCC Cutting Garden of Everlastings. “The Bloomingdale Garden Club is honored to receive this award. We thank the Reeve Foundation for its generous support of our collaborative efforts with the DuPage Master Gardeners to benefit the DPCC residents”, said Joyce Basel, Bloomingdale Garden Club President.

U of I Extension DuPage Master Gardeners have supported the DPCC Therapeutic Horticulture Program since 2009. They share their expertise in gardening, teaching lessons, Garden Craft Projects, and work one-on-one with residents, directly engaging them in the gardening experience. In 2011, 24 DuPage Master Gardeners and Interns collectively volunteered 1,083 hours to DPCC’s Therapeutic Horticulture Program. A Garden Walk is planned for this summer.

Reprinted from the TRIB Local- Wheaton.



Resident Debbie Ermilo shows off her vegetables.

USDA RELEASES NEW HARDINESS ZONE MAP

The USDA has just released its new plant hardiness zone map which can be accessed at <http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/>

The 2012 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map is the standard by which gardeners and growers can determine which plants are most likely to thrive at a location. The map is based on the average annual minimum winter temperature, divided into 10-degree F zones.

For the first time, the map is available as an interactive GIS-based map, for which a broadband Internet connection is recommended, and as static images for those with slower Internet access. Users may also simply type in a ZIP Code and find the hardiness zone for that area.

No posters of the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map have been printed. But state, regional, and national images of the map can be downloaded and printed in a variety of sizes and resolutions.



DISEASE-RESISTANT BEES MAKING A BUZZ IN NORTH CENTRAL REGION

In Rochester, IL, Stu Jacobson, a retired researcher for the University of Illinois at Springfield, has been working for years to increase interest and understanding among beekeepers in Illinois, eastern Missouri, and southern Wisconsin. Through grant work with NCR-SARE, Jacobson has been raising and marketing a line of mite and disease-resistant honeybee queens, an alternative to battling the mites with chemicals.

Bee pollination is responsible for more than \$15 billion in added crop value, particularly for specialty crops such as almonds and other nuts, berries, fruits, and vegetables. About one mouthful in three in the diet directly or indirectly benefits from honey bee pollination. Jacobson believes that bees play a vital role in the sustainability of agricultural systems, and is concerned about Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). One factor leading to CCD could include high levels of infection by the varroa mite, a parasite that feeds on bee blood and transmits bee viruses, so Jacobson has been working on the local production of disease and mite resistant queens and small colonies. He is concerned about a lack of adoption of disease and mite resistant or tolerant lines of bees and an over-reliance on queens from Sun Belt states. Jacobson uses standard cell grafting methods to raise queens. "Use of these lines will lessen the industry's dependence on harsh chemical and antibiotics, which can contaminate honey and cause reproductive problems for the bees, and should be at the core of strategies to address Colony Collapse Disorder" said Jacobson. "Beekeepers in Illinois who use locally adapted bees experience much lower annual losses than those using stock from Sun Belt states; frequently 15 percent or less." he said.

Jacobson's NCR-SARE grant-funded work has increased understanding and adoption of disease and mite resistant lines among beekeepers in the midwest. Another major thrust of his projects has been educational presentations to beekeepers on disease and mite resistant lines of bees. Jacobson and project participants have trained hundreds of beekeepers in queen production, and will offer at least four hands-on, introductory workshops in 2012. His NCR-SARE grant work has been the formation of the Illinois Queen Initiative (IQI), an organization that furthers the objectives of his NCR-SARE projects.