COORDINATORS’ COMMENTS

I hope you all enjoyed National Volunteer Week which was April 6-12. We often mention impact and how we all need to report the good things that are happening and the difference you are making with your programs. Numbers certainly don’t tell the whole story but here are your volunteer numbers for 2013. These numbers are used by our administrators to show stakeholders how much impact we are making with our programs and they are also used in our national reporting to USDA-NIFA.

HERE ARE THE STATISTICS FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER WORK IN 2013:

2013 Volunteer Hours= 195,758
2012 Continuing Education Hours= 42,893
Value of a volunteer hour= $22.14 per hour as specified by the Points of Light and the Independent Sector
Total Value of 2013 Illinois MG Volunteer Hours- $4.327 million to Illinois citizens

Volunteer Hours by Category of Work:
Gardens= 95,424  Hort Special Events= 23,990  Information Service= 35,480  Marketing Extension= 2096
Non-event Program support= 15,163  Other Extension Support= 4611  Speakers Bureau= 4714
Technical Hort Support= 7679  Therapeutic Hort= 6302

Contacts: adult face-to-face= 78,974
adult non face-to-face= 51,034
youth= 43,999
Total Contacts= 174,007
New Master Gardener trainees in 2013= 586

These stats are impressive and so is the work you are performing in your counties! Thanks to each and every one of you for your volunteer service to the University of Illinois Extension.

Monica David, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Coordinator

2014 MINI-GRANT WINNERS

Here are the mini-grant winners for 2014. These were funded from profits of the 2013 conference silent auction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County/Unit</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount Awarded</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DuPage</td>
<td>The Green Club at Camp Mathieu</td>
<td>$640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effingham</td>
<td>Empowering Youth to End Hunger</td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macoupin</td>
<td>Northwestern Elem. School JMG</td>
<td>$500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Madison</td>
<td>The Stephenson House</td>
<td>$150</td>
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<tr>
<td>McHenry</td>
<td>Community/Pantry Gardens</td>
<td>$700</td>
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<td>Peoria</td>
<td>Butterfly Habitat Education</td>
<td>$619.54</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rock Island</td>
<td>Teaching/Demo Vegetable Garden</td>
<td>$475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangamon</td>
<td>Monarchs for Kids</td>
<td>$500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Garden Grubbies</td>
<td>$340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winnebago</td>
<td>PAR at Rock River Valley Pantry</td>
<td>$441</td>
</tr>
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</table>
2014 AWARDS BANQUET AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS REGISTRATION NOW OPEN
Please join fellow IL. Master Gardeners as we celebrate our state award winners on June 13 at the I hotel in Champaign IL. The event will feature a keynote address by nationally regarded speaker, Doug Tallamy, followed by a luncheon and then the awards ceremony. Optional free tours of campus Hort sites will follow the awards banquet. This event replaces our annual state conference.

The schedule for June 13 is:
10:30 am-Registration opens at the I hotel
11:00 am- Keynote address by Doug Tallamy "A Case for Native Plants"
Noon- 1:00 pm- Luncheon
1:00-2:00 pm- Awards ceremony
2:30-4:00 pm- Optional guided tours
   Tour 1. Plant Sciences Greenhouses and Conservatory
   Tour 2. Hartley Trial Gardens and Japanese House/Champaign County Master Gardener’s Idea Garden
   Tour 3. Student Sustainable Farm

Douglas Tallamy Keynote Speaker
Douglas W. Tallamy is currently professor and chair of the department of entomology and wildlife ecology at the University of Delaware in Newark, Delaware, where he has taught insect taxonomy, behavioral ecology, and other subjects. Chief among his research goals is to better understand the many ways insects interact with plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. Doug won the Silver Medal from the Garden Writer’s Association. He is the author of the very popular book Bringing Nature Home and a new book with Rich Darke titled The Living Landscape. Doug’s first book will be on sale at the event. His website is www.PlantaNative.com

Optional Guided Tours: Three guided tours will be offered. There is no additional charge for the tours however you must provide your own transportation. Parking for the Greenhouse and Hartley Gardens/Idea Garden tours will be at parking meters so bring coins to “feed the meters”. Carpooling from the I hotel is encouraged. Parking for the student farm is free onsite. A map to the tour sites will be provided at check-in but each tour is only about a 5 minute drive from the I hotel.

Tour 1. Plant Sciences Greenhouse and Conservatory
The University of Illinois Conservatory and Plant Collection is a conservatory (2,000 square foot) and botanical garden. The conservatory houses over 200 species and 60 families of tropical and subtropical plants selected for their botanical interest or economic importance. Separate greenhouses contain ferns, bromeliads, cycads, orchids, carnivorous plants, herb and spice plants, and cacti, euphorbia, and other succulents. http://www.life.illinois.edu/plantbio/greenhouse/

Tour 2. Hartley Trial Gardens and Japan House/Idea Garden
Made possible by a gift from the family of alumnus and faculty member Miles C Hartley, the garden offers hundreds of different flowering plants and is the home of the University of Illinois All American Selections Trial Garden. The Japanese House is comprised of three rooms which were originally constructed in Japan, then shipped to the University and reassembled by Japanese carpenters. Tranquil gardens surround the House, typical of the Japanese style designed for harmony—tea, dry (raked gravel) and strolling. The Idea Garden is an ongoing project of the Master Gardeners of the Champaign County. The garden showcases the latest in borders, ornamentals, and vegetables. In addition, there is a children’s garden. These lovely gardens are all part of the University of Illinois Arboretum. http://arboretum.illinois.edu/our_gardens/

Tour 3. Student Sustainable Farm
The student farm serves as a production farm to supply our residence halls with locally grown, low-input sustainable food. In addition, the farm acts as a living laboratory to connect students, community members, and the state at large with regional, small-scale food systems. Currently, the farm operates between 45-48 weeks per year, occupying 6 acres for outdoor field production and nearly 10,000 square feet of year round high tunnel production. http://thefarm.illinois.edu/

Registration fee is $35. This includes the keynote address and the luncheon. There is plenty of free parking available at the I hotel. For a map to the I hotel visit: http://stayatthei.com/directions If you wish to stay overnite in the area you will need to make your own hotel reservations as no rooms have been reserved.

Registration is now open at http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/conference2014/ Registration closes June 5, no late registrations will be accepted.
Master Gardeners from Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Nebraska are invited to attend the Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference June 25-28, 2014 at the Isle of Capri and Quad Cities Waterfront Convention Center in Bettendorf, Iowa. The theme for the conference is “Growing Along the River”, a reference to Master Gardeners’ common interest in growing and learning about plants, and the mighty Mississippi River, which not only flows by the conference facilities but also unites the states in the Upper Midwest region. **Registration is now open. Early bird registration closes on April 30.**

Nationally known speakers Lauren Springer-Ogden, Scott Ogden, Melinda Myers and Felder Rushing headline a host of talented presenters who will be teaching classes during the conference. In most cases, you’ll have a choice from among six concurrent sessions. But you won’t be sitting in classrooms the entire time. The conference includes tours of private gardens, Iowa State University horticulture demonstration and research sites, public gardens such as the Bickelhaupt Arboretum, Vander Veer Botanical Park, and Quad Cities Botanical Center, and behind-the-scenes tours of commercial horticultural operations.

The featured speakers will talk on these topics: “Plant Driven Design-Creating Gardens that Honor Plants, Place and Spirit” by Scott Ogden and Lauren Springer-Ogden; “Gorgeous Perennial Grasses” by Lauren Springer-Ogden; “Add a Little Star Power to Your Garden” and “Go Vertical” by Melinda Myers; “Garden Art: The Good, the Bad, the Unbelievable” and “Slow Gardening” by Felder Rushing.

There will be 26 different breakout sessions including Less Common Fruit; Invasive Insects; Trough Gardening; Buck Roses; Crabapple Cultivars for the Midwest; Out of the Ordinary Theme Gardens; 30 years of the Hotline; Houseplants; Bulbs; Bee Virus Research; Gardening in Challenging Conditions and many more.

Full conference information is posted at [http://www.aep.iastate.edu/iowamg2014/](http://www.aep.iastate.edu/iowamg2014/)

The Isle of Capri Casino has reserved a block of rooms in their North Tower for conference attendees. To receive the special conference rates ($95 for King, $105 for 2 doubles), reserve your rooms through this link: [http://bettendorf.isleofcapricasinos.com/WMG0618.aspx](http://bettendorf.isleofcapricasinos.com/WMG0618.aspx).

**NEW IPM TAPED Webinars Released**

Three learning modules are now online for MG training:


Cost is $10 per module. Each involves videos, readings and questions and will be worth 3 hours of continuing education. Please check with your MG Coordinator for approval for continuing education credit prior to taking the courses. A printed certificate may be produced at the completion of each module. The learning modules are based on webinars held in 2012 and 2013 which were provided by the North Central Consumer Hort IPM Working Group and the North Central IPM Center.
2013 MINI GRANT SUMMARIES
THREE SISTERS GARDEN-LEE COUNTY
The Plum Creek Arboretum was the site for the Lee County Master Gardener’s Three Sisters Garden. The garden was planted in the spring by the Master Gardener’s, beginning with the corn seeds. The beans and squash were added later. Signs were posted with information on the history of the Three Sisters Garden, information on the plants, and information on how the plants sustain each other. Cement prints of animal tracks were placed around the edges of the garden along with flower pots. The garden was visited all summer long by a wide variety of people. Viewers included school groups, girl scouts, after school programs, summer school programs, Master Gardener’s, church groups, Dixon Area Garden Club, ladies clubs, and 4-H clubs. The Three Sisters Garden was a fun project for everyone. Much of the enjoyment was from watching the plants grow and develop their relationship with each other. Each time you visited there was something new to see and learn about in the garden.

The Three Sisters Garden was planted in a perfect spot and the Arboretum was a great venue to expose the project to the public. This summer we will turn the area into a different Children’s Garden project. The thing we would like to most work on for the future is getting the children to work with the Master Gardener’s in the garden. We have shared the project and information with the kids and now we would like to develop a working relationship with them also.

GARDEN GRUBBIES- WARREN COUNTY
Warren County Master Gardeners introduced a new program to our local community youth called Garden Grubbies. We broke ground on a new garden plot at the Community Center in Roseville, Illinois. The Community Center afforded us an excellent location, centered in the heart of an active residential area. In addition to the 4-H youth, we were able to catch the attention of children that lived nearby. These were youth enjoying their summer, whose innate curiosity drew them to the garden, with questions of “What flowers are you planting?” or “Is that lettuce!?” Our Master Gardeners quickly set to work educating the newcomers by identifying edibles, ornamentals and the occasional insect that was discovered.

Our young participants led the design of the new garden. With leadership from Master Gardener’s the children designed a circular planting of flowers and wildflowers, rows of leafy greens, and several ornamental shrubs. We purchased a tumbling composter and even though it was filled it every week with weeds, the materials always composted down, amazing the kids. Other educational sessions included vermicomposting, butterflies, vegetables, insects, and soil. As summer waned and school began again Garden Grubbies wrapped up for the year. Yet, in 2013 our Master Gardener’s grew more than a garden in Roseville. We sowed an enthusiasm for the outdoors, a place of belonging, and a love of growing.

ONARGA ACADEMY/CORNERSTONE CAFE GARDENS-FORD/IROQUOIS COUNTIES
The East Central Illinois town of Onarga is the home of a forward thinking educational institution – the Onarga Academy. Here troubled adolescent boys from all over the country stay in a homelike environment where they can further their education and treatment with behavioral and emotional problems. Among the many rich and varied programs designed to enable these young people to improve themselves and give them a future is the Cornerstone Café. Deb Foulks, Cornerstone’s manager teaches the youth in her charge, basic job training skills as they serve coffee and sweet rolls to the Café’s customers, literally “changing lives one cup at a time”.

In January 2013, the Master Gardeners were awarded a mini-grant for a new project to add vegetable gardens at Cornerstone Café. Project goal included expanding the café into a self-sustaining restaurant serving locally grown foods. Onarga Academy boys would grow the vegetables needed to make salads and other dishes in raised beds literally in the backyard of the cafe. By learning to grow vegetables, youth would gain new horticultural, culinary and business skills as well as add to the Café’s menu. Limited gardening space required the utilization of ‘square foot’ gardening techniques. Three 4 by 8 foot frames were built by the school’s vocational education teacher and class. Master Gardeners assisted with the planning, purchasing and installation of the beds in the spring. Rain barrels and a compost bin were added to increase the sustainability aspect of the garden. While the 2013 growing season showed mixed results, the 2013 learning season was a success.
2013 MINI GRANT SUMMARIES CONTINUED
ROOTS IN OUR COMMUNITY- ROYAL LAKES- MACOUPIN COUNTY

The Macoupin mini-grant was used to establish an intergenerational gardening program for Royal Lakes, which is a community of 190 in southern Macoupin County. Many of the residents in this community are elderly but there are 40 children as well. The seven session program included components of horticulture including: Plant Growth and Development: Food, Air, Soil and Water; Insects and Birds; Gardening including flowers and trees; and Vegetables and Herbs. The programs and activities were taught by Master Gardeners, Extension staff members and community leaders. The Roots in Our Community program introduced young gardeners and adults to the science of gardening, and helped them develop leadership and life skills to become a good citizen within the Royal Lakes community.

Examples of two of these sessions are discussed here.

April 11 – Plant Growth and Development - Participants started tomato and herb seeds. Youth members looked at different seeds to compare size. After the seeds were started, Master Gardeners helped grow them to be used in containers and garden. Activities included PLANTS Needs, selecting a garden site including a discussion on sunlight, water and soil and Plant Parts (roots, stems, flowers, seeds, fruit). The group discussed germination. Refreshments included vegetables and fruit. Participants discussed if the vegetables and fruit were roots, stems, flowers, seeds or fruit.

July 11 – The USDA Food Guide - My Plate - Nutrition activities included information on fruit and vegetables and how to increase the consumption based on color, texture, taste and smell. Youth discussed the cost of raising food in a garden compared going to a grocery store. More than 40 pounds of vegetables were raised and given to the community. Refreshments included vegetables and herbs raised by the participants.

INTOUCH ENABLING GARDEN-ROCK ISLAND

The Intouch Adult Day Service is one of the largest adult daycares in Illinois. Clients who come to Intouch are often elderly; many are wheel-chair bound and or suffer from age-related chronic problems such as arthritis, high blood pressure and obesity. About 15 years ago Intouch invited Master Gardeners to provide gardening therapy for their service. The Intouch Garden Club meets weekly and volunteers provide programs on gardening, plants, garden visitors and much more. Often times a horticultural/environmental craft is done or field trips are offered. In spring and summer programs focus on the Intouch garden. The garden was established several years ago as a memorial to a local garden lover, was designed by a local landscape company and features a raised bed, a small pond, an arbor and several ground level beds. Garden club members plan, plant, maintain and enjoy the garden, assisted by Master Gardeners. The grant helped these volunteers to revise the existing garden to make it more user friendly for Intouch clients. These items were added: two work stations in a covered area that is wheelchair accessible; four plant caddies were purchased to move container gardens around; containers, birdhouses, wind chimes and other art were added to the garden; four large flowers were cut from wood, painted by the members and added to the garden; two stationary planters were added; light weight hoses for easy use by clients were purchased and signage was added. Intouch staff and Master Gardeners removed the non-functioning pond and added a new bed to the garden.
4-H FEEDING AND GROWING OUR COMMUNITIES CHALLENGE GRANTS

These grants are being offered through the state 4-H office. As well as offering funds to 4-H staff and clubs, Horticulture staff and Master Gardeners who work in community gardens with youth are eligible for these monies. Applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis and will be considered until all funds have been obligated. Groups receiving funding will need to satisfy grant requirements. This would be a good opportunity to work corroboratively with 4-H and Hort staff within your Extension unit.

The levels of funding are:

**SPROUT** ($150): for groups of 5-10 youth (1 adult/group) pledging a minimum of 12 hours of service/participant. (Minimum of 60-120 hours of service/grant) [20 Grants available]

**SEEDLING** ($300): for groups of 11–25 youth (1-2 adults/group) pledging a minimum of 12 hours of service/participant. (Minimum of 132 – 300 hours of service/grant) [20 Grants available]

**TRANSPLANT** ($600-$750): for groups of more than 30 youth (3 or more adults) for use in designing activities that will increase awareness of hunger and food insecurity within in their community/county and responds to a direct need (i.e. Cost share funding to host a Meal-packaging Event.) (900+ hours of service) [5 Grants available]

The grant applications may be found online at: http://4hfoundation.illinois.edu/grants/feeding

In the application, provide a budget of expenses for the project. Be as specific as possible. Budgets may include items such as seeds, plants, equipment, materials and food supplies. All funds must be spent by September 30. Applicants will be notified of their acceptance within 10 days after the application is received.

Extension staff will need to purchase the supplies first and then submit all of their receipts at one time for reimbursement. The State 4-H Office will provide the CFOAP documentation needed for counties to charge purchases directly to the account.

For questions on this grant opportunity contact Bill Million in the state 4-H office at wmillion@illinois.edu

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2015 SPRINGTIME IN HOLLAND & BELGIUM

Have you longed to visit the bulb fields in Holland during tulip season? Then join Master Gardener Coordinator Monica David to experience springtime in Belgium and the Netherlands. The trip dates are April 25-May 7, 2015.

The trip will begin in Amsterdam with visits to the famed Aalsmeer Flower Market, a private tour with a commercial bulb producer, time to explore Amsterdam on your own and of course the amazing Keukenhof Gardens. Keukenhof has more than 7 million tulips, daffodils and hyacinths as well as pavilions featuring 30 alternating flower and plant shows. You will be there to visit in the height of bulb season! Leaving Amsterdam, the group will continue on thru the Netherlands to visit the palace gardens of Het Loo; the Kroller-Muller Museum; and then 2 well known private gardens, Piet Oudolf’s personal garden and the De Wiersse Garden. Next up will be the 200 model gardens at Apeldoorn before moving on to visit Belgium.

Belgium highlights include Peter Paul Ruben’s home and garden; Antoon de Clercq garden; the David and Alice Van Buuren garden; the Royal Greenhouses at the Palace in Laeken and Annevoie Castle. There will be free time to explore the UNESCO world heritage city of Bruges and also free time in Ghent.

The full itinerary and booking form can be found on the MG website at: http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/events/default.cfm

The trip cost is $4100 (twin share). The single supplement is $850. The cost includes all hotels, luxury coach transportation, entrance to all gardens and attractions listed in the itinerary, 11 breakfast, 5 dinners and 1 lunch. Airfare is additional and prices will be released in June.

For information or to book a spot on this trip contact our travel agent Robyn Gulstrom at rgulstrom@comcast.net or 269-629-9248. A deposit is required to reserve a place on the tour. Don’t wait too long as only a couple of spaces remain open on this great trip!
SALAD TABLESTM
Do you love the idea of eating home-grown salads from April through November? There are two types of container gardens that will enable you to produce fresh, flavorful greens close to your back door without the need to dig in the soil. You may also use the frames to grow transplants for the garden. The salad table was developed at the University of Maryland and has become popular all over the United States.

Here are the basic steps…
1. Build a Salad Table or a Salad Box
2. Place it on a level and convenient spot
3. Select crops you want to grow
4. Fill with growing media
5. Sow seeds
6. Water enough to keep the growing media moist
7. Sprinkle on the fertilizer after seedlings emerge
8. Remove extra seedlings so that plants are 1-2 inches apart
9. Harvest salad greens with scissors
10. The plants will re-grow for a second cutting. Then, just remove the spent plants and sow another crop!

The University of Maryland Salad Table™ is essentially a shallow wooden frame with a large surface area and a mesh bottom that allows water to drain. You can attach legs of any length you desire or set it on saw horses or other supports. It is portable, versatile, easy and inexpensive to build, and terrific for gardeners of all ages, sizes, and abilities. The Salad Table™ can be moved to capture sunlight in spring and fall and avoid the sun and high heat of summer. Best of all, you can garden comfortably at waist level and avoid problems with rabbits and groundhogs. The University of Maryland Salad Box is the baby version of the Salad Table™ and works especially well for kids and folks with small spaces.

Salad Table™ dimensions:
The table is made up of a frame that is 58 in. long X 33 in. wide X 3 ½ in. high and is divided into three sections. The frame is supported by four legs and stands 36 in. tall from the ground to the top of the frame. Dimensions and leg heights can be easily adjusted to meet individual needs. The frame has 11.1 sq. ft. total surface area for growing salad greens with a volume of 2.8 cu. ft. (21.8 gal.)

Salad Box™ dimensions:
The box is 21 in. long X 15 in. wide X 3 ½ in. high, has 2.0 sq. ft. of growing area with a volume of 0.5 cu. ft. (3.75 gal.).

What will it cost to build and use a Salad Table™?
About in $35 in materials to construct (using un-treated construction lumber) and about $20 for seeds, fertilizer, and growing medium.

How long will my Salad table™ or Salad Box™ last?
spf (spruce, pine, fir) lumber- untreated: about 4-8 years
spf (spruce, pine, fir) lumber- painted or stained: about 8-12 years
STK (small tight knots) Western cedar lumber: about 12-15 years

For more information visit https://extension.umd.edu/growit/food-gardening-101/salad-tables%E2%84%A2