A study was conducted in 2014 with Master Gardeners who had 2-4 years of experience in our program. The survey addressed perceived changes in 13 practices, 11 personal improvement skills, and experience in teaching horticulture topics.

The first set of findings were based on two questions that asked respondents to indicate their use of 13 gardening practices before and after becoming a University of Illinois Master Gardener. It should be noted that all but 14 of the 269 respondents indicated an increase in at least one or more of the recommended gardening practices.

71.4% [192 of 269] now prune landscape plants properly.
69.9% [188] now identify an insect, disease or weed problem before deciding on a control measure.
66.9% [180] now chose plant varieties that are known to be resistant to insects and diseases.
53.5% [144] now choose landscape plants based on the conditions in the planting site.
52.0% [140] now use water saving strategies in the garden.
51.3% [138] now take soil tests.
51.3% [138] now mulch landscape plants properly.
50.6% [136] now keep records of pest occurrence for later reference.
49.4% [133] now follow recommendations on soil test reports.
49.4% [133] now keep records of results of control methods for later reference.
45.0% [121] now install landscape plants properly.
36.8% [99] now recycle organic materials in the yard through mulching and composting.
27.9% [75] now use pesticides only according to the directions on the label.

The second set of questions addressed frequency in teaching the above gardening practices to others. 
174 [64.7%] taught mulching landscape plants properly
165 [61.3%] taught installing landscape plants properly.
162 [60.2%] taught choosing landscape plants based on the conditions in the planting site.
158 [58.7%] taught recycling organic materials in the yard through mulching and composting.
154 [57.2%] taught choosing plant varieties that are known to be resistant to insects and diseases.
151 [56.1%] taught pruning landscape plants properly.
145 [53.9%] taught identifying an insect, disease or weed problem before deciding on a control measure.
137 [50.9%] taught using water saving strategies in the garden.
133 [49.4%] taught using pesticides only according to the directions on the label.
126 [47.0%] taught keeping records of pest occurrence for later reference.
126 [47.0%] taught keeping records of results of control methods for later reference.
122 [45.7%] taught following recommendations on soil test reports.
111 [41.6%] taught taking soil tests.

Ninety-five percent [255] of the Master Gardeners indicated an increase in at least one or more of the recommended gardening practices after participating in their training. More than two-thirds now prune landscape plants properly, identify an insect, disease or weed problem before deciding on a control measure, and choose plant varieties that are optimal for the planting location.

Thanks to all who participated in the study. Evaluations help us to demonstrate and market the effectiveness of our program.

Monica David, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Coordinator
2015 MG APPAREL NOW ON SALE

Now is the time to order your Master Gardener apparel and merchandise. Along with this newsletter (and posted on the 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 2015 include HEATHER CONTR­ TENDER POLOS AND T SHIRTS, V NECK T SHIRTS FOR LADIES, ALL PURPOSE JACKETS, PUFFY VESTS, and more. All items contain an embroidered logo except for T-shirts and ladies tank tops which have screen printed logos.

The final date to order is April 10, 2015. All orders will be done online this year. No late orders will be accepted. All sales are final and there are no extra items for exchanges. Credit cards and checks will be accepted. Apparel will be shipped to your county office about 8 weeks after the April 10 deadline (approximately mid-June).

Go to the MG website for the sell sheet (under News and Updates) and to order at https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/default.cfm?RegistrationID=11856

2015 MINI-GRANT WINNERS

Thanks to all the counties who submitted applications for the 2015 Master Gardener mini-grants. We received 12 applications with a total request for over $11,000. Unfortunately- the state advisory committee could only fund seven of these projects.

THE FUNDING FOR MINI GRANTS IS BASED ON THE PROFITS FROM THE SILENT AUCTION HELD AT ANNUAL STATE CONFERENCE.

Chicago Botanic Garden- Cooke Magnet School $550
Kane County- Sherman Natural Prairie $628
Lake County- Community Garden Training Center $800
McDonough County- Habitat Discovery Garden $800
Rock Island County- Fostering a Healthy Garden $450
Tazewell County- ICC Green Roof Project $800
Vermilion County- Let It Grow $610

Total amount awarded for 2015 is $4,638.

2015 INTERNATIONAL MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

Join Master Gardeners from around the US and Canada at the International conference to be held September 22-25 at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The conference will feature tours, a vendor trade show and lots of class sessions. The conference tracts include: Midwest Flavor (prairie plants, local foods) Horizons (technology, QR codes, trends) From the Ground Up (composting, propagation, graft­ ing) Professional Development (program management, volunteer retention, conflict resolution) Design (floral, landscape, container) Working with Community (youth, elderly)

For more information about the conference or to sign up for the e newsletter visit- http://mastergardener.unl.edu/imgc2015

U OF I EXTENSION IPM MODULES

If you want information on newly emerging pests and diseases or if you need some continuing education credits don’t forget the U. of I. IPM modules. Each module features information about the distribution/ history of the pathogen or pest; host plant(s); pathogen or vector information, symptoms, look-a-like diseases which may confuse diagnosis, diagnosis, management and references. When finished, participants take a short quiz and complete an evaluation. Each module is worth 0.5 hours of continuing education. Currently there are 12 modules available and two new ones were added in 2014-Gypsy Moth and Oak problems. Access to the modules is via http://mg.cropsci. illinois.edu/ or a link is found on the Illinois Master Gardener website under “Educational Opportunities.”
2015 ILLINOIS MASTER GARDENER CONFERENCE

The Master Gardeners of Madison, Monroe and St. Clair Counties invite you to join them for exciting tours and great classes at the 2015 state conference. The conference will be held September 17 to 19 at the Hilton Garden Inn-Regency Conference Center in O’Fallon Illinois.

The keynote speaker is the internationally known garden, food writer, speaker and landscape designer Rosalind Creasy. Rosalind’s first book The Complete Book of Edible Landscaping won the Garden Writers Quill and Trowel award and coined the term ‘edible landscaping.’ Ms. Creasy will talk on Edible Landscaping and Edible Flower Gardens.

Classes will feature topics which will interest BOTH Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists. The Saturday general session will feature a presentation by Mike Jeffords on Exploring Nature in Illinois. The breakout sessions on Friday and Saturday will feature four strands of education- plant materials, natives, elements of design and edibles. The Plant Materials tract will feature talks including “Hostas” by Mark Zillas; Grafting Fruit and Nut Trees by KSU Extension Specialist William Reid; Roses by David Gunn and Bulbs by Jason Delaney, both from the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Natives tract will be highlighted by talks on Prairies; Garden Invasives by Chris Evans from IDNR; Dragonflies, Native Landscaping and more. The third tract- Elements of Design will emphasize Downsizing Your Garden; Planting for Birds; Rain Gardens; Woodland Gardens and Aesthetics and Hardscapes in the Garden. The fourth tract, Edibles, will feature talks on Horseradish; Culinary Herbs; Fruit Trees; Heirloom Seeds and more.

Out tour committee had a very hard time narrowing down all of the potential tour stops in SE Illinois and the St. Louis area. This area is rich in natural areas, great gardens, outstanding nurseries and great Master Gardener projects. Here are the best of the best in four exciting tours.

FULL DAY TOUR 1 (leaves at 9 am)- This trip features six exciting Master Gardener projects. Trip members will visit the State Street Community Garden; the display gardens at SIUE; the Stephenson House project; Drost Park in Maryville; the Wiloughby Farm and the Eastside Health Clinic Garden.

FULL DAY TOUR 2 (leaves at 9 am)- Join this trip to see what southern Illinois has to offer in gardens. The group will first visit Bellefontaine Cemetery and Arboretum with 3 state champion trees and over 200 varieties of shrubs and trees. Next up is the Jewel Box in Forest Park, an outstanding display greenhouse listed on the National Historic Register. Then spend the rest of your day visiting one of the most impressive botanical gardens in the country- the Missouri Botanical Garden.

HALF DAY TOUR 1 (leaves at 11 am- no lunch included)- This tour will delight both gardeners and nature lovers! The first stop is to the Gordon Moore Park, a 704 acre park with a Hosta Garden, a 27 acre tall grass prairie, an Oriental garden and the stunning 1 acre Nan Elliott Memorial Rose Garden with more than 1600 roses. The group will then travel to the Riverlands Audubon Center to view inside and outside exhibits. Outdoors is the beautiful bird sanctuary, the miniature wetland pond and a native rain garden.

HALF DAY TOUR 2 (leaves 10 am- free time to buy lunch at Eckerts farm)- This group begins with a tour of Eckert’s Farm- a local orchard in business since 1837 where apples, peaches and other fruits are grown. Time to visit the store and purchase your own lunch. Next up for this group is a visit to St. Louis Composting, a leading producer of nature’s ultimate renewable resource. The last stop is Heimos Nursery, a local wholesaler specializing in seasonal plants.

MAKE-IT and TAKE-IT - If tours aren’t for you, spend Thursday afternoon with fellow MGs at a local community center making great Horticultural crafts. These might be great items to replicate for your Gardening Therapy projects!

More information in the next Imagine newsletter. Online registration will begin about May 1st.
IMPORTANT DATES

March 14: IVCC Spring Garden Seminar, 8 am to 3:30 pm. IL. Valley Community College, Oglesby. There are 16 programs offered in four different sessions. Sponsored by the Unit 8 MGs. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/blmp or 815-433-0707.

March 14: Garden Day Workshop and Spring Festival, 8 am to 2 pm. Crossroads Christian Church, Danville. This event includes garden themed speakers, vendors, door prizes, a silent auction and a homemade lunch. The keynote will be delivered by Nicholas Staton from Monrovia Plants “What’s New in 2015”. The fee of $25 includes lunch. Sponsored by the Vermilion Co. MGs. 217-442-8615 or http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cfiv/

March 14: Ready..Set..Grow, 8 am to 3 pm. Sauk Valley College, Dixon. A keynote presentation on “Four Star Plants” will be given by Richard Hawke, Plant Evaluation Manager at CBG. Attendees may participate in three hands-on sessions: Stepping Stones, Herbal Vinegars and Self-watering Containers. Other workshops include: Seed Saving; Hummingbirds; Heirlooms, Shade Gardening, Square Foot Gardening and more. Registration is $40. Sponsored by the Carroll, Lee, Ogle & Whiteside County MGs. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/bdo

March 14: Russel Allen Garden Day, 9 am to 12:30 pm. Meyers-Evans Student Center, Lincoln College, Lincoln. Keynote speaker Guy Sternburg from Starhill Forest Arboretum will present “Tough Trees for the Landscape.” Other topics include: Pruning and Care of Hydrangeas; Succulent Gardening; Landscaping and Composting. Fee is $10 before March 6, $12 at the door. Sponsored by the Logan Co. MGs. To register visit: http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lms. 217-732-8289.

March 17- April 21(Mondays): Spring Series of Home Horticulture, 7 to 9 pm. Extension Office, Milan. Topics include Planning a Community Garden, Small Fruits & Backyard Orchard, Native Plants, Perennial Garden Maintenance and more. $5 per class or $25 for all 6. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/hmrs

March 21: Calhoun, Cass, Morgan and Scott County Gardener’s Day, 9 am to 3 pm. Morgan Co. Extension office. Morning session includes 3 breakouts: Pollinators; Cover Crops for the Home Gardener and Saving Seeds/Heirloom Vegetables. Hands-on Seed Starting Session in pm. $10 for full day & $5 for either am or pm session only. Register online at https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=11408.

March 28: A Day in the Garden Patch, 8:30 am to Noon. Livingston County Extension Office, Pontiac. The morning will feature talks on Butterflies, Containers and New Plants of 2015. Registration is $20. Visit https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=11354

March 28: Gardeners Day, Spoon River College Outreach Center, Macomb. Twelve sessions are offered including New Plants for 2015; Sustainable Landscaping; Get Layered!; Got Worms?; EAB; Shade Gardens; Backyard Orchards; Early American Botanists and Horticulturalists and more. Register by March 1- $30, after that the fee is $40. Sponsored by the McDonough Co. MGs. https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?registrationid=11674

April 5: Think Spring Horticulture Workshop, Blackhawk Outreach Center, Kewanee. The event will feature sessions on African Violets; Think Differently About Your Garden; Containers and New Plant Materials for 2015. $15 for the public, $10 for MGs and MNs. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/hmrs/

April 9: April in Paris, Cornerstone Baptist Church, Paris. Classes include: Human and Environmental Pesticide Protection by Phil Nixon; Blooming Bulbs by Mary Dickinson; Travels with Master Gardeners by Mary Kay North and Whats New in Container Plants by Ella Maxwell. Fee is $25 and includes lunch, vendors and handouts. Registration deadline April 3. Sponsored by the Edgar Co. MGs. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cce/

April 11: Gardeners Big Day, 8:00 am to 3pm. Dickson Mounds Museum, Lewiston. Keynote speaker is Father Dominic Garramone, the Bread Monk who will speak on Monastatic Gardens Past and Present. Breakout sessions include Native Plants; Photography; Gardening on a Budget; Edible Arrangements; Mushrooms of Illinois; Gardening for Butterflies and more. Fee until March 30 is $31, after that $41. Sponsored by the Fulton County MGs. http://web.extension.illinois.edu/fmpt/
IMPORTANT DATES CONTINUED

April 11: Gardenfest 2015, McHenry County College, Crystal Lake. The keynote address “The Know Maintenance Perennial Garden” will be given by Roy Diblick. Classes include Pocket Gardening; Gardening with Conifers; Hypertufa; Hardscaping; Hydroponics and Aquaponics; Tropical Plants; Top Twenty Weeds and many more. Sponsored by MCC and the McHenry County MGs. Visit www.mchenry.edu/gardenfest or 815-455-8764.

April 18: Woodford Gardener’s Gathering, 11 am to Noon. Woodford County Extension Office, Eureka. Join Horticulturist Ella Maxwell for a talk on annuals and perennials to use for a stunning container garden. Fee is $20. Register at https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=11360

April 23: Small Changes with Big Impacts: How Gardeners Can Help Native Plants and Animals, 6 to 8 pm. Lilac Cottage, Bowen Park, Waukegan. Please register with Cathy McGlynn at cathy.mcglynn@niipp.net or at 847-242-6423.

May 2: Proven Winners Outdoor Living Extravaganza, 8:30 am to 4 pm. Chicago Botanic Garden. This workshop will feature nationally known speakers Marshall Dirks and Rick Schoellhorn from Proven Winners; Kerry Mendez, garden author; Stacey Hirvela from Spring Meadow Nursery and Jamie Durie, author and TV Host. Registration price of $80 includes lunch, gift bag, free plants and giveaways. https://www.provenwinners.com/Outdoor-Living-Extravaganza-2015


September 17-19: Illinois State Master Gardener Conference, O’Fallon IL.

September 23-26: International Master Gardener Conference, Council Bluffs, Iowa.


NATURE DETECTIVES- THE NEWEST I THINK GREEN CURRICULUM

The Master Gardener state office in partnership with 4-H is offering a new track for the I Think Green program. The Nature Detectives curriculum was designed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and is being delivered through a partnership between Cornell and the University of Illinois Extension. This program is facilitated by University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists and 4-H volunteers with related subject-matter expertise.

The program is free to all classrooms and afterschool groups that commit to completing AT LEAST 4 activities from the curriculum, and agree to a short post-program evaluation survey.

Activities in the curriculum are:

Activity 1: What’s That Habitat?
This activity allows children to explore habitats of living creatures and then allows them to match animals to the different types of habitats on our planet.

Activity 2: Who Lives in Our Habitat?
Children play a Bird Bingo Game outside to observe behaviors of birds and are challenged to think about birds in their local habitat through a “Moving Opinion Poll”.

Activity 3: Food Web Tangle
Participants build a food web to show the flow of energy from its source (the sun) through a series of plants and animals.

Activity 4: Create a Bird
Children explore the adaptations and physical characteristics of birds by creating their own bird for a specific habitat.

Activity 5: Build A Bird Feeder
Different birds eat different foods and children can learn their food preferences by creating a feeder and watching the birds who visit.

Activity 6: Bird Survivor
Explore how birds face challenges during their lifecycles: investigate how birds find a mate, make a nest and raise their young.

Contact your local MG Coordinator, Hort educator or 4-H staff for more information about offering Nature Detectives in your county.
2014 MINI GRANT PROJECT SUMMARIES

JUNIOR MASTER GARDENER - NORTHWESTERN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MACOUPIN COUNTY

This program targeted 4-6 grade students in an after-school setting from 3:00-5:00 p.m. for 6 weeks in the spring and 6 weeks in the fall. In Fall 2013 Master Gardeners worked with elementary teacher Suzanne Humphreys to establish a berm for perennials and bulbs. Four chapters of the Jr. Master Gardener manual were used as a basis for teaching the basics of gardening. Students learned proper procedures of planting bulbs and perennial plants along with safety and use of garden tools. Twenty-five students were enrolled. The plants and bulbs were donated as well as small shrubs provided by Proven Winners. The soil for the berm was moved into place by a local earth moving company who donated their equipment and time.

In Spring 2014 the remaining four chapters of the manual were completed. Teachers from all the elementary grades were given the opportunity to have a grow light in their classroom. Seeds were donated by Burpee Seed Company to Unit 18. Plant choices included those especially attractive to butterflies and birds. Due to the late spring, plants were all transplanted into larger pots and placed in the high school greenhouse until warmer temperatures came. Planting day finally came May 19, the final week of the school year. Students had previously chosen any seeds they wanted for their home gardens, and all of the extra plants were also sent home with them. Although no produce was ready to be harvested before school was out for the summer, the school cafeteria will use any food grown for lunches in the fall.

In one session, a bird watch reporter gave a bird presentation and took the students on a bird walk around the school and presented them with a bird feeder and bird watch kit including small binoculars. Larry Mahan, author and owner of Mahan Tree Farm brought a donated white oak tree and guided the students in tree planting on the school lawn. On May 5, a field trip and guided tour of the tree farm was greatly enjoyed by the participants.

EMPOWERING YOUTH TO END HUNGER IN THEIR COMMUNITIES - EFFINGHAM COUNTY

For this project the Effingham County Master Gardeners teamed up with area 4-H members to grow produce to donate to the local food pantry. Enduring Freedom Ministries is a food pantry located in Shumway, IL and director, Vickie Kight, was grateful to receive the donations as they rarely have fresh vegetables to offer to their clients. We had a total of 10 kids join the club for the first year! The kids began by choosing the types of produce they wanted to grow. The Master Gardeners helped them choose what would grow well for the area and discussed with them vegetables that would be in season for the summer months. The kids chose to plant tomatoes, green beans, zucchini, and pumpkins to name a few. They even tried to start some potatoes! Throughout the growing season the kids would meet to weed the garden and water their plants. The kids were able to donate four heaping bags of produce to the local shelter which they were very proud of!

One member of the group, Craig Logan, wants to take the group a step farther and bring a similar idea to his school so the kids will be able to grow food all year long! The Farm to School program that he is helping to develop, along with Kevin Miller, another member of the club, will take place in the Altamont School district. It is a huge project that will span 4-H, the Master Gardeners, and the SNAP-Ed program and hopefully bring fresh produce to Altamont’s cafeteria!

We are very proud that what started as a small project ignited a spark in these kids to help their communities even more through a love for growing food. It was great to see the kids interact in the garden as well as develop a love for growing their own food and helping their community fight hunger.
2014 MINI GRANT PROJECT SUMMARIES CONTINUED

MONARCHS FOR KIDS - SANGAMON, MENARD AND LOGAN COUNTIES
“My favorite part of this class was releasing a monarch butterfly!” This was by far the most common comment by students enrolled in a new project designed to encourage children to understand and appreciate the amazing life cycle of the monarch butterfly and the relationship of this iconic state insect to Illinois’ native prairie plants.

On six Saturday mornings in late August and September, a dozen 8-10 year old children gathered near a native wildflower garden and adjacent 20-acre prairie at Lincoln Memorial Garden Ostermeier Prairie Center in Springfield, Illinois to learn about monarch butterflies. Each class session included a lesson on butterflies, a show-and-tell of live monarch eggs, caterpillars, chrysalises and adult butterflies, and field work with butterfly nets and journals.

The young naturalists learned about the role butterflies play in pollinating plants in the garden, as well as the importance of habitats that provide food for both monarch caterpillars and butterflies. Each child was encouraged to keep and share a field journal focused on the plant and insect life he/she observed on their hikes through the garden and adjoining prairie.

To teach the concept of citizen science, each class session ended with children tagging and releasing adult butterflies. The tagging data was later reported to Monarch Watch, a nonprofit educational outreach program based at the University of Kansas. During the course of the class, a total of 18 adult monarchs were tagged and released. The students learned about the annual migration of this magnificent insect. Several students attended the Indian Summer Festival held on Columbus Day weekend to demonstrate the monarch life cycle and migration. By playing a monarch migration game, children from the class shared with children attending the Festival the many difficulties migrating monarchs encounter on their journey to overwintering sanctuaries in Mexico.

KIM ST. JOHN BUTTERFLY HABITAT EDUCATION - PEORIA COUNTY
The Kim St John Butterfly Habitat is located in the Pioneer Homestead area at Wildlife Prairie Park in Hanna City, Illinois. This 38’ by 72’ hoop house is a result of partnerships with Phil St John, Wildlife Prairie Park and the Peoria Master Gardeners. The goals of the project were: to create a natural environment for butterflies native to Illinois which highlights their life cycles; to provide educational opportunities for students and community members to learn the connection between butterflies, native plants and the greater ecosystem; and to offer interactive learning opportunities for children.

The Master Gardener mini grant allowed us to enhance the habitat and educational programs offered at Wildlife Prairie Park. Pipevine plants were obtained and planted around the tunnel. Butterfly nets and cages allowed additional opportunities to collect and rear caterpillars and butterflies. Educational books were used by Master Gardeners while working with the public in the habitat and for sources of background information in developing educational projects and presentations. Educational materials provided signage and informational brochures for plant, caterpillar and butterfly identification.

Educational programs for adults and children were conducted by the Park and Master Gardeners in and around the habitat in 2014. Master Gardeners created “Butterfly of the Month” fact sheets for the public to provide interesting facts about butterflies. For the Mother’s Day celebration we offered butterfly nectar plants to mothers visiting the Park and supplied information about attracting butterflies to their backyards. During the Kid’s Pioneer Day in July we conducted hands-on activities. Kids created biodegradable pots and planted zinnia seeds in them to take home for their gardens with instructions for replanting and care. At the August Member Appreciation Day we showcased a large selection of butterflies in the habitat, discussed the native environment, encouraged responsible care of the environment, and focused on the life stages of the butterfly. Team members contributed over 5,000 volunteer hours at the Wildlife Prairie Park butterfly projects in 2013 and 2014. This year 33,427 children and adults attended 406 educational programs offered at the Park.

More project summaries to follow in the next issue.
THE HISTORY OF THE STRAWBERRY

“Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did.” Over 400 years later, this quote by 17th century English writer Dr. William Butler still reflects the high esteem most people hold for strawberry. Its fragrant aroma, delightful sweet flavor, and brilliant color make strawberry nearly irresistible. Whether eaten freshly sliced or prepared, the taste of strawberry makes it one of America’s most beloved fruits and May is an ideal month to sample this year’s harvest.

Throughout antiquity, strawberry has seen many different uses other than as a food source. For example, it was used as a symbol for Venus, the Goddess of Love, because of its heart shape and red color. The ancient Romans believed that strawberry had great medicinal value; they used it to alleviate the symptoms of a wide array of maladies ranging from melancholy to kidney stones. Medieval stone masons carved strawberry designs on altars and around the tops of pillars in churches and cathedrals to symbolize perfection and righteousness. In one of its most bizarre uses, Madame Tallien, a prominent figure at the court of the Emperor Napoleon, was famous for bathing in fresh strawberry juice. Reportedly, she used 22 pounds of strawberry fruit per bath.

Many people assume the common name “strawberry” stems from the fact the plant is most often mulched with straw during the winter. Although the exact origin of its common name is uncertain, the name strawberry probably is a corruption of “strewn berry.” The latter was an early designation for the plant which made reference to the fact that, as a strawberry plant produced runners and spread, its berries were strewn about the ground. Other sources suggest its name stems from the fact that English youth picked wild strawberries & sold them impaled on grass straws to the public.

There are species of strawberry native to temperature regions all around the world. However, it was the union of two species native to the Americas that gave us our garden strawberry. *Fragaria virginiana* is a species of strawberry native to North America. It is characterized by its highly aromatic berries borne in great abundance but rather small in size. History records *Fragaria virginiana* was taken from the New World to France in 1624. *Fragaria chiloensis* is a wild species of strawberry native to Chili. It bears berries the size of walnuts. It, too, was taken to France but in 1712. Both species were widely grown (presumably side-by-side) in European gardens. Chance seedlings representing crosses between the two species appeared. Some were vigorous, large-fruited and productive. These probably served as the ancestors of our modern garden strawberry, *Fragaria x ananassa*. It was not until the late 1700’s that garden strawberry made its way (back) to the Americas, and by 1825 strawberry production was well-established in the United States. One of the first popular cultivars was ‘Hovey’ introduced in 1838 by Charles Hovey, a fruit grower, plant breeder and writer from Massachusetts. Since that time, plant breeders made tremendous progress in improving the fruit quality and overall productivity of strawberries.

For a complete discussion of strawberry culture including recommended cultivars, fertilizing, weed control, and insect and disease management, please refer to MU Extension Publication G6135 (Home Fruit Production: Strawberry Cultivars and Their Culture). The information can be found at http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G6135

Reprinted from *Missouri Environment and Garden*, David Trinklein, Division of Plant Sciences, University of Missouri