

Fond du Lac County Master Gardener Association Member Accomplishment Report for 2016

We currently have 67 Certified Master Gardener Volunteers in our association, plus 10 interns who have not yet become certified. The following are some of our projects for 2016:

Day in the Garden: Our annual garden seminar Day in the Garden provided a great opportunity for over 180 people to learn about container gardening, pruning, lower maintenance gardening, and fun ways to grow food from area experts, including MGV Patty Percy. Participants appreciated being exposed to a diversity of ideas, learning new and different ways to grow food, and reported gaining knowledge and confidence in gardening. This event was originated by Beth Howman-Combs 18 years ago and it has been her project ever since, gaining in popularity with Master Gardeners and community gardeners every year. Beth is assisted by other MGVs in setting up displays, checking in attendees, planning the luncheon, and in greeting and answering questions from attendees. Alice Dann assists Beth with DIG. Alice and her committee also coordinate the Silent Auction. DIG is an excellent way for MGVs to earn continuing education credit as well as support service hours. The next Day in the Garden will be March 18, 2017.

Pier Elementary School I-Spy Garden: Eileen Blackburn originated and maintained this garden for the past 16 years. She received a plaque from the staff and students and had a large write-up in the Fond du Lac Reporter in November, 2015. This is a 2300 square foot garden which challenges students to discover items placed throughout the garden. Turtles, birds, ceramic tennis shoes and school supplies are hidden among the plants beckoning the students to explore. The theme is changed for each holiday and season, so there's always something new to see and an opportunity to learn about plants and how they grow. There are bird feeders and a bird bath, and all the plants and trees are labeled. The courtyard serves as a sanctuary for students and staff.

Free Spirit Riders Sensory Therapy Garden: Kathy Erickson and a large group of MGVs plant and maintain this garden, providing a space where families and care givers can relax while the clients are in therapy. It includes a bird sanctuary, small pond for listening, as well as touch, taste and smell areas and a butterfly garden and vegetable area. This year the MGVs worked with inmates from Drug and Alcohol Corrections one day a week – usually a different group every week – teaching and working with them on all aspects of gardening as they generally know little about growing plants.

Level 1 Training: Sally Boatman and Mary Gorske were the leaders in this, the first year MGVs have offered the training on our own. The students watched on-line videos prepared by the State MG office. Classroom time was spent learning about local projects from our own MGVs, along with in-class activities designed to help students apply concepts presented in the videos. We brought in 5 outside speakers and had at least 12 MGVs helping with the classes and sharing their expertise. 20 interns completed the course. Of those, 10 became certified this year and hopefully more of them will complete the necessary volunteer and continuing education hours to become certified in 2017. Sally and Mary will again offer the training beginning in January 2017.

Lamartine Veterans Memorial Garden and Lamartine and Town Hall Flag Flower Bed: Hal Barfknecht is the project leader for these gardens which were originally designed by Dolores Braun. The Veterans Memorial Garden serves as a resting point with bench seating to provide a view of the beautiful carved stone memorial and also the abundant flowers designed in a patriotic theme of red,

white and blue. The garden is weeded throughout the season to maintain a healthy plant diversity, providing floral interest to all that stop to rest, contemplate and give thanks to those who served our country. The Town Hall flag flower bed is also designed with a patriotic red, white and blue theme.

Horticulture Helpline and Landscape Smart: Our helpline, under the leadership of Sherry Freiberg, was available Tuesday and Thursdays from April through October. The majority of the 112 questions answered by MGVs came in May and June. Questions ranged from invasive species to Japanese beetles and everything in between. Nine volunteers worked the helpline in 2016, being careful to provide documentation for the answers given, using the reference library and many academic websites. MGVs also volunteered for a call-in radio show sponsored by a local landscaping company every Saturday morning throughout the growing season and once a month during the winter.

Parkside School Garden: Cindy Boudry is the project leader with 6 team members. They started by planting seeds in April for the garden and flowers for Mother's Day. They taught the upper classes how to test soil using vinegar and baking soda, and also the sugar content of different vegetables and cookies and snacks. Outside, the students were taught about bees and which food they planted needed to be pollinated by bees, and also the role of queen bees, workers and drones.

St. Mary's Academy: Cindy Boudry, along with 3 team members, taught Kindergarten and 4K how to plant seeds and pansies for Mother's Day. The students learned how plants grow by showing the roots in a viewer, and what it takes to make their seeds grow.

Faith Lutheran School: Cindy Boudry and 6 other MGVs planted terrariums with second graders using recycled jars. Cindy started 300 succulents from cuttings from plants supplied by members. Students were taught how succulents grow and what care they would need by playing a game with the class.

Rosenow School: Jo Schouten is the project leader. She and her team worked with Mary Williams, the gym teacher. Children planted marigolds for May 1 to give neighbors and week later planted seeds for the garden. They were also taught about some of the bugs in the garden – good and bad.

Riverside School: Bill Behnke is the project leader. He along with 5 team members educated elementary students on plants, soils, vegetables, pollinators, worms, and seeds. In the classroom, they planted seeds in trays, and in spring transplanted seedlings to the school garden. In fall, students harvested tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, popping corn, Indian corn, pumpkins and herbs, and cleaned up the garden.

NFDL Community Gardens and Yellowstone Trail Park: Dona McEssey and Katie Hornung are project leaders. In 2016 they created two more gardens at Yellowstone Trail Park and planted annuals at the Community Center, as well as continuing collaboration with supporters.

Master Gardener Booths: Eileen Blackburn and team members had an educational booth at Day in the Garden and at the Agriculture Show exploring garden design, which included a straw bale garden in miniature, lasagna gardening, square foot gardening and raised bed gardening. Information regarding becoming a Master Gardener was handed out as well as a flyer for our plant sale. Eileen also set up a 10 x 10 booth at the Sport and Home Extravaganza focused on garden displays and growing wheat grass. A team of MGVs kept the booth manned over the 3 day event answering questions regarding the upcoming growing season. In addition, her booth was set up at our Plant

Sale where MGVs were kept very busy answering questions about weeding, asparagus beds, rain barrels, and the miniature garden displays. At the Fond du Lac County Wellness Fair, Eileen and team members used the booth to sell Jade plants to encourage indoor gardening. The miniature displays triggered much interest and the MGVs were kept busy all day answering questions.

Junior Master Gardeners: Patty Percy is the project leader, assisted by 7 team members. The kids and families who participate in the project make it fun. Approximately 12 kids from Boys and Girls Club and 14 others participated with family members after school. Grant money was used to help pay for the field trip to Green Bay Botanical Gardens and the Oneida Nation Farms at no charge to families.

Fond du Lac Public Library: Alice Dann, Darcy Keplin and Vel Hynek changed the library containers spring, summer and fall to keep the plants fresh and beautiful in the hot south exposure. In summer, pansies were replaced by petunias, sweet potato vines, coleus, licorice plants and grasses.

Community Gardens: Patty Percy is the project leader. She reported that there was good participation by the public again for 2016. Approximately 85 families worked in 125 garden plots. Cover crops were planted on empty plots again this year.

Fond du Lac Lutheran Home and Health Services: We continued to add perennials to the raised bed and courtyard, plus watered, weeded and deadheaded on a weekly basis. This project is for the enjoyment of the seniors living at the facility plus staff and visitors. Master Gardeners receive quite a few "thank yous" for the beautiful flowers.

Rain Garden and Art Garden: Project Leader is Sally Boatman. With all the rain, the Rain Garden was beautiful this year. The garden is planted in daffodils, day lilies, turtlehead, iris, tall white aster, Joe Pye weed, cup plant and many more. In the Art Garden a Star Magnolia was planted by the UW-Ext. staff to honor Jim Hovland for his years of service.

Fond du Lac County Fair Awards: Patty Percy sends out awards for the horticulture class winners at the fair. A \$25 award is sponsored by the Master Gardeners for the best Vegetable Presentation, House Plants, Plant Crafts and Flowers.

Plant Sale: Tina Weiss and Ken Campshure were again Co-Chairs for the plant sale which is our big fund raiser for the year. With the help of almost all of our MGV's, the sale was a huge success. A lot of work went into digging and potting plants, transporting them to the Fond du Lac Fairgrounds Cow Palace, and organizing them into categories for the sale. We answered questions from our customers, gave advice on plant selections and care. Our next plant sale will be May 19 and 20, 2017, at the Fairgrounds.