

# Fond du Lac County Master Gardener 2019 Accomplishment Report

47,599 Volunteer Hours

2,578 Education Hours

**UW Art Building Garden** - Most of our time on the garden was spent pulling weeds and managing the ever-growing vegetation, caused by our abundant and frequent rainfalls. We compiled 3-5 labor hours weekly from mid-April, and will continue through fall cleanup (unless the snow flies first). The south end of the garden is primarily a butterfly garden and is the area that requires the most of our attention. The pond side is primarily specimen plants and does not tend to have as many weeds.

**UW Pond View Rain Garden** - This garden was wet the entire year, so our upkeep was limited to the outside edges only. The garden looked spectacular most of the growing season with the Joe Pye weed and others topping out at close to 7 feet tall. We are hoping for a dry spell this fall so we can get some of the vegetation pulled out before winter hits.

**Horticulture Helpline** - Horticulture Helpline was covered on Mondays and Thursdays from April 15 through October 31 in 2019. Eight dedicated MGV's covered shifts of 2-3 hours. They answered email questions, telephone questions and walk-in questions either directly, or with the assistance of UW Madison Horticulture extension agents, using university-based research to give the most up to date and accurate answers possible.

**Bus Trips** - The FDL Master Gardener bus committee set up 2 bus trips for 2019. Our 1<sup>st</sup> bus trip was on May 22, 2019. This is our annual "shopping" bus trip. We went to Johnson's Garden in Cedarburg and to Milaeger's in Racine. We offered a surprise visit to the only remaining covered bridge in Wisconsin. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> bus trip for 2019 was on August 14, 2019. We went to the Green Bay Botanical Gardens, Mayflower Greenhouse and Butterfly Gardens of Wisconsin.

The purpose of the bus trips is to provide information on the MG organization, gardening and natural resources. The FDL MG bus trips provide the opportunity to explore areas that individuals would ordinarily not visit on their own. These educational bus trips are both a source of fundraising and fellowship. The trips become social events where people can meet, share common interests such as gardening and landscaping. The bus trips are open to both master gardeners and members of the public.

**Day in the Garden** - The Fond du Lac County Master Gardeners held their annual garden seminar "A Day in the Garden" on Saturday April 6 at UW Fond du Lac. A Day in the Garden is for both Master Gardeners and the public. This event is designed to provide Master Gardeners a portion of their required continuing education hours.

The day featured three speakers with a variety of presentations. Susan Steinhafel spoke on "the Art of Herbs", Ben Futa gave two presentations; "Brown is a Color Too" and "Designing with Perennials", Dr. David Drake discussed "Healthy Cities for Wildlife". Comments from program evaluations regarding the day included; "education was outstanding", "good diversity of speakers", and "valuable program".

The day was complimented by vendors, a raffle, and the Fond du Lac Master Gardener Shop. New for 2019, the FdL MG Shop featured plants, member crafted goods, and other treasures. Many members contributed in a variety of ways, to make the shop a success.

**School Gardens** - This year with the grant money from WIMGA we added 4 more raised garden beds to Riverside Elementary School and 12 raised beds to Parkside Elementary School in Fond du Lac.

In March, the committee went into the schools and taught a lesson on Wisconsin Soil and how Fond du Lac soil was created. All the classes were given an experiment to grow beans in rocks, sand, and soil. Each class had to fill cups with the different media and then tell us in May how it worked out. We also froze a container of rocks and soil to demo how the glazier formed Fond du Lac soil and taught them why it is important to know what kind of soil we have in our gardens. Marigolds were planted to use for May Day at two schools. Tomatoes, peppers, broccoli and a few cool crops were planted. We taught about 400 children at Parkside School and 160 students at Riverside School.

We planted flowers and seeds with four classes of pre-Kindergarten this year for their Mother's Day tea and did a talk on Bee colonies and pollination. We had costumes for the little ones, and we talked about all the different jobs in the bee colony, while a story was read about bees.

The end of May, we planted at Parkside and Riverside schools. We had about a half hour with each class and we showed them how to read the seed packages and explained what plants need to grow. This year we planted with over 800 children. Stakes were made with each teachers's name on them, so the students could come back to the garden to show their families what their class had planted and to watch the garden grow during the summer. It was a little rainy again this year planting at Riverside, so we set up a tent, and planted the garden.

The committee worked with the school gardens mentoring the students and parents again this year. The children are becoming great at weeding and caregiving. Anywhere from 20 to 30 parents and students come each time and we will tell them how to care for the plants.

Parkside Elementary School ran a gardening summer school class and used the garden as an outdoor classroom. It had been great this year being able to plant a second crop of some of the vegetables and working with the dedicated teachers at our schools.

We also have a school garden that is a Hide and Seek at Pier Elementary School. Children need to find things as they explore the garden. At Chegwin Elementary School, the gardens are a Nature Center and our members work to bring new life into them and weed out the invasive plants. The school got a grant of pollinator plants last year, so eight of the Master Gardeners and the student council worked on clean up this spring. A summer class of 40 first graders was held at Sacred Heart making pots and planting seeds.

The first day of school was our night to mentor and harvest what was ripe. One of the teachers at Riverside Elementary School told us about a student that came up to her that day and said "Thank you for the having a garden at the school. This is where I came and eat my lunch every day, from the vegetables in the garden."

At Parkside School, we harvested with the summer school classes, and we did a taste and learn. The children helped make corn salsa.

**Community Gardens** - Several Master Gardeners stepped up to implement community programs at the gardens this past year. We now have a 'Broken Bread' pantry garden program, and our 'Second Harvest' annual pantry donation. In the month of October, we recorded a donation, which yielded over 40 pounds. Many of the gardeners also donated produce on their own to local food pantries.

**Junior Master Gardener Program** - JMG is a partnership between the FoodWise nutrition education program and the Master Gardener program. Amanda Miller (FoodWise Coordinator/Health and Well-Being Educator) and Patty Percy (Community Gardens Coordinator and Master Gardener Volunteer) coordinate the program. Annually, it runs from March to August and designed for youth ages 8-12 years old. The program is a 'seed to plate' concept, which means that the children are involved in the entire process, from planting the seeds to harvesting the produce to preparing meals.

The 2019 summer was a successful one. From March until August, 197 contacts were made with 27 enrolled kids. During the program, the children had the opportunity to:

- Learn about exotic produce from Festival Foods
- Learn about succulents from Haentze Floral Company
- Do garden science experiments to learn more about seeds, composting, etc.
- Create recipes from the garden, including mini pies, bruschetta, etc.
- Tour the Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center
- Visit the Woodland Dunes Nature Center and Preserve
- Host a celebration for their parents by preparing 4 different kinds of pizzas, using produce from the garden

Parents were surveyed on their experiences following the program. 100% of parents that responded indicated that their child benefited from the program. Most parents said that they loved the program and quite a few have already made sure that their child(ren) are on the registration list for next summer.