

Winnebago County Master Gardeners Association 2007 Annual Accomplishment Report

The Winnebago County Master Gardeners Association (WCMGA) has 113 members of which 18 are newly certified and 54 are recertified.

In 2007 we volunteered:

- 61 hours in Youth education
- 1150 hours in community education
- 4056 hours in support services
- 1860 hours in continuing education

WCMGA participated in many community activities. As an example, one member writes a weekly gardening column for the Oshkosh Northwestern, one member is head of a Loosestrife study, another organized a Garlic mustard pull along the Wiouwash trail in Winnebago County; still others had a training session and exercise in removing Buckthorn. Members are also involved in Home and Garden shows, the Winnebago County Fair and demonstration gardens at Lincoln School, Parkview Health Center and the Menasha Library. WCMGA made a tree donation for the Sesquicentennial Memorial Tree Grove in the Coughlin Nature Area in Winnebago County.

Each year, along with the University of Wisconsin Extension, WCMGA presents a 36 hour training program for current and future Master Gardeners

Major accomplishments this year or Projects:

1. One of the major accomplishments for WCGMA again was its presence at the Oshkosh Farmers Market on a weekly basis from June through October. Here, information was passed out to the public about plants, such as the flyers prepared by WIMGA. Worm castings were sold and their benefits explained. In keeping with this year's theme, "**Gardening for All Ages**", a children's area was set up to give kids the hands on experience of planting a plant and taking it home to watch it grow. Certified members manned the booth on a rotating basis. This project has had a very positive response from the community.

2. WCMGA has a yearly commitment to the gardens at Park View Health Center where master gardeners plan, plant and maintain the gardens along with the patients in keeping with this year's theme "**Gardening for All Ages**". There's the cutting gardens that are used to teach the resident patients flower arranging, the raised beds to enable handicapped patients to plant and grow vegetables, perennial gardens and the prairie garden to demonstrate how plants grow in a natural environment. At the end of the season, an event the patients look forward to is the entry of their displays in the annual Winnebago County Fair.

3. WCMGA had an information booth at the Paine Arboretum Spring Plant Sale. Horticulture questions answered and information was passed out about; plants, the benefits of using worm castings, Mini Info Fact Sheets and the Master Gardener Association. Worm castings and Cook Books were also sold as a fund raiser.
4. This is the first year WCMGA has had a booth at the Winnebago County Fair. MGVs staffed the booth, passing out information about plants, worm castings, Mini Info Fact Sheets and the Master Gardener Volunteers program. Worm castings and Cookbook were sold as a fund raiser.
5. All the members of WCMGA combined their gardening and cooking skills to produce a Winnebago County Master Gardener Volunteers Cook Book as a money raising project. These books were sold at the various informational booths we man.

Highlighted Project: Plant Health Advisors in UW Extension Office.

This year, WCMGA participated in answering questions on horticulture problems from the public in the UW Extension Office. This was done on a rotating scheduled basis with certified volunteers (Plant Health Advisors). PHA's answered questions from the phone or walk-ins when they were in the office. They also answered voice mail and e-mail messages that came in. 12 PHA's answered over 300 inquires. All answers were scientifically based and sources given.

This service was well received by both the public and the Extension Office last year and this year even more inquiries were called in to the office. There was a 50% increase in questions. The most asked questions were about trees and what to do about the drought.