

2013 UW Extension WI Master Gardener Association Annual Accomplishment Report Winnebago County

1. Statistical information

members: 121

trained (basic MG training) in 2012: 19

2. Something about your Association

In 2013, WCMGA has increased focus on education—by and for the members—and communication. When members report community education hours, they often report only the “obvious” hours and not the time they spend educating the public while working in the project gardens. We are also looking at ways to add educational signage to all projects.

Communication within and outside the organization is also an area of emphasis. The newsletter has been enhanced to be a more complete reflection on the group’s activities and to alert members to all the key meeting and project dates. The organization has significantly reduced paper and copying environmental impact by moving members to electronic communications. A survey of member activities and interests was conducted to see if the project offering needs to be rebalanced. We continue to have an educational speaker at each monthly meeting.

The co-presidents were interviewed for a local television program about volunteer organizations in the community. One member writes a weekly column in the major local newspaper and in 2012 a collection of her articles was published in book form, *“Down the Garden Path with Lawanda”*. Proceeds from the sales of the book go toward supporting the outreach of the Winnebago County MG Association. If you wish to purchase a copy of Lawanda’s book, please visit our website.

Monthly newsletters are circulated to association members and friends, and posted on our website www.winnebagomastergardeners.org. Two bus tours for members and the public were held, one to the Garden Expo in Madison and the other to four gardens on the east side of the state. Community education seminars are well attended by the general public from Winnebago and surrounding counties. A scholarship is presented annually to a Fox Valley Technical College student in a horticulture program. Our association sponsored a tour of gardens in the Vancouver area in June, and is planning a trip to Savannah April.

3. Highlighted project

Neenah Octagon House Historical Gardens

The Octagon House in Neenah is the second oldest building in the city. Built in 1856, it is now the Historical Museum. A team of Master Gardeners has designed, planted, and maintained vegetable and flower gardens using heirloom varieties. The vegetable garden plantings are rotated and this year included Paris Market carrots, Beaver Dam peppers (a Hungarian heirloom brought to Beaver Dam in 1912), Ant Ruby’s German Green tomatoes (a 120 year old heirloom from Greenville, Tennessee). Other vegetables planted included peas, lettuce, red and white potatoes, cabbage, Brussel Sprouts, broccoli, and Bok Choi. The gardens co-mingle vegetables and flowers similar to farm gardens of the past.

There is a 3 sisters garden, corn, beans, and pumpkins replacing the usual squash, were planted with the assistance of a third grade class. The children had a great time and a bountiful harvest of pumpkins resulted!

The gardens are highly valued by the Historical Society and receive many compliments from the community.

Major Accomplishments or projects

2012 Master Gardeners Plant Health Advisors

The Winnebago County MG/ Plant Health Advisors responded to 348 inquiries on the phone/email/walk-in "hotline" this year. This is a significant increase over recent previous years. Just under half of the questions were about trees, probably continuing to show the tree stress from the previous summer. Insects and plant diseases were the other two major categories. EAB was detected in the county this year and generated a lot of homeowner concern and questions.

Parkview County Nursing Home

Oshkosh North Conservancy Park Buckthorn Removal

WCMGA is in the second year of a long-term project to remove buckthorn from a 13-acre Conservancy Park adjacent to Oshkosh North High School. Several full-day work days are held each fall and spring. Neighbors with property adjoining the park have been educated about buckthorn and have pitched in to help. WCMGA coordinated with the City of Oshkosh Forestry Dept. to provide chemicals to treat cut stumps and remove the cut brush piles. The Oshkosh Northwestern did a feature article on the project that elicited many questions about buckthorn from the larger community.

5. Participation in theme

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