

Master Gardener Conference 2009
sponsored by the
Effingham Master Gardeners
with the help of
Master Gardeners from McLean, Champaign,
Coles and Edgar Counties.

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"Nurture Nature, Nurture You"

2009 Illinois Master Gardener Awards



*September 11, 2009
Keller Convention Center
Effingham, Illinois*





Illinois citizens are anxious for sound information on how to create sustainable landscapes, decrease the waste put into our landfills and grow healthy safe food for their families. Our award winners have taken the lead to educate the public about wise environmental choices. Many of the teamwork projects we honor today are groundbreaking in their efforts to promote sound environmental solutions. In the future, Illinois Master Gardeners will increasingly be asked to step forward as leaders in environmental stewardship. I have every confidence that we are up to the challenge— in reality we have already started.

Today we recognize our 2009 State Master Gardener award winners who have given of themselves in an amazing variety of ways. In some cases, it has been a strong individual effort from our thirty-three State Outstanding Master Gardeners, nominated by their local Master Gardener coordinators for the leadership and the service they provide to Master Gardener programs. Individual effort is also highlighted through our twelve Sustained Excellence Award winners, previous State Outstanding Master Gardeners who continue their dedicated service with at least 480 volunteer service hours. When several (or many!) Master Gardeners get together to combine their efforts, wonderful things happen, as evidenced by the results highlighted in the twelve Teamwork Award winner summaries.

Join me in congratulating all of our 2009 award winners! Let us also acknowledge the Extension staff and family members who support the excellent work done by these volunteers.

Monica David

University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Coordinator

***Dig It!* Master Gardener Newsletter (Rock Island County)**

**Melody Miller, Fran Pearson, Kathy Tack,
Sugandhi Sivakumar, Roxie DeShane**

The *Dig It!* Newsletter began 5 years ago as a newsletter to inform the community about the Master Gardener program and educational opportunities being offered in the Quad City area. The newsletter grew from a staff of 1 to a 5 person regular staff and is now issued bimonthly and published online. The newsletter currently includes a calendar of events; information on upcoming horticulture events in both IL and Iowa; articles on various and new plants; articles on environmental issues and pests; information on local birds; highlight of the Master Gardener projects and programs; summary of the most frequently asked questions on the hotline; Nursery Hopping with Jackie and much more. The newsletter serves to educate the public about horticulture issues but also showcases the Rock Island Master Gardener program.

Demonstration Garden Compost Committee (Sangamon-Menard Unit)

**Mary Altman, Bill Budd, John Janssen, Al Kamnick,
Jane Morris, Ann Pictor, Joy Poos, Randy Thomas,
Joan Walters, Wynne Coplea, Brett Ivers,
Nathaniel Sparks, Mike Rahe**

The Compost Committee was established to educate the public about composting and to prepare an area to compost the plant waste from the Demonstration Garden. Knowledge and money were provided by the City of Springfield Waste and Recycling Dept; the IL Dept. of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and IDOA. The funds were used to purchase signage and to print a compost brochure. Tangent Technologies of Aurora donated recycled plastic lumber to construct the bins. The volunteers constructed 5 bins at public programs to show the different options available for composting and how to construct the bins. In 2008, the committee wrote a 30 page brochure on composting and vermicomposting. The compost area is open year round and brochures are available in the demonstration area.

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Illinois Plastic Pot Recycling Initiative (McLean County)

**Laurie Wiechert-Sharar, Robin VanDermay,
Jerry Swartz, Jaci Dixon**

This project began as an effort to prevent pollution of our planet and was funded by a grant of \$3925 from public funds. Jerry Swartz initiated the project with help from the Ecology Action Center, the Town of Normal, Illinois State University, three local garden centers and Hundman Lumber. In its first year of operation, IPPRI collected 18,000 pounds of pots and trays and donated another 8,000 pots for re-use by organizations and individuals. It rapidly outgrew the space originally donated at ISU, and then partnered with the Occupational Development Center (ODC) for year-round space at its complex. ODC also provided additional volunteers through a workfare program. As a result of this partnership, an enabling garden has been established at ODC by Master Gardeners. The sale of the plastics plus support from Monrovia Nurseries/Growers Inc., GreenView Nurseries and a State Farm Community Grant have allowed this project to continue and expand. To date, collection sites have been established in two other counties with material from these sites returning to the McLean County for processing.

Lasagna Garden (Perry County)

**Michael Biesk, Sally Cook, Nancy Keller, Gail Taylor,
Martha Morgenstern, Mary Jo Novak, Don Taylor,
Telvi Wenzel, Tom Wenzel, Don Wilkin, Jane Chapman**

The Lasagna Garden began as a simple workshop on gardening for 4-H members. The garden was planted at the Manor at Mason Woods, an assisted living facility. Master Gardeners procured the necessary supplies and the first Lasagna Garden workshop was held in the fall of 2006. The workshop brought residents, 4-H youth and Master Gardeners together to prepare and plant vegetables. This activity is repeated now each spring and fall. Five Star Industries has requested the Master Gardeners to prepare Lasagna Gardens at their group homes. The preparation and planting of this garden was featured on WSIU-TV.

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Outstanding Master Gardener Award Winners

Lyetta Awalt	Loraine Miranda
Bill Budd	Anne Nadakavukare
Dallas DeShane	Sherry Park
Ray Ellington	Joy Poos
Ruth Gerlach	Marion Powers
Nancy Hansel	Sarah Redd
Mary Kay Hinkle	Bill Rosati
Diane Hultgren	Phyllis Schultz
Kim Isaacson	Purnima Shah
Venneta Joliff	Mary Alice Stonecipher
Rita Kemme	Normalie Strickland
Carol Killian	Jerry Swartz
Diana Kirby	Robin VanDermay
Carol Kohler	June Vandervest
Dixie Krisher	Rita Weisiger
Marie Luchetti	Rita Wiessing
Hugh McDermott	

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Lyetta Awalt (Effingham, Effingham County)

Lyetta took over the newsletter project with great enthusiasm and has been responsible for updating content, proofing and production. She also spent many hours surveying past horticultural clients on their needs and collecting suggestions on how to improve the service given by the volunteers.

Bill Budd (Springfield, Sangamon-Menard Unit)

Bill has been a leader in the Compost Project, constructing the bins and working on a compost brochure for the public. He has taken the lead for the rain barrel project and been responsible for construction of 80 barrels at four workshops. Bill has been a member of the Advisory Committee for 3 years.

Dallas DeShane (Orion, Rock Island County)

Dallas has risen to the top as a valuable leader and he is the current president of the Rock Island group. He has been involved with gardening instruction at the Longfellow School and Trinity Nursing Daycare as well as co-chairing the Lawn and Garden Show, the Fairground clean-up, and the Healthy Living Fair.

Ray Ellington (Peoria, Peoria County)

Ray has shown his leadership qualities as president of the Peoria Master Gardeners. Under his tutelage the volunteers updated bylaws and revised Hort Help Line guidelines. He has been a leader in the Bel-Wood Nursing Home Garden where he worked with staff and updated the garden plan.

Ruth Gerlach (Champaign, Champaign County)

As co-chairperson of the Idea Garden vegetable section, Ruth has worked with her committee to select plants, plan the garden and educate others about vegetable gardening. She contributes to Extension as a member of the county Extension Council.

Nancy Hansel (Paris, Edgar County)

Nancy has provided steady leadership to the Edgar County group for 9 years, both as president in 2000 and 2007 and by keeping an educational focus for the group. She was involved with the ECHO House project and is part of a trio of Master Gardeners who educate HCE members using a skit format.

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Planting and Growing Gourds

(Kane County)

Alice MacCallum, Kim Luppino, Mary Ann Krempel

The Gourd project involved planning, planting and tending a demonstration gourd garden at the Campton Hills Community Garden in St. Charles. The Master Gardeners spent a great deal of time researching knowledge on the subject and worked with a 90+ year old gardener who had been growing gourds from around the world for many years. The entire process was photographed, a PowerPoint was produced and seminars were delivered to garden groups all around the county. The show included everything from growing gourds, to diseases and pests, to selecting different varieties of gourds to grow and finally harvesting and storing the gourds. A table top display was created for the Geneva Festival of the Vine which has been used for other educational events as well.

Rain Barrel Workshops

(Macon County)

**Richard Zerfowski, Frank Grgurich, Sandy Shriver,
Sherry Martin, Sharon Gessaman, Pam Buttz, Diana Kirby,
Joan Whitacre, Dale Holtzscher**

Macon County Master Gardeners decided to try their hand at building rain barrels and several designs began mysteriously appearing at the Extension office. The final design chosen was one which was easy to teach others how to construct and also reasonably priced. Workshops were offered to the public and over 200 barrels have been constructed to date. Although some of the preliminary work is done by the volunteers, the participants actively take part in assembling their own rain barrels. The Macon County Master Gardeners have reached out to teach other Master Gardener groups in the region on how to build rain barrels and host their own workshops. Volunteers from Champaign, Christian, Dewitt, Moultrie-Douglas and Sangamon-Menard Units have all learned directly from the Macon County Master Gardeners. The public workshops are in high demand and a survey of past participants is planned for 2010.

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“April in Paris” Annual Garden Seminar

(Edgar County)

**Beverly Duzan, Elsie Allen, Gay Tegeler, Harry Clayton,
Jan Phipps, Jennifer Pendley, Kate Morecraft,
Kerry Allen, Marian Powers, Martha Alwardt, Mary Geekie,
Wilma Cook, Nancy Hansel, Lorma Hensley,
Ron Hensley, Teresa Bach**

Edgar County Master Gardeners decided to host a Garden Seminar and Luncheon in 2002 to provide education hours for their own members and for other area Master Gardeners and to establish a fundraising activity. Approximately 800 Illinois participants have attended the event since 2002. Seminars are presented by U. of I. faculty, horticulturists from local colleges and professionals from gardening businesses. A biennial retreat is held to brainstorm topics and speakers and potential speakers are invited to present an education program at a monthly meeting. The Master Gardeners handled all aspects of the day from preparing promotional materials, to assembling decorations, to preparing the luncheon and hosting a silent auction.

The Cross Project

(Effingham County)

**Rita Kemme, Purnima Shah, Tom Caldwell, Betty Boos,
Dorothy Niebrugge, Lyn Pankonen, Karen Hakman,
Normalie Strickland, Leslie Niebrugge, Lyetta Awalt,
Joan Fitzwilliam, Leslie Croxel, Dennis Ricketts,
Larry Johnson, Bea Grove, Kitty Simmons**

The 198 foot Cross is located on a 10 acre plot surrounded by farm fields and about 12,000 visitors stop by each year. Effingham Master Gardeners were asked to come up with a design plan for landscaping the area. Community support for installation and labor was provided. The volunteers planned a Biblical Garden but plans were sidelined the first year when a severe drainage problem was identified. The volunteers installed a swale to correct drainage problems and then installed a dry creek with native wildflowers. The Master Gardeners received a grant for 110 trees from “Trees Forever”. A butterfly garden is due to be installed this fall. The Master Gardeners volunteer as greeters at the Cross, answer questions and pass out educational materials. Plans to expand the gardens are in the works.

“Nurture Nature, Nurture You”

Mary Kay Hinkle (Springfield, Sangamon-Menard Unit)

Mary Kay has been instrumental in the success of the local Plant-A-Row campaign by creating a promotional brochure, attending events to promote the project and picking produce in 90° F weather. She is also an active member of the Garden Therapy Committee.

Diane Hultgren (Mt. Vernon, Jefferson County)

Diane has been instrumental in making the Hickory Shadows Exotic Wildlife Rehabilitation and Education Center a gardening resource for local children. She provided leadership to establish the Hope Park, a garden established to honor local residents who are battling cancer.

Kim Isaacson (Ingleside, Lake County)

Despite working full time, Kim is committed to several important projects in Lake County. She works regularly on the information service and at Plant Clinics and gives presentations to both youth and adults. Kim served on the MG advisory committee for Lake County in 2007-2008.

Venneta Joliff (Forsyth, Macon County)

Venneta has been a strong supporter of several local projects and has taken a leadership role in the Macon County Advisory Board and as co-chair of the Help Desk. She was instrumental in the preparation of a new Help Desk training manual and an online training for incoming interns.

Rita Kemme (Effingham, Effingham County)

Rita is the driving force behind the weekly articles in the *Effingham Daily News*. Her articles have covered everything from Amaryllis to Xeriscaping. She also plays a key role in coordinating The Cross Project where she labels plants, maintains the garden and works with other volunteers.

Carol Killian (Towanda, McLean County)

Carol has held several leadership positions in McLean County including chair of the In-Service Committee, the Mayor’s Manor project and the Member Relations Committee. As chairperson for this committee she oversees the newsletter, awards, elections and annual meetings.

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Diana Kirby (Decatur, Macon County)

Diana has brought her enthusiasm and dedication to the chairmanship of the Gardening Insights Day which is an annual educational event focused on gardening for the public. She actively serves on the Advisory Board and leads the Publicity Committee for the Garden Walk.

Carol Kohler (Canton, Fulton County)

Carol has served in a variety of roles to make the annual Gardener's Big Day educational event a success. She has worked hard to coordinate the Canton Jones Park project, a landscaping and educational project which has become a centerpiece for the community.

Dixie Krisher (Peoria, Peoria County)

Dixie was elected recording secretary of the Peoria group in 2008 and she keeps minutes for both board meetings and general monthly meetings. She has also assumed co-chair responsibilities for the ongoing therapy gardening project at Bel-Wood Nursing Home.

Marie Luchetti (Decatur, Macon County)

Marie and her co-chairs were the driving force behind the expansion of the MG Plant Sale. She also serves as co-chair of the Master Gardener Advisory Board and assisted the Program Coordinator in completion of a MOA with the Decatur Public Library for management of the display gardens.

Hugh McDermott (Sandwich, DeKalb County)

Hugh is active in six projects. He is project leader for the Hallgren Park Community Garden which specializes in roses, dwarf conifers and mixed beds. He is an active member of the Shabbona State Park Native Prairie Education Garden and is involved with the Garden Walk and Plant Sale.

Loraine Miranda (Wheaton, DuPage County)

Loraine is an active team leader for the Worms in the Classroom program which presents hands-on lessons in 3rd grade classrooms. For several years, Loraine has single handedly organized "Just a Peek Garden Strolls", a great opportunity to see what fellow volunteers grow in their gardens.

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**The Willow Elementary School Garden
(Cook South Suburban Unit)**

**Gina Banks, Margaret Burns Westmeyer, Vicki Crosley,
Roberta Franzen, Sheila French-Smith, Pat Gee,
Al Guger, Diane Hatfield, Martha Marshall,
Robert McGaghie, Deborah O'Connell, Penny Thomas**

Willow School teachers and Master Gardeners planned and implemented the construction of a children's interactive garden in an internal courtyard at Willow Elementary School in Homewood, IL. The Master Gardeners suggested plant choices ensuring that the plants' bloom times coordinated with the children's school season and that maintenance would be minimal. The finished plan had a butterfly garden, a seating area, a vegetable garden with a section for a heritage garden, a Crayola garden, decorative perennial borders, and a tool shed. The team, with supervised help from high school students and members of a local 4-H group did the installation of the garden. The garden is used by the school for conducting lessons in its existing curriculum and the Master Gardeners conducted programs such as the "Trees are Terrific" program for over 600 students.

**Downers Grove North Garden Program
(DuPage County)**

**Beth Corrigan, Beverly DePhillips, Mike Horsley,
Dolly Moneka, Patty Oleniczak, Ambi Pellegrini,
Larry States, June Vandervest, Elaine Weil, Marta Witte,
Jeanette Zeldin**

This project uses monthly hands-on horticulture lessons to teach developmentally handicapped students at Downers Grove North High School. Four to five lessons are planned for each month for up to 12 children, and the students rotated to different stations. The team is careful to plan lessons that take into account many different abilities and learning styles. Lessons are presented in a classroom or garden setting and incorporate all five senses. The Master Gardeners have taught lessons on butterflies, insects, plant propagation, flower arranging, recycling and many other environmental topics. With the help of Master Gardeners, the school courtyard was transformed into a beautiful garden with raised beds and ramps. The children plant flowers, learn tree ID, make snowmen and help do maintenance.

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2008 Master's Tour (Adams-Brown Unit)

Marcia Cray, Barb Nieders, Kathy Seidel, Patty Vogel

The Master's Tour of home gardens in Quincy has been a long-standing Master Gardener event. To create new interest for the project, Marcia, Barb, Kathy and Patty decided instead to do a tour of porch gardens, created and designed by Master Gardeners. The tour also highlighted a block of older homes that had been gradually restored as a German Village complete with great porches and a gazebo. The team scheduled two 'planting days' at the Village where MG's donated perennial flowers from their home gardens or purchased annual plants. The team of Master Gardeners at the Illinois Veterans Home Memorial Garden worked at an extra pace to further beautify that large garden while other gardeners assisted with weeding and beautifying the plots at the Quincy Community Garden so that they could be included in the tour. This project was a new and original twist on a popular annual event and the tour was a huge success.

Smart Home Garden

(Cook, Cook North Suburban, Cook South Suburban, DuPage, McHenry and Will Counties)

93 Master Gardeners, 5 Extension staff, 3 Museum staff

The Smart Home Garden at the Museum of Science and Industry is a 2500 square foot home and yard exhibit which is crafted of recycled and renewable resources and features the latest in energy and resource efficiencies. The goal of the exhibit is to provide museum guests with new information about green practices. The vegetable garden which was planted by Master Gardeners shows the public about inexpensive, realistic and tangible ways to be green. Master Gardeners filled three roles in the garden— as groomers, docents and historians. Visitors learned about water conservation through the use of rain barrels and Earthboxes® as well as plant selection, composting and worm bins. About 9,000 to 10,000 visitors visited the Smart Home in 2008. Master Gardeners gave between 1800-2000 volunteer hours and this project promoted teamwork among the different counties as well as being an excellent marketing tool for the program.

"Nurture Nature, Nurture You"

Anne Nadakavukaren (Bloomington, McLean County)

Anne uses her excellent teaching skills to conduct classes on a wide variety of topics and lends her expertise to the hotline and to answering questions on a local radio show. She has established monthly garden talks at the local libraries as part of her role as Chair of the Outreach Committee. .

Sherry Park (Loami, Sangamon-Menard Unit)

Sherry is active on the Perennial Garden Committee where she has assisted with layout of the garden, planting and scheduling volunteers. She is also co-chair of the committee which oversees the whole Demo Garden and she has created and given seminars in the garden.

Joy Poos (Springfield, Sangamon-Menard Unit)

Joy has played an active leadership role, serving on the Horticulture Action Committee for 4 years and 1 year on the Master Gardener Advisory Committee. She has volunteered most of her time as an active team member of the Herb Garden Committee where she is a specialist on lavender, lovage and marjoram.

Marian Powers (Brocton, Edgar County)

Marian has been an invaluable volunteer of the 18 member group, serving as co-president in 2005 and playing an active role on several committees. She was active with ECHO House project, working with an after school group to do landscaping. She plans Master Gardener trips in her role as Travel Chair.

Sarah Redd (Champaign, Champaign County)

Sarah is an enthusiastic detail person and provides leadership to the Children's Garden. She is responsible for design, plant selection and upkeep of the garden as well as development of an informational sheet for the garden visitors.

Bill Rosati (Woodstock, McHenry County)

Bill is a master at gardening, a trait which makes him a natural leader as co-chair of the Demonstration Garden. He has also been co-chair for the annual Gardenfest educational event for the county and assists with the Trips and Tours

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Phyllis Schultz (Mattoon, Coles County)

Phyllis has spearheaded a complete renovation of the local Idea Garden. She turned the area into a Xeriscape Garden and prepared information and plant lists for garden visitors. She was also responsible for establishing a bog garden, overhauling the Children's Garden and production of a new garden sign.

Purnima Shah (Effingham, Effingham County)

Purnima is a true advocate for the Master Gardener program with the public. She is a leader of youth projects including a JMG® group and helps them plant tomatoes for the local nursing home. Purnima also assists with Mystery Camps for kids, Camp Clover and the Girl Scout flower garden planting.

Mary Alice Stonecipher (Bismark, Vermilion County)

Soon after becoming an intern, Mary Alice became co-chair of the Garden Walk and has been so for 5 years. She selects the gardens, coordinates the volunteers, provides support to the homeowners and arranges a "Preview Night". Mary Alice also teaches a "Make it Take it" class at Tuesday Night Classes.

Normalie Strickland (Effingham, Effingham County)

Normalie is the local hummingbird expert and she writes articles and educates children about birds. She researched plants for a biblical garden at The Cross Project where she also helps with design and maintenance. Normalie is a great public speaker and she gives talks on a wide range of topics.

Jerry Swartz (Bloomington, McLean County)

Jerry single-handedly established the plastic pot recycling program which brought Master Gardeners, IL State University and the Ecology Center together with local nurseries to benefit the community. He has also assumed the lead role in the enabling garden at the Occupational Development Center.

Robin VanDermay (Bloomington, McLean County)

Robin has been one of the supervisors of the pot recycling program and has been an active member of the team which works at Sarah's Garden at the David Davis Mansion. She has been active on the Community Cancer Center Garden, the Community Projects Committee and the ODC Oasis Garden Committee

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Teamwork Award Winners

2008 Masters Tour

Adams-Brown Unit

Smart Home Garden

Cook County, Cook North Suburban, Cook South Suburban, DuPage, McHenry and Will Counties

The Willow Elementary School Garden

Cook South Suburban Unit

Downer's Grove North Garden Program

DuPage County

"April in Paris" Annual Garden Seminar

Edgar County

The Cross Project

Effingham County

Planting and Growing Gourds

Kane County

Rain Barrel Workshops

Macon County

Illinois Plastic Pot Recycling Initiative

McLean County

Lasagna Garden

Perry County

***Dig It!* Master Gardener Newsletter**

Rock Island County

Demonstration Garden Compost Committee

Sangamon-Menard Unit

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Homestead Prairie Farm Heritage Garden (Macon County)

The Homestead Prairie Farm Heritage Garden, second place winner in the SFE Demonstration Garden category, is a collaborative effort between the Macon County Conservation District and Master Gardeners. The project educates the community and showcases a typical 1860 vegetable garden as part of the farm's restoration. The Conservation District regularly features the Homestead Prairie Farm in their programming efforts. Master Gardeners contribute to these programs by describing and utilizing organic practices as well as distributing research-based information and typical 1860 recipes for the lesser known vegetables, herbs and spices grown in the garden. All rows of plants are labeled and at the annual festival, volunteers staff a booth explaining about the garden and the Master Gardener program. Over 1,200 visitors in summer 2008 learned how to successfully grow vegetables. The garden's produce is taken to Dove, a local shelter for victims of domestic battery.

Plant-A-Row for the Hungry (Sangamon-Menard Unit)

The Plant-A-Row project was awarded second place in the SFE Community Service category. Over the past eight years, the Sangamon-Menard PAR project has collected more than 275,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to improve nutrition for those served by food pantries and soup kitchens in 21 counties in Central Illinois. Beyond the sheer volume of produce contributed, the program has a successful educational component that compliments "eat local" efforts. Master Gardeners, food distributors, and consumers have learned good growing, handling and food preparation methods. The Sangamon-Menard PAR has expanded upon the basic mission of the national PAR effort by partnering with commercial growers and an established distribution system. Master Gardeners maintain dedicated gardens and seek fresh produce from unexpected sources to prevent both waste and hunger. Volunteers use a PAR informational display for promotional events and give presentations to civic groups. Most importantly, Master Gardeners have taken time to learn about food recipients and their needs.

June Vandervest (Downers Grove, DuPage County)

June has taken a leadership role on the Graue Mill team which has reclaimed garden areas surrounding the historic mill. She also took a leadership role in presenting Farming, Then and Now where she taught plant lessons to 8-12 year olds. June is a well respected Help Line volunteer.

Rita Weisiger (Champaign, Champaign County)

Rita is a wonderful leader and this shows thru in her work as co-chair of the Children's Garden where she oversees general maintenance and upkeep, chooses new plant material and manages volunteers. Her contributions as Garden Walk co-chair have added to the success of the annual garden walk.

Rita Wiessing (Humboldt, Coles County)

Although Rita helps with most any project, it has been the Idea Garden, Junior Master Gardeners® and public speaking where she has focused much of her time and talent. She thrives on speaking to the public as shown by her radio/TV interviews, classes for Summer College for Kids and garden classes at the Douglas-Hart Nature Center.

Sustained Excellence Award Winners

Lyn Ash	Nancy Gmitro
Elizabeth Champlin	Diane Hatfield
Paul Dennis	Diana Hetherington
Roxie DeShane	Ron Johnson
Paula Enstrom	Barb Killelea
Maxi Fitzjarrald	Richard Zerfowski

Lyn Ash (Bloomington, McLean County)

Lyn graduated from training in 2000 and jumped right into a leadership role. He has served as chair of both the Finance and Outreach Committees and provided three years of service as the President-Elect, President and Past-President. Lyn has written articles for the Garden Patch Dispatch and the Master Gardener newsletter as well as being a frequent panelist on the WJBC call-in radio show manned by Master Gardeners. Many clients have been assisted by Lyn's involvement with various Master Gardener booths at a local Farmer's Market, the county fair and other special events. Lyn was also the Chairperson for the 2009 Home, Lawn and Garden Day which is the largest educational event hosted by McLean County.

Elizabeth Champlin (Canton, Fulton County)

Elizabeth is the "root" of the Fulton County Master Gardener program. She has been active in many programming activities with both youth and adults. She was a leader at 4-H Super Saturday, working with kids to make a "Garden in a Glove", and has led chemical safety sessions at Farm Safety Camps. Elizabeth has developed new programs for adults such as 'Plants of the Bible' and she uses the lecture library to teach classes in cooperation with Spoon River College. Since becoming a Master Gardener in 1996, Elizabeth has been involved with ten Gardeners Big Day events, which have impacted over 1000 gardeners.

International Search for Excellence Awards

Search for Excellence is the recognition program for Master Gardener volunteers throughout the USA and Canada. SFE has seven categories in which Master Gardeners can demonstrate their outstanding contributions to their communities. In March 2009 at the International Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada three Illinois projects received international recognition. Kane County was the winner in the Special Needs category. Macon County received second place in the Demonstration Garden category and the Sangamon-Menard Unit received a second place in the Community Service category.

Female Inmate Garden Project (Kane County)

The Kane County Inmate Garden received first place in the SFE Special Needs category. It served incarcerated adult females of diverse backgrounds who were non-violent offenders. The goals of this project were to mentor inmates to build life skills and work ethics, to educate them about food production, to increase their awareness of healthy eating and to produce locally grown vegetables for food bank patrons and the general public. The garden is located on the grounds of the Kane County Correctional Facility and the garden features vegetables that are easy to grow and require minimal maintenance. Vegetables grown in the garden by the inmates were sold at a vegetable stand staffed by Master Gardeners. The inmates were involved with weekly classes on topics such as watering, pest ID, harvesting and more. The most significant result was the positive effect on the inmates themselves, as working in the garden fostered their sense of ownership while bolstering self confidence.

Richard Zerfowski (Mt. Zion, Macon County)

Without question, Richard is a key leader in the Macon County Master Gardener program. For four years, he was the chair of the WAND-TV demonstration garden project which won a 2007 International Search for Excellence Award. Richard has also been a leader in the Tomato Taste Panel, a program featuring multiple cultivars (50 cultivars in 2008) and offering tastings as well as information on each cultivar to the public. Another major project Richard has played a key role in is the Rain Barrel workshops. From planning the design of the barrels to developing instructions sheet, finding sources for the barrels and teaching the workshops, Richard has managed all aspects of this project.

Paul Dennis (Roscoe, Winnebago County)

Paul is in his 27th year as a University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener! He has been active on the Speaker's Bureau for many years and has given numerous presentations including talks at the Forest Hills Home and Garden Show, Gardening for Food and Fun, Joy of Gardening and at public libraries, garden clubs and for the public. Paul has extraordinary knowledge of fruit and vegetable production and incorporates permaculture, succession planting and intercropping into his teaching. Most recently Paul helped coordinate volunteers with development of a vegetable demonstration garden at the Extension office.

Roxie DeShane (Orion, Rock Island County)

The Rock Island County Master Gardener program is referred to by stakeholders as the "gold standard" for service- due in large part to Roxie's hard work and dedication. She has promoted educational projects such as the *Dig It* newsletter, numerous ongoing community projects and a community development survey. She is much sought after as a speaker on a variety of topics and she uses these opportunities to promote Extension and Master Gardeners. Roxie has initiated a mentor program for newly trained Master Gardeners and developed program policies and best practices for the volunteers. Her responses to clients young and old reflect her personal commitment to outstanding service.

Paula Enstrom (Charleston, Coles County)

Paula is one of the most active and dedicated Master Gardeners in Coles County. She served on the Program Committee where she shared responsibility for developing the yearly schedule and securing educational programs. Not only does Paula teach monthly lessons with the Mattoon Middle School Junior Master Gardeners® but she established a neighborhood garden for kids on the empty lot next to her home. For two years, she served as co-chair of the Idea Garden- a large multi-section garden on the grounds of the Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center. She has cared for special sections of the garden and was in charge of the plant list handouts.

Maxi Fitzjarrald (Arcola, Moultrie-Douglas Unit)

Maxi is one of a kind and she does it all! She helps the program in every way possible. She helps train and prepare new interns by showing them the ropes and how things operate in the office. She also answers questions in the office, helps recruit new volunteers and promotes the program to the public. Maxi gives talks on a variety of topics and she has given classes to senior groups, youth groups, garden clubs and the Rotary club. She is a regular when it comes to running tele-nets and organizing rain barrel workshops. Maxi has also been responsible for planning, preparing and planting the garden at the local assisted living center.

Nancy Gmitro (Mt. Carroll, Jo-Carroll Unit)

Since 2007, Nancy has served as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Carroll County Master Gardener program. She is the point person for the work done with the Mt. Carroll Community Development Corporation in establishing numerous community beautification projects including the county courthouse project. For this project, Nancy brought together church groups, Girl Scouts and the county jail inmates to learn about landscaping and to create the gardens. She also mapped trees and wildflowers to create a walking tour of the main park in Mt. Carroll. Nancy has continued her work as co-chair of the Mt. Carroll Garden Walk, an event which has been very successful under her leadership.

Diane Hatfield (Crete, Cook South Suburban Unit)

Diane took the Ask-the-Master Gardener office under her wing and stepped up into a volunteer management role. She scheduled the volunteers, reviewed how questions were being answered and trained the new incoming interns. She has also answered many questions from the public at off-site venues. Diane became fed-up with the office-hired landscape crew which was managing the office landscape. She organized a team of volunteers to turn the area into a cottage garden with low maintenance perennials and natives. It is now a showcase for clients on sustainable landscape practices. The group is called SCEGBUG for South Cook Extension Grounds Beautification and Upkeep Group.

Diana Hetherington (Springfield, Sangamon-Menard)

In 2006, Diana conceived a Garden Shed Sale as a fundraiser for the Master Gardener program. The volunteers donated unwanted garden items which were cleaned and sold to the public. She co-chaired the event which made \$2,500 in 2006 and \$2,800 in 2008. Diana was co-chair for the 2007 Garden Walk and she managed all aspects of the successful event. She is a five year member of the Master Gardener Advisory committee as well as serving a four year term on the Sangamon-Menard Extension Council. Diana was instrumental in helping set up plastic pot recycling collections in Springfield in partnership with the McLean County recycling project.

Ron Johnson (Sycamore, DeKalb County)

In 2006, Ron stepped up to take over as interim coordinator of the Master Gardener program. He did such an outstanding job that he was unanimously selected to fill that position. As coordinator he oversees and leads the Advisory Board, the continuing education of volunteers and the Master Gardener training. Ron also chairs several community projects such as the Gardener's Pathway Workshop; the annual Garden Walk and the Kingston Elementary School Prairie Index Garden. He is also a leader of several local beautification projects in DeKalb County including the garden at the Alzheimer Unit at the DeKalb County Home and containers which enhance the downtown.

Barb Killelea (Midlothian, Cook South Suburban Unit)

Barb is the "guiding light" of this Master Gardener program and she has a heart of gold. Barb is very busy with the Lake Katherine project and she has demonstrated chickens, goats and rabbits to the guests at the yearly Butterfly Fest. She has also been involved with giving environmental and horticulture tours of the Nature Center and Botanic Gardens. This year she stepped up to a management position at Lake Katherine and works to schedule school visits, classes and volunteer tour guides. Barb helps to manage the Tinley Park Farmers Market where she trains other volunteers on how to answer questions at the information booth.