

Outagamie County Master Gardener Volunteer Association Annual Accomplishment Report 2009

So far, 100 of our 128 members have submitted hours. The breakdown is:

402.5	Youth Education
822	Community Education
6237.5	Support hours
2106	Continuing Education

2009 has been quite a memorable year for Outagamie County Master Gardeners as this year we celebrated our 10th anniversary! We have gone from our first small class to 128 paid up members. Congratulations to Lynn Coffeen, Sally Teasdale and Kathy Baum, who have been active members since the inception of the program. Twenty-nine students were newly certified for 2010, and 29 for 2009, plus 5 members transferred in from other areas.

To our great delight, our Horticulture Advisor, Kevin Jarek, gained tenure at the same time and a celebratory pot luck party was enjoyed by all. Check out the photos at www.ocmga.net.

We were very sorry to lose Sally Jaeger-Altekruse in October 2009. Sally was a long-time member who was so passionate about anything to do with gardening. She worked and taught tirelessly for the Association and was particularly dedicated to the Community Garden projects. We will miss her. A stone commemorating her has been placed in our Memory Garden at the extension office.

We registered a total of 51 sanctioned projects for the year. We instituted a Permanent Sanction status designation for certain community projects including schools, Community Gardens, public gardens and nature conservancies. This gives our members the freedom to earn hours by working on these projects at any time without recourse to a project manager. This change is reflected on the Web site, and a continuing goal is to have photographs and a short report on the site for every project.

Our highlight project that we initiated for 2009 was to present a "Garden Discoveries" walk. Four of our members generously opened their gardens up to the public. MGs were on hand to give tours and hand-outs listing plants, problems, features, etc. were made available. Each garden was selected for its individual character and included a shade garden, natural plants, roses and water features. Fortunately the weather cooperated and the roses were in fine bloom and the day was much enjoyed by all. Admission was \$5 per person and two non-perishable food items and we were able to make a donation of almost \$1,000 to the local Community Gardens Project. The 2nd Annual Garden Discoveries walk is already being planned and two gardens have been selected so far.

Melinda Myers was our featured speaker at the Annual Garden Expectations Conference held in March. Approximately 145 people heard her talk on Small Space Gardening, plus we held presentations on "Don't Disturb the Soil", "Dwarf Confers" and "Water Features". This conference is always well received by community and members alike.

Our major fund raising event is our Plant Sale held on the extension grounds the last Saturday in May. The weather was beautiful and the event was well-attended by both members and the public. Some wonderful new varieties were available. We had fewer left-over plants this year than in previous years, and donations were made to local schools and community gardens as well as the Extension Office gardens.

The group extends their thanks to Carol VandeBerg, who after spearheading the committee for so many years, is stepping down.

We have maintained an information booth at the local farmers' market each summer and this year added a free seminar once a month for the general public. These have been quite well-attended and we plan on continuing to hold them next year.

With the interest in surface and ground water quality programs we continue to offer workshops and presentations on these topics. Rod Sternhagen's Rain Barrel demonstration is always in great demand, and he does maintain a small supply to fill requests. Several classes were taught on water conservation and rain gardens.

We have focused hard this year to meet the demands for education, grants and hands-on training for schools and community gardens. In these uncertain times, more people have turned to growing their own foods, and interest in any related topics has been high. This is an endeavor we plan on continuing throughout the coming year.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege for us to say "I am an Outagamie County Master Gardener." I thank each and every one of our members for another wonderfully productive and successful year.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Learman, President