

EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

State Report August 2019

*Helping people and communities **grow***

3,507

Extension Master
Gardener Volunteers

157,430

Volunteer Hours

616,306

Michigan Residents Reached



Our Mission

To further the land-grant university goal of disseminating scientifically based information via a network of trained volunteers who receive support and guidance from MSU Extension to educate Michigan residents on the most current and environmentally sound horticulture information

The Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Master Gardener Program is an outreach program that brings the gardening and horticulture resources of Michigan's land-grant university to the state's residents and communities through trained volunteers. University experts train these dedicated volunteers on environmentally sound horticulture practices rooted in research. In return, trainees provide at least 40 hours of volunteer community service to extend MSU's outreach into communities across Michigan. Individuals who successfully complete the training and then fulfill their volunteer commitment within 12 months become certified as an Extension Master Gardener (EMG). EMGs often remain active in the program for many years, continuing to volunteer at least 20 hours of service and a minimum of 10 continuing education hours annually to retain their MSU certification as an EMG.

The MSU Extension Master Gardener Program comprises more than 3,500 individuals across 78 counties. In 2018 alone, these passionate volunteers engaged in nearly 160,000 hours educating over 600,000 residents. Through their volunteer outreach, EMGs shared science-based, environmentally sound gardening knowledge with the gardening public in the following areas:

Environmental stewardship

Teaching about invasive species, gardening practices to protect and preserve water resources, environmentally friendly pest management strategies, and native plants

Food security

Providing technical assistance for community food gardens and teaching people how to grow their own food

Community and quality of life

Assisting local beautification boards and providing gardening classes for those with special needs

Youth

Teaching Junior Master Gardener classes, helping teachers and community members learn to create and maintain their school gardens

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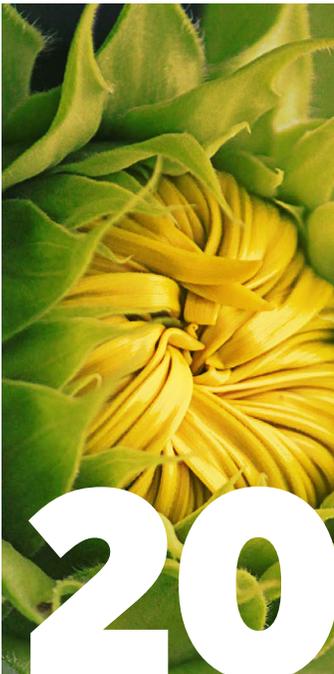
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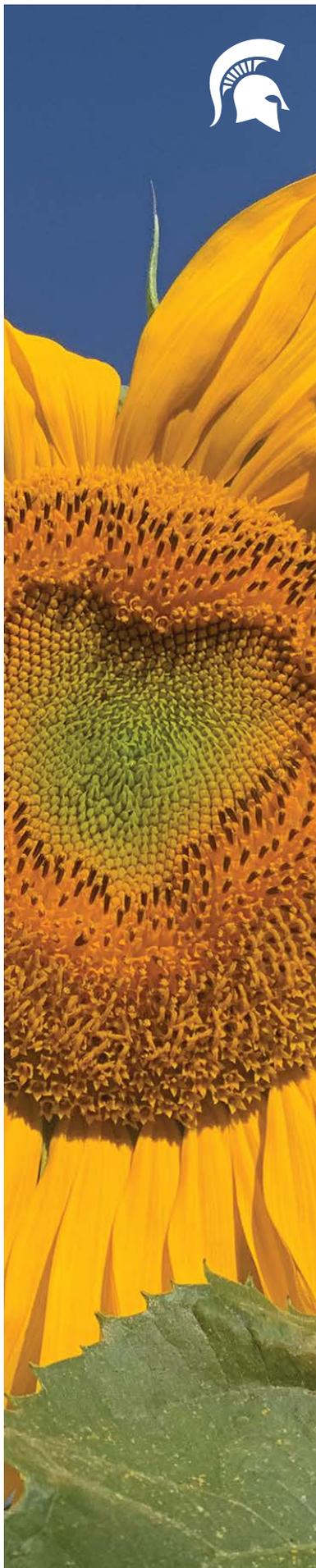
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About the Extension Master Gardener State Program

History

A Washington State University Extension educator created the EMG Program in 1972 in response to increasing requests from gardeners for unbiased, research-based horticultural information. Since then, the program has spread to 49 states with over 100,000 EMGs sharing researched-based knowledge with people who garden. In Michigan, MSU Extension educated its first class of EMGs in 1978. The EMG Program has grown exponentially from that first class of 25 enthusiastic gardeners. In the 40 years since it began, MSU Extension has responded to the public demand for horticulture education by training well over 40,000 Michigan residents who, in return, give back to their communities on a monumental scale.

2009-2018

1,873,497
Volunteer Hours

\$46.3 million*
Added value to
Michigan communities

*volunteer hourly value determined by Independent Section

Learning, Sharing, and Continuing Education

Individuals accepted into the EMG Program must complete over 50 hours of horticulture education. MSU faculty and Extension educators teach EMG courses. Topics covered include plant science, soil science, integrated pest management, diagnostics, turfgrass, vegetables, annuals and perennials, woody ornamentals, fruits, indoor plants, household pests, and gardening practices to protect water resources. To obtain their EMG certification, trainees share what they learned in classes with their communities while completing 40 volunteer hours through locally identified volunteer projects.

To remain active in the program and retain their certification, EMGs must fulfill a minimum of 20 volunteer hours and 10 hours of education each year. Continuing education is provided through countless opportunities across the state. EMGs have a passion for learning. In 2018, they engaged in 44,500 hours of continuing education classes and workshops.



EMG tending a vegetable garden for produce donation.

2018 MSU EXTENSION MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

157,430
Volunteer Hours

3,507
Total Participants

Webinars

Free webinars on subjects such as pollinators, invasive pests, healthy soils, and environmentally responsible pest management provide EMGs with a convenient way to learn about the latest and emerging horticulture news. Each year, new webinars are offered on emerging topics by leading experts in their topic field. In 2018, EMGs engaged in over 6,000 hours of continuing education through webinars.

Master Gardener College

Master Gardener College is a two-day conference that offers numerous educational sessions, as well as opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with EMGs from across Michigan. Tours, workshops, and seminars equip EMGs with increased knowledge and understanding of relevant, applied research; build understanding of the Michigan horticulture industry and provide a forum to share volunteer service ideas with other EMGs. In 2018, over 300 attendees from 39 counties participated in Master Gardener College.

“

The Extension Master Gardener Program gave me a start to a new path in life. It gave me more confidence and the desire to gain even more knowledge about plants, and now I am pursuing a degree from MSU in landscape management.”

– Karen Kasper,
MSU EMG

“

I took the classes to learn more about plants, be with others with the same interests, and to give back to my community through the motto of ‘helping others grow.’

– MSU EMG Program
participant

“

This webinar was so detailed that I have watched it twice and still picked up a few more facts. I will be able to confidently pass this information on to our community groups.”

– MSU EMG “Oak Wilt”
webinar participant

“

I am inspired to share with others and create connections between gardeners and food pantries to create access to healthy food and improve lives.”

– 2018 Master Gardener
College participant



*Making a difference
in local communities through*



Environmental
Stewardship



Food Security



Community and
Quality of Life



Youth



Environmental Stewardship

EMGs teach Michigan residents about environmentally sound horticultural practices including proper use of fertilizers and pesticides, water conservation, identification and management of invasive pests and plants, the benefits of native plants, and gardening for pollinators.

Genesee County

Just one enthusiastic EMG can make a big impact! In Grand Blanc, a single EMG turned a neglected, overgrown area in Rust Park into a Monarch Waystation. This 629-square-foot raised bed was transformed into a space that provides shelter and water for the butterflies and includes their favored plants. It also offers inspiration and education for residents and students from a neighboring elementary school. With financial support from local community groups, the garden was planted and mulched, signage was purchased and installed, and a donated trellis was positioned. The garden received official Monarch Waystation Certification in 2018.

Kalamazoo County

A sanctuary for native plants, the Kal-Haven Trail was opened in 1990. This accessible trail was developed from an abandoned railroad right-of-way. Over time, invasive plants started to crowd out natives and threaten an area previously rich in woodland wildflowers. In 2011, EMGs began the work of eradicating garlic mustard and other invasive plants. This crucial work has continued for eight years, and in 2018, plant identification signs were posted on the trail. EMGs often meet trail users and take the opportunity to educate them about what they are doing and why. Educational walks to identify wild plants are being planned with garden groups and native plant associations. This project has won several awards for this important work including the Fred Meijer Trail Champion Award and in 2018, the Champion Trail Volunteer Award.



Kal-Haven Trail project where EMGs educate trail users about native and invasive plants.

Teaching others about native plants and pollinators at the Leelanau County Government Center.



Leelanau County

For over 10 years, Extension Master Gardeners have played a central role in the planning and maintenance of an educational native plant display garden on the grounds of the Leelanau County Government Center. This is in an ideal location to educate many Leelanau County residents who pass the garden on their way to work and county offices. A rain garden has recently been installed, demonstrating water conservation fundamentals. Educational signage raises awareness of invasive species, the importance of native plants, water quality, and pollinator conservation.

Livingston County

EMGs have been instrumental in developing a garden renovation project at the Cromaine Library in Hartland with a focus on ecological and educational goals. EMGs, along with members of the Hartland Home and Garden Club, used construction as an opportunity to rethink the focus of the gardens. The vision is for the garden to increase public awareness of the beauty and function of native plants, be a backdrop to educate the public about invasive plants in the Ore Creek watershed, spur public projects and cleanup days, and provide learning opportunities for school and youth groups.

Otsego County

The Pigeon River Country State Forest spans 106,000 acres and is the largest contiguous piece of wild land in the northern Lower Peninsula. The park headquarters is located next to a historic log cabin built in 1935 by the Civilian Conservation Corps. In 2016, this log cabin was renovated into an educational facility called the Discovery Center, which received 1,100 visits in 2018 alone. EMGs from the Alpine Master Gardeners Association, along with volunteers from AmeriCorps and the Discovery Center, created 633 square feet of educational gardens along an accessible pathway. These gardens feature plants native to Otsego, Cheboygan, or Montmorency counties, grown and purchased locally. EMGs provide walks to teach the public about plants in the gardens and ways to maintain the area. Expansion plans include additional educational signage and inclusion of Native American medicinal plants.

“

Our students and their families had so much fun learning more about butterflies and native plants. This was a great opportunity to take some of our science curriculum (plants and butterflies) and extrapolate our learning in a fun and engaging way.”

– Juliet Poirier, Great Start Readiness Program lead teacher, Perry Center/Grand Blanc Community Schools

“

We have visitors from all over Michigan, and really from all over the world at the Pigeon River Country State Forest. The intent of the project was to establish a demonstration garden to teach visitors about native plants in a way that would make it easy for them to create wildlife- and pollinator-friendly gardens in their own backyards. But the garden is about so much more than that. It is a reflection of the pride that people have in this community, in its history, and in its future.”

– Scott Whitcomb, unit manager, Pigeon River Country State Forest Otsego County

By the numbers

Smart Gardening



Smart Gardening Initiative

Started in 2014, the Smart Gardening Initiative is an MSU Extension campaign to help novice and experienced gardeners adopt and implement scientifically sound techniques to save time, money, and the environment. This statewide initiative promotes reduced reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides, as well as water resource protection through soil testing and informed choices regarding lawn care, plant selection, and increased awareness about pollinators and invasive species.

Oak Wilt Prevention

To combat the lethal oak wilt fungus threatening Michigan oak trees, an EMG teamed up with the Oak Wilt Coalition, a collaboration of university, state, and professional organizations. This partnership resulted in a multi-pronged approach to raise awareness about oak wilt prevention.

Outreach Plan:

- An article on oak wilt prevention was written and published in 12 municipal newsletters and delivered to 130,000 homes in Oakland County.
- EMGs distributed over 1,000 oak wilt prevention brochures at large public events such as the Novi Home and Garden Show in 2018.
- A poster and bookmark were developed in 2018 for statewide distribution by EMGs.
- An expanded effort in 2019 includes the development of tip sheets on oak wilt and oak identification for distribution at Smart Gardening events throughout Michigan.



Citizen Science Squash Bee Pollinator Project

Thirty-eight EMGs from 20 counties engaged as Citizen Scientists in 2017 and 2018 with additional EMGs engaged in 2019. Citizen Scientists, who voluntarily contribute their time, effort, and resources toward scientific research, can be invaluable to the scientists they collaborate with. Working with MSU entomologist Zsofia Szendrei, EMGs learned through hands-on workshops, presentations, and webinars about identifying native squash bee pollinators and cultivating practices that could affect their survival rates. EMGs then scouted and monitored cucurbit crops (for example, squash, pumpkins, and cucumbers) from Houghton to Wayne counties to record production practices and presence of native squash bee pollinators.

Reported data supports Szendrei's research for her U.S. Department of Agriculture Organic Research and Extension Initiative on commercial organic cucurbit management. This Citizen Science project provides EMGs an opportunity to learn about these critical pollinators while providing important data for Szendrei's research.

EMG citizen scientist
identifying squash bees.



Food Security

According to the hunger-relief organization Feeding America, over 1.3 million Michigan residents struggle with hunger (www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/michigan). MSU EMGs are stepping up to help improve food security across the state. Through workshops, demonstrations, and leadership at community gardens, EMGs teach others how to grow produce using sustainable methods. These efforts are helping more Michigan residents put healthier food on their tables.

By the numbers Food Security Efforts in 2018

294

EMGs

13,000

hours volunteering and educating
about food production

140,000

pounds of produce donated

Delta County

The Escanaba Community Garden has provided garden plots for community members for over 20 years. In 2018, two EMGs spent more than 80 hours helping over 50 individuals and families learn how to grow more produce for their tables. These EMGs taught environmentally sustainable topics such as soil health and water conservation. A compost demonstration area was created to educate community members about recycling resources to grow more food.

Emmet County

Through the Petoskey United Methodist Church donation garden, EMGs are helping to change the lives of those in need. EMGs provide leadership and technical skills to help grow and harvest fresh produce that ultimately ends up on the tables of hungry families in northern Michigan. Since its inception in 2008, over 26,000 pounds of fresh produce from this garden have been donated to local food pantries. In 2018 alone, 2,500 meals of fresh produce were provided to families living in low-income situations.

Genesee County

One hundred senior citizens at the Park Place Manufactured Home Community in Clio receive home delivery of fresh produce through an on-site community garden plot that EMGs oversee. Residents learn about garden activities through a monthly newsletter, which also is used to educate them about the nutrients in the produce, and the best methods for storing, cooking, and preserving the food.

Ottawa County

The Holland Community Garden is a demonstration garden that works to bring community organizations and people together to help one another. Funded through partnerships with churches, Community Action House, and private donations, this 15,000-square-foot garden draws church groups, civic groups, business groups, children, schools, the court system, 4-H programs, people who are developmentally challenged, and EMGs to participate in hands-on and formal horticulture education. Working alongside community members, EMGs use the opportunity to teach and demonstrate the research-based gardening practices used in the Holland Community Garden.

In 2018, the Holland Community Garden produced 6,100 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables for donation to the Community Action House and Community Action Agency of Ottawa County.



EMG harvesting produce in the Petoskey United Methodist Church donation garden. Courtesy of The Graphic photographer Molly Hauxwell Currier.

“

This garden means everything to me. My husband always used to have a big garden out in the country where we lived for 60 years. I love everything out of the garden. This garden means I get fresh produce even though I can't garden anymore. I appreciate your deliveries!”

– Donny, senior resident at Park Place Manufactured Home Community

“

Every single day, the Holland Community Garden (HCG) makes a direct impact for the neighbors who seek help at Community Action House (CAH)...For our neighbors, having a stable supply of healthy, locally grown produce has proven essential to facing life challenges with a positive direction.”

– David Lee, Community Action House

“

The Master Gardeners provide a wide array of fresh produce to the Emergency Food Assistance Program. Much of the food we receive from the county is canned or frozen, so this addition of fresh produce helps the recipients maintain a healthy lifestyle within their budget.”

-Jessica Bunjik, Site Coordinator, TEFAP

Wayne County (Canton)

In 2018, a group of 32 EMGs in Canton cultivated 22 raised beds, raising 1,200 pounds of produce. This produce was donated to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in Canton; First Step, a women and children’s shelter in Wayne; and the Women Infants and Children Program.

Signage near the Canton farmers market is used to educate people who regularly visit the area. Plans are underway to expand the Canton group’s efforts to TEFAP in Westland, Focus Hope, and senior citizens in Belleville.

Wayne County (Trenton)

In 1972, the City of Trenton inherited the historic Frank Farm, now known as the Trenton Cultural Center. In 2010, city representatives asked an EMG to lead a group of gardeners in developing a community garden at the cultural center. To date, 3 acres of food gardens have been planted and are a source of sustenance and education for the community. In 2018, the EMG-led group of gardeners donated nearly 6,000 pounds of fresh produce to two area church pantries and a low-income senior living community located in Trenton. EMGs have been involved in an annual Butterfly Day at this site to educate residents about pollinators since 2014. They have also provided gardening programming for children at the cultural center’s community garden for over 10 years.

“Growing Together in Michigan” pilot garden in Detroit.



In 2018, Extension Master Gardeners produced

140,451
pounds of produce

for families living in low-income situations

Making a difference
in local communities



Growing Together in Michigan: Healthy Food Access Project

MSU EMGs are collaborating with MSU Extension’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education (SNAP-Ed) to create a food secure Michigan. This initiative is part of a multi-state Extension effort with Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. The project supports EMGs who educate other gardeners on how to grow more produce for donations to local food pantries and low-income food service sites. The partnership between MSU Extension Master Gardeners and SNAP-Ed also offers garden and nutrition education to donation recipients and pantries, as well as training for EMGs to improve food safety practices in donation gardens.

In 2019, MSU Extension implemented a pilot support program that provides mini-grants to EMGs in targeted areas dispersed across the state where high levels of food insecurity exist. These grants provide funds to purchase food donation garden supplies and materials, including those needed to improve food safety. Grant recipients work closely with MSU Extension SNAP-Ed and consumer horticulture educators to strengthen relationships with donation sites and better connect food pantry recipients to educational opportunities.



Community and Quality of Life

Plants and gardens contribute to the health and the vitality of our communities. The benefits of plants in places where we work, learn, heal, live, and play include fewer sick days, faster healing, more focused students, increased home values, and increased tourism. EMG projects increase access to plants and gardens in settings around Michigan and teach employable skills to the state's residents.

Arenac County

EMGs partner with Arenac Opportunities (AO), a nonprofit community organization that helps train and support cognitively impaired adults and locate employment opportunities for them.

When AO received a grant to help fund a gardening-related project, the organization saw an opportunity to draw on the expertise that EMGs offer. In 2018, a group of EMGs started teaching the clients fundamentals of planting and maintaining container gardens. Clients were then able to build container gardens that were then sold locally to beautify downtown Standish. AO and EMGs plan to continue and expand this partnership.

Genesee County

Seven EMGs partnered with the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) and the Genesee County Sheriff's Department work team to create several educational gardens at the I-69 rest area in Swartz Creek. The EMGs and MDOT created an educational poster and placed signs in the garden to help visitors learn more about plants.

These gardens, which receive over 650,000 visitors each year, are also a certified Monarch Waystation, providing food and habitat for pollinators. The rest area displays Smart Gardening posters on pollinator identification, habitat and protection. EMGs and the sheriff's team completed a combined total of 200 hours of volunteer time at this site in 2018.

Gladwin County

EMGs help communities thrive through the award-winning Cedar Avenue Courtyard Accessibility, Beautification, and Education Project on Main Street in Gladwin. The project brought together community members to create a fully accessible educational outdoor space comprising six separate demonstration gardens each with its unique focus, roses, grasses, herbs, succulents, shade, and native Michigan plants. Informative signage and benches encourage residents to spend time among the plantings.

EMGs wrote several grants to seek and obtain necessary funding for such a large project. The Gladwin County Community Foundation, the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation, the DeShano Foundation, and many local donors helped make this dream a reality.

Kalamazoo County

EMGs were approached by the Kalamazoo County Parks Department to create and renovate gardens at the Kalamazoo County Fairgrounds. The EMGs rose to the occasion.

In 2018, over 20,000 fairgoers enjoyed and learned from several inviting and educational raised-bed gardens. The success of these initial gardens inspired the creation of additional gardens and formation of more partnerships, truly embodying the notion that gardens grow communities.

Kent County

The Grand Ideas Garden (GIG) is an MSU Extension educational display garden designed as a living classroom for gardeners of all ages to learn about gardening, nature, and the environment. EMGs play an integral role for the GIG. Specially trained EMGs provide maintenance and care for the gardens, and work in shifts to answer visitors' questions throughout the summer months. They also provide group tours, promote community awareness, and assist with fundraising efforts. The GIG receives about 6,000 visitors annually and is completely maintained by a team of 250 MSU EMG volunteers.

“

The [Extension] Master Gardener Program has done a fantastic job here at the [Kalamazoo County] Fairgrounds. There are multiple events throughout the spring and summer that use the area, and the gardens are a hit at them all. It amazes me how often people are here for another show or event, and end up stopping out and enjoying the Master Gardeners' hard work. We are very grateful to have this partnership, and look forward to many years to come!”

– Josh Gower, fair and trail program coordinator, Parks & Expo Center



“

The Grand Ideas Garden is a shining example of how a garden can create a calming oasis of beauty and relaxation in a community!”

– Marilyn Goodson, MSU EMG, Kent County.

Work day at the GIG educational display garden.

“

I often stop by the Cedar Avenue Courtyard at the end of my early morning walks. It is peaceful and beautiful, and we are so fortunate to have it in our city. Most plants and flowers are labeled so it's a learning experience for me as well. The art scattered throughout is lovely. I appreciate that the area is handicap accessible making it easy for all to enjoy! A lot of hard work from many different folks made this area possible. That seems to be a signature of what happens in Gladwin!”

- Donna Ridley, Gladwin resident

Lapeer County

The Lapeer County Medical Care Facility Display Gardens were established by EMGs 17 years ago after being moved from the nearby MSU Extension office. The gardens are maintained by 35 EMGs and open to the public from dawn to dusk every day. They currently consist of 16 garden beds, including an annual garden, butterfly garden, children's garden, herb garden, and more. These gardens, which are accessible to people with disabilities, provide a refuge for facility residents and their families. They also serve as a place of learning for the many school groups who come to the gardens to learn about plants, pollinators, and composting every year. The gardens are self-funded through an annual fundraising event hosted by EMGs called Tea Thyme in the Garden, attended by over 200 appreciative patrons.

Macomb County

Built in 1860, Washington Township's Octagon House serves as a living museum that creates a sense of identity for township residents. In 2017, eighteen EMGs began volunteering to restore the house's many display gardens and educate township residents about environmentally friendly gardening practices. Since then, additional EMGs have joined efforts to renovate the vegetable and herb garden, build a compost system, and install rain barrels. These EMGs, deemed the "Octagardeners," work with local community organizations such as scout groups to broaden their educational impact.

EMGs installing plant material at the Cedar Avenue Courtyard Garden in Gladwin.





Farmer at Dutton Farm where EMGs mentor clients to increase their horticulture knowledge, skills and employability.

Montcalm County

EMGs partner with community members to host an annual event called the Seeds of Knowledge Tea. This event raises money for student scholarships, local EMG projects, and future educational events. EMGs provide a speaker and make posters that illustrate how their volunteer hours are making their community a better place to live.

Oakland County

Dutton Farm in Rochester was established in 2010 with a mission to empower and support adults with disabilities. It is a working farm, and its crops are used to create value-added products sold at the farm store, local markets, and events.

In 2018, EMGs began a partnership with Dutton Farm, providing hands-on horticultural education to help its farmers develop their horticulture skills and knowledge. EMG involvement has resulted in increased productivity and progress toward the farm's goal of becoming more sustainable. In addition, EMGs are mentoring some of Dutton's farmers who are volunteering with another EMG project to increase their employability skills.

Washtenaw County

Three years ago, a group of volunteers from University of Michigan Hospitals started a butterfly garden at the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor. Garden maintenance was a challenge until a group of seven EMGs began volunteering in the garden three days a week. The garden is now flourishing, with an established educational program as well as associated coloring and craft activities to teach participants about butterflies. The garden and the activities that occur within it not only provide education, but also offered a much-needed place of respite from waiting rooms, appointments, and health concerns for over 630 patients and families in 2018.

“

Because of the involvement of the master gardeners, Dutton Farm has been able to transition from just purchasing flowers for their products to growing some of the flowers that are needed to make their products. [The farmers] have been able to expand their gardens and farming areas, develop their horticulture skills and knowledge, and produce more and better quality crops. The farmers feel more confident, are proud of what they can accomplish now and are excited about growing plants.”

- Donna Olsen, MSU EMG, Oakland County

“

Hospitals can be very stressful places for both our visitors and our staff, so it is wonderful to have a place like this for our 'hospital community' to heal, relax, and learn. Everyone who ventures out into the garden is certain to be impacted by their generous volunteer work, either enjoying the beautiful flowers or being lucky enough to see a visiting butterfly stop by the garden. Thank you so much for letting us be the lucky recipients of your Master Gardener Program.”

-Susan Fisher, project manager, Radiology at C.S. Mott and co-founder of the garden



Youth

EMGs work with youth through the Junior Master Gardener Program, school garden projects, programs at farmers markets, and more. Learning is most effective when it is immediate and familiar to the learner. These EMG projects enhance learning by providing real-life applications of math and science concepts while developing an appreciation for gardening, the environment, and nutrition.

Oakland County

For the last nine years, a team of six EMGs have provided a monthly horticulture-based learning activity for 40 to 50 children and their parents at the Oakland County Farmers Market in Waterford. Activities include planting seeds, teaching plant biology, and taking part in other projects designed to stimulate youth to think like scientists and ask questions. Youth frequently return the following month to report observations from the real world and progress on their projects from the previous month. Although activities are targeted toward children, adults learn too. It's not uncommon for parents to say, "I never knew that!" These EMG activities serve as a model for schoolteachers and others working with children. This project is financially supported by Genesis Credit Union with plant material provided by Oakland County Farmers Market vendors.



EMGs teaching children at the Oakland County Farmers Market how to grow plants from seeds.

Genesee County

For over 20 years, two EMGs have engaged Genesee County youth through the Junior Master Gardener Program. Participants are involved in hands-on gardening activities as well as opportunities to teach these skills to other youth at the Flint Farmers Market. Since initiation, the program has provided over 120 Genesee youth with opportunities to learn gardening and leadership skills. Several of these youth were so passionate about their experience they became EMGs as adults.



Junior Master Gardeners receiving their certificates in Genesee County.

Washtenaw County

MSU EMGs began volunteering with high school-aged youth at the Washtenaw County Youth Center in 2011, helping to maintain a garden created by one of the center’s social workers. This long-term project has grown from seven to 17 EMGs, and now encompasses several gardens and fruit trees.

Through EMG-led trainings, youth learn about seed starting, plant biology, garden care, composting, pollinators, and native plants. When produce is harvested, they learn the value of fresh produce by preparing recipes using what they have grown. Extra produce is donated to local organizations. When youth leave the center, they are given garden gloves, a trowel, seeds, and a recipe booklet to continue to develop the skills they learned.

“

Dee had had some problems in school being bullied and teased. She lacked self-esteem and was withdrawn. As a Junior Master Gardener, she began volunteering with her grandmother (an EMG) and became engaged with people of all ages. Today she is so confident and sure of herself, the change is remarkable. I think that speaks well for our Junior Master Gardener Program here in Genesee County.”

– Vicki Perkins, MSU EMG, JMG program coordinator, Genesee County



MSU Extension Program Support

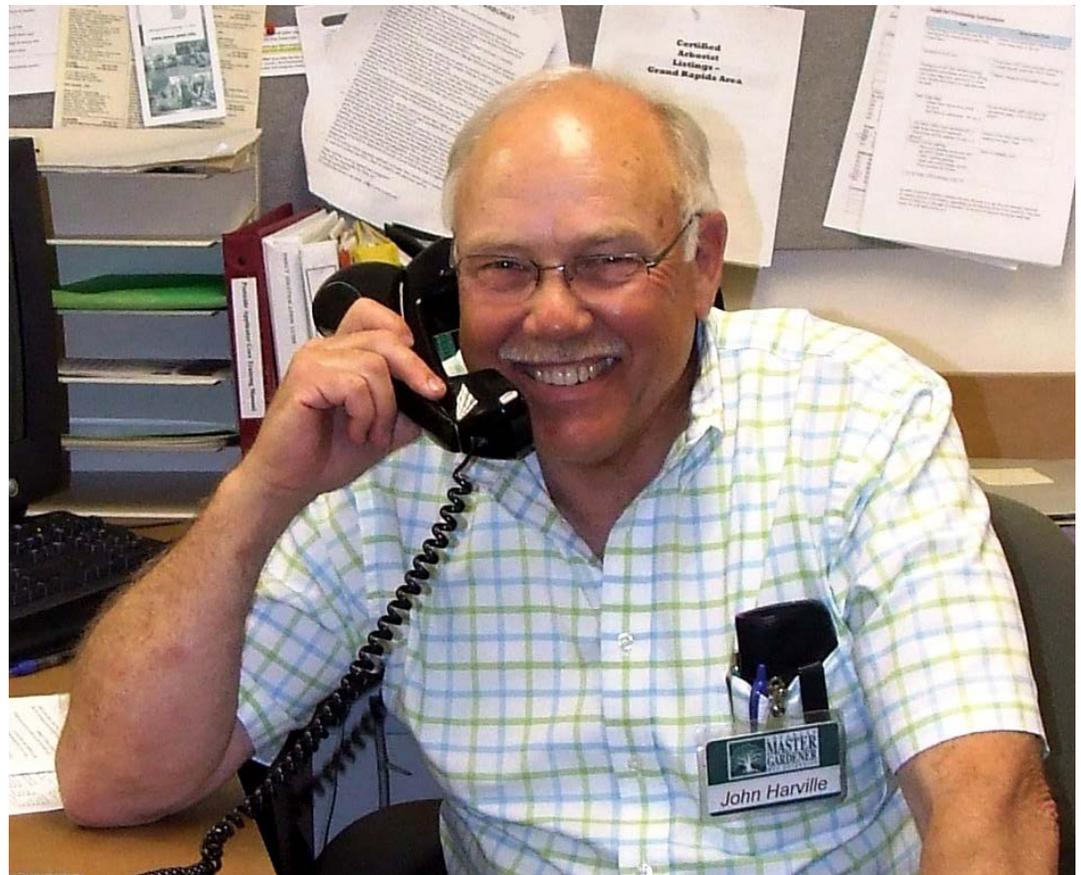
The mission of Michigan State University Extension is to help people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, communities, and businesses. MSU Extension Gardeners fulfill this mission through carrying out many projects throughout the state, facilitating Smart Gardening events, answering questions through Ask an Expert and the MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline, and assisting staff with EMG training courses. In 2018 alone, EMGs positively influenced the lives of over 600,000 Michigan residents.

MSU Extension Lawn and Garden Hotline

In 2018, nearly 7,000 questions from Michigan residents were answered through MSU Extension's toll-free Lawn and Garden Hotline. Callers are offered environmentally sound and science-based information with an emphasis on reducing pesticide use. EMGs make up 90% of Lawn and Garden Hotline responders.

Ask an Expert

This online service is another way for MSU to share knowledge with Michigan residents. Working with MSU horticulture experts, EMGs provided information and advice to over 1,600 Michigan residents in 2018.



One of the specially trained EMGs answering questions on the statewide hotline.

Extension Master Gardeners Educating Others Through Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences

Gladwin County

For over nine years, EMGs have partnered with local nonprofit groups, businesses, schools, the Gladwin Conservation District, the Gladwin Chamber of Commerce, and other community members to host an educational Earth Day celebration at the Gladwin High School. This yearly celebration typically draws over 150 attendees from multiple counties, as well as local media. Educational vendors and a 90-minute lecture provide opportunities to learn about current horticultural and environmental topics.

Ingham County

EMGs of the Capital Area Master Gardeners Association have coordinated an annual winter gardening symposium for over nine years. In 2018, 166 attendees learned about composting, and herb cultivation and uses. This group of EMGs continue to plan this high-quality learning opportunity for EMGs and the public.

Houghton County

In 2018, an EMG worked with the Keweenaw Land Trust, the Keweenaw Garden Club, and the Wild Ones Seedling Chapter to hold a Native Plants Symposium at Michigan Technological University. A second Native Plants Symposium took place in 2019. Each month, an EMG brings together area experts and the Keweenaw Garden Club to offer educational sessions for 20 to 60 people. Topics covered include smart plant selection, invasive and native plants, vegetable gardening, pollinator protection, and rain garden design.

Oakland County

Gardening and All That Jazz is an annual all-day educational conference in Waterford. Dozens of EMGs are involved in the project, which is now in its eighth year. Attendees participate in educational presentations on emerging topics, network with fellow garden enthusiasts and enjoy live jazz at lunch. The conference is open to the public and typically draws approximately 360 people each year.

Additional Annual Public Education Events

Genesee County	Fall into Spring
Huron County	Spring into Gardening Conference & Yard and Garden Expo
Isabella County	Spring into Gardening Conference
Jackson County	Spring Garden Event
Otsego County	Annual Gardening Seminar
St. Clair County	St. Clair Spring Symposium

Support the MSU Extension Master Gardener Program

In order to continue to grow and strengthen our Extension Master Gardener program, we need support from people like you. There are many ways to give, and your gift could help create a new generation of Extension Master Gardeners.

Learn more at
extension.msu.edu/MGgift

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