

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener 2006 Report "Snapshots" Around Minnesota

University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners in the state's 87 counties provide a tremendous resource in solving community issues and providing valued education using their passion for horticulture and their commitment to contribute to their communities. Master Gardeners use their volunteer time to educate through a vast variety of projects and venues. Their work has an impact on a wide diversity of people and communities across the state. Here are "Snapshots" of what Master Gardeners accomplished in several counties around Minnesota in 2006. Compiled by David Moen, State Master Gardener Program Manager.

Anoka County

61 Master Gardeners
14 Interns
4,751 volunteer hours

Global Children's Garden a Featured Hit

Under the leadership of Hilde Manuel, Anoka County Master Gardener, students at Riverview Elementary School created a 1,008 square foot garden that featured plants and vegetables reflecting the ethnic backgrounds of the school's students. The project featured gardens representing flowers and vegetables from Asia, Africa, Mexico and Central America, and the United States. Research was done to identify plants and seeds authentic to those geographic regions. Students' parents became very involved. The global garden offered learning opportunities for both children and the community. The site became an outdoor classroom where children studied phenology, growing techniques and international understanding.

Other Anoka County highlights:

- The "Lasting Landscape" educational series featured eight classes taught by Master Gardeners over the spring and summer. In addition, over 12 gardening-related classes were conducted by Master Gardeners through other organizations in the county. Over 400 county residents attended classes or lectures.
- Weekly Plant Health Clinics from June through August served 400 residents with approximately 800 diagnoses made at the clinics; Master Gardeners answered over 1000 Yard and Garden phone calls.
- "Ask a Master Gardener" booths were hosted in 13 sites in local nurseries and home improvement centers.
- Specialized projects with rain gardens, buckthorn eradication, Monarch butterfly research and Habitat for Humanity are among the long list of projects that highlight the work of Anoka County Master Gardeners.

Beltrami County **36 Master Gardeners**
1,895 volunteer hours

“Bemidji in Bloom” Program Spurs Interest in City

In collaboration with the city of Bemidji, the Downtown Development Association, and the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Beltrami County Master Gardeners completed the second year of “Bemidji in Bloom.” Master Gardeners assisted in the redesign of planters in the downtown and design of several large gardens on the city’s lakeshore entrance. As part of the program, Master Gardeners sponsored a “Front Yard Garden of the Week” that included recognition of those gardeners in the local newspaper. The recognition has encouraged more front yard gardens. The larger program has resulted in community members and city officials paying more attention to renovation and caring for plantings and in looking at future use of plants to improve the city’s environment.

Other Beltrami County highlights:

- Hosted a summer garden tour with Master Gardeners present at garden sites to answer questions.
- Weekly gardening articles and special features are written by Master Gardeners for newspapers in Bemidji and International Falls; Master Gardeners also host a monthly radio program.
- In addition to conducting gardening presentations to various groups, including informational seminars at local greenhouses, Master Gardeners staff a phone answer line from spring to fall.
- Coordinate several information booths, including one on “earth friendly gardening” at an Earth Day event.
- Master Gardeners assisted residents from the Red Lake Indian community with developing their first community garden.

Benton County **18 Master Gardeners**
866 volunteer hours

Master Gardeners Offer Educational Contests with 4-H

Master Gardeners organize two contests for the 4-H members in the county.

1. 4-H Container Garden Contest – 4-H members are given a theme around which to design a container garden. The entries are judged and prizes are awarded. Gardens are placed around the county fairgrounds.
2. 4-H Vegetable Challenge – 4-H members enrolled in vegetable gardening are given seeds of specific vegetables which they plant and grow. They enter specific categories in the Challenge such as tallest sunflower, longest cucumber, heaviest zucchini, etc.

The interest in both of these contests has grown markedly in the two years since they were instituted. The projects serve to increase interest and knowledge in the gardening projects and to have some fun in a competitive spirit.

Other Benton County highlights:

- Master Gardeners sponsor one-hour public gardening seminars prior to monthly meetings. Participation has been good. In addition to great horticulture education, the seminars give visibility to the program and are a recruitment strategy.

- Master Gardeners undertake beautification projects on the county fairgrounds – enhancing the entrance and the Benton County historical building – as a great public relations venue for the program.
- Benton County Master Gardeners are very active in teaching community education classes in Sauk Rapids, Sartell and St. Cloud.

Brown County

**15 Master Gardeners
1067 volunteer hours**

Pumpkin Program a Hit with Elementary Students

Using video, a coloring book curriculum and pumpkin products to eat, Brown County Master Gardeners teach horticulture and plant science to elementary students in New Ulm, Sleepy Eye, Springfield and Comfrey. The program is popular with students, teachers and Master Gardeners. Master Gardeners also created a horticulture education session on apples for a “Diversity Among Rural Students” school project day.

Other Brown County highlights:

- Master Gardeners write weekly horticulture articles for local newspapers in summer months and publish a “Weeder’s Digest” three times a year with a distribution of over 500.
- Display gardens are developed and maintained at Brown County fairgrounds where Master Gardeners also coordinate and staff the horticulture building activities during the fair.
- Master Gardeners conduct the Herberger’s Kids Day garden program and worked this year with revamping a garden used in working with special needs individuals.
- Master Gardeners answer garden questions through referrals and at booths at several locations in the county.

Carlton County

**23 Master Gardeners
801 volunteer hours**

Community Gardening on the Fond du Lac Reservation

Two Master Gardeners work on a community gardening program called “Gitagaan.” The project is on the Fond du Lac reservation and involves all members of the local Ojibwa tribe and anyone from the community who wants to be involved.

Other Carlton County highlights:

- From January through April, a public gardening program follows each Master Gardener monthly meeting. These have become popular, drawing from 50 to 110 people. In addition, Master Gardeners teach community education classes through all schools in the county.
- A Master Gardener works with youth from Barnum Elementary Youth Center to create the Heritage Garden on the Heritage Farm at Carlton County Fairgrounds. They use Junior Master Gardener curriculum and partner with Extension nutrition education associates to teach about nutrition of the produce grown at the garden.

**Carver/Scott
Counties**

**82 Master Gardeners
12 Interns
5,525 volunteer hours**

“From the Ground Up” Series Added to a Wealth of Horticulture Education Offerings

Teaching horticulture through classes and presentations is a primary emphasis for Carver/Scott Master Gardeners. In 2006, Master Gardeners conducted 114 classes. Introduced this year was a series of classes called “From the Ground Up.” The series of eleven classes were taught by Master Gardeners and scheduled from spring through fall. In addition to Master Gardener led classes and presentations, Carver/Scott Master Gardeners hosted the 8th annual “Garden Fever!” horticulture public outreach day. Welcomed by a county commissioner, nearly 200 people heard four experts speak on horticulture topics, had an opportunity to interact with 10 local commercial exhibitors, view MG displays and make bids at a silent auction.

Other Carver/Scott highlights:

- In partnership with the city of Savage, a Master Gardener TV team plans, films and edits horticulture programs for the local cable access network. Over twenty programs have been produced to date.
- Master Gardeners answer hundreds of questions during the growing season at Yard and Garden Help Desks and booths throughout the counties. Of the 118 Help Desks and booths conducted, a popular venue is the Saturday morning Help Desks at the Prior Lake Farmers Market.
- Carver/Scott Master Gardeners hosted the 2006 State Master Gardener Conference. Over 400 Master Gardeners and staff from around the state participated in the two-day event.

Chippewa County

**13 Master Gardeners
448 volunteer hours**

Enhancing Butterfly Habitat

Chippewa County Master Gardeners sponsored a public educational program on Monarch butterfly habitat and the nationwide citizen science, Monarch Larva Monitoring Project. Participants learned about Monarch butterfly life cycle and habitat requirements from Dr. Karen Oberhauser, director of the project and assistant professor in the U of M Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Conservation Biology. A local nurseryman discussed gardening to attract butterflies.

Chisago County

**21 Master Gardeners
1232 volunteer hours**

Spring Bonanza Becomes a Big Event

The Chisago County Master Gardener horticulture day, called "Spring Bonanza," has become a huge success drawing over 220 people. In addition to a featured speaker and a selection of classes, Master Gardeners use the event to promote their spring gardening series, this year focused on fruit crops and vegetables.

Other Chisago County highlights:

- Master Gardener educational articles are printed weekly in 5 local newspapers.
- During the growing season, Master Gardeners host a weekly plant clinic at the Extension office.
- Master Gardeners maintain 3 demonstration gardens.
- Presentations by outside educational speakers prior to monthly Master Gardener meeting in summer and fall are open to the public. This is used as a way to provide horticulture education to the public and bring visibility to the program. Attendance of new contacts averaged 22 per month.

Cook County

**13 Master Gardeners
887 volunteer hours**

Master Gardeners Make a Difference to Community Members and Tourists with Harbor Park in Grand Marais

Eight years of fundraising, project planning and site clean-up from the old gas station resulted in a final dedication of Harbor Park in September 2006. And, Cook County's Master Gardeners played a significant role. When a plant and installation estimate for the park came in way over budget, the city of Grand Marais turned to local Master Gardeners and businesses for help.

Master Gardeners co-chaired the planting project. Other Master Gardeners led planting teams for each of the ten park beds. They managed over 100 volunteers from local businesses and government, friends and family members to install the 3,506 plants.

Other Cook County highlights:

- Led a ten-week Green Thumb summer youth gardening program where 15 youth met weekly to learn about food production by having their own garden at the Cook County Community Center Park in Grand Marais.
- A landscape design class engaged 15 residents of Schroeder and Tofte in a two-weekend class that included on-site field trips to examine class participants property.
- Produced an informational hand-out and display teaching the art of Zen Gardening, a gardening technique using sand, stones and water.

Crow Wing County

**24 Master Gardeners
4 Interns
1,649 volunteer hours**

Public Gardens are Key Teaching Venues

Crow Wing County Master Gardeners play a key role in the horticulture educational efforts of several public gardens. In Breezy Point, Master Gardeners have worked for several years to plan and develop the landscape gardens at Pelican Woods Cemetery and Nature Trail. The area features several gardens including a fern glen, a shelter area garden, a wildflower meadow and a native grass demonstration area. Master Gardeners guide weekly community volunteer teams that plant and maintain the gardens. This year Master Gardeners supervised a dozen volunteers in planting over 1000 native grass plants to establish the native grass demonstration area.

Northland Arboretum in Brainerd is another major focus of Master Gardener work. Their work ranges from annual planning and installation of gardens to answering horticulture questions and writing educational articles for the arboretum newsletter. Most recently they have been working with landscape technology class students to design a Memorial Garden at the arboretum.

Other Crow Wing County highlights:

- Master Gardeners staff “Ask a Master Gardener” booths at several large community festivals and fairs. At one site they distributed 2000 packets of seeds locally collected by Master Gardeners.
- “Ready, Set, Grow! Garden EXPO” is a project co-sponsored with Central Lakes College. Drawing 200 participants, the one-day expo features horticulture educational classes and speakers.
- Master Gardeners support the efforts of the Brainerd Community Agriculture Center, an education center for 600 students in grades 9-12. Master Gardeners assist with the greenhouse production class and together with students answer horticulture questions at the annual plant sale.

Dakota County

**131 Master Gardeners
20 Interns
12,450 volunteer hours**

UMore Park a Focal Point for Horticulture Education

Dakota County Master Gardeners have been involved in building a bridge to the community through horticulture at the University’s UMore Park in Rosemount. The Master Gardener Education and Research Display Garden broke ground in 2000. Ever since, the number of educational gardens and the audiences attending educational events there have increased. In 2006, the water garden was dedicated. After years of Master Gardener planning, it became a reality in large part from donations by Vermillion Waters Aquatic Nursery and Bailey Nursery. Installation was accomplished through assistance of the county’s Sentence to Serve crews.

Master Gardeners began a new “Tuesday Evenings in the Garden” education series with weekly horticulture classes offered from May through September.

This year Master Gardeners took a greater role in planning a UMore Park Open House. They conducted classes, demonstrations, garden tours and a plant health clinic in conjunction with the Open House. The event drew 2300 people, an increase of 500 over the previous year. Open House visitors indicated on evaluations that they learned about new plant varieties, learned about environmental concerns related to pesticide use and gained knowledge of techniques for low maintenance cultural practices.

Other Dakota County highlights:

- The annual “Let’s Get Growing” spring gardening seminar once again sold out weeks in advance. The day-long series of classes was again a hit, with 95 percent of evaluations indicating participants had learned something new they would try in their home garden.

Douglas County

**45 Master Gardeners
2295 volunteer hours**

Garden Tour Proceeds to Katrina and Rita.

Proceeds from the Douglas County Master Gardener annual Tour of Gardens (five different area gardens annually) were donated to MG living in areas devastated by hurricanes Katrina and Rita. In addition to \$1366.70 donated to Operation Rejuvenation in Mississippi from the annual tour, Master Gardeners made individual donations to the same project in lieu of a gift exchange at their holiday party.

Among nearly 20 projects undertaken by Douglas County Master Gardeners each year, the Terrace Teaching Garden at the county services building continues to be a primary project of the program. The garden has dual purpose – an attractive landscape for the building and a teaching garden for classes and self-led touring. Labels and signage identify new, old and unusual plant varieties used in the garden.

Other Douglas County highlights:

- Partnered with the Soil and Water District to create a demonstration rain garden, along with a rain garden display at county fair.
- Partnered with Habitat for Humanity, assisting two new homeowners with landscaping and education on care of landscape plantings.
- Development of Heritage and Prairie Gardens at the Runestone Museum.
- Lead a Saturday Jr. Master Gardener Program each month and conduct other community planting projects with local youth.
- Master Gardeners taught 13 community education classes.

Faribault County **8 Master Gardeners**
410 volunteer hours

Small Group, Big Desire to Educate

Although their numbers are small, Faribault County Master Gardeners have a great desire to educate. They assist in keeping up county rain gardens they helped to create. They are also working with the city of Blue Earth to design and establish a new, sizable community park. Their plan is to gain new Master Gardeners and increase the number of community classes they offer.

Other Faribault County highlights:

- Produce a monthly garden spot on local radio
- Educate others at a farmers market and county fair
- Established a Master Gardener library at the Extension office
- Conducted several educational classes and workshops

Freeborn County **6 Master Gardeners**
1 Intern
275 volunteer hours

Small But Ready to Grow

Freeborn County Master Gardeners work on several county and community garden projects. The program is small, but in a stage of planning for growth. A very part-time coordinator for the program was added this year. Master Gardeners answer horticulture questions through the Extension office and write a weekly newspaper article.

Hennepin County **212 Master Gardeners**
31 Interns
10,900 volunteer hours

Survey of Garden Center Booths Show Impact

Most Hennepin County Master Gardeners participate in (and report being their favorite as well) information booths at garden centers, farmers markets, community/county fairs and other public events. This activity is also the program's main fundraiser for the year as most locations are charged for our services. In 2006 an impact evaluation was conducted. On several random days, Master Gardeners collected names and addresses of consumers receiving information from the "Ask A Master Gardener" booths. Names and addresses were given voluntarily. Sixty-nine names and addresses were collected. A month later, a postcard survey was mailed. With a 42% response rate, we learned:

- 96% reported having used the information received from the Master Gardeners
- 86% rated their experience as "excellent" or "near excellent."
- 85% found the information received "very helpful" or "near very helpful."

Other Hennepin County highlights:

- An inquiry about use of a room at Byerly's in St. Louis Park turned into a new opportunity for Master Gardeners. The store representative became so interested in the work of the Master Gardeners, the store hosted two spring and two fall Master Gardener presentations. In addition, Master Gardeners hosted "Ask a Master Gardener" booths for four hours on the day of each presentation. Now the store is booking Master Gardeners for 2007.
- In collaboration with the Minneapolis Public Library, Master Gardeners presented "Green Themes" at Minneapolis public libraries during the summer of 2006. The Master Gardener program coordinated the speakers and provided "Ask A Master Gardener" booths at all four presentations; the library provided the space and a stipend for the speaker.
- Since 2004, the city of Minneapolis has lost over 8,000 trees due to disease and storms. Master Gardeners supported two neighborhood groups working on tree sustainability. They educated residents in the Kingfield neighborhood about trees species that are well adapted for urban environments and how to plant trees correctly. In Linden Hills, Master Gardeners assisted with a "tree survey," identifying the neighborhood trees and educating residents about buckthorn.
- The Hennepin County Home School (CHS) is a residential juvenile treatment center for teens committed to the facility by the court. Master Gardeners educate residents using an 8,000 sq. ft. vegetable garden. The residents participate in all aspects of the garden from planting through harvest. Harvested produce is donated to a local food shelf. Residents can earn restitution money by working in the garden. Residents learn basic agronomy skills. They also learn to adapt to adversity as well as success as there are unanticipated encounters with environmental conditions, weed and insect infestations, and losses due to wildlife damage.
- Among the many classes taught and projects accomplished with both adults and youth, several provided connections with new audiences. Partnering with two special needs and low income housing organizations, Master Gardeners drew up landscaping plans for several of their facilities, then educated residents, staff and volunteers on how to plant and maintain the plant material. A longer-term community gardening project began with Hmong American Mutual Assistance Association. In preparation for their work, the organization taught Master Gardeners about Hmong culture. A booth at a benefit event for several organizations introduced immigrants from India to horticulture in Minnesota.

Houston County

**8 Master Gardeners
263 volunteer hours**

Join Hands Day with 4-H

Houston County Master Gardeners host a Join Hands Day with 4-H youth, planting container gardens for the fairgrounds, nursing home, and assisted living center. Master Gardeners also offer a Pumpkin and Sunflower contest.

Isanti County

**35 Master Gardeners
3 Interns
1,455 volunteer hours**

"Burst Into Spring" Grows

In its third year, the Isanti County Master Gardeners “Burst Into Spring” horticulture day drew 114 participants, a huge increase from the 20 participants just two years earlier. The event featured 12 different speakers and vendors from many area businesses.

Other Isanti County highlights:

- Used a “Gardening for Birds” theme for booths at the county fair and other community events. The themed booth was the suggestion of a county commissioner.
- Master Gardeners write weekly newspaper columns.
- Entered a float in the Isanti Rodeo Day parade to give visibility to the program and to promote the 2008 MG core course hosted by the Master Gardener programs in the region.

Lake County

4 Master Gardeners

North Shore Mystery Garden Tour

Lake County Master Gardeners hosted their 1st Annual North shore Mystery Garden Tour. Sixty-six people participated in this three-hour evening tour that featured three local gardens. Master Gardeners developed information packets for participants and led educational discussions on the tour.

Other Lake County highlights:

- Master Gardeners Taught Community Education Classes on Gardening and Landscape Design.
- Master Gardeners participated in a Nutrition Education Project teaching low-income youth how to grow and harvest vegetables. The youth learned about the nutritional value of vegetables as well as personal cleanliness when preparing food.
- Contributed newspaper articles on a variety of gardening topics.

McLeod County

21 Master Gardeners

1 intern

1,128 volunteer hours

Trees featured in Annual Day Camp

The McLeod County Master Gardeners have been doing a one day Jr. Master Gardener Day Camp for 7 years. This year’s title was “Trees and Me.” Fifty local youth attended the all day camp to learn about various aspects of trees.

Other McLeod County highlights:

- This past year was the 4th year of the McLeod County Master Gardener Horticulture Day. Fifty adults came to learn about flower and vegetable gardening.

Meeker County **22 Master Gardeners**
751 volunteer hours

Youth Learn Gardening

Three Meeker County Master Gardeners have been working on a youth garden project in Litchfield, MN. This year we had 8 youth register through Litchfield Community Education. Eight times throughout the growing season the group met to learn about gardening.

Murray County **3 Master Gardeners**
77 volunteer hours

Garden Tour A Great Way to Educate

Murray County Master Gardeners sponsored their 5th annual garden tour. The tour features area gardens and each year the tour rotates to a different community in the county. Master Gardeners are stationed at each site to discuss garden topics and answer questions. This is a self-guided tour. Participants receive a map of garden locations at the time of registration.

Other Murray County highlights:

- Master Gardeners produce a weekly 5-minute radio program that is aired locally during the growing season; a weekly newspaper column is also produced.
- Two community display gardens were designed and installed using revenue generated by the garden tour. Master Gardeners oversee the gardens, with city and county providing weeding and watering.

Morrison County **11 Master Gardeners**
400 volunteer hours

Using a Beautification Program to Teach and More

A Master Gardener collaborated with Minnesota Green and the city of Randall to beautify the downtown. A committee of 10 was taught to design and build 26 planters for the city. Planters were then “adopted” by local businesses and became storefront planters. The committee also designed and planted 25 hanging baskets at a city park, then organized a watering program that engaged business people, retirees, high school boys and civic group members.

Other Morrison County highlights:

- Master Gardeners answer horticulture questions on a local talk radio program. They also answer questions referred by the Extension office. Master Gardeners are viewed in the community as a respected source of horticulture information, often getting referrals from local nursery and landscape businesses.
- Designed and installed a labyrinth at the Belle Prairie Tech Center.
- Worked with a local church to create a Peace Garden.
- Conducted a fall workshop on “Putting Your Garden to Bed.”

Olmsted County

**75 Master Gardeners
3 Interns
3,108 volunteer hours**

World Gardens

Master Gardeners teach plant science programs in a variety of venues together with several Olmsted County schools. They served 47 groups of 50-80 students plus teachers and parents. Children and families keep involved with the gardens during the summer and participate in harvest of the crops. The curriculum has intentional focus on horticulture, math and science skills, social interaction, cultural background, international plant cultivars, composting and gardening best practices. At one garden, 3000 pounds of produce was harvested and donated to the local food bank. Here's a sample of the youth gardening projects:

Boys and Girls Club: This project works with the Boys and Girls Club in educating the youth in horticulture and providing hands on experiences in growing and caring for plants. A garden was started this year and a variety of topics were taught ranging from soil preparation to correct harvesting times. This provides an important learning environment for children from various cultural backgrounds to work together and see the results for their hard work.

Friendship Gardens: The Friendship Garden involves working with small groups of new immigrant populations and introducing them to the joys of gardening. This project is in cooperation with a non-traditional 4-H program targeting an audience of predominantly Somali, Mexican and Asian cultures. Children and adults learn how to garden in Minnesota's climate and to grow their own food as well as flowers.

Heritage Garden: Master Gardeners design and maintain a demonstration garden of heirloom vegetables, herbs, heirloom perennials and a small apple orchard at the Olmsted County History Center. Youth from Three Rivers Youth Residential Treatment Center, for whom Master Gardeners serve as mentors, assist with the gardens and grounds maintenance. The Master Gardeners serve as hosts and demonstrators during the History Center Hands on History days.

Kellogg Middle School "Butterfly Garden Club" Project:

Master Gardeners teach middle school students to design and maintain the butterfly garden in front of Kellogg Middle School. The club meets each week in the spring and students learn garden design, how to start seeds, transplanting, garden maintenance and plant identification. They also meet throughout the summer. Rainy days are enjoyed by doing garden crafts.

Riverside Elementary: Master Gardeners teach a Grow Lab project with the 4-H groups at Riverside. This project involves hands-on teaching of indoor and outdoor horticulture projects with 36 third, fourth, and fifth graders, 2 high school volunteers and 1-2 adults. Parents of the 4-H'ers are invited to one of the classes. Children learn lifelong skills in horticulture.

Willow Creek Middle School: Master Gardeners work with the science staff and middle school students after spring break to plan and start seedlings for the year's garden. The seedlings will be planted in the garden before the end of the school year, summer activities will be scheduled. Master Gardener's work with students of all cultural backgrounds while supporting the 7th grade science curriculum.

Other Olmsted County highlights:

- Master Gardeners take a lead in educating the public on how to identify and control the invasive species, buckthorn. The “Buckthorn Busters” provide education through displays, classes and hands-on projects.
- Master Gardeners worked with three Habitat for Humanity homeowners on landscape design, plant care and proper chemical use.
- Master Gardeners play a key role in restoring and upkeep of public gardens at historic Mayowood. They teach and oversee community volunteer work teams to maintain upkeep of the property.
- Handicapped accessible raised bed gardens are used to teach physically and mentally challenged individuals in the SEMCIL project. The produce grown is used in nutrition classes for the project participants.

Pine County

**17 Master Gardeners
937 volunteer hours**

Master Gardeners Oversee Interstate 35W Planting

Pine County Master Gardeners were partners with Minnesota Department of Transportation and the cities of Sandstone and Pine City to develop and implement Interstate 35W ramp planting projects. Master Gardeners supervised and instructed 40 community volunteers in planting over 450 plants, over \$20,000 of plant material.

Other Pine County highlights:

- Conducted fourth annual Pine County Hort Day that included five one-hour education sessions and nine vendor exhibits.
- Led an after-school Jr. Master Gardener program that included a youth summer vegetable garden.
- Master Gardeners trained and assist homeowners on rain garden design in a special project in the city of Sandstone.
- Conducted an annual garden tour, including several public gardens created by Master Gardeners.
- Used a spin-the-wheel activity at a county fair booth to share horticulture information and recruit new volunteers.
- Use proceeds from the annual plant sale to provide a scholarship for each Master Gardener to attend an educational training.
- Partnered with neighboring counties to initiate a quarterly Regional Master Gardener Meeting that includes an educational presentation and an opportunity to find ways to work together on projects that provide additional and improved service to communities within the region.
- Assisted Kanabec County Master Gardeners in producing four “Garden View” programs for a local radio station.

**East Otter
Tail County**

**12 Master Gardeners
791 volunteer hours**

Children's Garden is a Memorial and a Learning Center

A 4-H Children's Garden was established at the fairgrounds in memory of a Master Gardener's granddaughter. The garden is designed in the shape of a four-leafed clover. The center contains a butterfly garden surrounded by 20 smaller gardening spaces. Master Gardeners work with 4-H and nutrition education staff to conduct education programs with local grade school youth. Children plant individual gardens in the smaller spaces. At the end of the growing season, the program hosts a "stone soup" lunch for youth and their families.

Other East Otter Tail highlights:

- East Otter Tail's 2006 Horticulture Day drew 400 people. Six education sessions, with 10 classes per session, offered opportunities for young and old, beginning gardener to advanced gardener.

**West Otter
Tail County**

**41 Master Gardeners
2,241 volunteer hours**

**Huge Horticulture Day and Popular Radio Show
Stimulate Horticulture Interest**

West Otter Tail Master Gardeners host an annual "Garden Day!" program that features 6 sessions during the event, with 14 classes offered per session. In 2006, 546 paid registrants attended!

West Otter Tail Master Gardeners host a live radio program on Saturday mornings during the growing season. The 45-minute show includes live call-in questions from listeners. This popular show stimulates additional horticulture calls to the Extension office. Calls to the Extension office are recorded. Master Gardeners follow up with callers.

Other West Otter Tail highlights:

- The local Master Gardener program donated the internet access fee for a wheelchair-bound intern to take the MG core course on-line. In return, the new intern committed to develop a presentation promoting the joy of gardening despite physical challenges.

Ramsey County

**121 Master Gardeners
6,631 volunteer hours**

**Master Gardeners Make Strides in Reaching New Immigrant and
Underserved County Audiences**

With a goal of increasing cultural competency and outreach, Ramsey County Master Gardener accomplished several new efforts that engaged new audiences. Three gardening classes were conducted in Spanish

with Las Mujeres, a women's group of 1st generation immigrants from Mexico. Container gardening and small space vegetable gardening classes were enhanced with a trip to the University gardens on the St. Paul Campus. Two gardening classes were conducted with Somali youth at Liberty Plaza, a low-income housing development. Master Gardeners worked with Asian, Hispanic and Somali families at 33 new Habitat for Humanity sites. Six articles related to diversity and gardening were published in county newspapers and newsletters. Master Gardeners also received education about ethnic cultures at three monthly meetings. This included learning about Hmong and other Asian vegetable production and a session on Vietnamese agriculture.

Other Ramsey County highlights:

- Rain gardens, prairie gardens and butterfly gardens were features of projects conducted in conjunction with 18 different schools and day camps. Over 1820 youth participated in these educational projects.
- Over 8,000 garden questions were answered through weekly garden booths at four farmers market locations in St. Paul, a weekly plant clinic and phone hotline calls.
- Education on composting and yard waste disposal is a primary expectation of the county for Master Gardeners to achieve. Over 2,210 county residents received information at seven different yard waste/compost disposal sites. Compost demonstration booths were hosted at four locations and four composting classes were conducted through church and community groups.
- Over 1780 children engaged in Master Gardener led therapeutic horticulture projects at Children's Hospital in St. Paul. Popular activities are the cactus dish garden and Mr/Ms Grassheads. This program's success is reflected in comments from patients and staff. A 6-year-old refused to take medicine until her mother said, "The sooner you do, the sooner you can plant with Master Gardeners." The girl drank it in one gulp. A hospital staff member said, "You are a bright light in the midst of a child's hospital stay."

Renville County

**16 Master Gardeners
605 volunteer hours**

County Fair a Kick-off for Seminar

A vegetable container gardening themed-booth at the county fair was a promotion that served as a kick-off for the year's educational seminar "Let's Talk Veggies." The educational seminar covered a broad range of content about uses and growing practices of vegetable crops. Master Gardeners prepared a vegetable sampler as part of the event. Participants had an opportunity to taste and snack on a variety of uniquely prepared vegetables.

Other Renville County highlights:

- Master Gardeners publish a monthly e-mail newsletter called "Garden Gatherings." The popular newsletter features educational articles, a featured plant of the month, book reviews and more. It is published January to September and has an e-mail circulation of 250.

- Master Gardeners maintain county fair gardens, but also use them to educate. All plants in the gardens are labeled. A display booth uses a theme to focus on an aspect of gardening. This year “foliage plants” was the theme. Master Gardeners sponsored a foliage contest where the public designed and grew container gardens composed only of “foliage plants.”

Sherburne County 35 Master Gardeners
8 Interns
1,794 volunteer hours

Spring Garden Expo Grows with Educational Track for Youth

In its second year, Spring Garden Expo doubled its attendance with over 100 people and 35 youth taking part. The event is sponsored in cooperation with Elk River Community Education. The 2006 event featured 15 educational seminars and an exhibitor’s area featuring garden related businesses and multiple educational displays staffed by Master Gardeners. It also featured a separate track for youth. The program notes some indicators of the event’s success. First, people who attended both years were already asking when our next event will be. Second, proceeds from the annual plant sale grew substantially. The sale was promoted at the Garden Expo.

Other Sherburne County highlights:

- One master gardener worked with over 325 grade school children in a three week program that featured hands-on activities on planting, transplanting and re-planting outside. Another Master Gardener worked with over 70 children to create container gardens in a summer youth program.
- Educational displays and information were created for 4 area community expos, 4 area plant sales, and the Sherburne County Fair.
- Master Gardeners educate through a variety of community education classes and presentations to local organizations. One participant of a class applied to become a 2007 intern because she was so impressed with the instruction of the Master Gardener that she wanted to become one too!
- Master Gardeners led two stations at an environmental field day for 350 5th and 6th graders. Master Gardener-led sessions focused on the uniqueness of the sand dunes and vegetation in our area of Minnesota. With the help of the local coordinator, the presentation materials are aligned with Minnesota Academic Standard.

St. Louis County 66 Master Gardeners
1,914 volunteer hours

“Gardening Extravaganza” and a Broad Scope of Projects Add Depth to the Program

For over 25 years, St. Louis County Extension, along with Master Gardeners, has organized the “Gardening Extravaganza!” horticulture day offering a dozen workshops for northern gardeners. This year they

added a set of five workshops for children. The children's activities ranged from potting plants to making fun garden-related items.

Other St. Louis County highlights:

- Master Gardeners participate on "Great Gardening," a public television program that features St. Louis County Extension Educator and horticulturalist, Bob Olen.
- Master Gardeners provide education on vegetable production and other topics at several community garden projects in Duluth and Virginia.
- Master Gardeners, in partnership with another local organization, developed an adaptive gardening project built around raised bed gardens that gives access to people in wheelchairs.
- Many "Ask a Master Gardener" information booths are conducted at festivals, fairs and farmers markets from Duluth to Hibbing.
- A focus on senior citizens engages some Master Gardeners in projects at Duluth's Senior Center and Senior Expo. Master Gardeners also work with nursing students at St. Scholastica on using therapeutic horticulture techniques.
- In-school gardening projects are conducted with three Duluth elementary schools. Master Gardeners worked with another school to develop an educational landscape at the school.
- Master Gardeners assist with trial gardens at several sites.

Stearns County

**113 Master Gardeners
1,548 volunteer hours**

Reaching Experiences Gardeners and New Immigrant Audiences

A highlight of Stearns County Master Gardeners is the Horticulture Education Day. Originally designed as a venue to help Master Gardeners gain their educational hours, the event is now open to the public with an attendance of 250 annually.

Master Gardeners also sponsor a "Gardening Knowledge for Free" workshop, a half-day of seminars focused basic fundamentals of horticulture designed for novice and immigrant gardeners. Limited to 75 registrants, the program has to turn away people annually.

Stearns County Master Gardeners have two community garden projects that reach out to needs of new immigrant communities. The Somali community gardening project in St. Cloud involves 10 families. Extension staff and Master Gardeners help the Somali residents overcome barriers of transportation, garden space and language. A primary goal was teaching differences between tropical and temperate climate basic gardening practices.

A more extensive Latino community gardening project in Melrose is directed by a Master Gardener who developed the project in his intern year. What started quite small, now involves growing a large number of bedding plants and perennials in a greenhouse for a plant sale to support the garden project. The gardens are designed to be functional as well as attractive for the community. What started as one person's project has grown into a project of which the entire community is proud.

Other Stearns County highlights:

- The Stearns County Fair acts as a 4 day plant clinic for Master Gardeners where fairgoers bring samples and ask questions. This year's display educated fairgoers about poisonous plants.
- Master Gardeners oversee several educational gardens that also add attraction and color to the county fair. Master Gardeners sponsor a container garden contest for 4-H members. They evaluate the containers and make awards. The project provides both great public relations and public exposure.

**Washington
County**

97 Master Gardeners

11 Interns

6199 volunteer hours

Rain Garden Awareness Projects are a Focus

Master Gardeners are learning about rain gardens and informing homeowners about the potential value of the gardens. Much of their efforts are done in conjunction with the Washington Conservation District and the Great River Greening program. Using different plant materials for each garden, Master Gardeners developed four demonstration rain gardens at a new building on the county fairgrounds. During the fair they provided homeowner information and hope to utilize the gardens for future teaching. They also worked on a rain garden instillation at Lake St. Croix Beach. Master Gardeners conducted numerous presentations and classes on the topic to a variety of community organizations.

Other Washington County highlights:

- Master Gardeners taught over 500 residents how to plant a tree, protect them from wildlife and how to eradicate buckthorn at the annual tree & shrub distribution day for county landowners.
- Among the county program's six "core" projects are three that take significant volunteer time and have significant impact. In addition to hosting over 19 "Ask a Master Gardener" booths and answering phone questions, Master Gardeners conduct a plant and insect diagnostic clinic 3 days per week in the growing season.
- In addition to teaching community education classes in four school districts, Master Gardeners use Junior Master Gardener material as curriculum for teaching several youth classroom and summer gardening programs.