



Minnesota Master Gardener State Newsletter

February 2007

Hi Master Gardeners,

2007 marks the 30th Anniversary of the University of Minnesota Master Gardener program! We have a number of events planned throughout the year; details are inside this newsletter and more will be coming throughout the year. *The Best Plants for 30 Tough Sites* a new Extension publication written by you, Minnesota Master Gardeners, will be available February 1 from the Distribution Center as the educational promotion for our anniversary. Thank you for 30 years of teaching horticulture for the University of Minnesota Extension!

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**2007 State Master Gardener Conference
“Celebrating 30 Years of Master Gardener Teaching”
1997-2007**

**Fergus Falls Community and Technical College
September 14-15, 2007**

Hosted by:

Ottertail County East and West Master Gardener

Watch for more details in the next newsletter ad online www.mg.umn.edu

2007 VEGETABLE VARIETY TRIAL SIGN-UP

We are again looking for dedicated Master Gardeners to test various vegetables, marigolds, or coleus in their own gardens throughout the state. For a small service charge, if you agree to devote a **minimum of eighteen (18) row-feet** to the test, we will mail you enough seeds to start one plant of each tomato, one or two plants of each summer squash, two or three plants of each coleus or each marigold, 30 inches of row for each bean or each radicchio variety. Seeds will be mailed in padded envelopes to avoid shattering. We'll also send forms on which to record yield, flavor, etc., for the crop being tested. These forms are quite simple to complete. However, **the forms must be returned to us on time to be eligible to participate in future trials.** This year, we'll test six varieties in each trial. Gardeners choosing to grow tomatoes, for example, must grow all six varieties, and compare them to each other. The following listed variety selections are subject to change depending on availability:

WAX BEANS "Rocdor", "Golden Butterwax", "Goldenrod", "Carson", "Gold Mine", "Gold Rush"

RADICCHIO "Palla DiFuoco Rossa", "Di Treviso", "Carmen", "Fiero Hybrid", "Indigo Hybrid", "Palla Rossa Special"

YELLOW SUMMER SQUASH "Gold Rush Zucchini Hybrid", "Golden Zucchini", "Gold Bar Straightneck Hybrid", "Precious II Straightneck Hybrid", "Park's Improved Crookneck Hybrid", "Early Golden Crookneck"

COLORED HEIRLOOM TOMATOES "Aunt Ruby's German Green", "Pineapple", "Green Zebra", "Amana Orange", "Kellogg's Breakfast", "Rainbow"

COLEUS "Coral Sunrise Wizard", "Red Velvet", "Sunset Wizard", "Scarlet Wizard", "Splashdown", "Black Dragon"

FRENCH ORANGE MARIGOLDS "Durango Orange", "Disco Orange", "Safari Orange", "Bonanza Orange", "Hero Orange", "Janie Deep Orange"

2007 VEGETABLE VARIETY TRIAL PANEL REGISTRATION

To participate, return the following form before February 23, along with a \$5 check to cover the cost of materials. Make checks payable to **UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA**. Number your choices in order of preference (1 = most preferred to 5 = least preferred). Total participation in each test is limited so it is possible that not every first choice will be honored.

I am interested in the following tests:

<input type="checkbox"/> Beans	<input type="checkbox"/> Radicchio
<input type="checkbox"/> Summer Squash	<input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes
<input type="checkbox"/> Coleus	<input type="checkbox"/> Marigolds

I understand that I must return the evaluation forms which will be mailed with the seeds **NO LATER** than the date shown on the forms. Without the evaluation information the project is not helpful to our program. **I enclose a check for \$5 (payable to U of M).**

NAME AND ADDRESS (PLEASE PRINT) _____

COUNTY _____ ZIP _____

RETURN BY **February 23, 2006** To: Linda Wasem, Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
3675 Arboretum Blvd., Chaska, MN 55318

Dakota County Master Gardener Program - 25 Years Ago in 1981

By Warren Banks, Dakota County Master Gardener

The purpose of this letter is to give an account of my experiences with the Dakota County Master Gardener Program in the year that I joined – 1981. This short story is a compilation of documents I have from that year, conversations with the few people who have been around as long as I have and my own memory of the events.

Before I talk about the one slice of bread (1981) out of the loaf (1977-2006), I will start with a little background about the county and state programs from their inception in 1977 to 1980. Michael E. Zins was the Area Extension Agent in 1976 covering the counties of Washington, Ramsey (main office) and Dakota. He and the 3 County Extension Agents were interested in a new volunteer program that started at Washington State University (WSU) in 1973. The WSU Extension Agents who started the program had both previously worked and studied in Germany and brought back with them a name for the program, 'Gartenmeister', Master Gardener. This is a title the Germans bestowed on the top proficiency level in horticulture. Mike and the 3 County Agents, including Dakota's own Warren N. Sifferath, copied the structure of the WSU program and became the 10th state to initiate the Master Gardener program. The Minnesota Horticultural Society partnered with Mike and the County Agents to help develop the Minnesota program. This new program met the needs documented by a survey conducted in the Twin Cities by the U of M Extension Communications staff. A randomized selection of Twin Cities households were asked where they go to get information on home horticulture and gardening. The number one answer was a neighborhood gardener. Second were the 2 gardening columns in the Minneapolis and St. Paul Sunday papers. Next came the U of M Extension and gardening centers. County Extension Offices ranked very low on the 10 choices. The summation of the research was that if people go to their local neighborhood expert then let's find them and train them to be even better sources of horticultural information.

A notice was placed in The Horticulturist (now Northern Gardener) magazine asking for applicants for the 1st class starting in January 1977. The response was overwhelming. There were 150 applicants and only room to accommodate 75 students. There was no screening process developed yet, so 75 students were selected by lottery. Of these, 66 graduated from the course. Since then, a screening process was put into place (general quiz and interview). During the 1st 2 years ('77-'78) there were 54 hours of instruction at the U of M St. Paul campus. This was changed to 48 hours in 1979. Several Horticultural Society members helped teach some of the core courses. Soon after the program started, Jane P. McKinnon, Extension Horticulturist, joined Mike in running the program. Jane had helped start and supervise the Dial U Clinic in response to the 50,000 calls per year received by the Extension Department from gardeners throughout the state. Her connections with out-state gardeners and extension agents made her a perfect partner for Mike Zins to expand the Master Gardener program statewide. The first county program outside of the metro area was in Rochester (Olmstead County). They sent 13 people to the 1979 training in St. Paul. This very active group of gardeners were led by Ruth & High Crocker who were commercial lily breeders. Ruth is still an active Master Gardener living in Rochester. Jane next helped St Louis County train 23 people at a site in Duluth in 1981. Marjorie Klint and Lone Cooke are still active Master Gardeners from this training group and are celebrating 25 years with the program. Jane retired in 1989 and went to live with her husband in Waveland, Mississippi. She is just now gaining control over her home after nearly losing it to Hurricane Katrina. She fondly remembers her years working with Mike Zins, feeling fortunate and called it a joyful time. Anne Hanchek teamed with Mike for a few years until Dr. Mary H. Meyer

joined the program. Mary continued leading the program after Mike retired from the U of M in 2003.

As mentioned above, the '77 class graduated 66 Master Gardeners, including Dakota County's own Addie Buehler. Addie was volunteering with the 4-H program in 1976 at the Extension Building in Farmington when Warren N. Sifferath, the Dakota County Extension Director, asked Addie if she would be interested in going to the Master Gardener training the following January on the St. Paul campus. He remembers how at first Addie was very reluctant to speak to an audience, but she did it and became a very good teacher. Addie remembers 3 other Dakota residents who went to this first training class with her: Dorothy Johnson (now a Master Gardener in Crow Wing County), Clarence Germain (now deceased) and Judy Mooney (ex-Master Gardener). Robert P. Olson (Associate County Extension Agent) joined Warren after a couple of years to lead the Dakota County Master Gardener program. This lasted until Barbara Stendahl was hired in 1990 as the Master Gardener Coordinator.

During the 1st four years of the program ('77-'80), there were 10 Dakota County Master Gardeners trained in St. Paul. Overall, during this time there were 181 gardeners trained in the state (including 13 from Rochester in 1979). The class of 1981 trained 88 people including 10 people from Dakota County and 23 people trained in Duluth. I am the only active Dakota County Master Gardener from the '81 class and, along with Addie, one of 2 active Dakota County Master Gardeners from the 1st 5 years of the program.

My adventure leading into this program began in the early '70's with the heightened interest in organic gardening in the U.S. and by reading books by J.I. Rodale and Ruth Stout (where mulching and composting were the way to successful gardening). My interest was especially piqued by listening to Dr. Leon C. Snyder on the radio, reading his columns in the Minneapolis Tribune and by talking with him every year at the MN State Fair. Dr. Snyder died in 1987 leaving among his legacy the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. The interest instilled in me by people like Dr. Snyder led me to create and maintain a one acre vegetable garden in a farmer's field near my home in Apple Valley for many years before the property was finally developed for housing. I first heard of the Master Gardener program through The Horticulturist magazine in 1980 and decided this was an activity that I wanted to be a part of. All the applicants took a test consisting of general horticultural questions and were interviewed by Mike Zins. Ten Dakota County applicants went on to take the training in St. Paul on Tuesdays and Thursdays from January 20 through February 12. Included in the list of instructors were Mike Zins, Deb Brown, Bob Mugaas and Jane McKinnon. After passing the final exam, the students were sent off to their respective county agents with a large green 3-ring notebook and an enthusiasm instilled by these excellent instructors. I was reminded by Bob Olson that he visited my home after completing the training to take a photograph and record a short biography to publish in the Extension newspaper along with the other Dakota County Master Gardener interns.

1981 was a year that started with a very warm, snowless winter. Evergreen trees and shrubs suffered that year because of the lack of precipitation and the deciduous trees and shrubs suffered as well due to cold injury to the roots and bark. Some interesting (some less so) events during that 1st growing season as a Master Gardener included:

- Answering the garden line phone. You needed to be on site at the Farmington office using the Extension phone to answer the calls. Master Gardeners answered the phones starting in May on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 9:00-2:30. Warren Sifferath remembers this program to be successful from the beginning.
- There were 3 garden markets: Augustana Lutheran Church in West St. Paul on Mondays, Mary Mother of the Church in Burnsville on Thursdays and Church of the Risen Savior in

Burnsville on Wednesdays. Initially, these clinics were not as successful as the garden phone line.

- Budget cuts impacted Extension help with the summer program. A full-time summer horticultural assistant position was reduced to 1-2 days per week.
- Questions from the public frequently dealt with food preservation topics, e.g., pressure canning, freezing and drying. The core class training spent an entire afternoon on this topic.
- Clarence Germain (Class of '77) started the 1st Master Gardener vegetable trials. He picked up the program started by Dr. Orrin C. Turnquist, Extension Horticulturalist, and continued until his death in 1987.
- Dakota County Fair was August 10-16.
- Irregularly scheduled Master Gardener meetings were held in several libraries and community rooms throughout the county.
- I started a garden column in the Countryside newspapers entitled 'The Master Gardener' under the pseudonym of Dock Greene. This is something that no Master Gardener knew until now. Warren Sifferath was the only person who knew the identity of Dock Greene. Convincing the newspaper editor to allow me to use something other than my real name was a small challenge to overcome. Writing the articles was a real pleasure. Listening to my peer Master Gardeners talk about the column and about the author with the unbelievable name was a mix of pleasure and angst depending upon the commentary.

Much of the training received in 1981 is as valid in 2006 as it was 25 years ago. But there are a few exceptions where further research and public interest has changed plant management, e.g.,

- There is much less interest in food preservation.
- Tree wounds are no longer treated with oil-based dressings or concrete.
- Turf is no longer left without irrigation indefinitely during a drought.
- There is more selection of pesticides with lower toxicity.
- Minimal turf fertilization in the spring and 2 applications in the fall. This procedure started making itself known in the early '80s.
- Earthworms Are Good! NOT!! As we were recently told by Dr. Lee Frelich (Director of the U of M Center for Hardwood Ecology), they are one of, if not the most, dangerous pest of our forests. Bring out the bleach water during the rainy season!
- We no longer recommend the planting of buckthorn or common honeysuckle.
- We can now reliably plant blueberries and azaleas.
- In '81 we asked "What can I spray to kill weeds?" In '06 we asked "How can I control weeds without spraying?"

Gardening can be a lifetime pursuit. It is something you can age with and can share with people during all stages of your life. I look at Addie and I see how it's done. I look at the world around us and become overwhelmed by Nature. So my defense is to focus in on the nearby environment that I can touch and feel; subjects that I can get my arms around. Someone once said that you could spend a lifetime just studying the flora and creatures in your own backyard and I believe it. And that is what my gardening future holds; focusing my energy on gardening in my community of Apple Valley and Dakota County. If I'm lucky, I'll keep at it for another 25 years. See you there. Good Gardening,

Warren Banks, Dakota County Master Gardener, October 2006

A special thank you to these people for their help and for sharing their memories of the early history of the Dakota County and MN Master Gardener Programs: Michael E. Zins, Jane P. McKinnon, Robert P. Olson, Warren N. Sifferath, Deborah Brown, Lynn M. Steiner and Robert J. Mugaas.

2007 Advanced Training for Master Gardeners

In 2006, we started a new rotation for advanced Master Gardener training throughout the state. 311 MG took part in this training! The statewide rotation for the 2007 will feature the following topics and extension specialists:

Northeast: Home Lawns, Bob Mugaas, August
Northwest: Fruits and Vegetables, Terry Nennich, April
Southeast: Herbaceous Plants, Mary Meyer, October
Southwest: Woody Plants, Nancy Rose, Late Summer or Fall

Jeff Hahn and Michelle Grabowski will also be teaching and doing hands-on diagnostic plant pathology and insect identification at several of these sessions. If you would like to host an advanced training at your county, contact David Moen, moenx010@umn.edu, 763-767-3874. Watch the link on Master Gardener Advanced Training at www.mg.umn.edu for further information on specific dates and topics.

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum Public Policy Classes:

The Arboretum is holding some very interesting public policy classes this year. Nationally recognized speakers will be featured. For more information and registration see www.arboretum.umn.edu

Nature Nourished: Creating New Child/Nature Connections

10th Annual Growing To Learn Conference 2007; Saturday, March 31, 2007

Stephen R. Kellert, Yale University, author of *Ecology, Economics and Ethics: The Broken Circle*

8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. \$50 member / \$60 non-member (Lunch provided)

What's For Dinner? The Ethics And Aesthetics Of Eating

Thursday, April 19, 2007; 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Keynote: Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma*

\$100 full day (includes keynote, panel and special lunch discussion); Morning Session only: \$35

Send in your Stories and Memories of 30 Years of Teaching in the Master Gardener Program

Lynne Hagen, as a member of the State MG Advisory Board, is compiling 30 years of memories of the Master Gardener program. Send your older and newer photos of Master Gardener activities, favorite Master Gardener hair and clothing styles from the 70's and 80's, favorite blooper memories, unusual stories or most memorable plant questions to Lynne at lynne.hagen@co.anoka.mn.us. Please list the approximate year for each photo or story, county, and key people in the photo if appropriate. Since most older photos are snapshots, please scan them or re-photograph them with a digital camera and save them in a .jpg format that can be sent electronically through email. Start dusting off those old photo albums and scrapbooks and send those as soon as possible! Selection will be subject to clarity of images and diversity of submissions. Thank you for your participation in this celebration.

The Best Plants for 30 Tough Sites: A NEW Extension Publication

You made this happen! Master Gardeners from all over the state contributed to this new helpful anniversary publication. Get your copy now AND sell this new publication at your Spring Hort Day or plant clinics. Check the extension website: www.extension.umn.edu for final pricing and shipping costs. Master Gardeners can purchase this publication at the wholesale price and sell it for the retail price at public events. 40 pages with many color photos, retail price \$9.95

Slide Sets and Powerpoint Resources for Master Gardeners

Master Gardeners are often making presentations and looking for slide sets or Powerpoint (digital slide sets) resources. Listed below are the presentations that you can use from the U of M Extension. If you know of other slide sets or videos presentations that should be converted to digital formats, please let me (Mary Meyer meyer023@umn.edu) know. These are linked on the Resources for Master Gardeners, from our MG homepage: www.mg.umn.edu. You can also go to www.extension.umn.edu and type Slide Sets in the search box.

Slides Sets Online:

[Annuals for Minnesota](#)

[Black Walnut Management](#)

[Growing Herbs in Minnesota](#)

[Lesser Known and Grown Field Crops](#)

[Making a Forsythe Pot](#)

[Managing Aspen In The Lake States](#)

[Managing Oak Woodlands](#)

[Oak Regeneration](#)

[Ornamental Grasses For Minnesota](#)

[Minnesota Weed Seedling Photo Collection](#)

[Perennial Flowers For Minnesota](#)

[Perennials for the Shade](#)

[Planting Under Trees](#)

[Portrait of Minnesota Agriculture, A](#)

You can download these presentations and use them for a talk you are giving. Most have a handout or slide list to accompany the visual presentation. You should always credit the author and Extension, this is done for you on the slides at the beginning and end of these presentations. If you take a few of these slides out of the presentation and use them in your own talk, you should obtain permission from Extension (copyright@extension.umn.edu) and again credit the author and Extension for the slides you use. It is legal to use these slide sets in their entirety (using author and Extension credit) without permission for educational purposes. **Permission is required** to alter or remove slides and use them in your presentation. Commercial use of these slide sets is prohibited with the copyright.

New Home Lawn Care CD—Coming Soon!

Bob Mugaas, Regional Extension Educator, is developing a new Home Lawn Care CD that will have powerpoint presentations, handouts, references, and the latest information on environmentally sound lawn care. The CD will be completed in March 2007 and will be available Master Gardeners. Look for details in the next edition of this newsletter and at eh MG Homepage: www.mg.umn.edu.

Reporting your Volunteer Hours Online

Thanks to all of you who have used the new system for recording your volunteer hours online. This new technology will help us efficiently report all your work and the difference you are making in the community. If you do not have access to a computer, contact your local county or regional extension office or library to get online. Or ask your children or grandchildren to help you. Kids love technology and they can help you! The directions are easy to follow and you can see what exactly we see for your volunteer hours and records. Go to www.mg.umn.edu and click on Submit your Volunteer Hours Online.

Benefits of the Master Gardener Program

The following eight benefits of the Master Gardener program were recently developed from surveys and stakeholders evaluations by Tom Bartholomay, Extension Evaluation Specialist at the U. Master Gardeners, you make a big difference in your community!

Environmental MG Benefits

Master Gardener programs improve the natural environment through public education that leads to reduced yard waste, water runoff, pollution, and demands on water management and landfill systems.

Master Gardener programs reduce the spread of hazardous plants, diseases, and insects through public education and consorted collaborative strategies.

Community MG Benefits

Master Gardener programs increase the effectiveness of community public service organizations (such as Habitat for Humanity and farmers markets) by partnering with these organizations to broaden and strengthen their capacity around horticultural solutions.

Master Gardener programs increase the social, emotional, and cognitive abilities of children and youth by engaging them in horticulture through the Junior Master Gardener program, collaboration with schools, and other youth programs.

Health MG Benefit

Master Gardener program increase the safety and health of Minnesotans through public education about appropriate use of pesticides.

Access MG Benefit

Master Gardener programs provide Minnesota's vulnerable populations (such as children, elderly, and people with disabilities) with increased access to meaningful, multi-skill, community focused activities.

Research MG Benefits

Master Gardeners programs increase Minnesotans' access to University of Minnesota Extension through their broad and continuous public presence and their referrals to other Extension services.

Master Gardener program increase Minnesotans' access to tax supported University of Minnesota research –based information.

Arboretum Yard & Garden Desk and Phone: Volunteers Needed !!

The Yard & Garden Desk is open year round on the weekends. It's a great way to get in your hours and see the resources of the Arboretum. Sign up online and select the day that works for you. Bring a friend and double the fun! Phone call backs can be done at your leisure from home. See the online signup or call Shirley Kooyman: 952-443-1419.

The Minneapolis **Home and Garden Show**: Feb 28- March 4, 2007 online sign-up begin soon. Watch the website www.mg.umn.edu for your chance to volunteer at this popular event. We will send an email to mastgar and mgstate when the signup is open.

Review the Core Course Online

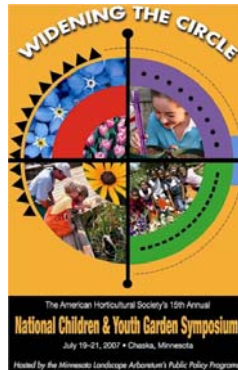
The Online section of the Core Course is available to active Master Gardeners. Go to www.umn.edu, click on my U, then my Toolkit, log in as username: garden password: Sign On 123 Look for the link Hort 1003 Horticulture for the Home and Garden/MG Core Course. This username and password will be good for 2007.

International Master Gardener Conference
May 2-5, 2007 • Little Rock, Arkansas



International MG Conference

Mark your calendars: May 2-5, 2007 is the next International MG Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas. Check it out at <http://mg2007.uaex.edu/>. Registration deadline is April 1, 2007.



Coming to the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum next July 19-21, 2007 the American Horticultural Society's 15th Annual **National Children & Youth Garden Symposium**. The theme is **Widening the Circle**, this sounds a lot like our state conference diversity theme. More information is available online at: http://www.ahs.org/youth_gardening/national_youth_garden_symposium.htm

The "Master" in Master Gardener doesn't mean you know everything about gardening, it means you volunteer and teach horticulture for the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Master Gardener Calendar of Events

January –December 2007: 30th Anniversary of the Minnesota Master Gardener Program

January 11-27, 2007	MG Core Course	Arboretum
January 16-March 23	MG Online Core Course	Internet
January 30 – February 24	MG Core Course	Mora
Feb 28- March 4	Home and Garden Show	Minneapolis
Feb. 16 – Mar. 10	MG Core Course	Carlton
Feb 27-March 24	MG Core Course	Brainerd
March 16- April 7	MG Core Course	Grand Rapids
May 2-5	International MG Conference http://mg2007.uaex.edu/	Little Rock, AK
July 19-21	National Children & Youth Gardening Symposium www.ahs.org	Arboretum
Sept 14-15, 2007	MN MG State Conference	Fergus Falls



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