This annual report features a snapshot of the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener Program in 2008. County and local groups that submitted information are represented. After reading it, I hope you will find these volunteers and their generous giving as remarkable as I do.

According to the website, “Volunteering in America”, the state of Minnesota ranks 3rd in the nation for the number of residents (38.4%) who volunteer in their communities, a statistic that has remained pretty consistent since 2002. In this time of economic strife and demands on our time, this is pretty remarkable, and presents an optimistic future of a world of people helping each other have a better quality of life.

I am proud to say that University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners are part of this encouraging statistic. In 2008, these dedicated citizens gave 102,099 hours of their own time to their neighbors and communities. As University-educated volunteers, they provided research-based horticulture education to youth and adults, preschoolers and seniors, people with disabilities, and people from diverse backgrounds and all walks of life. They collaborated with government, industry, community organizations, schools, public gardens and arboreta. Master Gardeners used face-to-face and online methods of teaching. Today, their tools are not only pruners, spades, rakes and wheelbarrows, but also Google, Twitter, blogs, and web sites.

As one of Extension’s keystone programs, the Master Gardener Program is building on the best of its traditions, embracing new ideas for teaching, and visualizing our role as volunteer educators to future Minnesotans. One cannot live by bread – or infrastructure – alone, but must have the knowledge and understanding about nature, plants, and animals that will provide and pass on the continuity of care and stewardship of the earth to future generations. We see our role as volunteers to deliver to Minnesotans University-based information that will improve and enrich their lives, heighten their awareness, and instill a sense of responsibility for each other and the natural world around us.

Thank you for your support in 2008.

Julie Weisenhorn
State Director
University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners Make a Difference and Provide Public Value through Projects that Address Important Community Needs

In addition to a general emphasis on answering consumer horticulture questions with research-based University information, the University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener program focuses on three program area priorities that address current needs and contribute public value. These program priorities align with priority public benefits identified in a public benefit study of the Master Gardener program conducted in 2007. Program priorities are:

- **Food Access**
- **Water Quality and Environmental Impact**
- **Youth Gardening**

Annual highlight reports find that Master Gardeners across Minnesota are making a difference in these priority areas. Of the 40 counties submitting 2008 reports:

- **26 -** Twenty-six county Master Gardener programs are engaged in projects that educate the public and increase the number of raingardens that reduce runoff and filter pollutants from lakes, streams and ground water. Most projects are conducted in partnership with other organizations, especially Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Blue Thumb and municipalities. Master Gardeners often teach introductory classes, consult on plant selection and teach others how to plant and maintain a raingarden.

- **7 -** Seven county Master Gardener programs work with individual home owners, lake associations and public sector agencies on shoreline restoration. Master Gardeners provide education about the value of buffer zones, teach others about appropriate plant selection and sometimes assist in installations.

- **11 –** Eleven county Master Gardener programs conduct activities to educate about and lead efforts to remove or control invasive plant and insect species. Many of these activities involve training other volunteers about the invasive plant, buckthorn, and then lead groups in removal efforts on public lands.

- **15 -** Fifteen county Master Gardener programs have projects that teach about and promote composting. Crow Wing County Master Gardeners initiated an effort to build the first yard waste composting site in the county. Others provide demonstrations and classes on composting for individual homeowners and youth audiences.

- **30 -** Thirty county Master Gardener programs conduct gardening education programs for youth. These range from short-term education stations set up at county field days to long-term, in-school gardening classes. The Junior Master Gardener curriculum is becoming a primary resource for these efforts in Minnesota. Master Gardeners often teach youth who are part of an organized community youth program, like 4-H. Sometimes they organize youth garden clubs and day camps on their own. In all cases, they connect youth with nature, spark interest in plant and provide positive youth development experiences.

- A growing number of Master Gardener programs are instrumental in organizing and assisting in the creation of community gardens. At least four counties report helping to start community gardens where residents, often lower income residents, have an opportunity to grow their own produce and increase their access to affordable, nutritional food.

### 2008 Grants to Counties from Minnesota Garden Calendar Funds

For the second year, local county Master Gardener programs had an opportunity to apply for small program grants from funds generated through state sales of the Minnesota Garden calendar. In 2008, the State Master Gardener program awarded $5000 in grants. Grant recipients included:

- Chippewa Co. – Courthouse Raingarden
- Clay Co. – Day on the Farm
- Hennepin Co. – Urban Gardener Program
- Mille Lacs – South Elementary Community Garden
- Olmsted Co. – Quarry Hill Butterfly Garden
- Todd Co. – Enhancing Educational Programs
- Chisago Co. – Stacy Teen Center Garden
- Dakota Co. – Garden Education at Cherry View School
- Lake Co. – Minnehaha Raingarden Education Project
- Mower Co. – Mower Co. Junior Gardeners
- Ramsey Co. – Frogtown Garden Tour
Fourteen counties in northwest Minnesota collaborate to produce a quarterly “Northwest Minnesota Master Gardener Newsletter” with a circulation of over 350. Designed to keep programs connected and informed, the newsletter includes announcements of local horticulture events and features educational articles. A similar regional newsletter is collaboratively produced by Master Gardeners in Cook, Carlton, Lake, and St. Louis counties.

From Albert Lea to Brainerd and places in between, seven counties report working with Habitat for Humanity. They assist home owners in landscape design and plant selection, then they teach them how to care for and maintain a healthy landscape.

For two years an Olmsted County Master Gardener has volunteered expertise and many hours working with the Community Corrections Garden Project. The project helps juvenile and adult offenders produce valuable life and job skills in addition to vegetables. Those in the program sell produce from the gardens at several locations in Rochester. Proceeds are donated to victims of crime in Olmsted County. Extra produce is donated to homeless shelters and food shelves. Master Gardeners in Hennepin and Steele counties also work with gardening programs at correction and detention centers.

Clay County Master Gardeners help plant and maintain the Northern EarthKind™ Rose Trial in Moorhead. The rose trial features 26 shrub rose cultivars. Master Gardeners will participate in data collection for the next three years.

Dakota County Master Gardeners use a new electronic software program to communicate with the public. Building a database from email addresses offered by participants in their programs, they now use it to announce upcoming events and important information. A "How Are We Doing?" survey indicates that the system is well received and that information provided by Master Gardeners helps people and changes the way they garden.

A Master Gardener in Kandiyohi County has been instrumental in establishing an exhibit on corn for a Native American exhibit at the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center. His focus on corn was to share history of indigenous people growing corn about 8,000 years ago in Mexico and modifying it, well before 1492, to a hybrid state that is similar to today’s hybrid corn.

Nine county Master Gardener programs report they have been instrumental in either organizing community gardens or in teaching new gardeners who use the sites. With increased interest in vegetable gardening, the need for garden space and education for new gardeners is a growing demand. Master Gardeners can have an important role in helping new gardeners achieve success.

The JMG program at Riverview Specialty School in Brooklyn Center was one of three finalists for the National JMG Program Award. An Anoka County Master Gardener introduced the school to JMG several years ago and continues to be an integral part of teaching the JMG curriculum. The JMG curriculum aligns well with the school’s environmental focus. The school has incorporated JMG as part of the 4th and 5th grade science curriculum. Nearly 75 students completed requirements this year to become certified Junior Master Gardeners.

Olmsted County Master Gardeners received national recognition from Steps to a Healthier US for a youth garden program, a part of Steps to a Healthier Rochester, conducted in partnership with the YMCA and the county’s public health department.

### Did you Know!

- Residents of a new Habitat for Humanity building in Ramsey County received instruction from Master Gardeners

### 2008 Master Gardener Core Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Attendees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Ulm</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willmar</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>213</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dollar value of volunteer time is based on figures provided by Independent Sector. For more information visit: www.independentsector.org
University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer investment makes an enormous impact.
(Statistics by county for 2008 as recorded from the state database 3/1/09)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Number of Master Gardeners</th>
<th>Number of volunteer hours</th>
<th>Value of volunteer time</th>
<th>Number of education hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aitkin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>$3,564</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anoka</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>5,282</td>
<td>$106,961</td>
<td>1,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becker</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>$16,200</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beltrami</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>$29,120</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benton</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>$13,892</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Stone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$365</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Earth</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>$13,183</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1,689</td>
<td>$34,202</td>
<td>468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlton</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>$8,039</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carver-Scott</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5,026</td>
<td>$101,777</td>
<td>1,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cass</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>$2,147</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chippewa</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>$13,709</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisago</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1,046</td>
<td>$21,182</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>$9,032</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearwater</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>$4,577</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>$9,599</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottonwood</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>$2,349</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crow Wing</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2,281</td>
<td>$46,190</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakota</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>8,642</td>
<td>$175,001</td>
<td>2,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>$5,549</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2,279</td>
<td>$46,150</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faribault</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>$9,882</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fillmore</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>$4,961</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeborn</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>$4,982</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goodhue</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1,303</td>
<td>$26,386</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>$709</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennepin</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>13,676</td>
<td>$276,939</td>
<td>5,012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>$7,412</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubbard</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>$6,581</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isanti</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1,176</td>
<td>$23,814</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itasca</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1,526</td>
<td>$30,902</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackson</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>$1,863</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanabec</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1,073</td>
<td>$21,728</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kandiyohi</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2,306</td>
<td>$46,697</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kittson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$506</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koochiching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>$527</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lac Qui Parle</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>$5,083</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake of The Woods</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>$5,528</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Sueur</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>$6,095</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>$2,957</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Number of Master Gardeners</td>
<td>Number of volunteer hours</td>
<td>Value of volunteer time</td>
<td>Number of education hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>$10,247</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahnomen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$648</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>$1,519</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>$1,438</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McLeod</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1,058</td>
<td>$21,425</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeker</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>$15,188</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mille Lacs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>$10,145</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>$11,097</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mower</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>$5,164</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>$7,088</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicollet</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>$9,153</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobles</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>$2,187</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olmsted</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3,540</td>
<td>$71,685</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter Tail-East</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>880</td>
<td>$17,820</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otter Tail-West</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2,230</td>
<td>$45,158</td>
<td>458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennington</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1,037</td>
<td>$20,999</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pine</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1,520</td>
<td>$30,780</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pipestone</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>$2,106</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk-East/West</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>$1,883</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pope</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>$4,172</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>6,824</td>
<td>$138,186</td>
<td>2,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Lake</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redwood</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renville</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>$8,870</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>$15,593</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>$4,111</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseau</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>$2,491</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherburne</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1,417</td>
<td>$28,694</td>
<td>482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibley</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>$1,276</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2,481</td>
<td>$50,240</td>
<td>537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stearns</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4,798</td>
<td>$97,160</td>
<td>1,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steele</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>$15,005</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevens</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>$4,860</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swift</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>$1,539</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Todd</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>$10,955</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traverse</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>$4,880</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wabasha</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>$1,944</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wadena</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>$3,888</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waseca</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>$2,957</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>5,864</td>
<td>$118,746</td>
<td>1,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watonwan</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,906</td>
<td>$38,597</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkin</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winona</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1,651</td>
<td>$33,433</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2,131</td>
<td>$43,153</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Medicine</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>$4,698</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2099</strong></td>
<td><strong>102,099</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,067,505</strong></td>
<td><strong>27,209</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anoka County

A Pilot Youth Program Called GAPS Challenge
This year students from two middle school 4-H after-school Adventure Clubs participated in a program called the GAPS (Gardens, Art, Presentation and Science) Challenge. This pilot program offered middle school students an opportunity to learn about plant and soil science while developing a greater appreciation for our environment. In the fall students participated in various hands-on activities led by Master Gardener volunteers. They invented their own plants with specific uses and developed informative posters. They also planned their garden spaces paying special attention to environmental conditions and best plant selection. Students began planting their youth-designed garden in March. A comprehensive journal was kept throughout the process and all aspects of the project were presented for judging at the end of May.

Students at Fridley Middle School created a School Pride themed garden planted in one of the courtyards. By request, they also created a Calming garden under a staff member’s window. Two Anoka County Extension Committee members, and the Extension Regional Director judged the two programs using a point system developed to create goals and enthusiasm in the program. Both of the school clubs received praise from judges and were both awarded the grand prize, a trip to Grand Rios Water Park. Both clubs also attended a joint field trip to the MN Landscape Arboretum where they were given the opportunity to get to know each other, as well as see nature and horticulture within a larger scale context.

Becker County

Raingarden for Detroit Lakes
Becker County Master Gardener Sally Hausken coordinated the Detroit Lakes' municipality's Flagship Raingarden in the City Park. Partners participating in the City’s effort were the Chamber of Commerce Festival of Birds, Minnesota DNR and Metro Soil & Water. Chronology of the raingarden's creation is illustrated in detail on the City of Detroit Lakes' website.

Specific responsibility of the lead Master Gardener was plant selection and work assignments. The Festival of Birds held the planting during a paid event within the festival. The day of planting, Master Gardeners attended a workshop and then mentored and supervised event participants in planting at the site.

Throughout the summer, Master Gardeners have casually overseeing progress. The chapter estimates 11 weeding hours were spent on the 100 square foot raingarden.

Several more raingardens will be planted by the City in the next few years, and Master Gardeners continue to have a role in overseeing progress.

Another 2009 activity that Master Gardeners will have a hand in is the naturalizing of 4,000 feet of shoreline along the newly upgraded U. S. Highway 10 going east from downtown Detroit Lakes

Beltrami County

Bemidji in Bloom
Beltrami County Master Gardeners have spearheaded the efforts for city participation in America in Bloom/Bemidji in Bloom which has resulted in more attention being given to city beautification. They have had superb response from community members in developing front yard gardens in each of the three years Bemidji has participated in this national program. The community is cleaner and a more attractive place for residents and visitors. This year, the third year of the Front Yard Garden recognition, a brochure of past Front Yard Garden winners was available to those interested in driving the area and looking at past front yard gardens as well as the current year’s participants.

Youth show off their GAPS Challenge projects and gardens to county commissioners, Extension representatives and school staff
Benton County

County Fair is a Major Teaching Venue
The Benton County Fair board and the Benton County Historical Society asked the Benton County Master Gardeners to help with a beautification project for the fairgrounds, particularly the area around the Historical Society’s one room schoolhouse. The plan for the schoolhouse included plants and amenities that fit the time when that building was in use. Plants were secured and the planting was completed. A large number of container gardens were planned and planted to beautify an area around the fair office and hanging baskets to be used in and around the Heritage Building. The Benton County Master Gardeners have an extensive booth area that covers nearly ¼ of the area inside the Heritage Building. In 2008 they planned and assembled a beautiful booth around the theme “Clean the Air with Houseplants”. In addition, there was ample room for an information table and area for a plant clinic during the entire fair. The booth was a bit more challenging this year because both of the nurseries that normally supplied the plants and amenities without charge are no longer in business. The comments of both fairgoers and board members was very positive and complementary of the entire project.

Clay County

Day on the Farm
Day on the Farm, held at Lee and Noreen Thomas’s farm was a day long event that featured more than 12 hands-on activities/sessions offered by master gardeners, farmers, horticulturists, extension educators, conservation and soil experts, and an entomologist.

Participants were able to learn about greening lawns naturally, how trees can help curb energy costs, proper pruning techniques, chemical-free house cleaning, and the latest ideas to save money and protect the environment. This event served more than 186 people, the vast majority not familiar with Extension.

Chippewa County

Partnering on a Major Raingarden
A road construction project along Highway 7 affected the Chippewa County Courthouse parking lot in Montevideo. Chippewa County Board of Commissioners approved the installation of a raingarden to absorb runoff from the parking area. Chippewa County Master Gardeners, Chippewa County Soil and Water Conservation District, Chippewa River Watershed Project, Hawk Creek Watershed Project, Courthouse Maintenance, Montevideo High School Ag Department, Land and Resource Management, and Chippewa County Natural Resource and Conservation Service collaborated to design and implement the project. The soil amending and grading was completed in early October.

Approximately one-fourth of the plants needed for the project will be grown by students in the Montevideo High School greenhouse. In 2009, 4-H clubs will assist Master Gardeners with planting, along with the high school horticulture class. The city of Montevideo will provide unlimited free mulch and access to dump trucks and watering truck. Site preparation, sand, gravel, and black dirt will be provided by the Chippewa County Highway Department.

The rain garden is approximately 4,000 square feet (one of the largest in Minnesota), containing an overflow pipe to carry excess water under Highway 7 and across to an existing wetland area. Pollutants from the parking lot will be filtered through the rain garden instead of being discharged into the storm drain, a direct link to the Chippewa River.

This project will increase public awareness and education about how a rain garden works in preventing water pollution and caring for the environment. Future plans are to add a kiosk containing pictures and information describing the function of a rain garden, and benches to encourage the public to enjoy the garden.
**Cook County**

**Garden Makeover Contest**
Our U of M Cook County Master Gardeners held a garden make-over contest this year. More than 30 people submitted an essay to them depicting why they needed a garden make-over. They narrowed the selection process down to three and from there all voted on one candidate. The candidate selected had an overgrown yard and a steep embankment. She was recently widowed and could no longer mow the hillside. Our master gardeners trimmed and removed the overgrown shrubs that were currently on the property. They also designed, developed and installed a hillside perennial garden complete with rock steps so that the owner would not have to worry about mowing that part of her yard. There was a lot of interest in the community and a slide show of the project was developed to show at the local garden shows and county fair. The garden make-over was completed during June and July 2008.

**Crow Wing County**

**Establishing the County’s First Yard Waste Compost**
Establishing a county yard waste compost site was the initiative of two Master Gardeners. In the summer of 2007, a long process started including meetings with county officials, presenting the concept to county commissioners, finding a suitable location and securing funds for the project.

The compost site was made possible by a grant from Crow Wing County and with the cooperation of CWC Master Gardeners and the Cities of Brainerd and Baxter.

![Image](image1.png)

*The grand opening of our Crow Wing County countywide compost facility was held in October 2008*

**Dakota County**

**The Year of Raingarden Education**
Dakota County Master Gardeners had one major program initiative for 2008 – raingardens. Partnering with the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District, our Master Gardeners learned about the benefits of raingardens and the Blue Thumb Project. We held a train-the-trainer workshop for all our Master Gardeners and distributed a Blue Thumb manual to each Master Gardener. Our program paid for the special training and the cost of the manuals through plant sale revenues. Master Gardeners then attended the six complimentary workshops conducted by Blue Thumb for the public.

The next step in our partnership was to work with individual homeowners in designing raingardens for their home landscapes. Each homeowner who attended a class was paired with a Master Gardener for advice on plant selection and placement. Technical assistance was the responsibility of the Soil and Water staff, but the actual garden design was the Master Gardener responsibility.

The Dakota County Master Gardeners also developed and taught classes on raingardens and presented these throughout the season in community education programs, at our “Tuesday Evening in the Garden” classes and at “Let’s Get Growing” Spring Gardening Seminar.

Designs were drawn for a raingarden to be included at the Master Gardener Education and Research Display Garden at UMore Park. Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District staff assisted with the engineering of the site and the preparation. In June we held a free two hour class for the public to view the planting of the garden. More than 50 people came to the garden to learn about raingardens on a Saturday morning.

As a direct result of our partnership, Dakota County now has 31 new raingardens installed in neighborhoods.
**Faribault County**

*Learning from Each Other*

The highlight of our Master Gardening Program in Faribault County is preparing and working together for our Community Education classes. We learn so much from each other and it is very important to us that we share that information with the general public.

Each Master Gardener has their own individual highlight for 2008 from helping youth learn to sow seeds to sharing valuable information with an elderly citizen. The Master Gardener program is a very valuable program that is beneficial to all age groups who enjoy working with all facets of the word "gardening".

**Fillmore County**

*County Fair is an Educational Event*

The Fillmore County Fair Master Gardener Booth featured home yard compost bins. As part of the provisions of the Master Gardener grant we received, there were several types of composting materials including a bin. There were a few "see through" containers with different stages of compost. The display included an active vermiculture bin with some of the castings from the past year. The booth also had an entomology component. There was also a small jar with earwigs (they always bring up a few questions) and educational posters about the emerald ash borer and gypsy moth.

**Freeborn County**

*Helping Habitat for Humanity*

The Freeborn County Master Gardeners volunteered landscape design and labor on two Freeborn County Habitat for Humanity homes. The planning and planting occurred spring through summer. Both homes were in the city of Albert Lea.

**Goodhue County**

*Plant a Row for the Hungry*

Master Gardeners worked with the Red Wing Area Food Shelf and Red Wing Farmer’s Market to establish the Plant a Row for the Hungry Program. We sent press releases to local newspapers and radios and distributed fliers to restaurants, grocery stores and other establishments that gave contact numbers and directions on how local gardeners could donate their excess fruits and vegetables to the Food Shelf. We also encouraged home gardeners to plant a row just for the needy and donate all the produce from that row to the Food Shelf. Volunteers from the Food Shelf went to the Farmer’s Market every Saturday at closing time and collected donations of leftover produce from the vendors. The Master Gardeners also built and planted a demonstration Square Foot Garden at the new Red Wing Community Garden and donated all the produce from that garden to the Food Shelf. Many of the other Community Gardeners donated vegetables as well. The Red Wing Area Food Shelf estimates that during the 2008 growing season they received on average about 100 pounds of fresh produce a week when previously they had rarely received any donations of fresh fruits and vegetables.

**Hennepin County**

*Urban Gardener Program Reaches New Audience*

The program that continues to impact our county is the Sabathani Urban Gardener Program. The program piloted in 2007 as part of a health initiative collaboration with the University of Minnesota Extension – Hennepin County Leadership and Civic Engagement and Nutrition staff. Based on feedback from participants and Master Gardeners, we began to focus our efforts on teaching residents (mostly from low income and immigrant populations) how to grow their own food. In addition to classroom training and "in garden" demonstrations, volunteers staffed a Master Gardener plot in the Sabathani Community Garden for 4 hours each Saturday, June through August. This not only enabled Urban Garden participants to access University resources and research, but residents gardening in the Sabathani Community Garden as well. Produce from the plot was donated to food shelves located in the Sabathani Community Center.

Highlights from 2008 included:

- 41 community participants
- 15 Urban Gardener Graduates
- 36 Master Gardeners provided 586 hours of service to the project
- participating families and individuals reported increased intake of fresh vegetables and better access to healthier foods

Achievements over the two years included:

- Creation and refinement of a new Urban Gardener curriculum, soon to be available to Master Gardener programs statewide
- 26 neighborhood residents became certified “Urban Gardeners”
- over 275 residents participated in gardening discussion and problem-solving
- more than 50 first time gardens were created in neighborhoods

2008 graduates of the Hennepin County Urban Gardener Program conducted in partnership with Sabathani Community Center in south Minneapolis.
Houston County

Join Hands Day
Master Gardeners participated in Join Hands Day, working together with 4-H members and parents. It was well organized this year. We used ideas from "Backyard Living" for the large planters. We made 42 pots for shut-ins and the workers brought them back to the various towns. We also planted 8 large pots at the fairgrounds and 5 mock hypertufa pots to sell at the Farmer’s Markets. Money for Join Hands Day expenses was received from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

Isanti County

Fifth Annual “Burst Into Spring”
Isanti County Master Gardener’s fifth annual “Burst Into Spring” horticulture day drew 95 participants and featured 15 educational sessions. Sponsored jointly with ISD 911 Community Education in Cambridge, the event also included a hands-on, free youth gardening session for children K-6 who attended with a paid adult. An “Ask a Master Gardener” booth, vendor displays, quilt raffle and silent auction were among other features of the event.

Itasca County

First Time Horticulture Day a Success
The Itasca County Master Gardeners hosted their first Spring Fling Horticulture Day. They partnered with ISD #318 Community Ed. Over 200 people attended. Seventeen vendors also took part in the day’s activities.

Kanabec County

Developing a Community Garden
Kanabec County Master Gardeners spent most of 2008 developing the Community Garden project. During 2007, several Master Gardeners researched the idea, looking at what other communities were doing and gathering materials on how to manage a community garden. We identified potential sites and collected soil samples. To determine whether or not there was sufficient interest among residents in actually gardening in a community plot, we distributed surveys in a variety of locations and talked to community groups.

In January 2008, we decided that there was enough interest to go ahead with selecting a site. Selection criteria included 1) soil condition, 2) access to people living in Mora, 3) availability of water, and 4) support from the City of Mora and/or Kanabec County. Final selection is a city-owned plot measuring 72’ x 220’. Volunteers sprayed the area with glyphosate to kill the grass/weed cover and Pheasants Forever did the first plowing in late May. Lots of rain and an incredible abundance of rocks forced a change in plans. Instead of making the garden available for 2008 planting, it was decided to delay opening the site to the public until late spring 2009.

Our revised goals were 1) to get the ground ready for 2009 and 2) to put a garden sign in place and advertise availability in 2009. Found a lot of stuff -- rocks, and then BIG rocks, glass, metal, horse shoes, and bottles (but no money). Fortunately, the city agreed to dispose of the rocks for us. During the remainder of the summer and fall, volunteers continued to clear out rocks and re-till the soil to control weeds. One of the MGers, who is a professional woodworker, made a large sign which will be erected in the spring.

As we begin our 2009 MG year, we will advertise availability of the garden plots, re-contact people who expressed interest in 2008, hold information meetings, sign people up for plots, and schedule classes for our community gardeners.

Kandiyohi County

Live Radio Talk Show
I think a program that almost all of our Master Gardeners participate in is the KWLM 1340 Radio Call-in Program Saturday mornings from 9-10 AM. The Master Gardeners take turns, in groups of 2 or 3, hosting a radio call-in program where consumers can call in with their questions. They bring resources so one can talk while another is looking up the information. We get lots of compliments on this program and the radio station does as well. It works out well for our county. It is a great opportunity for the Master Gardener program to increase visibility. We have one Master Gardener that puts together a schedule in March and passes it out, and the rest of them are responsible for their date or trading if necessary. Only a couple of Master Gardeners have opted out due to shyness! But they have all tried it. If there are no questions at the moment the master gardeners have articles on pertinent topics for the time of year and weather conditions that they share with the listening audience.

McLeod County

Horticulture Day has Impact
McLeod County Master Gardener Horticultural Day has an impact in the county. This year speakers presented educational presentations on plant classification, native plants, the city-owned composting facility, and weed control. Gardeners are provided information to utilize that will help them to maximize production of their plants and minimize the use of pesticides.

Meeker County

Educating at the Fair
Meeker County Master Gardeners began a new project during the Meeker County Fair. Master Gardeners conduct educational seminars in the Horticulture Building. About 100 fairgoers participated. Information was available about choosing the right plant for the right landscape and weed control practices. Master Gardener presentations focused on helping the home gardener maximize the productivity of their plants and to minimize the use of pesticides.
Lake County

*Mystery Garden Tour*
Lake County Master Gardeners and University of Minnesota Extension staff organized the 3rd Annual North Shore Mystery Garden Tour. Over eighty participants took part in the three-hour evening tour that featured three local gardens and even provided a chance to smile into the video cameras of WDSE Channel 8. The host of the station’s “Great Gardens” program was present and is expected to use portions of her visit in an upcoming program. Lake County Master Gardeners distributed a gardening information packet to each participant.

The tour featured stops at the homes of three Two Harbors area residents. At the first stop tour-goers viewed impeccable landscaping...from the lawn to the foundation plantings, from the outside living spaces to possibly the most weed-free vegetable garden ever grown. A brick patio featured indirect accent lighting made from recycled fixtures. Visitors had an opportunity to view unique plants to the north shore, including a ginkgo tree, Asiatic lilies, maple shrubs, sesame seed plants, and, yes, the homeowner’s Minnesota Palms.

A highlight on the second stop was a large pond that includes a large walking bridge leading directly to the front door of the owners home. Extensive use of native rock and trees help provide structure to this landscape. Many unique trees are featured, including weeping European larch, cutleaf staghorn sumac, weeping pussy willow, and a Norway spruce with an asymmetrical growth pattern.

The final stop featured gorgeous country gardens with a wonderful mix of colors, textures and antique farm garden tools as art accents. The participants were in awe of the whimsical layout, loads of color, and intimate setting. Of particular interest was the use of wool fleece to repel deer, the red plastic mulch that increases tomato yields by up to 30 percent, the tiered herb garden, built-in patio grill, and two water features with a hand-laid stone backdrop. Participants also enjoyed touring the home-built greenhouse and viewing the three-bin composting system.

Each garden host was presented a Lake Superior rock engraved with the phrase - 2008 North Shore Mystery Garden.

Mille Lacs County

*Focus on Youth*
Mille Lacs Master Gardeners have focused on youth programs in the past few years. They work with a youth garden program in Isle, teach High School students about garden boxes in Milaca, provide a container gardening program to Princeton Afterschool program participants, and teach Princeton elementary students how seeds grow.

The program at the Princeton South Elementary School stands out because it reaches all of the students in that school and builds upon those skills each year. Students in kindergarten and first grade learn how to plant seeds, care for them, and how to transplant them outside. First graders also learn about seeds and plant growth using a pocket garden activity. Second graders learn about dividing plants and how to tend the gardens planted outside on the school grounds. This multi-week project works with all of the school’s students. It also gives students a sense of pride about the beautification of their school.

Murray County

*Summer Garden Tour*
Murray County Master Gardeners hosted the sixth annual Summer Garden Tour in July. The largest crowd ever, over 160 people, attended. The tour traveled to six gardens in rural Murray County. Maps are provided along with tickets and driveway signs marked the entrance to a wide variety of gardens. Master Gardeners are present at each site. Some of the tour highlights included an 80 year old restored water garden, a garden covering almost an entire city block in a rural village of 60 people, and a pool with a water fall and two other water ponds.

Lake Co. Master Gardeners answer questions on mystery tour.
Nicollet County

An Array of Projects Serve County Citizens
Nicollet County Master Gardeners involve themselves in one-on-one assistance to homeowners and also in community centered activities as a group. We relied on our members who have had advanced education in insect pest management, ash tree seed collection, emerald ash borer detection and have earned the Tree Care Advisor and Woodland Advisor certifications. Two Master Gardeners focus on youth education, being involved with 4-H groups and the Nicollet County Fair Board.

Master Gardeners maintain an informational booth at the Nicollet County Fair. Our focus areas this year were “Herbs: Growing, Drying and Preserving”, safe organic practices for lawns, and tree diseases. We also staffed informational booths for Earth Day, the Southern Research and Outreach Center Open House in Waseca, Spring Alive II in North Mankato, garden centers, farmers markets and plant sales for community organizations. Members served on the Parks and Green Space Committee for the city of North Mankato and designed landscapes for Habitat for Humanity homes.

Talks at the local food coop focusing on safe organic practices, writing articles for community newsletters, hosting garden tours, contributing to a “helpful hints for gardeners” website and participating in the Million Tree Project are also part of Nicollet County Master Gardener educational efforts. In 2008 the program also developed organizational guidelines.

Olmsted County

Park Lane Neighborhood Garden
Last summer the County Planning Department began to explore the potential for establishing neighborhood gardens in the City of Rochester as a means to promote physical activity, access to healthy food and sustainability. The intent of a neighborhood garden is to create a space that is very convenient and accessible (preferably within walking distance) to encourage gardening in locations near to potential users. Olmsted County Public Health Services took interest in implementing a garden as part of the Steps to a Healthier Rochester and Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative (EHDI) to families of need. A site was selected and Olmsted County Public Works issued a permit for the garden and donated compost. Rochester Park and Recreation prepared the site and delivered the compost.

Steps to a Healthier Rochester and EHDI grant staff were able to draw upon the expertise of the University of MN Extension staff and Master Gardeners. One Master Gardener drew up a garden plan. The plan included everything from plot space to fencing, tool and plant needs. Master Gardener’s help to support the garden with donated plant and gardening materials. They also mobilized the neighborhood and organized plot sign up and garden planting. Master Gardeners taught families planting techniques, care of the garden, addressed weed and insect problems and helped at harvest. The result is that through the cooperation of numerous agencies, fifteen families in the immediate neighborhood benefited from the opportunity to raise and enjoy fresh produce (at no cost to their families), while getting physical activity through gardening.

Otter Tail County

Garden Day – 2008!
Drawing people from more than 20 counties, the one-day program offers participants a chance to learn from more than 30 knowledgeable presenters speaking on more than 50 topics. Workshops include research-based education on horticulture basics (e.g., composting, pruning, disease and insect prevention, seed starting); sustainable practices (e.g., rain gardens, water-smart gardening, shoreline management, organic gardening); plants and plant culture (e.g., perennials, annuals, shade plants, roses, turf grass, vegetables; fruits); and landscape design and ornamentation.

The impact on the county, the public, and the Master Gardener program is substantial. The county, where more than 1,000 of Minnesota's 10,000 lakes are located, benefits from greater public knowledge of research-based sustainable landscaping practices. The public benefits because they have an opportunity to learn about more than four dozen state-of-the-art garden and landscape practices for only $20 per day. The Master Gardener program benefits because more than 1,000 people in the area know that the Otter Tail County garden-landscape education days are the result of Master Gardener volunteers.

Pennington County

Reclaiming Plants Supports Garden Workshop
A community garden we developed at a local nursing home needed to be eliminated because of construction. We used the plants from that garden for a community plant sale to raise funds to start a community education gardening class in spring 2009. The plants were sold in late May 2008 and the remaining plants needed to be eliminated because of construction. We used the plants from that garden for a community plant sale to raise funds to start a community education gardening class in spring 2009. The plants were sold in late May 2008 and the remaining plants were donated to other community gardens in the area.

Pennington County Master Gardeners continue to work with students on the prairie landscape at Challenger Elementary School. They collected seeds in the fall and redistribute them. They also conduct sessions on prairie plant identification.

We continue to host a Spring Garden Workshop, a summer garden tour and provide education and resources for the horticulture department at our county fair.
Pine County

Annual Horticulture Day Continues Popular Event
The Sixth Annual Pine County Horticulture Day, organized by Master Gardeners using the theme “Your Garden, Your Landscape”, attracted 150 participants. Ninety preregistered and 64% of those attending were from Pine County.

“Plant Selection for Your Landscape: Right Plant, Right Place, Right Purpose” was the keynote presentation by Julie Weisenhorn, U of M Extension Educator and State Master Gardener Program Director. Four concurrent sessions were each presented twice on “Roses for Northern Gardens” by David Zlesak, Extension Educator; “Healthy Lawns” by Bob Mugaas, Extension Educator; “Composting & Soil Improvement” by Luella Green, Chisago County Master Gardener and “Pruning Trees and Shrubs” by Jeff Banister, tree care professional.

Pine County Master Gardeners planned, organized and promoted this annual educational day. Seven vendors exhibited and sold gardening products, door prizes were presented and the event received positive newspaper coverage.

Renville County

Focused on Heirlooms
Each year the Renville County Master Gardeners select a topic that is featured at our County Fair booth and in our “Garden Gatherings” newsletter, an online publication circulated to subscribers well beyond our county. The theme this year featured heirlooms and our county fair booth was entitled “Grandmother’s Garden”. Heirloom plants were featured in containers in our booth and also in the gardens around the county fairgrounds. Each newsletter also contained a highlighted heirloom plant. Master Gardeners chose 2-3 heirlooms and planted them in their vegetable garden or flower containers. It was interesting to evaluate the varieties. Some of the flowers did not grow like the modern day hybrids – they were spindly and did not have the flowering results expected. Many of the vegetables were favorites from past years and will be planted again. One flower, the “Love Lies Bleeding” amaranthus, was a highlight at the county fair and received many comments.

Rock County

Healing Garden Continues
Most of our Master Gardener volunteer hours were spent with the Sanford Hospital Luverne Healing Garden. This has been a project created over several years by Master Gardeners. We continue to add plants and maintain the garden and involve many local groups and individuals in these activities. They include: hospital staff, Luverne High School Ag classes and FFA, Luverne Junior High Intro to Ag and Rural Studies classes, Hills-Beaver Creek High School Shop Class, garden clubs, senior citizen groups, 4-H groups, and Little Buddies.

Ramsey County

Reaching New Audience with Herbs in a Pot
Ramsey County Master Gardeners, along with Ramsey County Extension nutrition education assistants used herbs and herb cooking to reach an underserved Extension audience. They partnered with the American Indian Family Center on several projects. A popular project was a herb gardening and nutrition class where participants from the Center learned to grow their own herbs in a pot and use them when cooking. One goal of the program was to teach how to grow healthy herbs in a pot and use them, instead of salt and fat, to flavor cooked dishes.

Survey results indicated the class was successful. Nearly all participants said learned both how to grow herbs and use them in place of salt and fats in cooking. Nearly all said they were likely to grow an herb pot in the future.

Some comments about what participants liked most about the classes included:
• Working together with different plants
• Taking home a pot of herbs
• Learning to be healthy
• I learned a lot about how long they grow, when it’s best to pick them, and how to grow.
Making a difference in St. Louis County!

The University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardeners are grateful for having this program. Financially it has helped us a lot. “This is a great community event!” “Thank you for all of the hard work that goes into the class. We use it all and enjoy it.” “Thank you for having this program. Financially it has helped us a lot.”

Comments about programs from the general public included:

St. Louis County

Focused on Meeting County Needs
St. Louis County Master Gardeners were challenged to be involved in programs that have a significant impact on the environment and welfare of the residents of St. Louis County. Major program themes included water quality and conservation, environmental quality, improved family diets and nutrition, the economics of home vegetable production, and white pine forest regeneration. Sixty-eight volunteers contributed more than 3000 hours in educational and applied research programming closely integrated with the educational/research programs of the University of Minnesota Extension, St. Louis County. Specific programs involved rain barrel and raingarden construction, family nutrition and vegetable gardening, vegetable variety evaluation, forest education, apple production and use, starting plants from seed, understanding and using organic fertilizers, and composting systems.

Participants all received monthly trainings and are encouraged to continue to develop their knowledge and skills. Many participants contribute far more volunteer hours than are required to maintain their Master Gardener status. They are committed to improving their community and to improving the quality of life in St. Louis County.

Comments about programs from the general public included:

“Thank you for having this program. Financially it has helped us a lot.”

Sherburne County

Sherburne Master Gardeners Pollinator Garden
Sherburne County Master Gardeners installed a new Pollinator Garden near the new Elk River library. Developed with funding from a University of Minnesota Extension State Master Gardener grant, the garden has been in progress since fall 2007 and installation was finished during summer 2008.

The purpose of the garden is to increase public awareness of the importance of pollinators in our lives and provide a learning environment to view them. Plants include native and hybrid perennials, bi-annuals, annual, and herbs. All were selected because they provide nectar or are host plants to the many pollinators we see in Minnesota, including bees and wasps (they do over 80% of our pollinating), butterflies, moths, and hummingbirds. For example, the milkweed plants provide both nectar and are host to the Monarch butterfly caterpillar.

The plants are symmetrical in keeping with the butterfly design, with labels on the right giving the common name and on the left, the Latin name. Some plants bloomed in 2008, while others will bloom as they mature over the next couple of years.

Stearns County

Major Involvement in County Fair
A major project for the Stearns County Master Gardeners in 2008 was extensive Stearns County Fairgrounds beautification. The gardens have been there for several years, but in 2008 they were redone. A large raised bed made with landscape blocks was built in front of the new fair office and restrooms. This bed is planted with daylilies and other perennials that will bloom at fair time. The border of the bed is planted with sedums that cascade over the edge of the three foot high bed. The second bed is a perennial butterfly garden with the plants labeled and identified. Both beds have permanent professionally made signage giving credit to the Master Gardeners. The Stearns County Fair is one of our greatest public relations venues. In addition to the gardens, we have taken the responsibility of the entire open class horticulture exhibits including that of department superintendent. We have a display booth and an “Ask a Master Gardener” table adjacent to the exhibits. This provided an excellent opportunity for both the dissemination of information and public relations. We also sponsor a 4-H container garden contest every year. Each club enters a container garden created around a theme for the year and after they are judged, the containers are placed around the fairgrounds to beautify the buildings.

Steele County

Producing a Gardening Show for Cable TV
This year two Master Gardeners have been involved in producing a gardening show for the local cable company. Every other month the team produces a fifteen to thirty minute program on seasonal gardening topics. The program is aired four or five times each month. In the future we also hope to promote upcoming MG events and presentations.

The Steele County Master Gardeners continue to be involved in a program with the Steele County Detention Center that allows inmates at the jail to work in a large vegetable garden where they learn workforce skills and skills and knowledge about growing vegetables. The vegetables are used in the Detention Center’s own kitchen and surplus produce is donated to local nursing homes and the food shelf. For the last three years over three hundred pumpkins have been donated to the Big Brothers Big Sisters program and the School Age Child Care Program.
Traverse County

Spring Gardening Workshop
Traverse County Master Gardeners presented their annual Spring Gardening Workshop in March 2008. Residents in Traverse County and surrounding areas attended mini-workshops presented by the Master Gardeners on topics about small fruits, preparing new gardens, flower arranging and fertilizer facts.

This year the Junior Master Gardeners also presented a topic at the workshop from a skill they learned as a JMG club and a 4H project. The youth demonstrated how to make garden stepping stones and shared some of their creative talents by displaying examples of stones they had designed. Adults attending the stepping stone class complimented the youth for their part in the workshop and were impressed with their knowledge and public speaking skills. With that boost of confidence the JMG group took the project one step further as they developed marketing skills by producing a stepping stone inventory to sell at a community event held annually in June. A portion of their profits went towards the community display garden.

Washington County

Demonstration Garden Projects
University of Minnesota Master Gardeners in Washington County create and maintain demonstration gardens at Carpenter Nature Center, Forest Lake Community Garden and the Washington County Fairgrounds. These gardens were designed specifically as demonstration projects where homeowners can learn to replicate all, or some of the ideas. Classes and hands-on workshops are also taught at each site. These gardens are not only functional, but aesthetic. The gardens at the Washington County Fairgrounds include raingardens and a multi-purpose garden. They are one of the most visited exhibit spaces at the Fair. Some statistics from 2008 include:

Washington County Fair
- 6328 visitors
- 1600 documented questions
- 57 volunteers-228 hours

Forest Lake Community Garden
- 14 non-MG volunteers trained to manage garden

Watonwon County

Fair booth and newspaper articles
Master Gardeners expanded their educational display booth at the county fair. The newly renovated booth included a restored pond and waterfall. The water feature was a show stopper that helped to attract a crowd.

Master Gardeners continue to write weekly articles for a local newspaper. Special topics for articles this year included information about invasive species, composting and insect and disease control.

Winona County

Creating Gardens for a Group Home
Winona’s Home and Community Options supports developmentally disabled adults, children, and their families. On of the organizations homes offers respite care to developmentally disabled teen-agers. There are 27 clients (children) helped here by 31 staff members. Much of the staffing is one-on-one, due to the severity of the children's disabilities.

Master Gardeners partnered with 4-H to provide a landscaping project for the home. Master Gardeners offered instruction and coaching to 4-H club members and parents who did the physical work. A local 4-H club received a grant to conduct the project from the Minnesota 4H Foundation.

The biggest part of the project is a rainwater garden filled with perennial forbes and grasses which receives run-off from three downspouts.

It is estimated that 17 teens and 9 parents worked with 8 Master Gardeners a total of 100 hours.

The home’s program director testified to the success of the project saying, "The work you did looks great. It does look beautiful and a majority of our children will truly enjoy it. I’m very excited about the work out there and think it will really add to the property. We really do appreciate the Master Gardeners and 4-Hers taking all of this on."

Thanks to staff and volunteers from all counties who wrote and contributed a county highlight report in 2008. Great work and efforts!
University of Minnesota Extension
Master Gardener Program

155 Alderman Hall
1970 Folwell Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55108
612-625-4211

www.mg.umn.edu

Julie Weisenhorn
State Director
weise019@umn.edu

David Moen
State Program Manager
moenx010@umn.edu

Bridget Barton
Executive Administrative Assistant
bart0590@umn.edu

Master Gardener Focus Areas
Diagnostics... Youth...
Environment... & Food Access

University of Minnesota Extension
Master Gardener Mission

To support Extension by providing volunteers trained in horticulture to educate the public with research based information on the best practices in consumer horticulture and environmental stewardship.

The University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.