

# GEORGIA MASTER GARDENER EXTENSION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



## Annual Report 2015

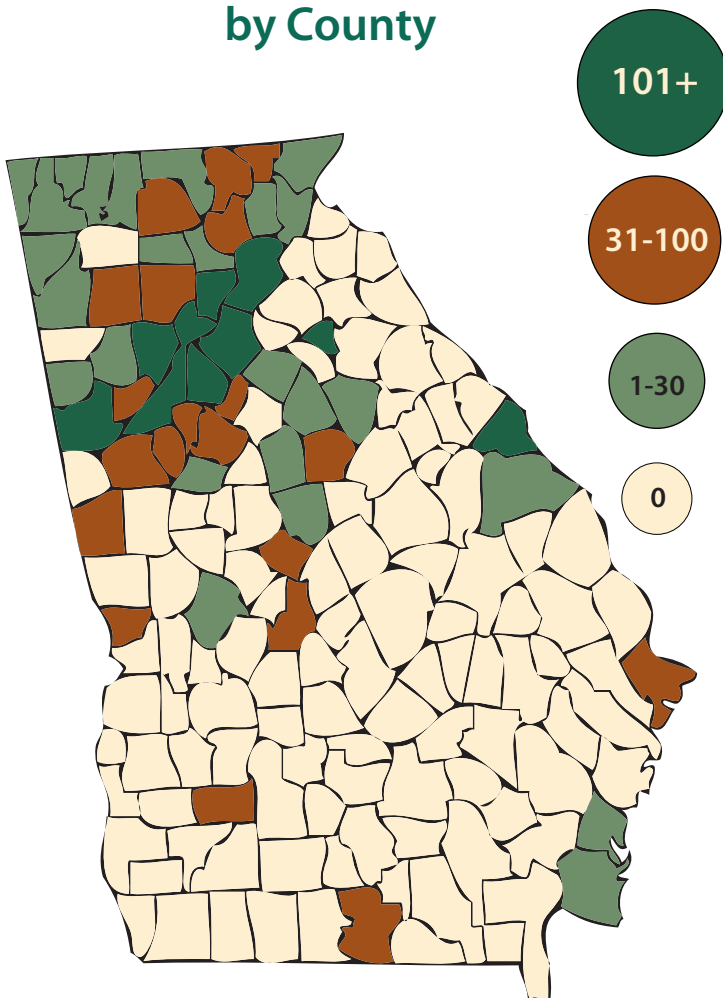


Learn

Serve

Grow

### Number of Active Volunteers by County



The Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program began in 1979, and it is operated through county offices of the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension. Through this program, individuals are trained in horticulture and related areas. These individuals volunteer their expertise, under the direction of Cooperative Extension staff, to help educate others through horticultural programs and projects that benefit the community. Each year, MGEVs conduct hundreds of workshops, garden tours, presentations, plant clinics, and other projects to educate others about sustainable gardening and landscaping.

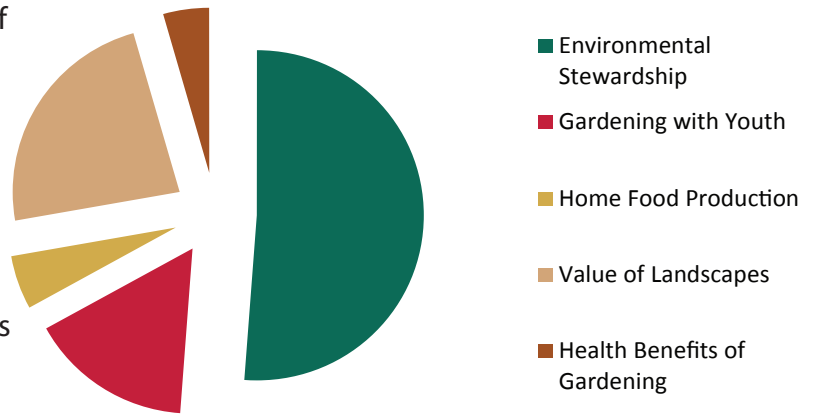


The Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program prepares volunteers to support UGA Cooperative Extension in delivering gardening information to Georgia's citizens and communities. Since 1979, Master Gardeners and UGA Extension have helped Georgians become healthier, more productive, financially independent and environmentally responsible.

# GEORGIA MASTER GARDENER EXTENSION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Master Gardener program in Georgia is a volunteer training program designed to help University of Georgia Cooperative Extension staff transfer research-based information about gardening and related subjects to the public by training home gardeners. Through this program, Cooperative Extension is able to reach out and serve more citizens with educational programming and demonstrations in five target areas, known as state initiatives. Georgia's Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program initiatives include:

## Hours Volunteered by State Initiative



### Environmental Stewardship



Knowing how to properly install and care for ornamental landscapes is critical for enjoying and reaping the benefits of the ecosystem services that they offer. Focusing on increasing awareness and knowledge of

landscape and garden management for the optimum use and protection of the environment, education in this initiative includes management of all aspects of the residential landscape. MGEVs teach about soil, plants, insects, diseases, and wildlife, as well as proper use of equipment, pesticides, fertilizers, and other landscaping inputs. By teaching people to implement sustainable gardening methods, landscapes have the greatest value with little negative impact on the environment.

historic gardens and landscapes, partnering with local agencies on projects that enhance community landscapes, and providing leadership for demonstration gardens that in turn contribute value to the community.

### Gardening with Youth



Research studies demonstrate multiple benefits of gardening with youth. Adults who have significant and positive exposure to nature as children (often with a significant adult) are more likely to, as an adult, view nature in

positive and meaningful ways. A child's gardening experience can grow an environmental steward, a person likely to grow up to value the environment and take care of it. Gardening experiences in youth increase the adult concern and value for the environment. MGEVs invest time and energy in Gardening with Youth projects, focusing on increasing young people's awareness and understanding of the value of horticulture and landscaping, using horticulture as a tool to increase responsibility and leadership for youth, and teaching individuals and professionals (i.e., teachers and therapists) how to use horticulture to reach young people.

### Value of Landscapes



Landscaping is known to yield an average 109% return on every dollar spent, making it a strategic home improvement and investment. Homes with professionally landscaped and manicured lawns sell faster and have a higher

property value. Beautification can have a positive effect on businesses and people are much more likely to choose to live and work in buildings with attractive landscapes. MGEVs are called upon for advice and direction, contributing to public and



# GEORGIA MASTER GARDENER EXTENSION VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## Health Benefits of Gardening



Plants and nature have known positive benefits for human health and wellbeing, including stress reduction, improved memory and concentration, higher work quality, higher work accuracy, and improved learning.

MGEV projects focus on teaching the value of the interior and exterior landscape for human health, well-being, and quality of life, transferring knowledge and skills to intended audiences so that they might utilize this information for personal health, and a healthier workplace and community. Projects may include working with special populations to enjoy gardening, imparting entrepreneurial skills to at-risk populations, bringing together intergenerational audiences through horticultural activities, or teaching caregivers and professionals the basics of horticulture so that they can use gardening in their activities.

## Home Food Production



MGEVs respond to public demand for knowledge of how to grow fruits and vegetables by conducting projects in the Home Food Production initiative. These projects focus on teaching the benefits of home food production

and developing skills and knowledge in growing food, managing community gardens, or contributing to food banks or kitchens. With MGEV instruction and leadership, community gardens can become a valuable tool for fighting hunger and poor nutrition as fresh produce becomes accessible.

These five initiative areas provide a framework for education and extension to Georgia communities by MGEVs. To be best equipped for these projects, MGEVs continue to train and learn about new research and gardening techniques. In 2015, MGEVs spent more than 1,600 hours in Advanced Training, a rigorous horticultural training for

current, active MGEVs that is above and beyond the initial horticulture training. Additionally, more than 6,200 hours were spent by MGEVs seeking continuing education, such as through workshops and lectures, to remain up to date on horticulture issues and topics.

The Georgia MGEV program endeavors to have a knowledgeable and relevant volunteer base to assist Extension in delivering educational programming for Georgia communities.

### Average Hours per MGEV Reporting

COUNTY	TOTAL HOURS	NO. OF VOLS	AVG HOURS/VOL
Habersham	690	4	173
Towns/Union	5,129	40	128
Paulding	2,667	27	99
Carroll	9,874	103	96
Douglas	4,946	52	95
Houston	6,075	68	89
Hall	18,100	210	86
Bartow	3,275	40	82
Cobb	17,454	214	82
Clarke	14,556	210	69
Chattooga	332	5	67
Coweta	6,388	101	63
Rockdale	3,015	51	59
Fayette	4,407	78	57
Gwinnett	11,457	203	56
Lumpkin	2,021	36	56
Fannin	1,571	28	56
White	485	9	54
Forsyth	5,593	104	54
Cherokee	3,785	71	53
DeKalb	14,732	277	53
Fulton	7,679	151	51
Muscogee	2,766	59	47
Floyd	1,122	24	47
Richmond	5,068	107	47
Walton	474	11	43
Bibb	3,601	83	43

## ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

To teach about **Environmental Stewardship**, MGEVs use a variety of tools such as demonstration gardens, workshops, trails and garden tours, Ask-a-Master-Gardener booths, lecture series, newspaper and magazine articles, television and radio interviews, and social media outlets, among other methods, to teach residents how to plant and maintain landscapes that positively contribute to Georgia communities. Demonstration gardens are living examples or classrooms that show people what different plants look like. They are great locations to demonstrate gardening techniques, such as pruning methods, how to divide plants, or even how to identify common pests. Events, like plant clinics and Ask-a-Master-Gardener booths, are more diagnostic in nature and present the perfect opportunity for an individual to have a plant problem, such as a disease or insect, identified and a solution offered. MGEV projects address many gardening topics that help residents be better gardeners.

Projects like the Tucker Butterfly Garden ([tuckerbutterflygarden.org](http://tuckerbutterflygarden.org)), teach children and the general public about butterflies and pollinator protection. Begun in 2008, the garden was designed and is maintained to attract butterflies. This pollinator garden demonstrates the cultivation of host and nectar plants that support the complete life cycle of butterflies. Stemming from the idea of two DeKalb County MGEVs, the garden was created to benefit the public and is situated in a highly visible area in front of Tucker Recreation Center. It is frequently visited by garden clubs, children, and adults.

MGEVs have taken an innovative approach to teaching children at the garden. They have created a special garden host, Mrs. Frittilary. Mrs. Frittilary is a dressed mannequin, developed as a fashionable art attraction for the site, who shows off a seasonal wardrobe. Citizens in Tucker know that when Mrs. Frittilary is sporting a new outfit that it is time to visit the garden!



*Photo courtesy of MGEVs in DeKalb County*

*Mrs. Frittilary in the Halloween spirit at the Tucker Butterfly Garden !*

### Top 10 Environmental Stewardship Projects by Hours

Project	Total Hours	County
Linwood Preserve/Redbud Project	3,469	Hall
UGA Trial Gardens Garden Helper	3,038	Clarke
Atlanta Botanical Gardens (Gainesville)	2,380	Hall
Gardens on Green	2,060	Hall
Plant Sale	2,007	Carroll
Spring and Fall Plant Expos	1,967	Hall
State Botanical Gardens Garden Helper	1,845	Clarke
Wreath Sale	1,483	Carroll
Special Projects	1,365	DeKalb
Columbus Botanical Garden	1,341	Muscogee

Each summer, The Tucker Butterfly Garden has an educational Butterfly and Friends Day for the children in summer camp at the Tucker Recreation Center. Activities include a butterfly and insect craft, learning a song, the butterfly dance, storytelling to act out the life cycle of a monarch butterfly, visiting the butterfly garden, and looking for gulf fritillary caterpillars. Lastly, they play a pollinator game to learn about how pollination works. Children end the day's activities with a ladybug release in the Butterfly Garden. Through the hard work of MGEVs, the Butterfly Garden has become a focal point for the community.

MGEVs volunteering at The State Botanical Garden of Georgia (<http://botgarden.uga.edu/>), located in Athens, Georgia, staff a Master Gardener Information Desk and answer plant questions from Botanical Garden visitors. Often, these questions regard plant identification. MGEVs also assist with

children's events, including field trips at the Botanical Garden. These trips are adapted to the school curriculum, and MGEVs teach Pre-K through high school students about nature and its importance. MGEVs also lead garden tours throughout the year and teach visitors about the plants at the Botanical Garden.

*MGEVs are present at the State Botanical Garden Information Desk six days a week and are readily available to answer visitors' questions.*



*Photos courtesy of MGEVs in Chatham County*

### DID YOU KNOW?

*The Sparrow Field Pollinator Berm is a 150-yard-long garden on Skidaway Island in Chatham County. The site is a living laboratory for monarch butterfly research. MGEVs, acting as citizen scientists, collect and contribute data to Monarch Health, a program administered by UGA, and to the Monarch Larvae Monitoring Project led by the University of Minnesota. MGEVs have planted seven species of native milkweed and have worked to increase the total number and variety of plants. The berm is now planted with nearly 100 species of flowering plants, 63% of which are native. The garden is a floral magnet for butterflies, honey bees, solitary bees and wasps, hoverflies, and other wildlife species.*

MGEVs in Paulding County have created a tree walk at White Oak Park, a community park managed by the Parks and Recreation department, to educate residents about trees. MGEVs lead regularly scheduled walks, teaching participants about each of the 25 trees in multiple seasons; sharing photos of flowers, berries/fruits, leaves, and bark; and providing descriptive and cultural information. Each tree on the walk is labeled with a laminated sign that is mounted to a post at convenient reading height. Individuals who use the trail have made many comments including, "I always wondered what those plants were. Thank you for labeling them!"

Projects, such as the Tucker Butterfly Garden, the Information Desk at the State Botanical Garden, and the White Oak Park Tree Walk, offer creative venues for educating the public about environmental stewardship. When residents have access to information for properly caring for their ornamental landscape plants, they can make good decisions that positively impact water quality and natural resources.



## VALUE OF LANDSCAPES

MGEVs provide leadership to a number of projects that fall under the **Value of Landscapes** initiative. Projects can include teaching homeowners how to install and maintain a home landscape, providing guidance for historic gardens, and organizing garden-related festivals. These projects can result in higher property values, desirable communities, and sources of tourism revenue.

MGEVs in Bartow County provide assistance with restoration and maintenance of the grounds at historic Rose Lawn, a Victorian mansion that was built in Cartersville, Georgia, in the early 1900s by Sam P. Jones (the "Billy Graham" of the late nineteenth century). MGEVs have been instrumental at restoring more than 200 rose bushes, the great majority of which are heirlooms originating before 1926, and MGEVs contribute to community events held at the site. Each year, two popular art festivals are held on the grounds, one the first weekend in May, the other the third weekend in September. MGEVs staff an "Ask-a-Master-Gardener" booth at these two festivals and also sell a variety of plants to support their restorative and maintenance



*Photo courtesy of Jane Drew, Rose Lawn Museum Director*

*Rose Lawn, a historic mansion in Cartersville, GA, benefits from the expertise of MGEVs.*

efforts at Rose Lawn. MGEV participation in these events helps to provide accurate gardening information to the public. Because of the intensive work MGEVs do each year, the Rose Lawn Museum property is considered a historical demonstration garden providing community members with a perspective on the heritage of the roses and history of the site.

Since 2007, MGEVs in Douglas County have been involved in the Penny McHenry Hydrangea Festival (<http://www.celebratedouglascounty.com/>). MGEVs provide educational displays and maintain educational gardens at the Douglas County Courthouse, where the festival is located. The event is successful at drawing thousands of visitors to Douglas County, benefitting the community and the local economy.

Festival activities and events include an award-winning Standard Flower Show, MGEV-led garden tours, a 5K race, and a marketplace. MGEVs lead garden tours through the courthouse and butterfly gardens, teaching attendees about plant selection and gardening methods. MGEVs also contribute fairy gardens in wheelbarrows to the annual miniature garden display and show off a scarecrow display in the MGEV vegetable demonstration

*A sculpture created by MGEV Sherry Beggs for the Hydrangea Festival features a lion made from grass stems with a mane of hydrangea blooms.*



*Photo courtesy of MGEVs in Douglas County*



garden. In 2016, the Douglas County Butterfly Trail, sporting gardens designed and maintained by MGEVs, will officially open. Interacting with MGEVs and touring the gardens encourages visitors to learn more about gardening and start their own gardens.

MGEVs in Central Fulton County partner with Atlanta Habitat for Humanity (AHH) and provide leadership for the landscaping portion of new house construction. MGEVs educate and direct volunteers by explaining appropriate methods of planting trees, shrubs, perennials, and sod. They also teach the new homeowner to properly maintain the landscape surrounding their new home, including knowing how and when to water the plants, trees, and sod. A sketch of the landscape that identifies all the plants, trees, and type of sod and grass is left with the homeowner. MGEVs also provide written material on the care of the landscape, including a link to the UGA CAES website for access to more information. Finally, MGEVs offer follow-up visits to provide further support. With Master Gardener help, this project fully benefits the new homeowner and family. When the home is complete, new homeowners have an attractive landscape and are equipped with the knowledge to maintain it. Through their work with AHH, MGEVs have made a valuable contribution to the improvement and greening of neighborhoods in Atlanta and East Point.

Projects, such as historic garden preservation, garden festival leadership, and partnership with Habitat for Humanity, position Extension within the community to guide and direct landscape and gardening efforts that foster community and economic development.

### DID YOU KNOW?

At UGA's fellow land grant university, Fort Valley State University, and at the USDA Fruit and Nut Research Facility in Byron, Georgia, MGEVs prune peach trees and harvest the fruit for fruit quality and yield evaluation research. Three varieties are harvested six times each year, and this feat of harvesting would not be efficient without the help of MGEVs.

*Fulton County MGEVs have provided guidance and leadership to more than 200 house projects of Atlanta Habitat for Humanity.*



*Photo courtesy of MGEVs in Fulton County*

## Top 10 Value of Landscapes Projects by Hours

Project	Total Hours	County
MGVOCC Plant Sale & Garden Tour	2,404	Cobb
Garden Walk	1,648	Hall
Penny McHenry Hydrangea Festival	1,319	Douglas
Vines Park Deonstration Garden	947	Gwinnett
Spring Home & Garden Show	946	Houston
Lockerly Arboretum Volunteer	835	Putnam Baldwin
Plant Clinics & Plant Sales	825	Houston
Ag Center Demonstration Garden	760	Carroll
Green House/ Annual Plant Sale	729	Douglas
Atlanta Habitat for Humanity	695	Fulton

## GARDENING WITH YOUTH

MGEVs in Georgia volunteer thousands of hours each year on **Gardening with Youth** projects. Horticulture and gardening provide many benefits and are uniquely suited to teach youth about being better citizens and personal health while providing physical exercise, reaching diverse audiences, and linking interdisciplinary topics. MGEVs use horticulture to reach out to youth to increase young people's awareness and understanding of the value of horticulture and landscaping, and increase youth responsibility and leadership for youth.

MGEVs in Houston provide leadership to seventeen different Junior Master Gardener (JMG) programs, reaching students 5 to 15 years old and families all over Houston County - from the poorest to the wealthiest, from the homeschooled to the public school educated, from the youngest to the oldest. Using the JMG Curriculum from Texas A&M (<http://jmgkids.us/>), leaders provide both classroom instruction and hands-on gardening experiences to promote concepts of environmental stewardship, sound gardening principles, sustainability, landscape design, integrated pest management, and teamwork to youth in grades 3 through 8. Activities are both inside and outside the classroom.

As a result of JMG, Houston Extension has seen increased interest in its local Teaching Garden and in homeowner classes that Extension offers. The single best thing they have experienced is watching some of the children move from primary to elementary to middle school and continue to be involved in JMG, gardening clubs, FFA, or horticulture classes. Beyond that, MGEVs get wonderful gardening successes and family project stories from parents, sometimes years after the child has gone through the program.

### DID YOU KNOW?

MGEVs not only work with children and 4-H, but have also provided over \$5,000 in scholarship support to send 4-Hers to summer camps.



Photo courtesy of MGEVs in Houston County

MGEVs educate children in the classroom and in the garden, teaching them to how to plant and care for their gardens.

### Top 10 Gardening with Youth Projects by Hours

Project	Total Hours	County
School Master Gardener	2,385	DeKalb
Junior Master Gardener Program	1,335	Cobb
Junior Master Gardener Program	1,310	Houston
Dunwoody Nature Center	1,078	DeKalb
Junior Master Gardener Program	876	Hall
Gardens and Orchards in Valdosta City Schools	781	Lowndes
Greenhouse Work	552	Fulton
MG SPROUTS	529	Statewide
Children's Education	480	Fannin
Junior Master Gardener Program	467	Bibb

## GARDENING WITH YOUTH

Similarly, MGEVs in Chattooga County offer the Junior Master Gardener (JMG) program to local schools serving third-through-fifth graders on a monthly and as-needed basis. MGEVs work in the classroom directly with an assigned teacher, usually a science teacher, to enhance current curriculum and standards. Two of the schools have permanent gardens that are managed cooperatively with volunteers, JMG participants, and school staff. Students benefit from horticulture-based learning, and from having a "guest instructor" in the form of a caring community member. Teachers have a hands-on lesson to which they can refer as they pursue their standards. The school also has an opportunity to share the gardens with all students. Often, teachers from other disciplines and grades will use the gardens for teaching opportunities and special events.

Through JMG, MGEVs have had a positive impact on many people. Students express pride about their school gardens and tell stories of what they



*Photo courtesy of MGEVs in Chattooga County*

*Simple gardening activities in the JMG curriculum teach youth about the joy and wonder of plants, soils, and insects.*

plan to do at home. One fourth grader in the JMG program even dressed up like a Master Gardener for Career Day in 2015! Master Gardeners are touched and motivated by the curiosity and awe of young people.

*MGEVs work with youth at community gardens, libraries, and classrooms all throughout Georgia.*



*Photo courtesy of MGEVs in Spalding County*

MGEVs in Lowndes County have been working to introduce urban youth to agriculture, offering youth the ability to learn first-hand the source of their food by creating vegetable gardens and fruit orchards at all Valdosta city schools. Early vegetable garden work included the Pinevale Learning Center Garden project, the reclamation of an abandoned garden requested by the Valdosta City School Superintendent. Pinevale is an alternative school for students referred because of academic, social, or judicial reasons. MGEVs gave presentations on landscape design, water and energy management, and the introduction of low-maintenance ornamentals and fruit-bearing trees. Students participated in transplanting the existing shrubs and trees and planting of new ones.

MGEVs have expanded from the Pinevale site to include all schools in Valdosta city schools. MGEVs work closely with teachers in the development of gardens and orchards. So far, seven schools are benefitting from the project. MGEVs note that, as a result of this project, more and more youth are becoming interested in agriculture. The local community has acknowledged the importance of this project and of educating youth about agriculture and has generously supported the orchards and gardens with donations.

Recognizing the importance of investing in youth, MGEVs have volunteered thousands of hours in youth horticulture projects.



## HEALTH BENEFITS OF GARDENING

MGEVs addressing the **Health Benefits of Gardening** choose from a number of project types. Projects may include working with special populations to enjoy gardening, imparting entrepreneurial skills to at-risk populations, bringing together intergenerational audiences through horticultural activities, or teaching caregivers and professionals the basics of horticulture so that they can use gardening in their activities.

MGEVs in Fayette County reach out to the community through the Plant-A-Row for the Hungry project (PAR), volunteering countless hours preparing the site, planting, harvesting, and managing the garden to give back to those in need. Over the last 15 years, MGEVs have expanded the project from a small plot behind the Extension Office yielding 3,000 pounds of produce annually to a larger plot yielding 28,000 pounds of produce every year. PAR leaders are looking for ways to increase biodiversity and reduce chemical sprays. In 2016, the garden will be used in a study coordinated by a researcher at Auburn University to



*Photos courtesy of MGEVs in Fayette County*

*MGEVs in Fayette County donate more than 28,000 pounds of produce annually as a result of their dedication to planting extra rows in gardens to provide fresh produce to those in need.*

determine the value of trap crops. MGEVs will have the opportunity to contribute to ongoing research. MGEVs have provided nutritious food to those in need and have encouraged other groups to add community/PAR gardens in additional counties.

MGEVs in Whitfield County have contributed to gardens at the Wrens Nest Center for Wellbeing (<http://wrensnestcenter.com/>), helping to make the Center more valuable to the public by planning, installing, and maintaining plants for The Healing Advocate Garden. Filled with medicinal plants and herbs, The Healing Advocate Garden is intended to display vegetation with healing qualities. However, the garden is most unique in its location, planted in a lime-green 1990 Volvo that was converted to a garden space in 2013 when, Cindy Michaels, the owner of Wrens Nest and a former MGEV, commissioned artist and mechanic David Mumford. The development of this unique space provides the public with a tranquil, historical, and educational garden of healing, medicinal plants to visit. The presence of The Healing Advocate has given the garden a new visual and educational focus and energy. It has been the catalyst for additional art





## HEALTH BENEFITS OF GARDENING

installations, as well as the development of an herbal display garden that is being developed this spring.

In Spalding County, MGEVs and the community have come together to demolish an old school and create a functional garden that serves the neighborhoods in Fairmont, a high-risk community identified as a food desert with little access to fresh, healthy foods. The Healthy Life Community Garden (HLCG) is a major positive asset to the local community. All residents in the area of the garden, as well as Spalding County in general, are welcome to grow vegetables in the garden by working one of the twenty-one individual raised beds and/or participating in the 12,000 square-foot community area. Children's programs, such as Junior Master Gardener programs, summer reading programs, and special events, like Halloween and Spring Fling, offer social gatherings at the garden throughout the year.

There are numerous benefits from this garden. Many people who have little gardening skills or have not had interaction with UGA Extension have been reached and now know of this resource. MGEVs have been able to put into practice what they learned in their classes. Volunteering with the garden has created an awareness of the economic disparity in the community and knowledge of the existence of a food desert in the area. The gardens have been a labor of love, bringing together people from all parts of society for the common goal of improving the wellbeing of the community. From the expertise shared by MGEV volunteers to the children in the neighborhood learning and playing in the garden, a positive impact has been felt within the community.

Projects addressing Health Benefits use gardening to improve life quality for people within a community. The act of gardening is fun and satisfying, and the gardens themselves are a source of beauty for all!



*Photo courtesy of MGEVs in Spalding County*

*Community gardens like the Healthy Life Community Garden offer a bounty of fresh, seasonal vegetables.*

### Top 10 Health Benefits of Gardening Projects by Hours

Project	Total Hours	County
Plant-A-Row and Orchard Community Gardens	1,075	Fayette
South Fulton Community Garden	585	Fulton
Health Center Vegetable Garden	558	Douglas
Local Community/Group Garden Support	340	Douglas
Lawn & Garden Seminars/ Speaker's Bureau	290	Bartow
Community Gardens	222	Bibb
Healthy Life Community Garden	185	Spalding
Community Vegetable & Butterfly Gardens	164	Dougherty
Community Gardens	146	Carroll
Wrens Nest & Healing Advocate Gardens	145	Whitfield

## HOME FOOD PRODUCTION

Knowledge of how to grow fruits and vegetables continues to be a popular demand of Extension staff. MGEVs respond to this demand for know-how by conducting projects in the **Home Food Production** initiative. These projects focus on teaching the benefits of home food production and developing skills and knowledge in growing food, managing community gardens, or contributing to food banks or kitchens.

MGEVs in Rockdale County played a key role in the 2015 Agriculture and Natural Resources Day Celebration. This event showcased agriculture and natural resources in Rockdale County and was part of Extension's "Increasing Fresh Food Opportunities in Rockdale County" educational program plan. The five-hour event was tailored to children of all ages and included activities from the Rockdale County Farmer's Market, farm animals, and farm equipment. Attendees were able to purchase fresh vegetables, meet local farmers, and also see farm animals such as a dairy cow, baby pigs, goats, rabbits, chickens, and even horses and bees. Children invited from local summer day care centers spent the day learning about agriculture and



*Photo courtesy of MGEVs in Gwinnett County*

*MGEVs in Gwinnett maintain Archie's Vegetable Garden as an educational demonstration garden in McDaniel Farm Park.*

### Top 10 Home Food Production Projects by Hours

Project	Total Hours	County
McDaniel Farm Park Demonstration Garden	764	Gwinnett
Plant-A-Row for the Hungry, Fountain Gate Gardens	535	Cobb
Plant-A-Row for the Hungry, Clarke Middle School	518	Clarke
Vegetable Demonstration Garden	418	Paulding
Gilmer County Farmer's Market	410	Gilmer
Plant-A-Row for the Hungry	390	Rockdale
Learning for Life Garden	371	Forsyth
Plant-A-Row for the Hungry, Thomas Orchards	361	Clarke
Cherokee County Senior Citizen Community Garden	252	Cherokee
Ask A Master Gardener Booth	231	Richmond

enjoying the variety of activities offered. MGEVs helped to organize and set up the event and staffed a booth for sharing UGA research-based gardening information with homeowners and gardeners. The MGEVs gave away door prizes, handed out UGA publications, and had a Pizza Garden to teach children about the source of their food. MGEVs also facilitated a pie contest and a cooking demonstration by a local chef. The day was a wonderful success, with more than 400 children attending the event!

In Gwinnett County, MGEVs have worked within McDaniel Farm Park, a historic park boasting a 1930s farm homestead and many walking and bicycling trails. MGEVs began "Archie's Vegetable Garden" to demonstrate various types of vegetables that were typically grown in the 1930s





### DID YOU KNOW?

*In 2015, MGEVs dedicated 5,934 volunteer hours to Home Food Production projects, including demonstrations gardens, community gardens, and involvement in farmers markets as some of the top projects.*

as a food source for the family, as well as to trial some new vegetable varieties. MGEVs and Extension in Gwinnett County work with the Gwinnett County Environmental and Heritage Center to provide historic programs and summer camps at McDaniel Farm Park. Children learn about how farms were run, discover the source of their food, and watch Civil War re-enactments. The working vegetable demonstration garden allows for produce to be donated to local food banks each year and to Annandale Village in Suwanee, a key donation site through the Plant-a-Row for the Hungry program. Impressively, the vegetable garden averages over one thousand pounds of produce each year.

In Forsyth County, MGEVs created the Learning for Life Garden (<http://fcmg.sharepoint.com/Pages/default.aspx>) as an educational space for the community. Visitors can come to the garden year-round and are always able to see something different going on in the garden. Extension agents offer public classes that include hands-on learning in the

garden. Several options for growing vegetables can be observed in the fourteen large raised beds, along with various drip irrigation systems, and examples of vertical gardening. The garden also demonstrates companion planting, square-foot gardening, crop rotation, and low hoop houses. Produce from the garden is donated to a local boys' shelter and local food banks. By visiting the garden, attending classes, and learning from the signage at each raised bed, visitors gain many ideas and techniques to put to use in their own vegetable gardens. Visitors leave the garden with new ideas and new excitement for growing their own food at home.

Home Food Production projects place MGEVs in the community, teaching people how to grow fresh fruits and vegetables. From the small container garden to a multi-plot community garden, MGEVs share Extension resources with gardeners all over the state.



Photos courtesy of MGEVs in Forsyth County

*The Learning for Life Garden demonstrates several methods to grow vegetables, such as the square foot and pole support gardening methods.*

## GENERAL SUPPORT TO EXTENSION AND UGA

MGEVs are recruited and trained to assist UGA Extension in educating the public about sustainable horticulture, landscaping, and gardening. In addition to providing leadership for specific projects, MGEVs are also called upon to simply be “hands and feet,” providing valuable support to the local Extension office, its agents, and its staff. Beyond the local county office, MGEVs are also asked to assist other parts of UGA Extension, efforts in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES), and beyond. MGEVs provide invaluable assistance to Extension programs and facilities.

At the UGA Coastal Georgia Botanical Gardens (CGBG) in Savannah, MGEVs use their horticulture skills and spirit of volunteerism to help in a variety of ways, including garden events, spring and fall garden festivals, greenhouse work, and building projects. MGEVs also devote more than one hundred volunteer hours per year to Roots & Shoots (<http://www.coastalgeorgiabg.org/schools.html>), an environmental education program for children grades K-8 that teaches about the life cycle of plants, the water cycle, pollination, and poetry in the garden. MGEVs have helped to add four new topics, and a fifth topic will be added to the program in 2016. Public gardens like the Coastal



*MGEVs have assisted with organizing and hosting Farmers' Markets across the state.*



### **DID YOU KNOW?**

*In 2015, MGEVs donated over \$17,000 in scholarship funds to high school seniors and college undergraduates attending UGA and ABAC who are pursuing a college education in horticulture, agriculture, and related fields.*

Georgia Botanical Gardens couldn't be successful without many MGEV helping hands. Through many volunteer hours, MGEVs are a valuable resource and are contributing to exciting, upcoming events that include new display gardens and new educational programs.

At University of Georgia's Mountain Research and Education Center (GMREC) (<http://www.caes.uga.edu/center/gmrec/commcouncil/index.html>) in Blairsville, MGEVs are a major part of the Community Council, a group of community partners who help extend GMREC's outreach and service to the mountain region. MGEVs contribute by teaching youth classes on site or acting as class guides during field days, maintaining the Ethnobotanic Garden, and offering adult classes. As a result, citizens of Georgia and North Carolina are provided with a better understanding of their natural surroundings, allowing them to live happier, healthier lives.

The State Botanical Garden of Georgia (<http://botgarden.uga.edu/>), located in Athens, benefits annually from the energy and support of MGEVs.



## GENERAL SUPPORT TO EXTENSION AND UGA

Approximately one-third of Clarke County MGEVs are involved in a variety of activities at the Garden, including teaching, research, and garden support. MGEVs assist with children's events, including field trips at the Botanical Garden. MGEVs work directly with curators to maintain and grow plants for all of the gardens. They are involved in greenhouse work, propagation of the Garden's collections, and conducting research in the Center for Native Plants. MGEVs also staff a Master Gardener Information Desk and answer plant questions from Botanical Garden visitors. Often, these questions regard plant identification. These well-trained volunteers have been invaluable to supporting the Botanical Garden and reaching the community.

The Trial Gardens at UGA (<http://ugatrial.hort.uga.edu/>) are located on UGA's Athens campus. These gardens, under the direction of UGA Horticulture

*MGEVs help start, install, and maintain plants at the UGA Trial Gardens in Athens.*



faculty, are a place where new plant introductions can be grown and evaluated in the southeast climate prior to the plants being marketed to the consumer. MGEVs support several operations of the garden. First, they help prepare the plant materials that will be evaluated in the garden. They take cuttings, sow seeds, and pot up plant plugs (small plants). Some of the plants are sold in the annual plant sale, while others are installed in the garden as part of the commercial plant trials. MGEVs also assist with the care and nurturing of the garden throughout the year, including the perennial trials that are maintained for at least

### *DID YOU KNOW?*

MGEVs provided over 57,000 hours in support to UGA Extension in 2015 through MGEV help desks and office and event support.

three years. MGEV support is important to the garden's success as a nationally-recognized plant trial garden.

The UGArden (<http://ugarden.uga.edu/>) is a unique project located near UGA's Athens campus. It is a student-run learning and demonstration farm that grows food on four acres using organic practices. Its mission is to teach students about sustainable food production and provide produce to families in need in the Athens community. Clarke County MGEVs have joined student volunteers to grow various medicinal and culinary herbs at the UGArden. Their work in the garden has become central in the local community and MGEVs are excited to grow and expand their work in the gardens.

MGEVs were instrumental in developing new educational materials, MG SPROUTS. Agents, Program Assistants, and MGEVs in Coweta, Forsyth, and Rockdale Counties, along with the State Program Office, coordinated pilot sites with a kindergarten classroom, a homeschool cooperative (ages 5-7), an after-school program cooperating with Boys and Girls Club (ages 7-8), and a community group at a library (ages 5-8). The input from all involved in the pilot projects contributed to the completion and release of the MG SPROUTS project ([www.mgsprouts.org](http://www.mgsprouts.org)). MG SPROUTS is now being used in several Georgia counties and has been shared at national conferences.

MGEVs contribute to all kinds of projects, including some that broadly benefit UGA, Extension, and the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. Without the assistance of these volunteers, it would be difficult to deliver the level of quality programming that occurs. The energy, talents, skills, and knowledge of MGEVs is vital to the success of these projects!

# 2015 STATEWIDE VALUE

## Active Program Service and Value

County	Hours of Service	Value (\$)
Bartow	3,275	75,554
Bibb	3,601	83,075
Burke	534	12,319
Camden	26	600
Carroll	9,874	227,793
Catoosa	54	1,245
Chatham	3,701	85,382
Chattooga	332	7,659
Cherokee	3,785	87,320
Clarke	14,556	335,807
Clayton	1,693	39,058
Cobb	17,517	404,117
Coweta	6,388	147,371
Dawson/Lumpkin	2,383	54,976
DeKalb	14,732	339,867
Dougherty	807	18,617
Douglas	4,946	114,104
Fannin	1,571	36,243
Fayette	4,420	101,969
Floyd	1,153	26,600
Forsyth	5,593	129,031
Fulton	7,679	177,155
Gilmer	1,395	32,183
Glynn	302	6,967
Greene	677	15,941
Gwinnett	11,457	264,095
Habersham	691	15,941
Hall	18,100	417,567
Haralson	35	807
Henry	2,329	53,730
Houston	6,075	140,150
Jasper	32	738
Jones	250	5,768
Lowndes	970	22,378
Morgan	364	8,397
Muscogee	2,766	63,812
Paulding	2,667	61,528
Pickens	1,129	26,046
Putnam	2,396	55,276
Rabun	123	2,838
Richmond	5,068	116,919
Rockdale	3,015	69,556
Spalding	665	15,342
Taylor	62	1,430
Towns/Union	5,129	118,326
Troup	1,928	44,479
Walker	297	6,852
Walton	474	10,935
White	485	11,189
Whitfield/Murray	145	3,345

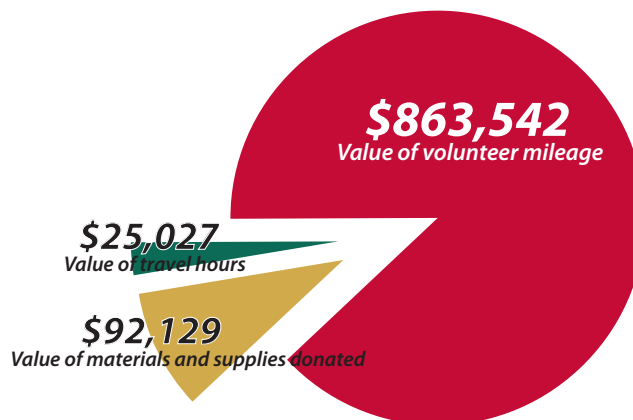
## Annual Summary of Master Gardener Activities

New Master Gardener Extension Volunteers (completed training this year)	261
Active Master Gardeners returning	2,425
Total Volunteers	2,981
Volunteer hours	177,318
Value of service (\$23.07* per hour)	\$4,090,726
Total # of in person contacts	363,388
Total # of telephone/email contacts	6,009,076
Total # of miles traveled	789,752
Value of travel	\$394,876

**Overall value to the citizens of Georgia \$4,485,602**

*Self-reported data collected from MGLDG, the recordkeeping system for the Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program, as of March 2, 2016. \*The wage rate of \$23.07 per hour was used. The value of volunteer time is based on the average hourly earnings of all production and nonsupervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls (as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) increased by 12 percent to estimate for fringe benefits. The information was supplied by the Independent Sector (1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20036; 202-223-8100; <http://www.independentsector.org>), a national forum to encourage giving. \*\*The mileage rate is based on \$0.50 per mile.*

## Value of Contributed Support



**State Program Office**  
 1109 Experiment St - Cowart Building  
 UGA Griffin Campus, Griffin, GA 30223  
[www.gamastergardener.org](http://www.gamastergardener.org)

