



Gardens on Green *served by Hall County Extension and MGEVs*

gamastergardener.org

Georgia Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program

Gardens on Green, a collection of educational gardens in Gainesville, Georgia, is a collaborative effort of Hall County Extension, Hall County Master Gardener Extension Volunteers, and the Hall County School District. The teaching and learning garden is located next to the Hall County Education Building. About 35 Master Gardeners, along with several retired teachers and other community volunteers, provide programming and maintenance of the gardens. Hall County MGEV Kathy Lovett planted the idea for the garden in 2007 and was joined by other Hall County Master Gardeners, high school horticulture students, and Junior Master Gardener elementary school students to begin planting of the first garden, Garden of Winners, in 2008. Since then, a native, pollinator, vegetable, conifer, and deer-resistant garden have been added, with the addition of the Literacy Garden in 2017.

Guided by a committee of Master Gardeners and school system nutritionists, the goal of Gardens on Green is to provide horticulture education to a youth audience and grow these young individuals into gardeners by inspiring a love for outdoors and gardening. To accomplish this goal of “growing good kids,” planting and programming are designed to teach plant life cycles, appreciation of nature, and the interdependence of all life. From April through October, meetings, tours, and classes take place in the gardens. Each year, more than 1,000 children are reached through an annual program, Growing with Second Graders, which focuses on life cycles. During this program, groups of 50–80 second graders spend four hours in the garden engaging in hands-on activities that complement their regular classroom curriculum. Second graders learn about composting, vegetable gardens, pollinator gardens, native gardens, and nutrition.



1,687
volunteer service
hours in 2017

35
MGEVs
contributed to
this project

During a field trip to the gardens, children rotate through five learning stations designed to provide educational displays and hands-on activities for visitors. In the vegetable garden, children learn the parts of a plant and plant needs before planting a radish seed to take home. They also engage in seasonal planting and harvesting in the garden.

They especially enjoy digging up sweet potatoes in the Fall! In the composting center, children learn all about composting and observe the role of critters, like worms, in the composting process. In the pollinator garden, the importance of pollinators is taught and reinforced with displays of Monarchs and Gulf Fritillaries. Children even get to participate in the release of adult butterflies! In the native garden, children observe and learn the importance of growing native plants. Lastly, visitors often wrap up their garden excursions and activities with a visit to the nutrition center, which is operated by a Hall County MGEV and two Hall County School District Nutritionists. Here they learn that they often eat plant parts, like roots and seeds; observe fruit and vegetable displays; and help make a salad or smoothie. By circulating through these learning stations, MGEVs help children make a connection between the foods they eat, where these foods come from, and the many life cycles that contribute to the growth of fruits and vegetables.

In May of 2017, a final garden was added to Gardens on Green. This addition was a literacy garden designed for children in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade. The garden's design weaves together important early literacy experiences with gardening. This addition includes a whimsical story time arena; a sensory garden; a monarch butterfly garden; a reach-in library; laminated children's stories; a reading arbor; alphabet rocks; and other literary-related elements, like Jack and Jill's hill, Dr. Seuss quotes, a

shrubbery bookworm, and Mr. McGregor's house and vegetable garden. These garden elements are intended to engage children while enriching reading-readiness and sparking the imagination. Most importantly, the literacy garden is a place to read, discover, and grow.



Gardens on Green is free and open to public when it is not otherwise in use for youth programs.



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.

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