Public Value and Master Gardeners

BETSY WIELAND
PRIVATE VALUE - WIIFM

- Only participants benefit
- Classic economic models work
- Learned how to grow tomatoes
- Lawn looks better
- Got an MG service award
PUBLIC VALUE

- Benefits more than just participants
- Information to make better decisions
  - Consumers
  - Businesses
  - Lawmakers
- Address issues of fairness
Program participants have been shown to change their behavior in specific measurable ways that have been shown to lead to specific measurable outcomes that generate public value.

Participants of the Integrated Pest Management Program have been shown to adopt techniques that are effective against pesticide-resistant insects which slows the spread of pesticide resistance in the insect population which increase pest control options for all farmers in the area.
GREAT LOCAL RESOURCE

- Building Extension’s Public Value
- Laura Kalambokidis
- http://blog.lib.umn.edu/kalam002/publicvalue/
EXAMPLES
The Year Brought Special Highlights in Counties

Just What Do You Do?

The mission of the Extension Master Gardener program is "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."

This annual report shares highlights from 46 county Extension Master Gardener programs that submitted 2012 reports. It captures the many methods and venues Extension Master Gardeners use to deliver education and share gardening knowledge. It helps to answer a question often asked of our Extension Master Gardeners, "Just what do you do?"

1. We answer questions and help people solve garden problems.

When the Extension Master Gardener program was created in the 1970’s, the role of Master Gardeners was to assist county Extension educators in answering gardening questions. Today, finding solutions to gardening questions and situations is still a primary function of Extension Master Gardener volunteers, although the methods of doing so have changed significantly. Online fact sheet, web links, email, digital photos, and social media pages were primary tools used to answer thousands of gardening questions in 2012.

2. We help the public understand and use home landscaping and gardening practices that minimize negative impacts on the environment.

Raingardens

16 counties engage in projects that provided instruction, demonstration, or information about the value, construction and maintenance of raingardens to reduce run-off into public waterways.

- You’ll find demonstration raingardens developed and maintained by Extension Master Gardeners in Minnesota River Valley (Blue Earth), Cook, Douglas, Lake of the Woods, and Washington Counties.
- Working with Metro Blooms, Hennepin County Master Gardeners assisted 60 homeowners with raingarden plant selection and design consulting.
- Raingardens were featured in garden tours in Steele, Rock and Olmsted Counties.

Shoreline Restoration

5 counties provide classes about or assistance with shoreline restoration projects.

- Master Gardeners in Becker, Benton, Goodhue, Stearns and Itasca Counties partner with Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Extension educators to assist lake associations and others with shoreline projects that reduce runoff into lakes and rivers.
4. We help to increase access to healthy food by teaching others to garden.

Community Gardens

12 counties have organized or assisted in the development of community gardens. In all cases, Master Gardeners provide either classes or time in the garden to answer questions and mentor new gardeners. Often Master Gardeners use a garden plot to grow a teaching garden and contribute the produce to a food shelf.

- Itasca County Master Gardeners teamed up with the YMCA to conduct a youth garden. Thirty youth participated in the program that began with starting seeds for transplant and ended with vegetable harvest.
- Master Gardeners in Olmsted County continued an ongoing Junior Master Gardener program in partnership with the Boys and Girls Club.
- Pine County incorporated the “Grow Yourself Healthy” program into their community garden education and their county fair booth display.
- Isanti County Master Gardeners established the Cambridge Community Garden in 2009 in partnership with the city and the county’s environmental coalition. They have experienced steady increase in use, increasing space 25 percent between 2011 and 2012. Master Gardeners have turned over management of the garden to a newly formed “Board of Gardeners.”
- In Washington County, Master Gardeners support 3 community gardens. They provide education and support for a corporate partner, Retail Construction Service, who established a garden to engage youth and employees in producing food for a food shelf. In 2012 they donated 3000 pounds of produce.
- Hennepin County Master Gardeners worked with a similar corporate program, the C.H Robinson employee “giving” community garden. They taught employees gardening classes and provided consulting through the growing season. Departments within the company competed to grow the most produce. Collectively they donated 3036 pounds of produce to a food shelf.
9. We engage in applied research in collaboration with Extension educators and partners like the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

7. We help new homeowners increase property values and improve neighborhood aesthetics when we partner with Habitat for Humanity.

Extension Master Gardeners assist faculty in adding new knowledge to the field of horticulture and in formulating decisions that impact communities.

- Master Gardeners in Kanabec County continued their efforts to care for and record data for one site of a hardy shrub rose trial conducted by an Extension educator.
- Over 100 Extension Master Gardeners across the state participated in the 2012 seed trial program, conducted this year under direction of a volunteer committee. Across the state Extension Master Gardeners grow selected garden seed varieties, evaluate specified growth variables and submit their data for a statewide report. The Minnesota Horticultural Society publishes the report annually.
- In an effort to plan for anticipated destruction of ash trees resulting from Emerald Ash Borer, Crow Wing, Kanabec and Minnesota River Valley Master Gardeners assisted university staff and municipal officials in conducting tree inventories in the cities of Brainerd, Mora and Mankato.
- Master Gardeners from several metro counties began a multi-year project to evaluate biochar as a soil amendment for vegetable and flower gardens. Biochar is a byproduct in the production process that turns biomass into transportation fuel. Three applied research gardens were established in Minnesota, along with several in Iowa. This applied research project is part of a multi-state CenUSA Boichar project funded by a USDA NIFA grant.

8. We promote gardening through libraries, books and scholarships.

One way to stimulate an interest in gardening and nature is through books and incentives to study horticulture. Libraries have also become good partners in delivering educational classes.

- A growing number of counties find that public libraries make good partners in delivering classes and other educational programs. For example, Aitkin County EMGs conducted a five...
2012 Stats at a glance

- **2,448** Extension Master Gardener volunteers
- **129,222** volunteer hours contributed
- **52.8** hours average contribution per volunteer

**Equivalent to 62.1 FTE staff positions**

Total Dollar value of volunteer time: **$2,527,582**

(The value of volunteer time is calculated using Independent Sector’s 2011 nationally recognized formula (minus 12% fringe) to determine dollar value of volunteer time. For more information visit: http://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time)

Number of Minnesotans reached by Extension Master Gardeners in 2012:

- **162,800** adults
- **53,500** youth
5. We continue to reach out, build relationships and share in learning with individuals and communities traditionally underserved by Extension.

- In 2012, using a new cohort model of learning that focuses on building community as well as content, the Fond du Lac Tribal Community collaborated with the 13 Moons Fond du Lac Tribal Extension program to establish the first community-based Extension Master Gardener group. The five initial Master Gardener interns focused their volunteer work solely on meeting needs of the tribal community.

- Dodge County Master Gardeners annually organize community gardens in three communities. Because many new gardeners have limited English language skills, they publish their garden newsletter and garden signage in both English and Spanish.

- Hennepin County’s Vegetable Growing Basics program is an urban garden education program that graduated 66 participants in 2012. Responding to participant needs, classes at two sites were taught in Spanish.

- A composting workshop was conduct in Hmong language in an immigrant housing complex in Ramsey County. This met a county goal to reach Hmong families with education that would encourage residents to compost and use other environmental best practices.

- Winona County Master Gardeners and local Hmong gardeners/farmers shared information

6. We use hands-on activities and gardens to provide environments for healing, enrichment and vocational skill building.

- Organized through Anoka County Master Gardener program in 2012, a team of Master Gardeners works year-round with adults with cognitive and developmental disabilities at Merrick, Inc. Master Gardeners receive specific training to work with this adult population. They then provide regular hands-on learning sessions for the participants in the Merrick, Inc. life-enrichment horticulture program.

- Goodhue County Master Gardeners helped Mayo Red Wing Health Center develop a healing garden. They conducted informational tours in the garden in 2012. Similarly, Master Gardeners in Wright County created a healing garden for the Cancer Care Center at the hospital in Buffalo. In Rock County, Master Gardeners continue their ongoing work with the Sanford Hospital Healing Garden, a garden they were instrumental in starting. This year they engaged teens in a day of garden maintenance.
KNOW CARDS IN YOUR POCKET

- Maximize tax $ through volunteers
- Increase property taxes
- Increase local business revenue, tax base
- Youth
- Underserved citizens
- Vulnerable citizens
- Healthy living
- Food access
- Environmental protection
PARTICIPANT

- Attend programs
- Active users
- Influence stakeholders
- Potential champions
STAKEHOLDERS

- Affected by our programs, may not be participants
- Make decisions about our programs
- Influence decision makers
- Take time to figure out the list
STAKEHOLDER INTERESTS

- Ask them
- Ask a friend
- Super sleuth their activity
  - Social media posts
  - Committees serving
  - Bills / motions leading
PICK 1-3 CARDS

- Find topics most of interest
- Go easy on the #s
- Add anecdote
- Start with main point, fill in details as they are interested
- Quit while you’re ahead
Thank you.
Questions or comments?