

Fond du Lac County Master Gardener Association Accomplishment Report for 2014

In 2014 we volunteered	292 hours in youth education
	483 hours in community education
	5,009 hours in support service
and participated in	1,386 hours of continuing education

We meet the second Tuesday of the month from January through June and from September through November. Most of our meetings include speakers on horticultural topics. We currently have 60 Certified Master Gardener Volunteers, plus 23 people took Level 1 Training in the fall.

School Gardens - We currently have seven schools seeking leadership/guidance from our volunteers. We have worked with four of the schools – Riverside, Chegwin, Rosenow and Pier - for several years now, and three more schools have made requests for our guidance- Waters, Parkside and Sabish.

Parkside Elementary School, for its first year of a garden, had a 40 x 40 foot area in front of the school tilled this spring and compost added. Our association purchased grow racks, lights and trays. Four days were spent letting every child plant seeds and watch them grow. Seed and root systems were explained in the classrooms and seed games were played. Girl Scouts and leaders made rows in the garden and laid down paths. The children planted seeds or a plant they had started. The Scouts took care of the garden during the summer, letting any neighboring kids take home food and help weed. The Master Gardener project leader was Cindy Boudry, assisted by Bill Behnke, Kathy Robinson, Jo Schouten, Mary Gorske, Vel Hynek and Sharon Rasmussen.

Sabish Middle School is in its second year with our Master Gardeners. Students watched several videos and our volunteers helped them start seeds and explained square foot gardening. The summer school planted and took care of the garden. Cindy Boudry and Kathy Robinson were the volunteers for this school project.

Rosenow School had another successful garden project. Students and their families maintained the garden along with MGV garden coordinator, Mary Williams. To aid in earlier germination, students wrapped pumpkin, corn and cucumber seeds in paper towels and placed the seeds in plastic bags. The kids got to see the seeds sprout and then planted them in peat pots. The plants got an earlier start and reached maturity sooner. The future plans for this school are to keep improving the soil, adding a cold frame for cool weather crops and work on companion planting. The students raised kale, beans, pumpkins, lettuce, radishes, cucumbers, popcorn, potatoes, tomatoes, Swiss chard, beets, onions, spinach and summer squash. Sharon Rasmussen, Bill Behnke, Cindy Boudry, Lane Chapman and Jo Schouten also volunteered their time for this garden project.

Riverside School Garden, under the leadership of Bill Behnke and with the assistance of Gary McCaughtry, Dave Lefeber, Cindy Boudry and Anna Toman, had vegetable seeds started in the classroom and students were taught about plants and soils. The future plans are to add a second garden for pumpkins and squash which need space to sprawl.

Our association President, Bill Behnke, was presented with the 2013-14 Fond du Lac School District's Friend of Education award last November because of his ongoing commitment to students and school district gardens.

Rosendale Peony Gardens – Several of our members are caretakers of rows of peonies at the heritage peony garden in Rosendale. It was originally called Sisson's Peony Gardens. Wilbur Sisson began planting this American favorite in 1920. Over the years, the gardens deteriorated, but in 2005 they were given to the Rosendale Historical Society. Restoration began at that time as volunteers helped to clean up and replant the beds. Presently the garden is a showplace,

particularly in June, when the annual Peony Day is celebrated. Most of the peonies are original, and are lovingly cared for by the Historical Society and other volunteers, including MGVs Sherry Freiberg, Ken Campshure and Chris Dorsch. Beds are weeded, deadheaded as needed and cut back in fall.

Galloway House and Village is an eight acre property owned, restored and maintained on a nonprofit voluntary basis by the Fond du Lac County Historical Society. Eileen Blackburn was asked to restore the rose garden which was neglected for at least six years. She and a team of our members weeded, replanted hostas, day lilies, sedum and seven new roses. They replaced the fountain pump in the middle of the garden and managed the planters around the main mansion. Our association donated \$250 plus many plants for this project. As a result of their efforts, the Galloway House and Village received a 2014 Beautification Award from the County Natural Beauty Council. Besides Eileen, MGVs Dave Lefeber, Sue George, Margie Winter, Dolores Braun, Doug Kindschuh and Sandy Beyer assisted with this project.

The **Community Gardens** has a mentor program for new gardeners, run by MGV Lynette Liepert. The UW-Extension Garden Education/Coordinator is Patty Percy. She wrote and received grants from Fond du Lac Area Foundation the past two years. This enabled the UW-Ext. to improve the garden's need for a better way to fill the tanks during the summer with the addition of a new water hook-up instead of a 500 foot string of hoses which took over three hours to fill one tank. Now the new hook-up has been set up in the center of the garden and can fill the largest water tank in twenty minutes. Also, in the fall topsoil was added to the garden. Patty Percy is working with the Fond du Lac County Executive and Land Conservation Department to get the gardens in better condition.

Junior Master Gardeners had a great response this year with the help of WNEP program Head, Amanda, to promote the program in the community. The program is open to all children in Fond du Lac County ages 8 to 19. Throughout the spring, a group of families came to the after-school sessions. After school let out, the Boys and Girls Club joined us with a nice group throughout the summer.

Bill Nettlehorst taught a special session teaching on lasagna raised bed gardening. The kids had a great time making it, and Mr. Nettlehorst made a video of them the whole time for his website. They grew tomatoes, cucumbers, onions and Swiss chard in the lasagna garden, and will use it again next year with the marsh hay from this year as the base. The summer sessions closed with a family day and a meal prepared by the kids from the garden produce. They also prepared flower arrangements and delivered bouquets to a local nursing home. Patty Percy is the project coordinator and was assisted by MGVs Jo Schouten, Jo Heinkel, Tina Weiss and Carol Thome, plus Amanda and Sharon from UW-Extension.

The **Columbus Park Butterfly Garden** in Campbellsport is in its second year. Brenda Hill and Pat Wiedmeyer continue to face many challenges with this project. Some tree trimming will be done to allow more sunlight and eventually several ash trees will be removed as a preventative measure against emerald ash borer. They are working to raise the soil level and create an erosion control barrier against the nearby river.

UW Gardens – Our members are responsible for planting, maintaining and improving the numerous flower beds surrounding the buildings. The largest of these is **Sunset Garden**. Plants were started in the campus greenhouse by our Master Gardeners and provided approximately half of the annuals. The garden was wonderful this year with great color and texture combinations. There was continuous blooming. Passers-by and faculty stopped to comment and ask questions while our members worked. This garden is planted and maintained by Pat Birschbach, Jim Johnson, Sue Furness, Mary Ditter and Vel Hynek.

The **Courtyard Garden** consists of three gardens surrounding a cement courtyard with a table and umbrella. Because of very difficult planting situations, project leader Lane Chapman, has used all hardy perennials. After three years the garden is starting to have its own personality.

Crane's Nest and **Shady Rest** are two other gardens on campus. They are being maintained and improved with self-watering pots. A water line broke near the Crane's Nest so Dolores Mick and Jane Ketterer had to do an emergency plant rescue. They plan to put in a tree and refinish a wood bench in 2015.

The **Pond View Rain Garden** is maintained by Shirley Frieler and Sally Boatman. They cleared plant debris from last year and removed grasses encroaching on the edge of the garden. Sally and Shirley also work on the **Campus Art Garden** which needed considerable attention. They spent a good deal of time removing excess vegetation, pruning trees and shrubs, pulling weeds and refreshing the mulch. Donkeytail spurge was taking over the south end of the garden and they are trying to eradicate it. They also plan on adding some signage to the garden next year to increase the educational value of the garden.

Pier Elementary Garden is a courtyard garden inside the school with an "I spy" theme surrounded by lush plantings, trees, bushes, annuals and perennials. This is designed and maintained by Eileen Blackburn with the help of Kathy Robinson.

Our major educational event of the year, **Day in the Garden**, was held on March 1, 2014. The speakers were Steve Petznick on "Birdscaping – Landscaping and Plants to Attract Birds"; David Wright on "Ornamental Grasses for the Home Garden"; Haentze's Floral and Greenhouses with a "Floral Arrangement Demonstration"; and Samantha Peckham from Olbrich Botanical Gardens on "Garden Design for Plantaholics". The day included vendors, door prizes, a silent auction and a raffle. There was an excellent turnout for this event. The 2015 Day in the Garden will be held on February 21st.

Fond du Lac Public Library grounds are maintained by Master Gardeners Julie Toshner, Ken Campshure, Alice Dann and Vel Hynek. They did a complete spring cleanup of the grounds and planted seasonal pots at both entrances. They put down five yards of mulch in the beds around the library, and installed a bulletin board in the library's main entrance to advertise Master Gardener upcoming events.

The inner courtyard at the **Fond du Lac Lutheran Home and Health Services** is maintained by Ellen Flynn and Jo Schouten. Last fall many perennials and bulbs were planted in the raised bed and this year more were added, bushes were trimmed, weed barriers were laid down, and mulch was spread. As the newly planted perennials take hold and multiply, the garden should become more self-sustaining.

The **UW Greenhouse** project – The seedlings planted this spring were used mostly in various Master Gardener projects. There were a few leftovers taken to the plant sale. Patty Percy was the leader and Margie Winter, Doug Kindschuh, Dolores Braun, Ron Haag, Kathryn Haupt, Jo Schouten, Kathy Erickson, Pat Birschbach and Marilyn Faris assisted.

The **Fond du Lac City Parks Flower Fund** was established as a component fund by Fond du Lac County Master Gardener Association for the purpose of providing support to the City of Fond du Lac Flower program and flowerbed improvements. This is a permanent fund so community members can contribute to ensure the continuation of the beautiful flowers we have all enjoyed. Our association also contributes to the annual fund requests by the city.

The project leader for **Lamartine Veterans Memorial** is Dolores Braun and team members are Lin Morgan, Josette Schouten, Brenda Hill, and Pat Wiedmeyer as well as township citizens. This year thirty five hostas were added as well as sixteen new perennials. People stop often when our members are working there to comment or ask questions.

Free Spirit Gardens started out having standing water in the garden, and gravel paths leading into the garden washed out four times due to the heavy rains. Free Spirit Riders hosted the Agnesian Garden Walk on July 13, 2014, so our

volunteers had to scramble to figure out what to do with all the drowned out spaces. They used some potted plants to fill in. About 800 people came through the gardens and were very complimentary. On August 23, Free Spirit had their annual fund raiser Ride A Thon, and again our MGVs received many complimentary remarks. This project is under the leadership of Kathy Erickson and Pat Birschbach with eight other team members.

The **Fond du Lac County Health Fair** is designed to expose the county employees to all health options. Master Gardeners' presence at the fair was a big hit. Our members talked to over 400 people and were able to give educational information. Eileen Blackburn was the project leader and Cindy Boudry, Lynette Liepert, Carol Thome and Kathryn Haupt represented our association at the fair.

Eden Elementary School asked Lane Chapman to help them with the landscaping at their entryway. Tina Weiss and Patty Percy offered to help along with Eden PTO members. Lane designed the project, bought plants, mulch, etc. and planned the day. Over twenty people helped with the project.

Diane Soffa and Marilyn Faris maintain the front garden beds at the **Fond du Lac Senior Center** with perennials for low maintenance and continuous blooms. Many questions are asked while they are working and a lot of reminiscing is done by the seniors who can no longer garden.

The **Second Ward Memorial** flower bed, flag and memorial is maintained by Marilyn Faris. Marilyn is also in charge of our **Scrapbook** which is a continuing project and very time consuming, as well as the **Sunshine Committee**. The committee sends cards and gift certificates when applicable to members who are sick or have lost loved ones.

Janet Tess and Gail Williams planned a **Motor Coach Trip** on May 20, 2014, for Master Gardeners and others to visit five nurseries, greenhouses, and gardens for a wonderful day of education and shopping.

Our largest project every year is our **Plant Sale**. Tina Weiss and Ken Campshure were co-chairs for this event which was held for the first time at the Fond du Lac Fair Grounds. Almost all of our members were involved either at the sale itself or by digging and potting many of the plants. The sale was a huge success. We made approximately \$6,000 which is used to fund many of our projects. The 2015 plant sale will again be held at the Fair Grounds on May 15 and 16.

Once again the Master Gardeners held the **Horticulture Helpline** from mid-April to mid-October, answering gardening and landscaping questions posed by local gardeners three days each week. The Helpline team, comprised of Sally Boatman, Ellen Flynn, Sherry Freiberg, Sue Jones, Lin Morgan, Terry Shoemaker and Tina Weiss volunteered more than 150 hours in 2014.

The **Social Committee**, which consists of Lane Chapman, Marilyn Faris and Sandy Beyer, provides drinks, snacks, plates, cups, etc for the MGA meetings and potluck dinners. They do the set up, some cooking and monitoring of food brought in, plus clean up. Their pleasant smiles make everyone feel welcome.

The **Public Relations Committee** handles a wide variety of duties, from obtaining sponsors and vendors for our events; getting fliers printed for the plant sale, bookmarks for the Horticulture Helpline, and Master Gardener brochures; arranging speaking engagements at Kiwanis, Church of Peace, Edward Jones, KFIZ Radio, and Lake Winnebago Clean Water; preparing press releases, other handouts and displays. Dolores Braun and Lin Morgan and project leaders and Ken Campshure, Eileen Blackburn, and Patty Percy are team members.