

Rooted in Community

THE STORY & IMPACT OF MASTER GARDENERS &
THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN GARDENS

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Setting the Stage for Master Gardeners

WHY DEMONSTRATION ARDENS MATTER

- Living classrooms
- Translate research into real landscapes
- Volunteer engagement
- Community gathering spaces



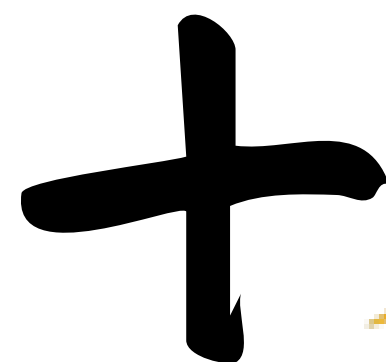


Session Roadmap

- Origin story of Rocky Mountain Gardens and the Exploration Center
- Garden planning and partnerships
- Building the garden
- Lessons from three growing seasons
- Impact on Missoula County Master Gardener program
- Replicable lessons

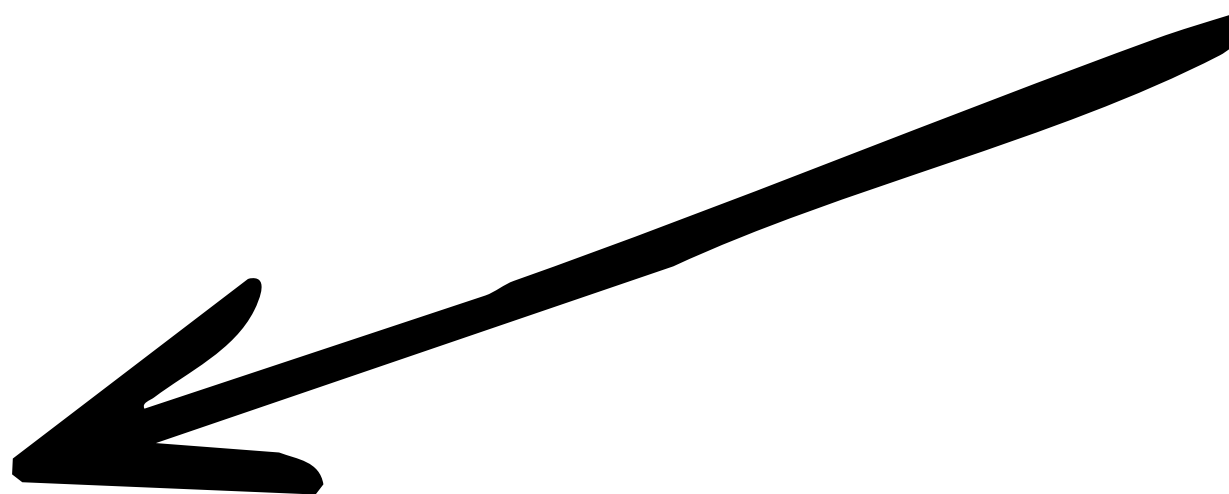


Origins & Vision



**MONTANA
STATE UNIVERSITY**

EXTENSION



**MISSOULA
COUNTY**

**DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY & EXTENSION**



**Healthy Acres
Healthy Communities
Foundation**



MISSOULA
**BUTTERFLY
HOUSE**
& INSECTARIUM



Partnership with Missoula Butterfly House & Insectarium

ENHANCING POLLINATOR EDUCATION

Through joint programs, we enhance **pollinator conservation** , educating the community about the importance of native species and sustainable gardening practices.

Partnership with Missoula Conservation District

SUSTAINABLE LAND MANAGEMENT

The Missoula Conservation District provides **expertise in sustainable practices** and supports native plantings, enhancing the ecological health of the garden.





Securing the Garden Site

- 4 acres at the Missoula County Fairgrounds
- Approval granted for a demonstration garden

Planning Begins in 2019





Educational Vision for the Gardens



Community Support

Join the

Buzz!













Transforming the Community Through Gardening

VISION AND GOALS

Our vision is to connect, teach, learn, and grow community through a vibrant demonstration garden, fostering engagement and education.



Building Community Strength



VOLUNTEERS

Community volunteers have dedicated thousands of hours, showcasing their commitment and passion for revitalizing the Rocky Mountain Gardens project.



DONORS

Generous donors have provided essential financial and in-kind support, ensuring the project's sustainability and growth through their invaluable contributions.



MASTER GARDENERS

Master Gardeners have played a critical role, sharing their expertise and leadership to guide community members and enhance garden activities.





Community Engagement Events





Education and Outreach Impact

HANDS-ON LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The garden fosters interactive education for both Master Gardeners and the public, enhancing community engagement through collaboration with local schools and nonprofits.





Master Gardeners: The Heart of Our Community

VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING HORTICULTURAL GROWTH

Master Gardener volunteers are essential for programming, community education, and garden upkeep, helping to foster a thriving ecological environment.



BEFORE

The Missoula Master Gardener program faced **significant challenges** with dwindling participation and limited community connection over the past 20 years.

TRANSFORMATION

The revitalization of the garden project led to **increased volunteer recruitment** and engagement, transforming the program into a vibrant community hub.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

With strong local support, the program now sees **enthusiastic participation**, fostering a sense of belonging and collective effort within the community.





Demonstration Garden: A Community Hub

ENGAGING THROUGH HANDSON EXPERIENCES

The Rocky Mountain Gardens demonstrate how community involvement fosters growth, education, and connection beyond traditional Extension offices, enhancing local horticultural needs.



Celebrating Our Successful Fundraising Journey

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
MILESTONES





Growing the Master Gardener Network Across Montana

EXPANDING COMMUNITY GARDENING INITIATIVES

Lessons from the Field

What Worked

- Volunteer ownership
- Visible demonstration spaces
- Strong partnerships



Lessons from the Field

What Required Adaptation

- Climate challenges
- Irrigation adjustments
- Coordination systems



Lessons from the Field

Plants as

- Teachers vs failures
- Learning in public



Looking Ahead: Expanding Our Garden's Impact

FUTURE PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

As Rocky Mountain Gardens evolves, we aim to enhance educational outreach, expand volunteer roles, and foster new partnerships for community growth.



Get Involved Today



Starting a Community Garden Space

TOGETHER WE GROW

- Start small
- Define purpose
- Build partnerships

Common Pitfalls



- Expanding too quickly
- Unclear leadership
- Maintenance challenges

Keys to Long Term Success

- 
- Volunteer ownership
 - Community partnerships
 - Consistent programming

- 
- Does your MG program have a demonstration garden?
 - What role does it play?
 - What could it become?

Questions

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